



**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**  
**Request for Proposals for Partnered Fellowship Research Projects on**  
**Coastal Adaptation and Resilience in the Lake Champlain Basin**  
**2023–2025**

Please direct questions to Julianna White, Research Program Coordinator, [julianna.m.white@uvm.edu](mailto:julianna.m.white@uvm.edu).

**Research Focus**

Q: What does coastal mean in this competition?

A: Communities and land along waterways in the Lake Champlain basin are considered coastal.

Q: What does coastal adaptation and resilience in the Lake Champlain basin mean in the context of this research fellowship project competition?

A: Increased severity and frequency of storms, increased coastal and inland flooding, and erosion along waterways are growing challenges for coastal communities. Adaptation and resilience research and actions that can help predict, prepare for, and mitigate negative effects for coastal people and ecosystems are the research focus of this fellowship.

Q: How does climate change research relate to coastal adaptation and resilience?

A: Climate change increases the need for coastal adaptation and resilience in multiple and varying ways, including severity and frequency of storms, changing seasonal patterns, etc. As such, climate change may be considered in the research.

Q: Are projects focused on basic research welcome?

A: Yes. We want potentially transformative projects, and basic research can be transformative. All proposals, including basic research proposals, should identify potential benefits to the communities. The RFP states, "PIs must provide a strong rationale for how their proposed research will inform policies, management practices, businesses, recreational organizations, or other types of communities in the Lake Champlain basin, including underrepresented or underserved communities." In general, proposals with benefits to communities, strong relevance to LCSG's strategic plan, and public education and public policy components are more likely to be successful. Keep in mind that proposals will be scored by both technical reviewers and local stakeholders.

Q: Can the proposal include studies of Tropical Storm Irene?

A: Yes, Tropical Storm Irene may be a study topic. However, the research questions should respond to current local, state, and/or regional needs related to adaptation and resilience.

Q: May the proposal focus on stormwater management, spring flooding, or stream restoration?

A: Stormwater management is a coastal resilience strategy. Spring flooding and stream restoration may be researched within the contexts of reducing erosion and flooding. Because this is a research project, the proposed fellow should not be solely engaged to implement strategies. The project must ask key research questions and use research strategies such as monitoring, assessment, analysis, or modeling to create new knowledge around coastal adaptation and resilience.

### **Geographic focus**

Q: How can we meet the needs of under-resourced communities?

A: Climate change impacts disproportionately affect more vulnerable coastal populations, many of which face barriers to implementing new strategies for addressing climate-related risks comprehensively.

Q: Could a proposal focus on research across all of Vermont? New York?

A: The proposal should focus on benefits for the Lake Champlain basin, though some research and benefits may also take place outside of the basin.

Q: Would research projects that are rooted in a particular place or particular community be competitive?

A: Yes. Most of what we do is place-based. It is advisable that the proposal explain how the research would benefit the one community and also how the approach or results are somehow translatable to other places.

### **Communications and Outreach**

Q: Are proposals based on outreach welcome?

A: This call is for a research project fellowship, and outreach can include research. For example, researchers could assess the effectiveness of tools, messages, or methods for reaching new audiences or influencing behavior change.

Q: What responsibilities could the fellow have around communications and outreach efforts?

A: This will depend on the particular proposal and description of work. The fellow may organize or participate in meetings with the public or workshops for the public or certain professionals; they may write blog post, social media, fact sheets or reports written for the general public or specific audiences. They may collaborate with extension people from UVM, government, or NGOs. It is important to identify and work with communities or certain groups starting from the planning period to increase the likelihood that the research project will produce outputs that are useful and research findings that will lead to policy, practice, or conservation outcomes.

Q: When could people interested in this project contact LCSG staff re communications and outreach efforts?

A: LCSG staff are willing to advise or help at any phase.

### **Administration and Budget**

Q: Can municipalities and NGOs apply?

A: Yes. Proposals are welcome from non-profit organizations, businesses, government agencies, or institutions of higher education in the New York or Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain basin.

Organizations representing diverse ways of knowing, perspectives, and audiences are encouraged to apply. Multiple organizations may apply collaboratively.

Q: Can anyone be a fellow?

A: It is expected that the fellow will be a recent graduate at the undergraduate, master's or doctorate level and add capacity to the partner organization.

Q: Can projects be for one or two years?

A: This competition is for a two-year fellowship.

Q: What is the match requirement?

A: A 1:1 non-federal match is required. This means that every \$1 of federal funds must be matched with \$1 of non-federal funds. Monetary and in-kind sources of match are allowed.

Q: May researchers' time/effort qualify as match? Can indirect costs (F&A) count as match?

A: Faculty or staff time may qualify as match, as long as the source of funding is non-federal. Likewise, travel costs, supplies, a new computer purchased for the fellow, etc. may count as match if the source of funds is non-federal. Please check with your institution, see [federal uniform guidance](#) on indirect costs, or contact Lake Champlain Sea Grant with questions.

Q: If an institution chooses to use an F&A rate that is less than its established NICRA rate (whether it be a random lower number or an off-campus v on-campus rate), may it count the difference in the F&A (waived or unrecovered) as match?

A: As long as the institution voluntarily waives the indirect cost, the difference of what is charged as F&A on federal direct costs can be counted as match. Please check with your institution and see [federal uniform guidance](#) on indirect costs. This is true for UVM as well.

Q: Can businesses and NGOs use a *de minimis* 10% F&A rate? And if they choose not to charge any F&A, would that foregone F&A be able to count as match?

A: Yes, on both counts. If the small business doesn't want to calculate their own NICRA, they can use the default 10% rate set by the government. However, if they have ever had a NICRA, they are not eligible for the 10% *de minimis*. Foregone F&A can be counted as match. Please check with your institution and see [federal uniform guidance](#) on indirect costs.

Q: At UVM, what is the F&A rate for Lake Champlain Sea Grant?

A: UVM has agreed to use an F&A rate of 25.7% for Lake Champlain Sea Grant, including all schools and departments.