

# Frequent Questions: Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program

Questions and answers for grant applicants for the 2024 Federal Funding Opportunity.

## National

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## Who should I contact if I have a question about the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program?

Contact the program officers in your region:

- **Headquarters:**  
Cliff Cosgrove  
[clifford.cosgrove@noaa.gov](mailto:clifford.cosgrove@noaa.gov)  
(301) 427-8736
- **Alaska Region:**  
Kristin Cieciel  
[kristin.cieciel@noaa.gov](mailto:kristin.cieciel@noaa.gov)  
907) 723-1305
- **West Coast Region:** Desmond Gelman  
[desmond.gelman@noaa.gov](mailto:desmond.gelman@noaa.gov)  
(206) 526-6131
- **Pacific Islands Region:** Scott Bloom  
[scott.bloom@noaa.gov](mailto:scott.bloom@noaa.gov)  
(808) 944-2218

- **Greater Atlantic Region:**  
Nicole MacDonald  
[nicole.macdonald@noaa.gov](mailto:nicole.macdonald@noaa.gov)  
(978) 281-9330
- **Southeast Region:** Kim  
Raneses  
[kim.raneses@noaa.gov](mailto:kim.raneses@noaa.gov)  
(727) 551-5760

## Pre-Proposal Information

### What is a pre-proposal?

A pre-proposal is a two-page, single spaced document that clearly conveys the management impact and applicability of the proposed research for the priority area that you are applying to.

### Do I have to submit a pre-proposal?

Yes. A pre-proposal must be received at [grants.gov](https://grants.gov) under the competition link named “PRE-PROPOSALS 2024 Saltonstall-Kennedy,” postmarked, or provided to a delivery service by 11:59 pm, Eastern Standard Time, July 24, 2023, 60 days after the posting date of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. NOAA will inform applicants, within 45 days of the pre-proposal due date, if the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program encourages or discourages submission of a full proposal.

### What is the format for a pre-proposal?

The pre-proposal package includes an SF-424 form and the two-page narrative only. The SF-424 form will serve as a cover page to the pre-proposal. Although the SF-424 form allows for additional attachments, this function should not be used. Each pre-proposal may not exceed two pages, single-spaced, and must provide:

- Name of organization, title of project, and principal investigator(s), with email contact(s).
- Priority - Applicants must identify the single priority that is most addressed by the pre-proposal. If more than one priority is addressed by the pre-proposal, one priority must be identified as the primary.
- Background section that sets the stage for the work and identifies which one of the priorities in Section I.B. the pre-proposal addresses directly.
- Rationale of why the work should be conducted and how it is relevant to the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program.
- Clear statement of objectives and general methodology to be used.
- Identification of required permits (i.e. Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act) and permit numbers, if applicable.

- Estimated budget amount – both federal and cost-sharing if applicable (a detailed budget narrative is not required.)

## **What happens to my pre-proposal after I submit it?**

Reviewers will assign scores to pre-proposals ranging from 0-40 points based on the four evaluation criteria below. Scoring will be determined by subject matter experts providing scores based upon receiving up to ten points for meeting each of the provided criteria:

- How well the proposal addresses the needs of the fishing community/communities;
- Approach and methodology (realistic objectives and design);
- How relevant the proposed project is to the Saltonstall-Kennedy priority it is applying for; and
- Involvement/collaboration with the fishing community, industry or stakeholders.

The Saltonstall-Kennedy Program will review the complete set of pre-proposals and consider the merit ranking and relevance to determine whether to ‘encourage’ or ‘not encourage’ full proposals.

## **When will I hear back from NOAA Fisheries about my pre-proposal?**

Within 45 days of the pre-proposal due date, NOAA will inform the authorized representative identified on the SF-424, based upon their pre-proposal, if the Saltonstall-Kennedy Program encourages or discourages submission of a full proposal. Regardless of if you are encouraged or not encouraged, all those who submit complete and timely pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit full proposals.

## **[Grants.gov](#) and Submission Information**

### **What is a Notice of Funding Opportunity?**

NOAA Fisheries announces funding opportunities by publishing grant Notice of Funding Opportunities. These opportunities 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 the Notice of Funding Opportunity and the application forms necessary to apply for a funding opportunity?**

You can access and download the Saltonstall-Kennedy [Funding Opportunity](#) and grant application forms directly from the grants.gov web page. Search for Opportunity number NOAA-NMFS-FHQ-2024-200800

## **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—are 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 one month to complete so it is important to begin this process as early as possible.

