



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – CYCLE 3

RESTORE ACT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR LOUISIANA

January 2023



SUMMARY

The RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana (LA-COE) is requesting proposals for research to support implementation of [Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan](#). A Letter of Intent is required in advance of full proposal submission.

FUNDING

In July 2023, the U.S. Department of the Treasury awarded the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) a grant to continue its research program. Approximately \$4.2 million is available for research in this third funding cycle. It is estimated that up to 12 awards will be given.

ELIGIBILITY

Academic institutions, private firms, non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies are all eligible for various categories of awards. Staff from CPRA and The Water Institute (the Institute) may not participate in Letters of Intent, be part of research teams, or participate in proposal development in any way, including the submission of Letters of Support. There is no limit on the number of organizational partners that can be included in a single proposal. An individual investigator may only lead one proposal submission but may participate in others. For complete information regarding eligibility, see Section 4.1: Eligibility.

TYPES OF AWARDS

Graduate Assistantships: These awards will only be made available to support full-time graduate students conducting relevant research at Louisiana colleges or universities.

Research Awards: Any organization or institution may be the lead on a proposal and participate in the proposed research. In the case of proposals involving multiple organizations, a single organization must be identified as the lead.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submission of required Letters of Intent is **Friday, February 23, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. CST**. The deadline for submission of full proposals is **Monday, April 22, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. CST**.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP) shall be submitted via email to LA-COE@thewaterinstitute.org. There will be a live and recorded webinar on February 1, 2024, from 2pm–3pm CT. Written questions can be submitted during the webinar and the final answers will be posted on the [LA-COE](#) website within five business days, along with a link to the recorded webinar. Please review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) posted on the LA-COE website before attending the webinar. The last day to submit questions on full proposals is Friday, April 12, 2024.



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1.0 PURPOSE AND LA-COE MISSION

1.1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to fund research projects that aim to produce results directly relevant to the regular update and implementation of [Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan](#). The Coastal Master Plan, which was developed by the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) with input from citizens, legislators, parish representatives, and stakeholder groups using the best available science and engineering, focuses state efforts and guides actions needed to sustain Louisiana's coastal ecosystems, safeguard coastal populations, and protect vital economic and cultural resources. The Coastal Master Plan is updated every six years, providing an opportunity for the incorporation of new knowledge and understanding into the plan.

1.2. LA-COE MISSION

The mission of LA-COE is to support research directly relevant to the regular update and implementation of Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan by administering a competitive grants program and providing the appropriate coordination and oversight to ensure that success metrics are tracked and achieved. More information about LA-COE can be found on the [LA-COE website](#).

2.0 AWARD INFORMATION

2.1. TYPES OF AWARDS AND FUNDING LEVELS

Two types of awards will be available through this RFP. All awards will be for no more than a two-year duration.

Graduate Assistantships: These awards provide funds for full-time graduate student stipends, tuition, and minimal (less than \$10,000) research expenses to support a graduate student (master's or Ph.D.) at a Louisiana college or university for up to two years to undertake research in an area identified in Section 3.0: Research Topics. Internships with private organizations may be included as part of the graduate student's training, although funding for the organization's expenses cannot be supported. Note that these Graduate Assistantships cannot be used to support work proposed under the following "Research Awards" category or post-doctoral researchers. A Letter of Intent is required. The Principal Investigator (PI) on the proposal must be a full-time employee of a Louisiana college or university.

Research Awards: These awards support research activities that seek to further knowledge in an area identified in Section 3.0: Research Topics that will produce findings directly applicable to the regular update and implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan. Appropriate activities include, but are not limited to, field and laboratory studies, computer modeling, archival research, surveys, data analysis, and synthesis. In the case of proposals involving multiple organizations, a single organization must be identified as the lead.



Interorganizational proposals, including partnerships with academia, federal, state, private, or non-profit organizations, are strongly encouraged. Collaboration among organizations and disciplines to address cross-disciplinary research needs is also encouraged. In addition, proposals that include meaningful roles for undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, including training in skills relevant to the implementation of [Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan](#), will be viewed favorably.

The PI on each proposal must be a full-time employee of a Louisiana organization or institution. Other participants may be from any organization or institution within or outside Louisiana. If the PI moves to another institution outside the state of Louisiana, someone else on the research team will need to be identified as the new PI. A Letter of Intent is required in advance of full proposal submission.

It is anticipated that approximately \$4.2 million will be available for this third funding cycle. Levels of support available for distribution for each category of award through this RFP are expected to be as follows:

- Up to \$750,000 for Graduate Assistantships (~five awards < \$150,000). This funding may be used to accommodate student stipends as well as research and publication support.
- Up to \$3,450,000 for Research Awards (~four awards < \$350,000 and ~ three awards < \$685,000)

These levels will be adjusted if the meritorious proposals submitted in each category do not total the designated amount. Cost sharing or matching is not required for LA-COE awards.

2.2. PROJECT AWARD PERIOD

All awards will be for no more than a two-year duration. The start date for successful projects is expected to be August 2024.

2.3. IDENTIFIED RESEARCH NEEDS

The [Research Needs document](#) broadly outlines the research, modeling, and monitoring needs for informing [Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan](#). In the Research Needs document, needs are organized into five topic areas with a description of each topic's rationale and potential outcomes to directly support the Coastal Master Plan. For this third funding cycle, priority research needs were selected from the Research Needs document. These research needs, refined with specific research activities, are listed in Section 3.0. At least one out of 19 listed research activities must be addressed in the Letter of Intent to be considered for invitation of a full proposal. To prevent project duplication and to mitigate risk of funding duplicate projects, proposers should utilize the [Deepwater Horizon project tracker](#) to vet their ideas.



3.0 RESEARCH TOPICS

3.1. TOPIC AREA 1: HYDROLOGY AND HYDRODYNAMICS OF RIVERINE, ESTUARINE, AND COASTAL SYSTEMS

3.1.1 Research Needs

Analysis, testing, and installation guidance for bank stabilization (e.g., articulating concrete blocks) of high-velocity conveyance channels for river diversion projects in coastal Louisiana soils.

1. Develop engineering and design criteria for an articulating concrete mat shoreline protection system, including filter layer and protection layer, for use on earthen containment dikes exposed to wave forces within the inland Louisiana coast. The design criteria should produce engineering design methodology that applies best-available science to the optimization and analyses of multiple installation techniques, construction sequencing, constraints, maintenance considerations, and engineering recommendations.

3.2. TOPIC AREA 2: ESTUARINE AND COASTAL ECOLOGY

3.2.1 Research Needs

Nutrients, Vegetation and Soil

Improve quantification of nutrient sources, sinks, and transformations, including salinity gradients and watershed processes, at multiple spatial scales. For example, improve understanding of transformation and assimilation pathways for nutrients within watersheds and receiving basins, including water quality, soil, primary and secondary producers and the potential for ecosystem changes such as estuarine hypoxia.

2. Develop and use imaging technologies combined with water quality and other in-situ environmental data to advance methods for detecting and tracking Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) in coastal Louisiana waters, including prediction of the presence or absence of specific HAB taxa and bloom-forming potential.

