

Informational Webinar

2025 Delta Science Fellowship Program

May 22nd, 2024 | 10:30am



Delta
Science
Program

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The information in this presentation is accurate as of May 22nd, 2024. However, the timeline and details of the 2025 Delta Science Fellows Request for Applications (RFA) contained herein are subject to change. Any updates to the timeline or the RFA will be listed on the California Sea Grant website:

<https://caseagrants.ucsd.edu/funding/2025-delta-science-fellowship>

We urge potential applicants to refer to the RFA itself when preparing applications and not solely rely on the information in this presentation.

Introductions



**Delta
Science
Program**

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Delanie Medina
Fellowship Program
Coordinator

Lian Guo
Research Coordinator

George Isaac
Delta Senior Environmental Scientist

Maggie Christman
Delta Program
Manager

Webinar Objectives

- To describe the purposes and management needs for the Delta Science Fellowship Program
- Review important application components of the 2025 RFA
- Provide application tips and answer questions that potential applicants have





Webinar Guidelines

- Please ask questions by using the Q&A function found at the bottom of the Zoom screen
- Please reserve very specific questions (relevant to your project only) for email to *sgproposal@ucsd.edu*
- Recording and PDF of slides will be made available on California Sea Grant website

California Sea Grant



- Federal – State Partnership, network of 34 programs
- Authorized by the National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966
- **Mission:** To provide the information, tools, training and relationships needed to help California conserve and sustainably prosper from our coastal and marine environments.



Delta Stewardship Council

- Independent State agency created by the Delta Reform Act of 2009
- Responsible for developing the Delta Plan
- **Mission:** to advance the state's coequal goals for the Delta - achievement of a more reliable statewide water supply and a healthy and protected ecosystem, both in a manner that protects and enhances the unique characteristics of the Delta as an evolving place

Delta Science Program

Mission statement

To provide the best possible scientific information for water and environmental decision making in the Bay-Delta system. That mission shall be carried out through funding research, synthesizing and communicating scientific information to policy-makers and decision-makers, promoting independent scientific peer review, and coordinating with Delta agencies to promote science-based adaptive management.

Delta Science Plan

Lays the foundation for achieving a shared vision for Delta Science: 'One Delta, One Science' - an open Delta science community that works collaboratively to build a shared body of scientific knowledge to inform future water and environmental decisions



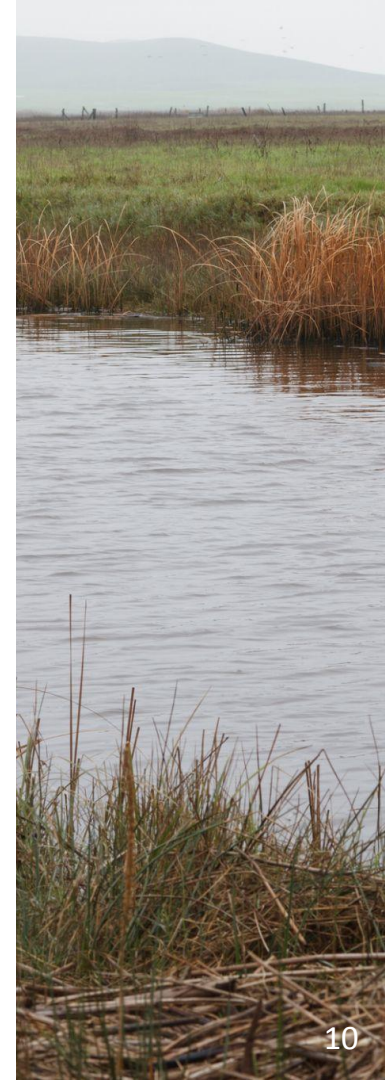


Delta Science Fellowship Program

- **Purpose:** to train the next generation of science leaders in the Delta by bringing together fellows with research mentors and community mentors in collaborative research, data analysis, and synthesis projects relevant to Delta policy and management
- **Provides:** up to two years of support (monthly stipend, research/education related expenses) based on scope/type of projects and contingent upon the availability of funds, for postdoctoral, Ph.D., and master's fellows.
- This will be the 14th Delta Science Fellowship cohort
- Many Delta Science Fellows have ended up working at the Delta Stewardship Council and for several state and federal agencies.

