National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative

2022 - 2023 Capacity Building Funding Guidance

Guidance Updated: March 9, 2022

Important notes about this funding opportunity:
- Each reserve has the opportunity to receive a one-time Capacity Building award for up to $10,000 between 2020 and 2023. Reserves must submit an application but this is not a competitive process.
- Applications are no longer being accepted on a rolling basis and will instead be reviewed annually every April. The next deadline to submit an application is April 1, 2022 and the last deadline is April 1, 2023. Applications will be reviewed in April, and the Science Collaborative team will reach out in May with any questions prior to making the award.
- Capacity building activities should occur within a 12-month period.
- These funds may be useful in addressing capacity needs related to increased virtual engagement with partners, so long as the activities fall within an effort that leads to the development of a collaborative research or catalyst proposal.
- These funds are dispersed as either a contract ($10,000) or one-time reimbursement (up to $9,995) after activities are complete. An important distinction between these options is that indirect costs may NOT be applied to reimbursable funding.

Overview

Developing collaborative, end user-driven proposals requires coordination and significant investment in time and resources. Science Collaborative Capacity Building funding is intended to help ease that resource burden and enhance reserves' capacity to develop and submit high-quality Collaborative Research and Catalyst proposals in response to our funding opportunities.

This funding may be applied to a number of eligible activities related to proposal development to allow reserves to tailor the work to meet their individual needs. This opportunity is intended for capacity building activities up to one year in duration. A reserve may submit an individual application or partner with one or more reserves to submit a joint application.

Funding Amount

Each reserve has the opportunity to receive a one-time Capacity Building award for up to $10,000 between 2020 and 2023.

Reserves may opt to participate in capacity building activities by pooling resources with other reserves such that the total award amount exceeds $10,000. They may also use portions of their allocation for multiple efforts, but the total for each reserve may not exceed $10,000.

Eligibility for Funding

This funding opportunity is open to reserve staff working in partnership (as appropriate) with applicants from United States academic, state and local governmental, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Federal agencies are not eligible for support under this opportunity.

Each application must designate a fiduciary institution and a fiscal lead[1] that will receive and manage the award. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. cannot serve as the fiscal lead but are eligible to receive funds. Federal employees and agencies are not eligible to receive funding from the Science Collaborative, but may participate as unfunded team members.

Application Process & Timeline

Reserves must submit an application but this is not a competitive process. Applications will be reviewed internally to ensure plans align with program guidelines.

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[1] In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead. The contract will be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they will have ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed.

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Applicants should review this funding guidance and follow the directions to submit an application. Applications should include a three-page (maximum) narrative that describes the need and proposed activities, outputs and outcomes, and team members, in addition to required appendices for budget and timeline. Applications must be submitted through an online form accessible through the Science Collaborative website.

Applications are no longer being accepted on a rolling basis and will instead be reviewed annually every April. The next deadline to submit an application is April 1, 2022 and the last deadline is April 1, 2023 for the current round of Science Collaborative funding. Applications will be reviewed in April, and funding decisions made in May.

Key Dates for Capacity Building Funds	
Date	Activity
April 1, 2022	2022 Applications Due
May 2022	2022 Response from Science Collaborative
April 1, 2023	2023 Applications Due
May 2023	2023 Funding notifications

About Capacity Building Funds

Eligible Activities

This funding may be applied to a number of eligible activities related to the development of a proposal.

Examples of eligible activities and expenses include, but are not limited to:
- *Personnel time* – for example, supporting staff time to coordinate and facilitate workshops or meetings with end users and researchers to elicit and advance collaborative research ideas;
- *Hiring subcontractors* – for example, consultants to provide training or facilitate workshops and meetings, or supplementing staff expertise through external contractors;
- *Training* – for example, collaboration, facilitation, or proposal development training;
- *Convening partners* – travel and meeting expenses including food, meeting space rental, and supplies related to the convening of potential proposal collaborators;
- *Expenses associated with increasing capacity to work with partners remotely* – for example, webcams, microphones, web collaboration software licenses, or other related supplies that cost less than $5,000 per item;
- *Preliminary data analyses or literature reviews* – for example, using existing samples or data to develop pilot analyses or visualizations, or synthesizing background information that would inform and strengthen a proposal; and
- *Conducting a needs assessment or planning exercise* – for example, a structured needs assessment process could be designed to elicit and explore research opportunities that are responsive to the needs of end user partners.