Increase understanding and quantification of processes affecting marsh surface elevation, in the context of relative sea level rise, as influenced by emergent vegetation, specifically rates of organic matter incorporation and carbon accumulation. Additionally, improve knowledge of feedback processes between inorganic sediment accretion and growth of emergent marsh vegetation.

3. Empirical studies on carbon dynamics in Louisiana's coastal wetlands, including greenhouse gas emissions from emergent wetlands and open waterbodies across a range of salinities, and carbon fate in converted or converting habitats, such as emergent wetlands converting to open water.
4. Improve the ability to detect and map the current extent of floating marshes using remote sensing tools; and determine the combination of factors controlling marsh shallow expansion and



subsequent mat detachment to improve the ability to predict mat detachment using vegetation, elevation, and flooding data.

5. Determine establishment criteria for wetland vegetation in newly developed land of deltaic regions (e.g., West Bay, Wax Lake Delta, Bay Uhlán), with emphasis on creating or refining inundation characteristics, specific to water depth and duration of inundation.

Terrestrial and Aquatic Fauna

Determine the effects of natural ecosystem changes and protection and restoration projects on the abundance, distribution, movement patterns, growth, food web stability, and trophic dynamics of ecologically and economically important freshwater, estuarine and coastal biota (including all life history stages of phytoplankton, infauna, shellfish, fish, birds, submerged aquatic vegetation, and key wildlife species).

6. Evaluate empirical data (e.g., Coastwide Reference Monitoring System data) to determine species-level shifts in distribution, areal coverage, and/or biomass of wetland vegetation species in response to environmental drivers such as water level changes, salinity changes, and climatic events (e.g., droughts). This research should include an analysis of statistical relationships of potential wetland vegetation species-level transitions.
7. Assess the ecological effects of *Phragmites australis* colonization of natural and created marshes in southwestern Terrebonne Basin, particularly relative to fish, shellfish, and wildlife habitat utilization and whether marsh creation has promoted the spread of *Phragmites*.
8. Characterize macroinvertebrate infauna communities, and the relationships between these communities and sediment characteristics, in the nearshore habitats of northeastern Lake Pontchartrain.
9. Evaluate the effects of hydrologic and competition influences on the growth and survivorship of bald cypress and water tupelo plantings through greenhouse studies and/or field research.

3.3. TOPIC AREA 3: GEOTECHNICAL, STRUCTURAL, AND COASTAL ENGINEERING

3.3.1 Research Needs

Develop standardized geotechnical laboratory testing procedures for hydraulically dredged slurry for marsh fill material.

10. Develop empirical design criteria for estimating the consolidation of mixed, fine-grained sediments in marsh creation projects through the analysis of existing geotechnical software output data from past marsh creation projects.



11. Develop marsh creation construction protocols that use best-available science to provide guidance on the minimum dredge pipe outfall distance from an earthen containment dike or existing oil-gas pipeline to prevent impact to these features.
12. Conduct geotechnical investigations and testing programs on constructed earthen containment dikes to develop comparisons of in-situ versus containment dike geotechnical parameters to be used for future geotechnical slope stability analyses.
13. Compile and evaluate post-construction Instrumented Settlement Plate data from marsh creation projects to develop best-available science guidance and protocols for the use of Instrumented Settlement Plates in tracking long-term marsh slurry geotechnical properties and to improve marsh fill consolidation estimations on future projects.

Improve coastal systems analysis techniques for monitoring and sediment management of marsh creation, sediment diversion, and barrier island / barrier shoreline restoration projects and adjacent tidal inlets (e.g. sand retention, sand bypassing, beach re-nourishment).

14. Determine the status and channel migration trends of inlets in the Isle Dernieres chain (e.g., Whiskey Pass and Coupe Colin). The research could utilize multi-beam bathymetry, discrete discharge measurements, and sediment cores to determine the channel geometry, morphology, water discharge, and estimated migration trends for these inlets.

3.4. TOPIC AREA 4: DELTAIC GEOLOGY, GEOMORPHOLOGY, SUBSIDENCE, AND SEDIMENT DYNAMICS

3.4.1 Research Needs

Improve predictive capabilities of destructive coastal processes on deltaic-chenier coastal land areas (e.g., sand shoreline dynamics, wetland edge erosion, estuarine and shelf floor deflation), and how these processes operate under normal storm conditions.

15. Develop process-based approaches to modeling aspects of barrier island systems (barrier islands, headlands, and adjacent shorefaces), including changes to accretion/island recovery, decadal-scale evolution, shoreface evolution, and inlet/barrier island/headland interaction.

Evaluate the effectiveness and impacts of individual project restoration strategies (e.g., hard structures, natural defenses, hydrological network modifications) on the larger Louisiana continental shelf and coastal and estuarine ecosystems to predict both positive and negative project and project-type feedback. This also includes identifying sediment sources, inventory, and budget, and impacts of sediment resource removal—such as the impact of borrowing in shelf and estuarine settings.

16. Conduct geophysical and geotechnical investigations of Ship Shoal to further characterize the shoal, evaluate its migration rates over time, and quantify available sand resources for restoration, particularly in areas of potential oil and gas pipeline removal. The proposed research should build on the datasets and recommendations identified in the study *Compilation of Existing Geoscientific Data in Ship Shoal, Louisiana*.



17. Measure, evaluate, and analyze the effects that the recently constructed Henderson Lake Dixie Pipeline Spoil Bank Gapping hydrologic restoration project has had on water quality parameters (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, turbidity), water flow patterns, and sedimentation both within and adjacent to the project footprint in the Atchafalaya River Basin.

3.5. TOPIC AREA 5: HUMAN DIMENSIONS

3.5.1 Research Needs

Develop dynamic metrics to calculate the social impacts (e.g., population change and composition, place attachment and identify, effects on social equity, public health, impacts on low to moderate income population, changes to infrastructure and critical services such as schools, health services, etc.) of individual restoration and risk reduction projects, future without action, and suites of projects on coastal communities.

18. Develop metrics that quantify the social impacts (e.g., population changes, sense of place, changes to infrastructure and critical services, etc.), and the ecosystem services, of suites of coastal restoration and risk reduction projects on coastal communities. These metrics should consider the range of potential restoration and protection projects, and not just sediment diversions.

3.6. OTHER RESEARCH NEEDS PROPOSALS

19. The research activities listed above were developed by CPRA and LA-COE to address knowledge gaps that have been identified in implementing the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan. Research proposals that align with the activities listed above will be given priority for funding under this RFP. However, LA-COE will also consider funding for up to three research proposal topics that are not explicitly described above. These proposals must still align with the research needs articulated in the [RESTORE Act Center of Excellence for Louisiana 2019 Research Needs document](#). In doing so, researchers will need to demonstrate how the research proposed will support the research needs identified in the 2019 Research Needs document, and how it will address important knowledge gaps in the implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan.



4.0 FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

LA-COE will enter into a subaward agreement with the lead PI's organization. The lead PI's organization shall execute the grant agreement and shall execute lower-tier subaward agreements with co-PIs. All lower-tier subawards shall incorporate all applicable terms and conditions.

