



# National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative

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### 2022-23 Capacity Building Funding Opportunity

### Q&A Record

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## Eligibility

### **Q: Who is eligible for capacity building funds?**

**A:** Each reserve may request up to \$10,000 in capacity building funds between 2020 and 2023. To request funds, reserves must submit an application\* – but this is not a competitive process.

*\*For information on who should submit the application and/or be listed as the fiduciary organization, see “Who should be listed as the project lead on the proposal?” in the Project Roles section below.*

### **Q: Can capacity building funds be used to support the development of catalyst or science transfer proposal ideas?**

**A:** Yes. Capacity building funds can be used to develop an application to the 2023 Catalyst/Science Transfer RFP.

## Focal Topics

### **Q: What are some creative ways to stretch and administer the \$10,000?**

**A:** You should choose an approach that meets your needs and will support your proposal development goals. Here are just a few ideas based on what reserves have done previously:

- Consider reimbursement instead of a contract. Through the University of Michigan, we’re allowed to use a reimbursement process up to \$9,995. The reimbursement process can be helpful if the contracting process is overly burdensome for your agency/organization, and allows reserves to take advantage of the full award amount as direct project funds. Keep in mind, however, that you will need to be able to pay costs up front as the process includes a one-time reimbursement at the end of the project.
- Pool money with other reserves.
- Consider including training that will help you build skills for future collaborative science proposals.

## Project Roles

### **Q: Who should be listed as the project lead on the proposal?**

**A:** Typically, the project lead is a reserve staff member leading the work but there are instances where a non-reserve staff member is listed as project lead, namely when the fiscal institution is not the reserve. There have also been instances where a partner organization is completing the majority of the work and it makes the most sense for them to serve as lead and for the funds to go directly to them, versus through the reserve to the partner. Keep in mind that for contracting purposes, the project lead must also be the fiscal lead, to ensure that the same institution that is responsible for managing the funds is held responsible for completing the work. Finally, even if you list an individual from another organization as the "project lead" on the cover page, you can still clarify reserve roles and responsibilities on the cover page and in the project narrative.

**Q: Does the reserve have to be the lead on the project?**

**A:** No. In many cases, a reserve staff member serves as the project lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups or other partners who serve as the fiduciary organization, there are instances that require that the project lead be a non-reserve staff member. This is related to the requirement that the project lead must be from the same institution that will receive and manage the award.

If the reserve is not the lead on the project, we would expect to see the following in the application:

- A clear and eligible reserve need identified and explained in the proposal;
- Demonstrated support from and co-development with the reserve;
- Project roles clearly explained on the cover page and in the approach; and
- A letter of support from the relevant reserve indicating that the organization is doing the proposed project with their support.

**Q: What does the fiscal lead role entail?**

**A:** The fiscal lead is responsible for ensuring that the work is completed, and they/their organization are responsible for financial reporting.

**Q: Does the application have to come from the project lead?**

**A:** The application can be submitted by anyone on the team. You will need a U-M Account or Friend Account to start an application. You will be prompted to log in or create an account when you access the application page.

**Q: Can contractors be project team members?**

**A:** Yes.

**Review Process**

**Q: When will I hear back from the Science Collaborative?**

**A:** Applications for the 2022 capacity building opportunity are due April 1, 2022. The Science Collaborative will reach out to applicants sometime in May with any clarifying questions and help refine individual proposals as needed.

**Proposal Format and Appendices**

**Q: Do I need a letter from each reserve that participates, even if they aren't requesting funding?**

**A:** Yes, each reserve with participating staff should provide a letter of support. Even if reserve staff are participating without requesting funds, you should still provide a short explanation as to how their team members' time will contribute to the project. In addition, a letter of fiscal commitment is required from the organization that will serve as the fiscal lead for the project (see project roles below), and for any subcontracting organizations.

## Budget

**Q: Can a reserve split their \$10,000 and apply for two partial amounts of funding?**

**A:** Yes. We have seen this happen if a reserve wants to create a joint project with another reserve and hold some of their money back for a different project or joint opportunity. We have also seen funding split among staff within a single reserve to be able to pursue a couple of different projects. These are both possible situations. Follow up with a Science Collaborative Program Officer to work through the details of splitting funding.

**Q: When writing your proposal and putting your budget together, how should you allocate travel costs?**

**A:** It can help to differentially allocate funding to individuals based on the distance they have to travel. You can start by listing all the people who need to travel, and then asking those participants to specify how much travel support they require.

## Other

**Q: Will there be a capacity building opportunity in 2023?**

**A:** Yes, April 3, 2023 is the last deadline for capacity building funding under the current program cooperative agreement.

**Q: Will there be a collaborative research RFP in 2025?**

**A:** Due to the five-year limit of our cooperative agreement with NOAA, we cannot speak to the RFPs that will be available beyond the 2023 catalyst/science transfer opportunity, which is the last RFP we will offer under the current program. Presumably, there will be a collaborative research RFP in 2025, no matter who hosts the Science Collaborative.

It may be worth noting that some teams move from capacity building to catalyst, and then use the catalyst project to set themselves up for a very successful collaborative research project. Planning along these longer timelines can help clarify key objectives and enable you to develop stronger relationships with your primary users.