Capacity Building funds CANNOT be used for:
- Data collection, except for the purposes of a needs assessment;
- Equipment purchases over $5,000; or
- Professional proposal writing services.

A reserve may choose to dedicate the entirety of the funds to develop one or more Research and/or Catalyst proposals to the Science Collaborative.

The work may explore a Science Transfer component but this opportunity is not intended to support the development of Science Transfer proposals alone.

Cross-reserve capacity building activities are eligible and encouraged. In such cases, each reserve involved should contribute to the development of a joint proposal.

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Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes

Eligible efforts **must**:
- Demonstrate responsiveness to reserve capacity needs as they relate to collaborative science proposal development; and
- Support the scoping and/or development of a user-driven Science Collaborative Research and/or Catalyst proposal(s) that meets reserve management needs.

Outputs of capacity building efforts **must** include the following:
- A framework for developing a Science Collaborative Research and/or Catalyst proposal(s); and
- A final report summarizing how the funds increased the capacity of the reserve to develop a Science Collaborative proposal, and any other related accomplishments.

Examples of desired outcomes resulting from capacity building activities include, but are not limited to, the following:
- The reserve is better positioned and prepared to submit a needs-based, competitive Science Collaborative proposal;
- Existing relationships among the reserve(s) and their partners, including end users, are strengthened as a result of purposeful and deliberate engagement; and
- New relationships are developed between reserve staff and potential collaborators, including end users.

Receiving Funds

The applicant must request to receive Capacity Building funds in **one** of the following ways:

1. **Contract**: In this case, the fiscal lead[2] for the Capacity Building grant will enter into a contractual agreement with the University of Michigan; the fiduciary institution may submit monthly invoices for approved expenses throughout the duration of the grant. The fiduciary institution may choose to charge indirect charges in the grant budget.

2. **Reimbursement**: In this case, the Science Collaborative will issue a one-time reimbursement to the reserve or the identified fiduciary institution for approved expenses. Reimbursements will only be made to organizations or agencies, not individuals, and will only be made after all approved expenses have been incurred

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[2] In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as the project lead. The contract would be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they would have ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed.

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and a detailed invoice is presented to the Science Collaborative. The Science Collaborative can only reimburse up to $9,995 in expenses.[3] Indirect charges may NOT be applied to reimbursable funding.

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[3] This is a contracting threshold set by third-party administrators.

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Application Requirements

To apply for Capacity Building funding, reserves must submit an application to the NERRS Science Collaborative. Applications must be submitted online at graham.umich.edu/application-request/12387.

To submit your application, go to the application page and click "Apply". Once you have logged in,[4] you will need to complete an online form and upload a PDF of your application. Budget tables should be submitted as an Excel file and also included as an appendix within the application PDF. Your application will be submitted once you hit "save." You will receive a confirmation email when you have successfully saved/submitted your application. If you do not receive a confirmation email, your application was not saved properly and you should resave or contact us directly at NERRS-info@umich.edu

To be considered for funding in 2022, applications are due April 1, 2022. To be considered for funding in 2023, applications are due April 1, 2023.

Applications must be provided as a single PDF file that includes the following:

Title page

1) <u>Title of Capacity Building Effort</u>

2) <u>Project Lead / Fiscal Lead</u>* (primary contact for the effort)

    a) Title / Position

    b) Institution

    c) Telephone Number

    d) Postal Mailing Address

    e) E-mail Address

*In most cases, the project lead is also the fiscal lead. However, recognizing that reserves sometimes work with Friend Groups who serve as fiduciary organizations, there may be instances where the project lead is not employed by the institution that will receive and manage the grant. In these cases, a project team member from the fiduciary institution must serve as lead, and should be listed here. The contract would be issued to the fiduciary organization under the responsibility/authority of this individual and they would have ultimate

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[4] You will need a U-M Account or Friend Account to start an application. You will be prompted to log in or create an account when you access the application page.

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responsibility of ensuring that the proposed scope of work is completed. In these cases, the project lead should be listed under "Additional Team Members" below.

3) Additional Team Members (anyone receiving resources or contributing significant resources to the proposed activities) – Name, institution, telephone, email, and role in capacity building effort.

4) Fiduciary Information – Indicate the institution that would receive and manage the grant contract or submit the one-time reimbursement request. Please provide a point of contact, including email address, to receive fiscal questions. The fiduciary institution is responsible for managing any project subcontracts, tracking grant-related spending, and submitting invoices to the University of Michigan for reimbursement on behalf of the grant.