Award documents will supersede any other documents, discussions, notices, this RFP, or other publications and will constitute the entirety of the agreement. LA-COE shall not be under any obligation to provide funding to any specific proposal submitted, any subsequent discussion or negotiations, or any costs incurred in preparation or submittal of any proposal, any subsequent discussion or negotiation, or any costs incurred prior to the full execution of the subaward. A sample draft subaward is available on the [LA-COE website](#).

LA-COE reserves the right to fund only selected parts of any given research proposal and may require modifications to the proposed work plan, personnel, and budget of any proposal. The RFP and information in the completed proposal and subsequent modifications to the proposal as requested by LA-COE shall form the basis of any award that may ensue.

4.1. ELIGIBILITY

Academic institutions, private firms, non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies are all eligible for various categories of awards. Federal agencies are eligible to apply and participate in other proposals; however, each federal agency must determine in advance of submitting a proposal whether their agency rules allow them to participate in this program and receive funding.

Interagency transfers from U.S. Department of Treasury are not supported; awards are not to be made by LA-COE. Per the RESTORE Act Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions and Program-Specific Terms and Conditions, Section S. Procurement, Item 3, any award made by the LA-COE to a federal agency or employee must have prior written approval of U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of General Counsel before any award is executed.

Per U.S. Department of Treasury regulations, LA-COE may not make a subaward to any entity unless that entity has provided its Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to LA-COE. A DUNS number is the nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. to uniquely identify business entities. Most large organizations, libraries, colleges, and research universities already have a DUNS number. Contact your grant administrator, financial department, chief financial officer, or authorizing official to identify your organization's DUNS number. Allow up to two business days to obtain a DUNS number.

Staff from CPRA and the Institute may not participate in Letters of Intent, be part of research teams, or participate in proposal development in any way. In addition, staff that worked for CPRA or the Institute in the last two years (2021–2023) are not eligible to apply for RFP3 funding.



5.0 IMPORTANT DATES

Proposers should plan their research activities to commence in August 2024. All research activities must be completed within two years from the start of the award. No-cost extensions (NCEs) are not anticipated and will only be granted in unusual and exceptional circumstances.

Table 1. Dates for the RFP Cycle 3.

Deadline	Date
Save the date email sent out	December 20, 2023
RFP released on LA-COE website	January 25, 2024
Live and recorded webinar to submit questions on this RFP	February 1, 2024
Letters of Intent due for Graduate Assistantships, Research Awards	February 23, 2024
Feedback provided on Letters of Intent	March 18, 2024
Full proposals due for Graduate Assistantships, Research Awards	April 22, 2024
Expected announcement of Graduate Assistantships, Research Awards	Late June 2024
Expected start of research activities	August/September 2024



6.0 LETTERS OF INTENT SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Letters of Intent are required for Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards. Following Letter of Intent submission, LA-COE will provide feedback to researchers on the relevance and scientific merit of their proposed project to the goals of the RFP in advance of preparing a full proposal. Full proposals will only be encouraged for Letters of Intent if they are deemed relevant and applicable to the competition. The Letter of Intent should provide a concise description of the proposed work and its relevance to the *research activities* identified in Section 3.0 of this RFP. The Letter of Intent should include a cover page and a narrative two to three pages in length. The narrative should be single-spaced in 12-point font in Arial or Times New Roman with one-inch margins and must include, in order, all the components listed below.

If the components listed below are not included, the Letter of Intent may not be considered.

1. **Survey Monkey Form Cover page** including (fill out the fields in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#)):
 - a. Award type
 - b. Tentative project title
 - c. Lead PI name(s), title(s), phone number(s), email address(es), and organization address(es)
 - d. Any Co-PI name(s), title(s), phone number(s), email address(es), and organization address(es)
 - e. Duration of project
 - f. Approximate cost of the project (annual budget amount per year)
 - g. Identification of the *research activities* (at least one out of 19 being addressed (name all that apply))
 - h. Up to six keywords describing the research and research discipline(s)

Note: These fields must be filled out in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#).

2. **Narrative** of 2–3 pages, uploaded as a PDF, including the following components:
 - a. Statement of the issue the proposal plans to address and its relevance to the *research activities* identified in Section 3.0 of this RFP
 - b. Brief summary of the methods and approach to be used
 - c. Brief summary of how the findings and outputs of the project can support the implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan



Note: The narrative should not include any information identifying the PI, submitting institution or organization, or team members. This information will be included on the Survey Monkey Cover Page described above.

3. **List of past and current collaborators, advisors, and advisees:** provide one single list that includes all collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (PI and co-PI), complete with corresponding institutions or organizations. Submit one combined and alphabetized list per application in a separate Excel spreadsheet, using last name, first name, and organization for the column headings. The template for the Excel file is posted on the [LA-COE website](#).

Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications listed in the resumes. Collaborators also include the persons with whom the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations.

Advisees are people with whom the individual investigator has had an association as thesis or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not the collaborators of those unfunded participants). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

Letters of Intent including the cover page form, the narrative as a PDF, and the Excel file of collaborators as attachments should be submitted in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#). Templates are available in the portal and on the [LA-COE website](#).

An email providing feedback on the Letter of Intent, including whether the research proposed addresses the *research activities* and has potential to provide meaningful support to the regular update and implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan, will be sent to the lead PI approximately two weeks after the Letter of Intent deadline. The feedback will include a determination as to whether the PI should submit a full proposal. Late Letters of Intent will not be considered, and a full proposal cannot be submitted without a Letter of Intent.



7.0 FULL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Instructions for the submission of full proposals for Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

8.0 PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCEDURES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated using two fundamental criteria:

- Relevance to the *research activities* identified in Section 3.0 of this RFP
- Applicability of the research findings to the regular update and implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan

PIs should ensure their narrative for Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards address these criteria directly. Proposals that do not directly address these criteria will be returned without review.

8.1. LETTERS OF INTENT

Letters of Intent for Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards will be reviewed by LA-COE staff, subject matter experts, and CPRA, to identify adherence to the following:

- Eligibility for the category of award
- Provision of required information
- Potential relevance to the *research activities* identified in this RFP
- Potential scientific merit

Letters of Intent found to be deficient in one or more of these areas will be advised not to submit full proposals. Where minor deficiencies are noted, proposers will be supplied with brief comments by email to help them address the issues in the full proposal submission.

8.2. FULL PROPOSALS

Full proposals will be evaluated based on the likelihood of success in meeting the *research activities* identified in this RFP, the quality of the scientific merit, and the potential role of the research findings in supporting implementation of the Coastal Master Plan. Proposals that do not directly address these criteria will be returned without review.

Review procedures for full proposals include independent evaluation of each proposal by multiple subject matter experts, consideration by the External Review Board (see [LA-COE SOPV4](#) for clarification on RFP External Review Processes), and assessment by the LA-COE and CPRA regarding relevance of the findings to implementation of the Coastal Master Plan. Evaluation criteria and their relative weighting are identified in Table 2. Past performance may be considered to assess if proposals from previously funded



researchers should be funded for this cycle. Past performance will be judged based on the timely delivery of final reports, publications, graduate student training, and available data shared in a regional or national digital repository or data center that promotes discovery and long-term preservation within one year of project completion. Funding decisions will be made by the LA-COE Director in concurrence with CPRA.

