

FY2014/15 Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions
FFO: NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2015-2004246

Who should I contact if I have a question about the S-K Program?

Regional S-K Program point of contacts:

Headquarters – Daniel Namur, telephone (301) 427-8730 email: Dan.Namur@noaa.gov

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Grants.gov and Submission Information

What is a Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO)?

NOAA Fisheries announces funding opportunities by publishing Federal Funding Opportunities (FFO). FFOs provide potential applicants with detailed information about particular funding announcements (including purpose, eligibility, restrictions, focus areas, evaluation criteria) and instructions on how to apply.

Where can I get a copy of an FFO and the application forms necessary to apply for a funding opportunity?

You can access and download the S-K FFO and grant application forms directly from the Grants.gov webpage.

Do I have to register with Grants.gov before submitting an application through Grants.gov?

Yes. Before you prepare an application you should confirm that you -- an individual or an organization(s) interested in applying for a grant is registered with Grants.gov. If you are not registered, register immediately.

How long does the registration process take?

The entire Grants.gov registration process can take up to 1 month to complete so it is important to begin this process as early as possible.

What is involved in the Grants.gov registration process?

Applicant organizations need to complete a **one-time only registration** process for Grants.gov that includes obtaining a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, registering in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) and registering in Grants.gov. Details for Grants.gov registration can be found at the Grants.gov website. Important: If you have problems registering for Grants.gov, call the Grants.gov Help Desk [1-800-518-4726] for support.

Please note that this is a **one-time only registration** for all Federal agencies using Grants.gov. So if your organization has already completed the Grants.gov registration process to submit electronically for another Federal agency, a separate Grants.gov registration is not necessary for the S-K grant submission.

What type of notification will I receive after submitting an electronic application via Grants.gov

The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR), the individual who is competent to submit the application, will receive a series of four e-mails after submission of the final application. It is extremely important that the AOR watch for and save each of these e-mails. E-mail Number 4 will indicate that the application has reached NOAA Fisheries.

Specifically, the e-mails indicate:

Email 1: Grants.gov Submission Receipt Number

Email 2: Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt. Note: Receipt of this email no. 2 may take up to 2 business days after submission of the application.

Email 3: Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval. Note: The Grantor Agency is NOAA.

Email 4: Receipt of Grant Application at NOAA (i.e., at NOAA Fisheries, the line agency which is the management agency, the Federal Program Office, for this application).

Receipt of the above four e-mails does **not** indicate the application has been accepted for review. The AOR will be notified in up to two subsequent e-mails, if the application has been accepted or not-accepted for program review. Keep these emails.

What are the differences between the checks that Grants.gov performs on the application and those performed by NOAA Fisheries Program Office?

Grants.gov validations include checking to make sure no viruses are attached to the application and ensuring the DUNS number is correct. At the Agency level (i.e., the NOAA Fisheries Program Office), the application is checked to confirm that you have met the minimum eligibility to apply and other application criteria, including all key pieces of the application (i.e., the SF-424, the SF424A, in other

words all of the basic documents required within the application package). Applicants not meeting minimum eligibility requirements or missing key pieces of information will not be considered for review.

I will be the Principal Investigator on the proposal. Do I need to register with Grants.gov?

If you are an individual applying for a grant or cooperative agreement, yes, you will need to register with Grants.Gov. A Principal Investigator does not need to register with Grants.gov, unless that Principal Investigator is also the person legally and financially authorized to submit that application (i.e., is he/she the “Authorized Organizational Representative, the OAR on behalf of their organization. For example, the Principal Investigator for a company submitting a proposal to the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program may also be the person authorized to submit applications.

What if Grants.gov or my organization’s internet connection is unavailable at the submission deadline?

Avoid this problem by submitting early. If you choose not to submit until the last minute, you do so at your own risk, as applications cannot be accepted by fax or email.

Can I request an extension of time submit an application?

No.

Deadlines

How early can I submit my S-K proposal? If I submit my proposal early, can it be reviewed (i.e., “pre-screened”) to ensure that I have provided all the information required?

You can submit your S-K proposal at any time up until 11:59 p.m., December 15, 2014, via the Grants.Gov website. We strongly recommend early submission of proposals in the event that we have the resources to pre-screen (pre-screening is **not** guaranteed). Any revisions to proposals must be submitted by the December 15, 2014 deadline date. Our ability to pre-screen is dependent upon the submission deadline and the availability of resources.

How do I know my application was received by the deadline date and time?