5) Name of Reserve(s) – Identify the reserve or reserves partnering in this capacity building effort.

6) Funding Mechanism – Indicate if you are applying for contractual funding or reimbursable funding.

7) Budget Request – Requested dollar amount. The total budget may not exceed $10,000/reserve for contractual funding and $9,995/reserve for reimbursable funding.

8) Duration – Indicate start and end dates. Capacity Building efforts may start as early as June 2022/2023 and must end no later than 12 months after the start date. When determining the start date for contract applications, please anticipate receiving contract award details approximately 6 weeks after notice of approval of your application.

Narrative (Up to 3 pages)

Organize your narrative using the following headers:

1) Scope of Work – Describe the capacity need and proposed activities that will address this need. Clearly explain how the activities better position the reserve to submit a user-driven collaborative research and/or catalyst proposal(s) to the Science Collaborative that meets reserve management needs.

2) Outputs (specific products to be developed with the funds) – Describe the planned outputs; outputs must include, but are not limited to, a framework for developing a Science Collaborative proposal(s) and final report.

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3) <u>Desired Outcomes</u> (consequences of the proposed activities) – Describe the desired outcomes resulting from the proposed activities.

4) <u>Team Members</u> – Provide a list of team members and their roles.

Appendices:

I.   <u>Timeline</u> – Using the <u>timeline template</u>, provide the following:

    A. Start and end dates of the proposed activities. When determining the start date for contract applications, please anticipate receiving contract award details approximately 6 weeks after notice of approval of your application.

    B. A schedule with key activities and tasks that will help document progress and the development and completion of outputs.

II. <u>Budget & Budget Narrative</u>

    A. Budget: Use the <u>budget template</u> provided on the application page to give an itemized estimate of all costs. The total budget may not exceed $10,000/reserve for contractual funding and $9,995/reserve for reimbursable funding. Budget tables should be submitted as an excel file and also included as an appendix within the application PDF.

    B. Budget Narrative - Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Please note the following:

        1. Eligible expenses include personnel time, travel, meeting space rental, meeting supply purchase, web collaboration software licenses, and other expenses related to the convening of the collaborative team. Capacity Building funds may not be used to purchase equipment greater than $5,000.

        2. Personnel costs shall be broken out by team member, including number of months and percentage of time requested.

        3. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination, and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person. Domestic and foreign travel should be itemized separately. Foreign travel must comply with the Fly America Act which limits the use of foreign flag carriers. For more information, go to http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191.

        4. Indirect costs may not be applied to reimbursable funding.

        5. For contract proposals only:

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a) Overhead may be charged up to the fiduciary institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Applicants should include a copy of their indirect agreement, if they have one, as part of the application PDF. If an institution does not have a federally negotiated indirect rate, they must use the *de minimis* rate of 10%, or a lower rate.

b) If applicable, a separate budget and budget narrative are required for any partner organizations that are receiving any portion of the Capacity Building funds through a subcontract.

c) The fiduciary institution must provide a fiscal letter of commitment approving the proposal submission, including approval of any subcontracts included in the proposal. A letter of commitment is also required from each subcontracting institution. There is no standard form for this letter.

III.   <u>Reserve Manager Support</u> – If the lead is someone other than a reserve manager, applications must include a signed statement of support from the relevant reserve manager. If more than one reserve will participate in capacity building activities, each reserve manager must submit a letter of support.

Application Review Process

Applications will be reviewed internally by Science Collaborative staff and the NOAA Program Officer. If necessary, the Science Collaborative will contact applicants with any clarifying questions and work with them to refine the approach before funding is granted. We expect to contact applicants in May 2022/2023.

Contractual grants:

Once approved for funding, the Science Collaborative will immediately initiate the contracting process. This process takes approximately 4-6 weeks; however, the reserve may begin incurring approved expenses on the start date, if the fiduciary institution allows.

Reimbursable grants:

Once approved for funding, the reserve may begin expending funds for the approved capacity building activities. However, the reserve or designated fiscal agent may only request reimbursement after all approved expenses have been incurred. Instructions for requesting reimbursement will be provided with the award notification.

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Questions regarding this funding guidance?

Email: Written questions regarding this funding opportunity should be submitted to nerrs-info@umich.edu.

Phone: You may also direct questions to Nick Soberal (734-763-0034) and Maeghan Brass (734-763-0727).

Website: More information about the NERRS Science Collaborative can be found at www.nerrssciencecollaborative.org.

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