Table 2. Evaluation criteria for full proposals.

Criteria	Possible Score
Relevance: whether the proposed research addresses the <i>research activities</i> detailed in this RFP as priorities for this funding cycle and whether the proposed research supports implementation of the Coastal Master Plan, including the direct applicability of knowledge generated and utility of research outputs.	35
Scientific merit: meaningfulness of the contribution to existing knowledge, theoretical framework and context, and demonstrated understanding of the systems to be studied.	15
Appropriateness of the methods/approach: rigor of field/laboratory methods and experimental design, availability of data, suitability of analytical/statistical tools, and potential for successful completion within the proposed timeframe and budget.	15
Competency of the team: expertise and training of the researchers, familiarity with this type of research, experience of the PI in leading research of the type proposed.	15
Capacity building: training of undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior staff; mentoring opportunities for early career researchers; and high diversity of the team, including involvement of under-represented groups/minority-serving institutions and/or organizations on the research team.	10
Appropriateness of the budget: efficient use of resources and leverage of existing equipment, field sites, research facilities, etc.	10
Total	100



9.0 AWARD ADMINISTRATION

9.1. AWARD NOTICES

Award announcements are expected to occur in June 2024 for Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards. Notifications of funding will be made to the submitting organization(s) by LA-COE by the date stated in Section 5.0. Organizations whose proposals are not selected will be advised as promptly as possible. Should funding be awarded, the lead organization is responsible for communicating the appropriate terms and conditions to any subrecipients on the project. The lead organization must also carry out all the responsibilities of a pass-through entity, including, but not limited to, management and oversight of any subrecipients.

9.2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Standard terms and conditions are available on the [LA-COE website](#).

9.3. REPORTING

All award recipients will be required to:

1. Submit semi-annual technical performance progress reports (PPRs) within 30 days of the end of the reporting period and participate in 30-minute follow up discussions with CPRA and LA-COE Technical Point of Contacts.
2. Submit invoices not more often than monthly, in a specified format as defined in the subaward. A paragraph of technical progress will need to be included with every invoice.
3. Participate in up to two LA-COE/CPRA in-person presentations (anticipated one day per year in the spring/summer in Baton Rouge, LA; costs to be included in proposal budget).
4. Participate in semi-annual webinars with LA-COE and CPRA to highlight and share recent accomplishments and to receive training on data management and co-production of actionable science.
5. Submit final report within 30 days of the close of the award. A final report template will be provided, and the PI will need to describe all research activities and findings. Copies need to be provided of all publications and presentations made during the award period. This includes electronic copies of thesis/dissertations of funded graduate students (to be provided as soon as they are finalized even if an embargo exists), metadata (ISO format) of existing or future archived data sets as well as metadata and digital object identifiers (DOIs) of any archived data sets. DOIs need to be provided to the LA-COE Data Manager within one year of the end of the period of performance.

Note that it is encouraged that all data be archived during the award period, but it is required that all data, collected data products, and metadata be made publicly available within one year of submission of the final report. Notification and access information for publications and thesis/dissertations produced after



the closeout of the award is also needed. Failure to meet these requirements may influence future LA-COE funding decisions.

The financial support from LA-COE shall be acknowledged in all research projects and outputs. The following language must be used in those products and outputs:

This study was supported by the U.S. Department of the Treasury through the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's Center of Excellence Research Grants Program under the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revised Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act) (Award No. RCEGR260007-01-01). The statement, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Treasury.

A LA-COE Technical Point of Contact (TPOC) will be identified for each award to enable technical evaluation of progress on research activities, assist with troubleshooting, and review technical reporting. LA-COE TPOCs and grants staff will coordinate with awardees to fulfill reporting requirements and will maintain records for all grants, publications, presentations, reports, and activities of each grant. These will inform semi-annual reports to the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Gulf Restoration and an annual report for the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, as required for continuation of program funding. LA-COE TPOCs will also work with CPRA Liaisons to ensure the research results assist with implementation of the Coastal Master Plan. If progress is not deemed adequate, LA-COE staff will work with the lead PI to establish revised milestones. Failure to meet milestones and respond to LA-COE requirements may result in discontinuation of or reductions in funding, as detailed in research subawards.

9.4. OWNERSHIP AND PUBLICATION OF DATA

The State of Louisiana encourages the use of data collected for the purpose of dissemination of information through publication of abstracts and scientific and technical papers and by direct presentations. Suitable venues for presentations include conferences, seminars, and workshops. Suitable venues to publish research results may include peer-reviewed technical journals and formats designed for popular audiences such as popular magazines, newspaper articles and television news, etc. However, to ensure proper quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) of the information released, the dissemination of data/project information collected via State contracts is subject to the following protocols:

- No data or results of activities funded through this agreement shall be publicly released, published, or presented by any means mentioned above, prior to submission of the final report to LA-COE, who will then submit the report to CPRA. If awardees wish to publish data, results, or activities developed or obtained through research from agreement-funded tasks prior to submission of the final report, the entity so desiring will furnish the state with a digital copy of any materials intended for publication at least 60 days prior to the initial submission of those materials to the publishing group. The LA-COE will forward requests to CPRA, who shall then have 30 days from receipt of such materials to review and provide the entity with written comments. The comments will then be forwarded to the awardee. LA-COE and its lower-tier subrecipients agree to give due consideration to any written comments made by the state and



discuss any such written comments with state personnel prior to publication. If the entity receives no written response from the state within the 30-day period, it may proceed with the publication.

- All data, collected data products, and metadata must be made publicly available within one year after submission of the final report.



10.0 OTHER INFORMATION

10.1. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Research involving human subjects is allowable when the project has been certified by a responsible body to be in compliance with the federal government’s “Common Rule” for the protection of human subjects and approved by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Awardee institutions and organizations have the responsibility for setting up an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to review research protocols and designs as well as ensure the protection of the rights of human subjects. While a proposal can be reviewed without IRB approval, projects involving human subjects cannot be recommended for funding until this certification or its equivalent has been provided to LA-COE and the U.S. Department of Treasury has approved it by a special award condition or otherwise in writing. Researchers should file their proposal with their local IRB at the same time they submit it to LA-COE to minimize any delay that the approval procedure may incur.

10.2. CARE AND USE OF LIVE VERTEBRATE ANIMALS

Recipients must comply with all applicable statutes pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of vertebrate animals held or sacrificed for research, teaching, or other activities supported by federal financial assistance. An institutional animal care and use committee (IACUC) approval might be needed at the researcher’s institution.

10.3. DATA AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

Protocols for sampling, sample processing, record-keeping, and data management are required to be consistent with the specification defined in the [CPRA Internal Agency Policies](#), the [LA-COE’s Standard Operating Procedures](#), and the [Standard Terms and Conditions](#). Furthermore, all geo-scientific data (e.g. bathymetric, sidescan sonar, sediment samples) collected during a project should be standardized and formatted according to the Louisiana Sand Resources Database (LASARD) [Standard Operating Procedures](#). All projects must ensure that data and materials are collected, archived, digitized, and made available using methods that allow current and future investigators to address new questions as they arise.