Delta Science Fellowship Goals

1. Engage highly qualified scientific talent to help advance the state of knowledge in social and biophysical science on high priority Management Needs and Science Actions identified by the Science Action Agenda (SAA).
2. Provide support for the training and development of social and biophysical scientists to work on research projects that support resource management in the Delta and contribute to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in Delta science; and
3. Promote scientific partnerships across research institutions, agencies, non-profit organizations, Delta communities, and multiple disciplines.



2025 SAA Management Needs

Based on the **2022-2026 Science Action Agenda (SAA)**, a four-year multidisciplinary science agenda for the Delta that prioritizes and aligns science actions to respond to relevant management questions and inform management decisions:



1. **Improve coordination and integration of large-scale experiments, data collection, and evaluation across regions and institutions**
2. **Enhance monitoring and model interoperability, integration, and forecasting**
3. **Expand multi-benefit approaches to managing the Delta as a social-ecological system**
4. **Build and integrate knowledge on social process and behavior of Delta communities and residents to support effective and equitable management**
5. **Acquire new knowledge and synthesize existing knowledge of interacting stressors to support species recovery**
6. **Assess and anticipate climate change impacts to support successful adaptation strategies**



Eligibility

- **Postdoctoral fellowship:**
 - Completed a Ph.D. before the starting date of the fellowship.
 - Degree must be from a program in a related field appropriate for disciplines
- **PhD/Master's fellowship:**
 - Been enrolled or recently admitted to a Ph.D./Masters degree program in related field at any accredited U.S. institution of higher education.
- Proposed fellowship projects are not required to be physically located within the Delta; however, project activities must provide a demonstrable benefit(s) to the Delta and address the priority research topics identified in the 2022-2026 SAA

California Sea Grant and the Delta Science Program are committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with unique knowledge, backgrounds, life experiences, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking.

2025 Fellowship Awards

- The Delta Science Program and partner organizations are expected to sponsor a total of approximately 5 fellows across multiple disciplinary areas for up to 2 years of support.
- Postdoctoral Fellowship
 - Up to 2 years of support (max: \$110,522/year)
 - \$66,868/yr in stipend (not paid as salaries, wages & benefits)
 - \$15,000/yr for research/education (supplies, equipment, travel, health benefits) + 35% indirect cost (IDC) on R&E costs
- PhD/Master's Fellowship
 - Up to 2 years of support (max: \$94,500/year)
 - \$45,000/yr in stipend (not paid as salaries, wages & benefits)
 - \$25,000/yr for research/education (supplies, equipment, travel, health benefits) + 35% IDC on R&E costs





Fellowship Project Deliverables

- Submit a formal mentoring plan within one month after funds are awarded
- Participation in Early Career Leadership Workshop (if offered)
- Presentations or briefings during Delta Stewardship Council Meetings
- Oral or poster presentation at Bay-Delta Science Conference and/or State of the Estuary Conference. (Encouraged to present research at other national and international professional meetings)
- Publish results from this fellowship in peer-reviewed, open-access journals (e.g., *San Francisco Estuary & Watershed Science*)
- Annual progress reports and final completion report
- Adding to and maintaining projects on the [Delta Science Tracker](#)

Delta Science Tracker

A comprehensive tool to track and summarize science activities





Questions?



