



Request for Proposals for Partnered Fellowship Research Projects 2026–2028

Timeline

- Proposals are due Friday, August 15, 2025, to seagrant@uvm.edu.
- Expected project duration is 1–2 years beginning between October 1, 2025 and no later than February 1, 2026

Opportunity Summary

Lake Champlain Sea Grant (LCSG) requests proposals from partners in the Lake Champlain basin to co-support a 1–2-year fellowship that will provide early-career training experiences for a current student or recent graduate and create new scientific knowledge via research on a topic of interest to the partner organization(s) that is aligned with the Lake Champlain Sea Grant strategic plan. We will select up to two proposals to recommend for funding.

LCSG and the partner organization(s) will share costs for the fellowship. LCSG will provide up to \$35,000 per year for two years with federal funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), contingent upon receipt of funds from NOAA. Partner organizations will commit at least a 50% match (i.e., at least \$1 in non-federal matching funds for every \$2 requested of federal Sea Grant funds). These funds will be used as non-federal match on LCSG federal funds.

About Lake Champlain Sea Grant

LCSG develops and shares science-based knowledge to benefit the environment and economies of the Lake Champlain basin. LCSG envisions a future of long-term ecosystem health and sustainable economic development in Lake Champlain basin communities.



LCSG is a collaborative effort between the University of Vermont (UVM) and the State University of New York (SUNY) Plattsburgh. LCSG is supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [National Sea Grant College Program](#).

We develop meaningful partnerships through thoughtful integration of expertise, assets, and capabilities of collaborators within the Lake Champlain basin, across the nation, and beyond. Partnered fellowship proposals should describe how the fellowship will create new knowledge that addresses the needs of businesses, state and local leaders, and the communities they serve.

What is a Partnered Research Fellowship?

A partnered research fellowship is designed to provide financial support for an early career professional to conduct research that advances knowledge and supports the needs of a partner organization. Fellowships are designed to primarily support the time and professional development of the fellow working on the project. It is expected that the fellow will be a recent graduate from any level of higher education (i.e., associate, bachelor, master, doctorate); alternatively, the fellow may be a current graduate student but the research in which they engage through their fellowship should differentiate from their primary graduate research. Other costs of the research are expected to be supported by the partner(s).

All proposals must describe a project suitable for an early career professional that will generate new knowledge in an area aligned with the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Strategic Plan goals (see below). Generating new knowledge includes development and use of tools and strategies, monitoring, and assessment of current or new activities or efforts related to environmental literacy and workforce development, healthy coastal ecosystems, resilient communities and economies, or sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Lake Champlain Basin. All research should be responsive to local, state, and/or regional needs, as well as those of the partner organization.

The proposal should identify and describe a specific audience (communities, decision-makers, etc.) and include anticipated outcomes for that audience. We work diligently to support participation by multiple audiences by extending knowledge and resources. Applicants should clearly identify if and how the proposed research will have societal impacts in the Lake Champlain basin environment and/or economies.

Particular care should be taken to describe how the fellowship project will provide both a *research* and *training* opportunity that aligns with the goals of this request *and* the goals and interests of the partner organization.

Lake Champlain Sea Grant Strategic Plan Goals

Proposals must support one or more of the LCSG Strategic Plan (2024–2028) goals listed below.

Focus Area: Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development

Goal 1: An environmentally literate public participates in lifelong formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities and implements innovative solutions to improve community well-being in the face of a changing Lake Champlain basin.

Goal 2: A skilled and environmentally literate workforce is engaged and able to build prosperous lives and livelihoods in a changing world through traditional and innovative careers.

Focus Area: Healthy Coastal Ecosystems

Goal 3: Habitat, ecosystems, and the services they provide are protected and/or restored in the Lake Champlain basin.

Goal 4: Land, water, and living resources are managed by applying sound science, tools, and services to sustain resilient ecosystems in the Lake Champlain basin.

Focus Area: Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

Goal 5: Domestic fisheries, aquaculture, aquaponics, and other living freshwater resources supply food, jobs, and economic and cultural benefits in the Lake Champlain basin.

Goal 6: Natural resources are sustainably managed to support coastal communities and working waterfronts, including industrial, recreational, subsistence fisheries, aquaculture, and aquaponics in the Lake Champlain basin.

Focus Area: Resilient Communities and Economies

Goal 7: Lake Champlain basin communities and economies have resilient capability and the resources to prepare for and adapt to changing environmental conditions, extreme weather, coastal hazards, economic disruptions, and other threats to community health and well-being.

Goal 8: Aquatic resources are sustained and protected to meet emerging needs of the communities, economies, and ecosystems of the Lake Champlain basin.

The LCSG Strategic Plan (2024–2028) was developed with engagement from a wide variety of constituents in the Lake Champlain basin, consultation with the National Sea Grant Office, LCSG Program Advisory Committee, and the LCSG Steering Committee.

Eligibility

Proposals are welcome from non-profit organizations, businesses, government agencies, or institutions of higher education working within the New York or Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain basin. Multiple organizations may apply collaboratively.

Expectations for Collaboration

Leaders of each partnered research fellowship project will ensure that the fellow is selected in a fair and transparent process. LCSG and the partner(s) will collaborate to facilitate a competitive selection process for the fellow. The fellow may be employed either through UVM or a partner organization. This will be determined based on the proposal and the agreed-upon scope of work and work plan.

