

North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund Request for Proposals Issued June 13, 2024

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission Commercial Resource Fund Committee and the Funding Committee for the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund are issuing a request for proposals for consideration of funding from the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund.

The Commercial Fishing Resource Fund is composed of a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the commercial fishing licenses issued by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF). The N.C. General Assembly created the fund to support the development of sustainable commercial fishing in the State.

This RFP is based on the priorities established in the Strategic Plan for the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund. The Strategic Plan can be referenced [here](#).

Eligibility

This Request for Proposal is open to both public and private entities and is subject to the State's terms and conditions of contracting. Interested parties must submit a complete proposal, meeting the requirements listed below. Partnerships between eligible entities are permitted. The proposal must include a letter defining the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The NCDMF has no obligation to enter into any partnership agreement.

Proposal Requirements

1. Applicants must submit one electronic copy of the application as a PDF, using Times New Roman, 12-point font with centered page numbers on the bottom of each page. Proposals are not to exceed 20 pages. An appendix to reflect a data management plan and/or access agreements is permitted.
2. All proposals must include a completed copy of the Application for Funding from the N.C. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund application cover sheet (**see page 6**) as **page 1** of the proposal.
3. Indirect costs cannot exceed the indirect rate established for the Division of Marine Fisheries which is 15%.
4. Any funds realized from the sale, lease, rental, or other grant of rights to real or personal property acquired or produced from this grant must be paid back to the Commercial Fishing Resource Fund.
5. All projects that involve site acquisition/improvements must occur in coastal or joint fishing waters, except projects specifically designed to enhance diadromous fish populations and habitats.
6. Successful new multi-year projects will receive funding through a state contract that will obligate funds. If selected for a first year of funding, the subsequent years funding of multi-year projects will be contingent upon availability of funds and the completion of satisfactory grant performance progress reports as required by grantor and approved by the Marine Fisheries Commission and the Funding Committee for the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund.
7. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with NCDMF species and/or program leads regarding potential projects. Consultation with the leads does NOT guarantee funding or NCDMF partnership in the project. **The Division of Marine Fisheries will not provide letters of recommendation for projects.** For more information on the species and/or program leads, and partnerships contact Kathy Peterson via e-mail at Kathy.Peterson@deq.nc.gov.

8. If applicable, applicants are encouraged to consult with species and/or program leads about potential data requests needed from the NCDMF to fulfill project proposals. Some NCDMF data elements are restricted by law, while other data elements are readily available and accessible through the NCDMF webpage or other public sources. The NCDMF is not required to create a computer database that has not otherwise been created or is not otherwise required to create. Data access plans and/or access agreements that are generated by the applicant can be included as an appendix to the proposal. The NCDMF will not provide a template for a data access plan and/or access agreement.

Each proposal shall include the following:

Each proposal shall be in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include the following:

Applicant Name: Identify the name of the applicant and the applicant's organization.

Project Title: A brief statement to identify the project.

Project Period: The total period of the project proposed for funding. The project period may be for one or multiple years. However, multi-year projects approved for year one funding will be reviewed annually for subsequent year funding. **All contracts for projects selected for funding will begin no sooner than 60 days after full approval.** There are no exceptions to this starting date. Please note this time period when developing project milestones.

Objective: Address what is to be accomplished.

Approach: List all procedures necessary to attain each project objective, with sufficient detail, to be able to evaluate the likelihood of obtaining the objective.

Expected Results and Benefits: Identify and document the results or benefits expected from the proposed activities and how the project will help educate the public on North Carolina's sustainable commercial fishing industry. Proposals must clearly state how applicant will conduct research. **A statement detailing how the project will ultimately develop and support sustainable commercial fishing in the State must be included.**

Expected Methodology: Provide a written plan describing how all data, analyses, models, etc. generated from the project will be made available to the NCDMF in both raw and summarized format. The plan must include the format in which data will be submitted and acknowledge the requirements of the request for proposal. This section will also contain a narrative of what deliverables will be provided to the Marine Fisheries Commission Commercial Resource Fund Committee and the Funding Committee for the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund at the conclusion of the project, and metrics used to determine success. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund proposals, reports, and research data are subject to the N. C. Public Records Act (N.C.G.S. § 132-1 et seq).