Notice of Intent to Submit Form

Due June 24th, 2024 by 5:00PM PT

- Required in order to submit a full application
- Not evaluated, but assists in identifying appropriate reviewers
- Provide applicant's names, contact information, tentative project title and description, research mentor name and affiliation, community mentor(s) (if identified), and review track (social science, biophysical science, or co-review)

Technical Review Panels

**Biophysical
Track**

**Social
Science
Track**

Co-Review

Application Components

Due August 26th, 2024, 5:00PM PT to eSeaGrant*

NOI required in order to submit a full application!

Application Component	Sections	Page Limit
Signed Title Page		N/A
Project Summary		1 page
Project Narrative	Proposed Research	12 pages
	Management Needs	1 page
	Personal Statement	2 pages
	CVs	2 pages each
Budget & Justification		
Letters of Support	Community Member	2 pages
	Research Mentor	2 pages
2 Letters of Academic Recommendation		N/A
Transcripts (Undergraduate/Graduate)		





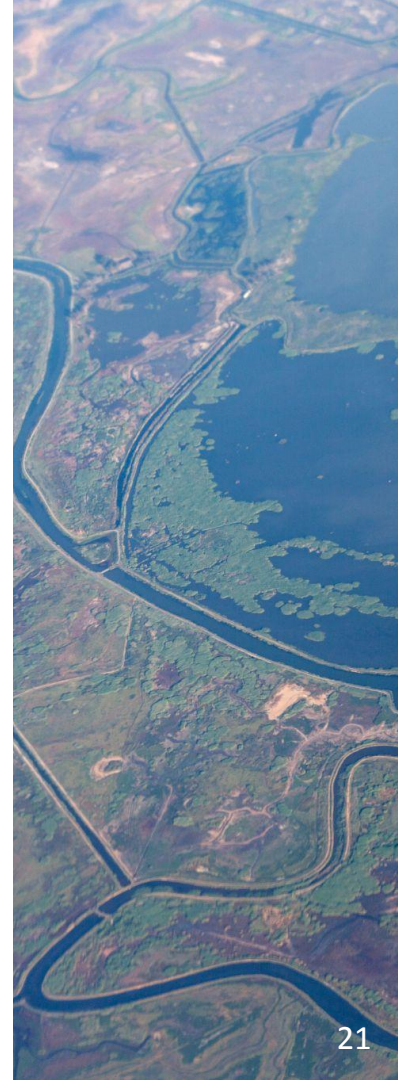
Signed Title Page

- Provide summary information
- **Approval signatures** from the fellow, mentor/principal investigator, and authorized institutional representative
- Provide information about animal subjects and recombinant DNA technology/research

Project Summary

(1-page limit, using 12-pt font and 1" margins)

- Brief sections for objectives, methodology and rationale (referring to relevance to high priority Delta Science Actions)
- Concise description of the proposed research in a form useful for a variety of purposes such as informational websites and outreach products
 - *Should be clear, compelling, and engaging*
- The project summary is the most widely consulted description of your project
 - *Write it last!*



Project Narrative

- **Proposed Research** (12-page limit, 12-pt font, 1” margins, not including literature citation)
- **Management Needs and Science Actions:** (1-pg limit) Explain which overarching Management Need and specific Science Action within it are most related to the project and how the proposed work will address them.
- **Personal Statement:** (2-pg limit) How does this project fit into the fellow’s career plans and summarize experiences that specifically prepared the applicant for this project. How does this project promote interactions with your research and community mentors that will benefit your professional development?
- **CVs:** (2-page limit for each CV) From the fellowship applicant, research mentor(s), and community mentor(s).