After an application has been submitted, the Grants.gov system provides the applicant with the electronic equivalent of a postmark stamp on a confirmation screen. This email confirmation contains the date and time the application was received by Grants.gov. Applicants should print out and retain this page for their records.

Eligibility Requirements

What applicants are eligible to apply for Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) funding?

You are eligible to apply for a grant or a cooperative agreement under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program if:

1. You are a citizen or national of the United States;
2. You are a citizen of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), being an individual who qualifies as such under section 8 of the Schedule on Transitional Matters attached to the constitution of the NMI;
3. You are a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia; or
4. You represent an entity that is a corporation, partnership, association, or other non-Federal entity, non-profit or otherwise (including Indian tribes), if such entity is a citizen of the United States or NMI, within the meaning of section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802).

We encourage applicants from the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation. We will consider the extent of fishing community involvement when evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

Who is prohibited from applying for S-K funding?

You are not eligible to submit an application under this program if you are an employee of any Federal agency; an employee of a Regional Fishery Management Council; or a Regional Fishery Management Council. However, Council members who are not Federal employees can submit an application to the S-K Program.

May a federal employee serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI?

Federal employees may not serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) on any application. However, they may be included as a project partner.

May NOAA personnel (both Federal or contractors) serve as Co-PIs?

No, NOAA personnel (both Federal employees or contractors) cannot serve as Co-PIs, but they can be listed as project partners.

Program Priorities

What type of projects can be submitted for funding consideration under the S-K Program?

Proposals submitted to the FY2014/15 competition must address at least one of the following priorities: maximizing fishing opportunities and jobs; improving the cost effectiveness and capacity for observations; increasing the supply, quality, and diversification of domestic seafood; and improving the quality and quantity of fishery information from the US territories.

I want to submit an application that does not address an identified priority. How will this affect my chances of success?

Chances of success will be low because evaluation criterion #1 (Section V.A in the S-K Funding Opportunity) assesses how well the application addresses the program priorities. Applications that best address the evaluation criteria will be most competitive.

How many applications can I apply for? How many grants can I receive?

There is no limit on the number of applications you can submit to the S-K Grant Program. Multiple proposals submitted must clearly identify different projects, and must be successful in the competitive review process.

Proposal Requirements

What is the difference between a Project Summary and Program Narrative?

A Project Summary is a short concise description of the proposed project. It is a succinct and accurate, stand-alone description of the proposed work and must be no longer than two pages.

The Project Narrative is a much more detailed description of the work to be performed, including purpose and objectives, hypotheses to be tested, methodologies to be employed and justification for their use, key personnel, key personnel and partners, schedules for performance, outreach resources methods, evaluation criteria, and deliverables, among others.

Do I need to indicate whether my application is a cooperative agreement or grant?

No. If the application is recommended for funding, NOAA will determine if the proposed activities constitute “substantial Federal involvement” of a NOAA entity. “Substantial Federal involvement” is the criterion which distinguishes a cooperative agreement from a grant. Therefore, the applicant should describe in detail in the detailed Project Narrative (also known as the “Statement of Work”) the nature and degree of participation of any NOAA entity in the project.

What is the main distinction between a grant and a cooperative agreement?

The difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement is the degree of Federal participation or involvement in performance of work activities:

Grant: A financial assistance mechanism providing money, property, or both to an eligible entity to carry out an approved project or activity. A grant is used whenever NOAA Fisheries anticipates no substantial programmatic involvement with the recipient during performance of the financially assisted activities.

Cooperative Agreement: A financial assistance mechanism used when there will be substantial Federal scientific or programmatic involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after the award has been made, Federal scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities

What is a data-sharing plan, and how much detail is required in the S-K application?

In the section of your proposal for “data sharing plan” (see Sections IV.B.B.6 and Section VI.B.3 of the FFO), briefly describe the data you will be collecting and what you plan to do with them and then, if you are recommended for funding and if we think these are the kinds of data that should be shared, then we’ll ask for a more detailed plan when we enter into negotiations for making an award.

Budget Information

What are the cost sharing requirements?

Cost-sharing (also known as match) is NOT required. If you elect to cost-share, and if your application is selected for funding, you will be obligated to account for the amount of match noted in the approved/accepted award documents, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer. If project costs are shared, NMFS must provide at least 50% of total project costs. Applicants should note that cost-sharing is a project evaluation criterion noted in Section V. A. of the FY2014/2015 Saltonstall-Kennedy Federal Funding Opportunity.