Milestone Schedule: An activity schedule for the duration of the project, starting with month one and concluding at the end of the requested award period including a maximum three-month report writing period (see Table 2 for template). Schedule should include submission of performance reports at six-month intervals.

Cost Summary: Detail all costs to be incurred in the project, including, but not limited to personnel, equipment, supplies, travel expenses, etc. Prepare your budget carefully and make it as detailed as possible. **Page/publication costs will not be funded.** You may use Table 1 as a template for preparing your budget. Changes to the budget after submission are highly discouraged.

Other Information:

Any abandonment of the project, conversion of the project to another use, or allowance of uses prohibited by the contract shall automatically trigger repayment to the fund of an amortized portion of the total grant reflecting the remaining life of the project.

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be received electronically by the Division of Marine Fisheries no later than 5 p.m. EST on Tuesday, August 13, 2024. Proposals should be sent through email to Kathy.Peterson@deq.nc.gov. Applications received after this will not be eligible for consideration of funding, so please allow sufficient time for email and attachments to be sent.

Applicants must submit a **separate** abstract of the proposed project to be included with the proposal in no more than 300 words. Submit one abstract in PDF format via e-mail to Kathy.Peterson@deq.nc.gov.

Review Process

Only those proposals that meet the guidelines and objectives established in this request for proposals will be considered. Proposals meeting these requirements will be evaluated based on their capability to enhance the sustainability of commercial fishing in the state. During the final review of proposals, the Committees may ask for applicants to be available for in-person discussion of their proposals.

The NCDMF will recommend to the Committee members that they consider scoring proposals based on the following metrics, in conjunction with their meeting discussions, to assist in their determination on approval for funding:

- **Scope and Approach –20%**
 - Adequate problem description based on RFP, sufficient background information, knowledge of available literature and data sources, addresses a specific objective within the RFP, and meets the Legislative intent of the Fund.
- **Expected Results and Benefits – 20%**
 - Anticipated benefits, identification of how results will be useful and applied, and the proposal has actionable results upon completion.
- **Methodology – 20%**
 - Sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal, clarity of objectives, work-content plan within methodology, and data delivery plan.
- **Milestone Schedule – 20%**
 - Applicant has experience in the proposed work, availability of resources to complete work, project completion date is reasonable, and proposal has mitigations in place for weather and/or staffing delays.
- **Budget – 20%**
 - Budget realistic and reasonable, number of staff in line with overall project needs, equipment and travel budget appropriate (if applicable).
 - All costs should be focused directly on the proposal, with an appropriate level of justification.

Post Award

If your proposal is approved for funding, you will need to work with the NCDMF by supplying information for the preparation of a state contract to facilitate your receipt of funds. It is important for you to know that this program cannot reimburse you for work that has already begun or been completed. Should your proposal be selected for funding, a contract should be in place within six months following the date of your funding award letter.

If your project is selected for funding and a contract is in place, you will be required to provide semi-annual updates of progress. You may be required to present the results of your project and/or research findings at a Commercial Fishing Resource Funding Committee meeting. Commercial Fishing Resource Fund proposals, reports, and research data are subject to the N. C. Public Records Act (N.C.G.S. § 132-1 et seq).

Funding Year 2023 Eligible Proposal Opportunities

Program Area – Fish / Fishery

- Priorities: F2

Project Focus: Characterization study of North Carolina's large, red drum fishery

- Examine effort, abundance, size, discards, definition, bycatch, fishing practices, mortality rates, etc. of the fishery.
- Collect and record broad contextual information on the large, red drum fishery including, but not limited to, the ecosystem, fishermen and fishing grounds, fishing infrastructure, and species information.
- Focus the study on biological characterizations, not socioeconomics.

Program Area – People

- Priorities: P3

Project Focus: Consumer education

- Enact a consumer education program to elevate consumer awareness and education.
- Extend the Always NC Fresh Campaign or extend the marketing campaign through a different avenue.
- Propose tiers of annual funding with different options or engagement opportunities.

Program Area – Fish/Fishery

- Priorities: F1, F2, F3

Project Focus: Blue crab

- Develop a project or white paper to address blue crab abundance and/or a juvenile survey design for the state of North Carolina.
- Develop and assess an independent survey design that could be implemented into management decisions.
- Forecast potential costs for a blue crab abundance and/or juvenile survey design implementation.
- Include environmental parameters including, but not limited to, water quality impacts, variability in ecosystem fluctuations, and explore markets/opportunities for contracting out the design implementation.