Therefore, the use of open standards for data sharing (i.e., data formats that do not require proprietary software in order to be read) is required. All data, collected data products, and metadata (ISO format) must be made publicly available within one year after the final report is submitted to the CPRA Contract Monitor.

All information products resulting from funded projects must be associated with detailed, machine-readable metadata and shared in a regional or national digital repository or data center (i.e., National Centers for Environmental Information, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research, DataOne Dash, etc.) that promotes discovery and long-term preservation. DOI data must be provided to the LA-COE Data Manager to track progress. LA-COE encourages the use of free data repositories, although there might be situations when this is not possible. Failure or delay in making data accessible may be considered by LA-COE when making future funding decisions. Metadata and details of the repositories used must be provided to LA-COE to enable tracking of all LA-COE data and information



products. LA-COE will provide a catalogue of all LA-COE data to the public to facilitate data dissemination.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A. LETTERS OF INTENT AND FULL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Letters of Intent and full proposals must be submitted using the required forms, posted on the [LA-COE website](#) and available for download in the [online proposal submission portal](#). The submission portal will be available for uploading materials **February 2, 2024 until Friday February 23, 2024**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to work closely with their organization’s contracting officers early in the proposal development process.

First-time users of the proposal submission portal will need to register and enter basic information. Users will not be allowed to submit their Letter of Intent until they have confirmed their email address. Applicants are encouraged to register and log in with sufficient time to complete and review the online application prior to the submission deadline. Submission of Letters of Intent will not be accepted after **Friday, February 23, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. CST**. A full proposal cannot be submitted without the submission of a Letter of Intent, and an invitation to submit a full proposal.

User support for the submission portal will be available throughout the open application period. Any technical inquiries about the online application itself can be made by emailing LA-COE@thewaterinstitute.org. Applicants may expect a response to their inquiry within one business day (excluding holidays and weekends). Any program or grant-related questions must be asked prior to Letter of Intent submission. If help is still needed, the applicant should review the FAQs posted on the LA-COE website. Technical support via SurveyMonkey Apply is available via email **Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.– 8:00 p.m. EST, Sundays 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time**.



APPENDIX B. FULL PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND FORMAT FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP AWARDS

Proposals are submitted by the academic advisor as lead PI. An academic advisor can submit a proposal as lead PI either before or after a student has enrolled in the graduate program. A student does not have to be identified before submission of the proposal by the academic advisor. If the student is not already enrolled in a graduate program, award of the Graduate Assistantship will be contingent upon the student's acceptance to the graduate program listed in the narrative. The Graduate Assistantship proposal should include the cover page, a narrative 4–5 pages in length, and a biosketch for the PI (and student, if identified). The narrative and biosketch must be single-spaced in 12-point font in Arial or Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. The proposal must be submitted as four different sections: the Cover Page online form; a PDF file including the project description; a PDF file of a biosketch; and an Excel file listing collaborators.

The components listed below are required:

1. **Cover page** (to be filled out in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#)), including:
 - a. Award type
 - b. Project title
 - c. Lead PI name, title(s), phone number(s), email address(es), organization(s) address(es)
 - d. Indicate the student's current enrollment status and the degree program in which the student is enrolled or expected to enroll
 - e. Duration of the project
 - f. Funding amount requested by year
 - g. Identification of the topic area(s) and research activities identified in this RFP
 - h. Up to six keywords describing the research and research discipline(s)
2. **Project description** (4–5 pages, uploaded as PDF), including:
 - a. Project title
 - b. Degree program in which the student is enrolled or is expected to enroll
 - c. Description of the research that would be conducted as part of the student's degree program and how it relates to the research activities identified in this RFP. If the student has not yet enrolled, this does not have to be exact as it is expected the student will play a role in developing specific research objectives as part of the learning experience. If funding is requested to support only part of the student's degree studies (i.e., Ph.D. student), specifically describe the role of this award in furthering the student's studies.



- d. Summary of how the findings and outputs of the student's research and the training provided relate to the regular update and implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan
 - e. Outline the curriculum, or anticipated curriculum, for the student including the classes that the student has taken, is taking, or might take
 - f. Provide a description of current or anticipated funding sources that will be applied to support the research activities proposed for the student. For Ph.D. students not expected to complete their degrees within the time frame of the award, describe funding available for the remaining years of the student's program.
 - g. Data management: One paragraph listing the tasks to be completed to establish and implement a data management plan
 - h. References cited: Follow the journal [Science Citation Style](#) for format of citations. This section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the project description.
3. **Biosketch** for the major professor and student, if identified (2 pages each, using either the provided form or the standard NSF template available through SciENCv and uploaded as a PDF).
 4. **List of past and current collaborators, advisors, and advisees** (use the template provided on the [LA-COE website](#) and upload as an Excel file): Provide one list that includes all collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (PI and co-PI [student, if identified]), complete with corresponding institutions or organizations. Submit one combined and alphabetized list per application in an Excel spreadsheet using last name, first name, and organization for the column headings. The list should be alphabetized by last name.

Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications in resumes. Collaborators also include those people with whom the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations.

Advisees are people with whom the individual investigator has had an association with as thesis or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral sponsor. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

Graduate Assistantship full proposals should be uploaded using the online proposal submission portal procedure described in Appendix A.

Proposals containing items other than those described in these instructions, missing required sections, or exceeding the page limitations will be returned without review. The format of Graduate Assistantship proposals responding to this RFP does not allow for endorsement.



APPENDIX C. FULL PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND FORMAT FOR RESEARCH AWARDS

The full proposal must include the components described in Sections 1–12 below and using the forms and templates provided. Required forms and page limits are indicated below. Proposals containing items other than those described in the proposal instructions, missing required sections, exceeding the page limitations, or that do not address the research activities identified in this RFP may be returned without review.

Proposers must format their proposal in the following order and, as required, clearly label each section and subsection.

1. **Cover page** (fields to be filled out in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#)):
 - a. Award type
 - b. Project title
 - c. Lead PI name, title, phone number, email address, organization address
 - d. List any co-PIs, titles, phone numbers, email addresses, and organization addresses
 - e. Duration of project
 - f. Funding amount requested by year
 - g. IRB check
 - h. Federal agency affirmation that they are eligible to receive funds, if applicable
 - i. Identification of the topic area(s) and research activities being addressed
 - j. Up to six keywords describing the research and research discipline(s)
 - k. Signatures of the Lead PI and Lead Authorized Organizational Representative
2. **Project summary** (up to 2 pages and uploaded as a PDF): The project summary must be written in third person, be informative to people working in the same or related fields, and be understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader (i.e., avoid jargon). Provide a concise description of the project, including how the project relates to the identified research activities and supports implementation of the Coastal Master Plan. Specify project goals and objectives, the nature of the proposed research, and the potential scientific and societal impacts if funded.
3. **Project Description** (up to 15 pages, uploaded as a PDF): Narrative including tables and illustrations that describe goals, approach, outcomes, milestones, and qualifications of proposing team. Sections must include:
 - a. Relevance of the proposed research to the specific topic area(s) and research activities identified in Section 3.0 of this RFP.
 - b. Goal and objectives