Budget & Budget Justification

- Once you are provided access to the full proposal in eSeaGrant, you will use a budget spreadsheet to plan your budget with your mentor and academic institution
- Final budget submission and justification must be submitted via eSeaGrant
- Carefully review budget instructions in the RFA and eSeaGrant
 - Pay attention to annual budget limits
 - Research-related costs and benefits are subject to 35% indirect cost rate
 - Justifications should explain all budget items in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the research-related funds being requested.
- **Budget questions?** Email sgproposal@ucsd.edu

Letters and Transcripts

- **Letters of support from mentors:** (2-page limit each) Indicate willingness to be a mentor, support for research project, and brief description of plan for mentorship.
 - Research mentor
 - Community mentor
- **Two letters of academic recommendation:** (2-page limit each) Should address the academic qualifications and performance of the candidate.
 - One can come from research mentor but should not duplicate material from letter of support
 - Must be submitted directly to eSeaGrant
- **Copies of transcripts** (undergraduate, graduate)
 - Unofficial are OK!



Evaluation Process

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Weight
The quality of the research proposal, including appropriateness of the approach to be used.	25%
The strength of academic performance and relevant academic achievement, experience, and the quality of applicant's career goal statement.	20%
The importance of the proposed research to the priority topics identified.	25%
The research mentor's demonstrated abilities in the general area of methodology and/or questions addressed by the proposal.	10%
The expected quality and strength of interaction that will be developed between the fellow and their research and community mentor(s).	10%
The degree to which the proposed activity will achieve beneficial, broader societally-relevant impacts. Societally-relevant outcomes that the Delta Science Program and California Sea Grant value include, but are not limited to the following: advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion in Delta science; curriculum enhancement and educator training at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science; enhanced equitability of public access to information and resources; increased partnerships between academia, communities, industry, and others; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education	10%



Evaluation and Selection Process

- **Full Applications are due August 26th, 2024 by 5:00PM PT**
- Biophysical and Social Science Review Panelists will be selected by California Sea Grant and Delta Science Program
 - Outside, independent expert reviewers from relevant disciplines, Delta Science Program leadership, and California Sea Grant leadership
 - Review of all applications using evaluation criteria
 - Recommend finalists for funding
 - Final decisions made by Delta Lead Scientist

Timetable

June 24, 2024 (5:00PM PT) - Notice of Intent form due

August 26, 2024 (5:00PM PT) - Applications due to California Sea Grant College Program via eSeaGrant online submission portal

November 2024 (approximate) - Applicants notified of selection results

Feb 2025 (approximate) – Start date: Funds awarded to the selected Delta Science Masters, Ph.D. and postdoctoral fellows

Jan 2027 (approximate) – 2-year fellowship awards end. 1-year fellowships will also be considered (ending Jan 2026).

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE CONSTRAINTS INHERENT TO THE FUNDING SOURCE, NO TIME EXTENSIONS BEYOND DATES SPECIFIED IN THE AWARD WILL BE POSSIBLE.



Questions?



Application Tips

- Meet all deadlines, exceptions will not be granted
- Read all application instructions carefully; make sure you are answering the questions and meeting the evaluation criteria
- Clear and engaging proposals stand out in reviewer's minds! Make sure you accomplish that, especially in the project summary/introduction.
- Assume that you are writing for a reviewer in a somewhat related field, rather than for an expert directly in your area.
- Utilize the Delta Science Tracker for identifying community mentors
- Refer to the SAA when developing your application components

Common Errors

- Proposal is too ambitious... promises too much for too little money and/or time, unrealistic
- There are no testable hypotheses (a proposal that is primarily descriptive is less favorably received)
- Proposal is fragmented and disjointed; different parts were obviously written by different colleagues and hastily assembled by the applicant
- Not enough detail or unclear research methods
- Proposal does not “fit” with the purpose of the RFA or address priority topic areas
- Proposal does not mention or make connections to the Delta





Common Errors Continued

- Introduction too long
- Plan of work and research methods too short and too vague; inadequate details to determine likelihood of success
- Inadequate expertise within the partnership
- Broader impacts to Delta policies and/or management are missing
- Role of mentors in providing mentorship and professional development is not described
- Necessary permits not described

Point of Contacts



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For full details:

<https://caseagrant.ucsd.edu/funding/2025-delta-science-fellowship>





Thank You!