What is the total amount of funding for which I can apply?

The total Federal amount requested must be no less than \$20,000 or greater than \$400,000, for all years (maximum 24 months), including direct and indirect costs. Project applications that request funding outside of this range will not be accepted or reviewed.

What categories should be included in the Budget Table and Budget Narrative?

Categories should track those line items identified in the SF-424A.

Is there a cap on the amount I can allot for any particular budget category?

As long as the costs are amply justified in the Project Narrative description and Budget Narrative, there is no cap on any budget category.

What can't S-K monies be used for?

Projects that primarily involve business start-up or infrastructure development are not eligible for funding under the S-K Program.

Are there any other S-K funding restrictions?

The S-K Program will not consider expenses associated with fees, fund-raising activities, travel for activities not directly related to project implementation, travel or salaries for Federal employees, or profit as allowable costs in the proposed budget. The total costs of a project consist of all allowable costs incurred in accomplishing project activities during the project period. Project costs can only include support for activities conducted between the effective start date and end date of the award, and cannot include activities undertaken either before or after the agreed upon dates. Applicants will not be

reimbursed for time expended or costs incurred in developing a project or in preparing an application, or in any discussions or negotiations with the agency prior to the award.

May equipment be included in the budget?

Yes. Equipment necessary to carry out the proposed project may be requested and should be justified in the Budget Table and Budget Narrative. .

May I include indirect costs in my S-K application budget?

The budget may include indirect costs, if the applicant has an approved Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance) incurred for common or joint objectives, which therefore cannot be allocated to a specific project. For this particular Federal Funding Opportunity, the Federal share indirect costs must not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs the applicant would be entitled to if the negotiated Federal Indirect Cost rate were used or 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of the applicant's Federal Indirect Cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the Federal direct costs, the difference may be counted as part of the non-Federal share. If claiming indirect costs, the applicant must submit a copy of the current Approved Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. If that agreement has expired or it is under review, a copy of the transmittal letter that accompanies the request for a current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement application should be included in the application.

What if I don't have a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate agreement?

If you or your organization does not have a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost (IDC) Rate agreement or if that agreement is out of date and a renewal is not pending, you should list those indirect costs as direct costs in the Budget Narrative and in the SF-424A and leave the IDC rate at 0%.

Are sub-awards (i.e., subcontracts) allowed?

Yes. The Project Narrative and detailed Budget Narrative should clearly state why there is a need for a subcontract, the services the subcontractor will provide, and if possible, the organization(s) or individuals to which the subcontracts will be made. Additionally, if any funds are planned for a subcontractor, the applicant must describe and provide the funding amounts in the same level of detail as is provided in the overall budget, i.e, you should provide the same category break-down, as appropriate as provided in the overall budget for the applicant as for the subcontractor. The cumulative cost of subawards/subcontracts should appear under the category of "Contractuals" in the SF-424A.

Screening and Review Procedures

What process is used to evaluate proposals submitted to the SK Program?

Administrative Review: The Federal Program Officer responsible for the program conducts an initial screening to determine compliance with all application requirements.

Proposal Evaluation: Proposals are evaluated based on Importance, Relevance, and Applicability of the proposed project to:

- Program goals
- Technical/scientific merit
- Overall qualifications of applicants
- Project costs
- Outreach and education components

Independent Technical Review: All scientific grant applications undergo a technical review process. During this process, all proposals are evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria and any additional criteria published in the SK Federal Funding Opportunity by an independent technical review panel. The technical reviewer panel members are individuals with expertise in the subject(s) addressed by each proposal who do not have a conflict of interest with the applicant. Each reviewer sees only proposals within their area of expertise. In addition to their developing their review scores, reviewers score each proposal according to the five review criteria (listed above) to produce an overall score for the proposal.

Constituent Panel Review: Upon completion of Administrative and Technical reviews, evaluation may include a review panel, an *ad hoc* assembly of three or more independent reviewers with a range of expertise appropriate to the proposals being considered. Panel members may include representatives from the fishing industry, state government, non-governmental organizations, and other entities, as appropriate. The panelists will review the applications, a summary of the technical evaluations (including scores and comments from the independent technical reviewers), and if the application proposes to continue previously funded project, information on progress to date.

Each panelist will evaluate the applications in terms of the significance of the problem or opportunity being addressed, the degree to which the project involves collaboration with fishing community members and other appropriate collaborators, proposed means to disseminate project results, and benefits (industry, resource, economic) derived from investment in the project.