- c. Approach, including, when applicable, field/laboratory methods and experimental design, availability of data, suitability of analytical/statistical tools, protection of human subjects, and use of vertebrate animals.
 - d. Outputs, including opportunities for training students, postdoctoral fellows, and/or junior researchers.
 - e. Relevance to the regular update and implementation of the Coastal Master Plan.
 - f. Timelines and milestones
 - g. Qualifications that demonstrate capabilities of project team for accomplishing proposed work including:
 - i. Summarize key research accomplishments for the lead PI and co-PIs that ensure the feasibility of the project and demonstrate the team's track record of similar research.
 - ii. Describe how student, postdoctoral, and junior researcher career mentoring will be ensured.
 - h. Data management—this section should address:
 - i. Data types, sample types, physical collections, coordinates, software, hardware, and any other materials or data to be used or produced over the course of the grant.
 - ii. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) procedure to ensure data integrity and account for variability and responsible parties.
 - iii. Details on short-term data management procedures, including plans and timelines for data back up to secure the data.
 - iv. Details on long-term data management procedures, including developing Iso metadata files, publishing and archiving machine-readable data with metadata files, samples, and other research products in corresponding regional or national data archives.
4. **Available facilities, equipment, and other resources** (up to 1 page, uploaded as a PDF): Provide a detailed description of resources that will be available or required to meet the research objectives (dedicated space, access to facilities and instrumentation, staff positions). The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Inclusion of personnel, facilities, equipment, vessels, experimental and standards materials, and other resources in the proposal is considered verification that all are available; evidence to the contrary may lead to return without review.
5. **Budget request:**
- a. Annual budgets (use required excel form): Must be created for the lead organization for each year covering all costs (including subawards) and one for the total of all years. For proposals that contain a subaward, each subaward must include a separate budget and budget justification of no more than 2 pages.



- b. **Budget justification** (up to 2 pages, uploaded as a PDF): Describe the annual award budget for each year of proposed research. The proposed budget should be consistent with the needs and complexity of the proposed research. LA-COE funds shall not be used for the acquisition or construction of equipment or physical infrastructure (including, but not limited to, computers, field and laboratory equipment, ships, vehicles, or laboratories). Allocated research funds must be clearly discernible and match with the budget as presented in the annual budget form, including line items for:
- i. **Senior personnel:** Name PI and co-PI of the lead organization and list salary by year, level of effort, and a brief description of their role in the project
 - ii. **Other personnel:** Name all other personnel of the lead organization and list salary by year, level of effort, and a brief description of their role in the project
 - iii. **Fringe benefits:** Total of fringe benefits by year
 - iv. **DOI cost considerations:** Costs that may accrue from making data publicly available with appropriate digital object identifiers
 - v. **Travel:** Include costs for participation in individual, in-person meetings annually where one PI presents to CPRA, LA-COE, and TPOCs, in addition to any other travel costs. Travel should include the purpose of the trip, the destination, the number of travelers, and the expenses per trip. RESTORE Act Terms and Conditions restrict use of funds from this award for travel outside the United States unless U.S. Department of Treasury provides prior written approval. If foreign travel is requested, a detailed justification must be included.
 - vi. **Other expenses:** Materials, supplies, publication costs, computer services, facility or other equipment rental costs should be listed and justified
 - vii. **Consultant services:** Must include the organization name, technical point of contact, total budget for each year, and a brief description of the role of the project
 - viii. **Subaward/contractual costs:** Must include the organization's technical point of contact name, the total budget for each year, and a brief description of the role on the project. All subawards must include a budget detail for the total budget (using the required form) and a budget justification (up to 2 pages) detailing costs per this section.
 - ix. **Indirect costs:** Indirect costs shall be no more than 26% of modified total direct costs. Administrative support should be provided from the indirect costs unless specific exceptions are requested, justified, and accepted through the subaward.
6. **References cited:** Follow the journal Science Citation Style for format of citations. This section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 15-page proposal narrative.
7. **Biosketches:** Biographical sketches (up to 2 pages each, using either the provided form or the standard NSF template available through SciENcv and uploaded as a PDF) for lead PI and co-PIs



8. **Current and pending support** (using the provided form or the standard NSF template available through SciENCv): Provide current and pending support information for the lead PI and co-PIs only. Include titles, status of support, source, primary place of performance, duration of the award, total award amount, and person months per year committed to the project.
9. **List of past and current collaborators, advisors, and advisees** (using the provided spreadsheet or the standard NSF template and uploaded as an Excel file): Provide one list that includes all collaborators, advisors, and advisees for each investigator (PI and co-PI [student, if identified]), complete with corresponding institutions or organizations. Submit only one combined and alphabetized list per application in an Excel spreadsheet using last name, first name, and organization for the column headings. The list should be alphabetized by last name. Collaborators are individuals who have participated in a project or publication within the last 48 months with any investigator, including co-authors on publications. Collaborators also include those persons with whom the investigators may have ongoing collaboration negotiations.

Advisees are people with whom the individual investigator has had an association as thesis or dissertation advisor or postdoctoral sponsors. Advisors include an individual's own graduate and postgraduate advisors. Unfunded participants in the proposed study should also be listed (but not their collaborators). This information is critical for identifying potential conflicts of interests and avoiding bias in the selection of reviewers.

10. **Optional statement on proprietary information and rules:** If proprietary or privileged information in connection with your response to the RFP is provided, clearly indicate the segments that cannot be made public and why. To the extent that any organization submitting a proposal in response to this RFP is restricted by law from agreeing to any applicable LA-COE rule or policy provision, the proposal shall indicate which provisions the PI's home organization objects to, as well as the specific legal basis for any such objection. Please upload this information in the Support Documentation section.
11. **List of permits required:** Describe the procedures to be used to obtain the permits in a timely manner. If no permits are required to conduct the proposed research, this should be stated.
12. **Letters of commitment:** Letters of commitment, with official authorized signatures, must be provided for each named collaborating organization expected to receive funds and/or contribute key personnel or make substantial contributions to the research.

The format of proposals responding to this RFP does not allow for letters of support or endorsement.

C.1 FORMAT

File format: Prior to submission, each applicant is encouraged to do their own administrative review to ensure that each proposal complies with the formatting guidelines noted below. Ensuring that all materials included in the application have been properly prepared is the applicant's responsibility. Following the full proposal deadline, the LA-COE will conduct an administrative review and if a proposal is deemed to violate the administrative guidelines, it will be returned without review. The proposal must include the required sections (1–12 above). **Proposals not collated with the required sections or in the proper order may be returned without review.**



Applicants are encouraged to seek, if needed, technical support in the creation of the required electronic file and to review the electronic file prior to submission. Discretion should be exercised in the resolution of figures. While color figures may be included, reviewers may print applications in black and white for review. Applicants may wish to annotate the figure legend directing the reader to the electronic file if color is an important aspect of the figure. Applicants must utilize the required forms available on the [LA-COE website](#). Forms will be posted no later than one week following the release of the RFP. The proposal must be submitted/uploaded as described in Appendix A.