## **What is involved in the grants.gov registration process?**

System for Award Management (SAM) – All Applicant Organizations (optional for Individual Applicants) must complete and maintain an active registration. New registrations take an average of fourteen (14) business days. The renewal process may require as much time as the initial registration. SAM registration includes the assignment of a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code for domestic organizations which have not already been assigned a CAGE Code. To register, go to: <http://www.SAM.gov>. **Important:** If you have problems registering, call the Grants.gov Help Desk at (800) 518-4726.

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 registration process to submit electronically for another federal agency, a separate registration is not necessary for the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant submission.

## **What type of notification will I receive after submitting an electronic application via grants.gov?**

The Authorized Organizational Representative (Representative), 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 Representative watch for and save each of these emails. The fourth email will indicate that the application has reached NOAA Fisheries.

Specifically, the emails indicate:

- Email 1: Grants.gov Submission Receipt Number (acknowledgement email).
- Email 2: Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt. Note: Receipt of this email may take up to two business days after submission of the application.
- Email 3: Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval. Note: The Grantor Agency is NOAA.
- Email 4: Agency Tracking Number Assignment.

## **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. 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, submitted a pre-proposal, and other application criteria, including all key pieces of the application (i.e., the SF-424, the SF-424A, 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. 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., they are the "Authorized Organizational Representative" on behalf of the 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 to submit an application?**

No.

## **Deadlines**

**How early can I submit my Saltonstall-Kennedy pre-proposal and full 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 Saltonstall-Kennedy pre-proposal at any time up until 11:59 p.m. ET, **on the pre-proposal closing date listed in the NOFO**, via grants.gov. You may submit a full proposal up until 11:59 p.m. ET, **on the full proposal closing date listed in the NOFO**, via grants.gov, provided you previously submitted a pre-proposal. 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 pre-proposals or full proposals must be submitted by the noted 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. Applicants should print out and retain this page for their records.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

### **What type of applicants are eligible to apply for Saltonstall-Kennedy funding?**

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

- You are a citizen or national of the United States.
- 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 within the meaning of Section 2 of the Shipping Act, 1916, as amended (46 U.S.C. app. 802).
- You are a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

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.

We recognize the interest of the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior in defining appropriate fisheries policies and programs that meet the needs of the U.S. insular areas, so we encourage applications from individuals, government entities, and businesses in U.S. insular areas. We support cultural and gender diversity in our programs and encourage women and minority individuals and groups to submit applications. We are also committed to broadening the participation of [Minority Serving Institutions](#) (MSIs), which include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities, in our grant programs.

## **Who is prohibited from applying for Saltonstall-Kennedy funding?**

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

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

No. 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 (federal employees) serve as Co-PIs?**

No. NOAA personnel (federal employees) 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 Saltonstall-Kennedy Program?**

Proposals submitted to the FY2024 competition must address at least one of the following priorities:

- Promotion and Marketing
- Development, Infrastructure, and Capacity Building
- Science or Technology that Enhances Sustainable U.S. Fisheries

See the [Funding Opportunity](#) for detailed descriptions of these priorities.

### **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. under the Full Application Evaluation Criteria) 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?**

NMFS will only accept three full proposals from the same entity or applicant. If more than three full proposals are submitted from the same entity or applicant NMFS will accept the first three in the order they are received. Multiple proposals submitted must clearly identify different projects, and must be successful in the competitive review process.

## **Full Proposal Requirements**

### **Are there changes in submission requirements for the FY24 S-K NOFO compared to previous years?**

Submission requirements in this NOFO may change from previous year's announcements. We recommended reading the full announcement carefully, paying close attention to section IV Application and Submission Information, for changes to application submission requirements.

### **Can I submit a full proposal without having submitted a pre-proposal?**

No. Full proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated if a pre-proposal was not received on time and accepted.

### **Can I submit letters of support?**

Letters of support or collaboration are allowable only from individuals or entities with direct involvement in the project and should outline the specifics of the collaborative effort. Letters of support from individuals or entities that do not have direct involvement in the project will not be accepted during the review process.