In addition to the research experience they will gain, fellows will benefit from professional development opportunities through LCSG, tapping into the rich collection of resources available at the University of Vermont, SUNY-Plattsburgh, and Sea Grant networks, along with those of local, state, regional, and federal agencies and organizations. Fellows are expected to participate in monthly LCSG staff meetings, annual retreats, and other staff initiatives; share monthly updates and have quarterly check-in meetings with a designated member of the LCSG staff; contribute to bi-annual reporting to NOAA; and collaborate with LCSG communications staff to disseminate information related to Lake Champlain environment and economies, particularly as related to their research.

All partnered research fellowships must follow [LCSG's data management and sharing plan and policy](#) and have or be able to secure any permits and permissions necessary to conduct research via local government and federal authorities (e.g., following the National Environmental Policy Act). LCSG will assist with identifying and following relevant policies and forms after the competition is decided.

Application Instructions

Narrative and budget proposals are due to seagrant@uvm.edu by August 15, 2025.

Proposal narrative. The narrative should be a maximum of five pages, with one-inch margins and eleven-point font. It should include the following information:

1. **Project title, project leader name, title, affiliation, and contact information.** Project titles may be shared with NOAA and/or Congress, so please use professional, clear, concise, and informative language and avoid acronyms or shorthand language.
2. **Background.** Describe the specific problem the proposed fellowship research project will address and justify the importance of this problem.

3. **Project objectives.** State the key questions or testable hypothesis that will be the focus of the project. Provide a list of clearly defined objectives. For each objective, provide a concise statement explaining how it is aligned with the goals and priorities of the partnered research fellowship program.
4. **Project details.** Provide an explanation of the methods you will use to address your project objectives. Include the recruitment plan for the early-career fellow and a basic workplan including both research and career-development activities. See also the timeline below. Clearly identify research-users, partners, and specific communities involved and their roles. Explicitly explain how this project leverages the expertise of and adds capacity to your organization(s).
5. **Anticipated outcomes and results.** List expected deliverables and outcomes related to the creation of knowledge, tools, and strategies and to the fellow's career development. Explain how the research outcomes will benefit the audience and meet current and future local, state, and/or regional needs.
6. **Project timeline.** Please provide a timeline for accomplishing the proposed work, which covers the entire duration of the project. Include approximate dates for key milestones related to the proposed work, including the accomplishment of anticipated outcomes and release of deliverables.
7. **Works cited.** (Not included in the page limit).
8. **CV or resumé.** For project leader/s only. (Two-pages maximum each, not included in the page limit)
9. **Letters of support.** Optional.

Budget and budget narrative (not included in page limit)

1. An **annual line-item budget** for both federal and non-federal match for each year of the project. A 50% non-federal match is required (i.e., \$1 of non-federal match from a partner organization for every \$2 of federal funds from Lake Champlain Sea Grant). LCSG federal funds should be used to support the fellow's salary and benefits and associated indirect costs. Fellowships may be full-time or part-time positions for a duration of 1–2 years.
2. A **budget justification** with a short narrative that explains federal and match budget items for each year of the project in sufficient detail to enable review of the appropriateness of the funding requested.

Review Process and Criteria

All applications received will be reviewed in accordance with the National Sea Grant Competition Policy and [LCSG's Competition Policy](#). All reviewers will abide by the LCSG confidentiality and conflict of interest policies.

The **review process** consists of:

- The UVM Extension lead and two professionals external to LCSG will provide written reviews regarding technical merit, relevance, and fundability according to criteria described below.
- A panel composed of partners and advisors who are familiar with research needs relevant to the Lake Champlain basin will be convened if there is a sufficient number of proposals that all proposals cannot be reviewed by the same reviewers. The panel will comment on the fundability of all proposals and rank proposals recommended for funding.
- LCSG will notify all applicants of the recommendations regarding their proposals and provide anonymized reviews.
- The LCSG Director will recommend proposals to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) to fund. The director will endeavor to follow the recommendations of the review panel but has authority to make final decisions that, in their opinion, best serve the strategic interest of the program and its partners, including geographic diversity and meeting match requirements.
- The NSGO will review and make a final determination.
- LCSG will notify all applicants of the recommendations regarding their proposals and provide anonymized reviews.
- LCSG will work with the selected proposal partners to complete the budget in NOAA-required format, confirm a data management plan (or concurrence with the LCSG plan), confirm environmental compliance, and prepare for institutional review board approvals (if needed).

Review Criteria

External technical experts will comment on the strengths and weaknesses of proposals as a whole and score proposals using the following equally weighted criteria:

- The proposal addresses a gap in knowledge relevant to the goals of Lake Champlain Sea Grant and the partner organization.
- The proposed approach/methods are scientifically valid.

- The deliverables and outcomes will meet a need for knowledge, tools, and strategies in the Lake Champlain basin.
- The early-career fellow is likely to achieve anticipated learning, skills, or career outcomes as a result of the proposed activities.

The scale used for scoring will be Excellent, Very Good, Acceptable, and Poor. If insufficient information is provided, the application will be given a score of Poor.

Contact

Please send any questions to Research Coordinator Gretchen Nareff, gretchen.nareff@uvm.edu