Fonts and page layout: Adherence to type size, margins, and line spacing requirements is necessary to ensure that no applicant receives an unfair advantage. **Proposals not in compliance with the following guidelines may be returned without review:**

- Allowable typefaces include Arial or Times New Roman at a font size of 12 points or larger. A font size of 10 points may be used ONLY for mathematical formulas or equations, figure, table, or diagram captions and when using a symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters.
- No more than six lines of text within a vertical space of one inch (for single-spaced lines of 12-point font). While line spacing (single-spaced, double spaced, etc.) within this requirement is at the discretion of the applicant, established page limits must be followed.
- Margins, in all directions, must be at least one inch.
- All sections must use a standard, single-column format for the text.
- The use of landscape (i.e., sideways) page orientation is not allowed.

APPENDIX D. FAQs

Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the Request for Proposal Cycle. Please email any additional questions to la-coe@thewaterinstitute.org.

Q: Are there any no-cost extensions to be allowed for this RFP Cycle 3?

A: The student is expected to begin in the Fall 2024, at the same time as the Research Awards will begin. We understand that this may pose challenges for some. Thus, if the full proposal for the Graduate Assistantship is awarded, we will work with the PI on a case-by-case basis about the extension.

Q: Is it possible to have scientific advisors for the projects? People who are not co-PIs but would be a part of the project in an official capacity. If so, what documents would be needed from them (Biosketch, etc.)?

A: Yes, scientific advisors can be added to projects, and they should be listed as part of the team. The PI should make sure they include all the same required documents that a co-PI would need to submit (i.e., biosketch, current and pending support, list of collaborators, and a letter of commitment) and their role should be clearly defined in the proposal.

Q: Are company performers for federal work treated differently than universities? For all our federal work we follow FAR 15.403-4 (Certification of cost or pricing data), and this does not include a 26% IDC cap. Are we correct in assuming we can follow our typical approach for federal contracts to building personnel charge rates (as outlined in the DARPA costing requirements)?

A: The rates can be built up as you do for any federal work (salary+fringe+IDC). The indirect, however, is limited to 26% and not your standard federally negotiated rate. This project is funded by the U.S. Dept of Treasury, FAR 15.403-4 is not applicable under the terms of this award.

Q: The graduate Assistantship award stipulates “...minimal (less than \$10,000) research expenses to support a graduate student...” can be included in the budget. Does this mean \$10,000/year or \$10,000 for the full duration of the award (two years)?

A: This means \$10,000 for the duration of the award (two years). Therefore, the cumulative budget should have a maximum of \$10,000 for these categories under the “Other Expenses” and they include: Materials and Supplies, Publication Costs, Computer Services, and Facility/Equipment Rental, and Other.

Q: Will the standard and commercial personnel charge rates of a private sector company as lead awardee (rates that are accepted by CPRA under existing contracts) be accepted for the Research Grant work? Is the 26% IDC cap only applying to universities? If this is incorrect, we need more guidance in terms of what are considered direct costs under this award (i.e., other than fringe and travel). Can a subawardee charge its full commercial rates?

A: The rates to be used should also be the same rates that apply to any federal work. This work is funded by the U.S. Department of Treasury and not CPRA. Please refer to Appendix C, 5. Budget Request (page



18) instructions for more information. As listed in the RFP, “i. Senior Personnel: Name PI and co-PI of the lead organization and list salary by year, level of effort (person months), and a brief description of their role in the project. ii. Other Personnel: Name all other personnel of the lead organization and list salary by year, level of effort (person months), and a brief description of their role in the project. Iii. Fringe Benefits: Total of fringe benefits by year.”

26% IDC applies to everyone, not just universities. As listed in the RFP, “Indirect Costs: Indirect costs shall be no more than 26% of modified total direct costs. Administrative support should be provided from the indirect costs unless specific exceptions are requested and justified and accepted through the subaward.”

The items that fall under Direct Costs are listed in Appendix C, 5.b Budget Request (page 18).

Subawards should follow the same budget guidelines as the lead, refer to answer 1 above. As listed in the RFP, Appendix C, 5.a. Budget Request (page 18) “For proposals that contain a subaward(s), each subaward must include a separate budget & budget justification of no more than 2 pages for each subaward with a co-PI identified for all said subawards.”

Q: If we work with a federal lab or federal agency as a lower-tier sub, does this paragraph in RFP3 that “Interagency transfers from U.S. Department of Treasury are not supported; awards are to be made by LA-COE” mean that the subaward to the federal agency/lab will be issued by the Institute directly without involving the awarded academic institution?

A: If the academic institution will be listed as a subrecipient on a proposal being submitted by a federal agency as the lead, that federal agency is responsible for contracting with the academic institution. If the academic institution is including a federal agency on their proposal as a subrecipient, that institution will be responsible for contracting with that agency, pending Treasury prior written approval. Either way, Treasury approval will be needed for any federal agency. LA-COE will issue all awards to LA-COE recipients only. The Department of Treasury will not issue an interagency transfer. Note: This program is different as the federal agency must have prior approval before LA-COE will issue an award.

Q: Will you all be culling the submissions of the LOIs, or will everyone who put in a LOI be eligible to submit the full proposals?

A: LA-COE is planning to release the reviews of the LOIs by 3/18/2024. A notification email about LOI feedback will be sent to all the PIs and the LA-COE website will be updated with the new deadline for submitting full proposals.

Q: Can collaborators be added later to the full proposal who were not included initially on the LOI?

A: Yes, collaborators can be added later to a full proposal if the team is invited to submit a full proposal.

Q: Can a private company serve as lead on a project, or does it have to be a university or government agency?



A: Yes, a private company can serve as lead on a project. Please refer to RFP Section 4.1: Eligibility (page 9) that includes, “Academic institutions, private firms, non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies are all eligible for various categories of awards. Federal agencies are eligible to apply and participate on other proposals; however, each federal agency must determine in advance of submitting a proposal whether their agency rules allow them to participate in this program and receive funding.”

Q: I understand that the LOI narrative should not identify researchers/institutions. Are references allowed/expected in the narrative?

A: No, references are not expected in the narrative. Please refer to RFP Section 6.0: Letters of Intent Submission Information. The narrative must include three components, including, “a. Statement of the issue the proposal plans to address and its relevance to the research activities identified in Section 3.0 of the RFP, b. Brief summary of methods and approach to be used, and c. Brief summary of how the findings and outputs of the project can support the implementation of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan.”

Q: Must Graduate Assistantship proposals also match at least one of the 19 listed research topics? Or can they address other questions or research needs relevant to CPRA / LA-COE coastal restoration activities but not explicitly listed in RFP3?