### **What is the difference between a Project Summary and Project 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 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 a data-sharing plan, and how much detail is required in the Saltonstall-Kennedy application?**

In the section of your proposal for “data sharing plan”, describe the data you will be collecting and what you plan to do with them. A Data Information Sharing Plan should include a description of the types of environmental data and all other data and or information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing and security; and prior experience in publishing such.

If the proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, you are still required to have a data sharing plan. Such a data sharing plan could include the statement “this project will not generate any environmental data.”

## **Do I need to provide additional information on potential environmental effects?**

Yes. You are required to provide detailed information on your program activities to help proposal reviewers understand the potential environmental effects of your project. This information includes detailed project activities, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non- indigenous species, interactions with endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems). Your application should, to the best extent, provide what you know about your project when you submit your application.

NOAA has developed an environmental compliance questionnaire to assist in the evaluation of the possible environmental impact of your application. As part of this application process, you are asked to fill out this [questionnaire](#). You will need to answer all relevant questions. Please be as specific and comprehensive as possible when answering the questionnaire to facilitate the timely review of your proposal.

## **Full Proposal Budget Information**

## **What are the cost sharing requirements?**

Cost-sharing (also known as match) is not required. Cost sharing is voluntary and will not increase your chances of your project being selected. 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, NOAA Fisheries must provide at least 50 percent of total project costs.

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

The total Federal amount requested can be no less than \$25,000 and no greater than \$500,000, for up to a two-year period (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 Narrative?**

Categories should match 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 justified in the Project Narrative description and Budget Narrative, there is no cap on any budget category.

## **What can't Saltonstall-Kennedy monies be used for?**

Projects that mainly involve infrastructure (to include personnel, buildings or equipment) development that are for the primary benefit of the applicant are not eligible for funding under the S-K Program.

## **Are there any other Saltonstall-Kennedy funding restrictions?**

The Saltonstall-Kennedy 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 Narrative.

Provide justification for the use of each item and relate them to specific program objectives. Equipment is defined as an article of tangible personal property (including information technology systems) that has a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. A recipient organization may classify equipment at a lower dollar value but cannot classify it higher than \$5,000. For example, a recipient may classify their equipment at \$1,000 with a useful life of a year.

It is recommended that any internal policies for equipment are provided in the application to clarify the classification of equipment by an applicant.

A lease versus purchase analysis must accompany every equipment request over \$5,000. If a lease versus purchase analysis cannot be completed, a statement is required to that effect.

## **May I include indirect costs in my Saltonstall-Kennedy application budget?**

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate agreement with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect costs agreement with the federal government must be included with the application.

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

If an applicant has not previously established an indirect cost rate with a federal agency they may choose to negotiate a rate with the Department of Commerce or use the *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (as allowable under 2 C.F.R. §200.414). The negotiation and approval of a rate is subject to the procedures required by NOAA and the Department of Commerce Standard Terms and Conditions Section B.06

## **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 breakdown, 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 “Contractual” in the SF- 424A.

## Full Proposal Screening and Review Procedures

### **What process is used to evaluate full proposals submitted to the Saltonstall-Kennedy 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:

- Importance and applicability of the proposed project(s) to the Saltonstall-Kennedy priority being applied for and relevance to Saltonstall-Kennedy Research Program goals.
- Whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.
- Overall qualifications of the team.
- Anticipated impacts of results.
- Outreach and education components.

#### **Independent Technical Review**

All eligible applications undergo a technical review process. During this process, all proposals are evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the evaluation criteria and any additional criteria published in the Saltonstall- Kennedy Funding Opportunity. The technical reviewers 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.

Reviewers score each proposal according to the five review criteria (listed above) to produce an overall score for the proposal.

#### **Constituent Panel Review**

For those applications at or above the cutoff technical evaluation score, NOAA Fisheries may solicit individual comments and evaluations from a panel or panels of three or more representatives selected by NOAA. Panel members will be chosen from the fishing industry, state government, non-government organizations, and others, as appropriate. The role of the panelist is to enhance the Agency's understanding of this select group of proposals received under the competition prior to recommendations for selections being made. 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.