Program Area – Habitat

- Priorities: F4, H3, H16, P4

Project Focus: Water Quality

- **Matching funds are highly preferred to be presented with all water quality proposals.**
- **Proposals to address water quality shall not exceed \$100,000 per year.**
- Investigate and implement water quality planning initiatives or improvements protect, manage, conserve, enhance, and map critical aquatic habitats that support fish, crustaceans, and shellfish that commercial fishing activities depend for a sustainable industry.
- Examine and implement synergistic efforts or offer an actionable plan to address water quality.
- Localized water quality assessments and impacts may be considered.
- Applicants may wish to consider recommendations from North Carolina's Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP).

Program Area – Fish/Fishery

- Priorities: F1, F2, F3, H1, H8, and/or H10

Project Focus: Shrimp trawl fishery

- Conduct trial trawling studies, in areas above the ferry lines, to examine benefits of trawling in the sound or rivers.

- Compare areas that have been closed to trawling versus areas that are consistently trawled, which may include implementation of a pilot program and/or test sites.
- Principal Investigators should contact the NCDMF, prior to submitting their application, to discuss potential test sites and permitting. Permits for trawling in closed areas would be discussed on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMERCIAL FISHING RESOURCE FUND

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION:		2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION:	
Applicant's Legal Name:		Name of Project Administrator/Principal Investigator:	
Street:		Street:	
Mail (PO Box):		Mail (PO Box):	
City, State and Zip Code:		City, State and Zip Code:	
EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):		Project Administrator/Principal Investigator Phone number with area code:	
		Project Administrator/Principal Investigator FAX number with area code:	
3. TYPE OF APPLICANT: <input type="checkbox"/> State agency <input type="checkbox"/> County or Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify and list partnering entity)		Project Administrator/Principal Investigator Email Address:	
4. TYPE OF APPLICATION: <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation of previously funded CFRF Project <input type="checkbox"/> Award Revision (Explain):		5. PROJECT TITLE:	
6. PROPOSED PROJECT: Start Date: _____ Ending Date: _____ Number of years: _____		7. STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE, STRATEGY AND RESEARCH NEED: (Please reference Strategic Plan) Program Area (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Fish/Fishery <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat <input type="checkbox"/> People	
8. SOURCES OF FUNDING: a. CFRF Funds Requested : \$ _____ b. Applicant Match: \$ _____ d. Other Match: \$ _____ e. TOTAL: \$ _____		Priority(s): _____ Project Focus: _____ Research Need (list project need):	
		9. AREA AFFECTED BY PROJECT (City, Counties, etc.):	
11. LIST STATE AND FEDERAL PERMITS REQUIRED FOR THIS PROJECT (if applicable): (Indicate completion date)			
12. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN FULLY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND WILL COMPLY WITH ALL RULES AND REGULATIONS IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.			
Full Name of Authorized Representative:		Authorized Administrator Email Address:	
Signature:		Date Signed:	Phone Number (with area code):
Following Boxes are for DMF Internal Office Use Only			
Date Received by NC DMF:	Tracking Number:	Year 1 Request From CFRF: \$ _____	

Table 1.

Budget template to be used as a guide to help applicants provide an itemized budget per project proposal. Budget page for each year of project is required as separate document. Additional needed items may be added and items not necessary are to be deleted.

Expense	Year 1		Subsequent Years	
	No. FTE*	Cost (\$)	No. FTE*	Cost (\$)
Personnel by position title (biologist, technician, computer programmer)		Include % amount of project		Include % amount of project
Fringe (social security, retirement, health)				
Tuition	See page 3 Cost Summary			
Travel (mileage, meals, lodging)	See page 3 Cost Summary			
Conference Cost	See page 3 Cost Summary			
Postage				
Printing/photocopying				
Vessels				
Vehicles				
Telephone				
Computer Equipment (PC, printer, etc.)				
Software				
Office Furniture				
Office Space				
Gas				
Uniforms/Clothing				
Safety Items				
Office Supplies				
Scientific Equipment				
Training				
Office Equipment (photocopier, fax, etc.)				
Maintenance Contracts				
Others				
Indirect (rate= <u>15%</u> of total direct costs, if applicable)				
TOTAL COST				

*Full Time Equivalent