*A: Yes, Graduate Assistantship Award proposals must match at least one of 19 listed research activities (Note: Research activity 19 allows for research activities that address the overarching topics listed in the LA-COE Research Needs document). Please refer to RFP: Section 2.1 Types of Awards and Funding Levels that “Graduate Assistantships: These awards provide funds for full-time graduate student stipends, tuition, and minimal (less than \$10,000) research expenses to support a graduate student (master’s or Ph.D.) at a Louisiana college/university for up to two years **to undertake research in an area identified in Section 3.0: Research Topics**”. Please also read Section 6: Letters of Intent Submission Information (page 7) that includes, “Cover page including (fill out fields in the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](#)): a. Award Type b. Tentative project title c. Lead PI Name(s), Title, phone number(s), email address(s), and organization(s) address d. List any Co-PI’s, Name(s), Title, phone number(s), email address(s), and organization(s) address e. Duration of project f. Approximate cost of the project (annual budget amount per year) **g. Identification of the research activities (at least one out of 19) being addressed (select all that apply)** h. Up to six keywords describing the research and research discipline(s).”*

Q: For the graduate assistantships: Are co-PIs allowed (e.g., other faculty) when appropriate for multidisciplinary research?

A: Yes, a co-PI is allowed for the Graduate Assistantship Award. Please note that the Principal Investigator (PI) on the proposal must be a full-time employee of a Louisiana college/university (see page 1 of the RFP document).

Q: Are researchers working in foreign universities eligible to participate as Co-PI?



A: Yes, researchers working in foreign universities are eligible to participate as co-PI. Please note that the co-PI from a foreign university will need to comply with all applicable terms and conditions. Please review RFP Section 4.0: Funding Instruments which explains: “The lead PI’s organization shall execute the grant agreement and shall execute lower-tier subaward agreements with co-PIs. All lower tier subawards shall incorporate all applicable terms and conditions.”

Q: Can an individual investigator lead one proposal submission for each category (Graduate Assistantships and Research Awards) or only one overall (Graduate Assistantships or Research Awards)?

A: An individual investigator can only lead one proposal overall. You can only select one category not both. Please refer to the RFP document (page i) which states: “An individual investigator may only lead one proposal submission but may participate in others. For complete information regarding eligibility see Section 4.1: Eligibility.”

Q: If you are from the USGS (Lower Mississippi-Gulf Water Science Center), do you have to be located in the Louisiana office to be PI?

A: Yes, you have to be located in a Louisiana office to be a PI. As documented in RFP Section 2.1 (page 2): “The PI on each proposal must be a full-time employee of a Louisiana organization/institution. Other participants may be from any organization or institution within or outside Louisiana. If the PI moves to another institution outside the state of Louisiana, a co-PI will need to be identified as the new PI. A Letter of Intent is required in advance of full proposal submission.”

Please note that if PI is from the Baton Rouge, LA office of the USGS Lower Mississippi-Gulf Water Science Center they are eligible. If the PI is from offices that are outside Louisiana (e.g., Jackson, MS), they are not eligible.

Q: Can we seek funding for two students on the same proposal? Or is the money meant to support a PI for a summer month, lab equipment, and travel for the Assistantships?

A: No, Graduate Assistantships will only be made available to support one full-time graduate student per award conducting relevant research at Louisiana college/universities. Also, the RFP document (page 2) states, “These levels will be adjusted if the meritorious proposals submitted in each category do not total the designated amount. Cost sharing or matching is not required for LA-COE awards.”

Money cannot be used to support a PI for a summer month, lab equipment or travel. Research expenses (less than \$10,000) are allowed to only support a graduate student and their research needs. Please refer to the RFP, Section 2.1: Types of Awards and Funding Levels (page 1) that lists details of Graduate Assistantships.

Q: Is the lead PI the only eligible to submit the LOI?

A: The PI is responsible for submitting all the required documents for LOI submission in our submission portal (<https://laco.e.smapply.io/>). However, a co-PI or collaborator can obtain ownership of the application. Per SurveyMonkey Apply, “When a submission is created it is linked to the profile of the user



who created it. However, in some cases, it may be necessary to change the owner of an application such as when the user has multiple accounts, if the application is managed by a team and the ownership must be changed, or if an organization is completing an application and the creator leaves the organization." If an Authorized Official Representative needs to approve proposal submissions, they can be added as a collaborator to allow for their approval/sign off on the proposal.

Q: Do you expect to fund each of the research needs listed in RFP?

A: We do not have any pre-defined expectations on the number awards per topical area. From the RFP document (page 9), please review RFP Section 8.2.1: Graduate Assistantship Award and Research Award Proposals that includes Table 1. Evaluation criteria for full proposals (page 9). A suite of criteria will be considered when making funding decisions.

Q: If our research team is interested in working toward a diverse combination of Activities that are all related to a certain geography, do you see that as combination or separate proposals?

*A: Please refer to RFP Section 2.1 (page 1): "Interorganizational proposals, including partnerships with academia, federal, state, private, or non-profit organizations, are strongly encouraged. Collaboration among organizations and disciplines to **address cross-disciplinary research** needs is also encouraged." LA-COE encourages cross-disciplinary research, thus, proposed research with a diverse combination, such as for research activities 7, 8, and 17, will be encouraged.*

Q: Are there directions for the Letter of Intent available at this time?

A: The Request for Proposal – Cycle 3 (RFP3) was released on January 25, 2024 and is available to view and download at this [link](#).

Please refer to Section 6: Letters of Intent Submission Information, and Appendix A in the RFP document to prepare your LOI submission.

Q: Can Graduate Assistantship Awards be used to support graduate students outside of Louisiana?

A: Graduate Assistantship Awards are only available to full-time students who are currently enrolled or who will be enrolled at a Louisiana college or university for the duration of the Award.

Q: Does the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) count as a college/university, and can a researcher at LUMCON be a lead PI on a Research Award?

A: Yes, LUMCON is considered a Louisiana college or university. Full-time employees at LUMCON are eligible to be lead PI on Research Awards.

Q: Given the MTDC definition in 2CFR200, are subrecipients only allowed the 26% indirect rate on the first \$25,000 of the subaward, and subsequently not allowed an indirect rate on costs above \$25,000?



A: The MTDC calculation means that indirect costs can be charged at 26% of the total grant budget (e.g., personnel, supplies, travel, etc.) and then only on the first \$25,000 of each subaward that will be made by the lead institution (in addition to other exclusions as noted in 2 CFR 200).

Q: Is overhead capped at 26% of MTDC for federal agencies?

A: Yes, indirect costs will be no more than 26% of modified total direct costs. Administrative support should be provided from the indirect costs unless specific exceptions are requested and justified and accepted through the subaward.

Q: Can an individual submit multiple Letters of Intent and full proposals as lead PI?

*A: No, an individual is only eligible if they submit **one Letter of Intent** as lead PI.*

Q: Can an individual submit multiple proposals as a Co-PI?

A: Yes, an individual can be listed on multiple Letters of Intent and proposals as a Co-PI. There is no limit on the number of Letters of Intent and full proposals an individual can participate as a Co-PI.

Q: Is an agency considered a recipient or a sub-recipient if that agency is the only agency listed in the Letter of Intent?

A: For the purposes of issuing an Award agreement and the flow down of federal funds, all awardees are considered subrecipients of the LA-COE. If the agency has partners on the proposal, those partners would be lower tier subrecipients to the agency.



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