

National Estuarine Research Reserve System Science Collaborative Capacity Building Funding Guidance *Updated: October 2016*

The development of collaborative, end user driven proposals requires coordination and significant investment in time and resources. With this in mind, the Science Collaborative offers the opportunity for each reserve to receive **up to \$10,000** to enhance its capacity to develop competitive user-driven collaborative research and/or integrated assessment Science Collaborative proposals that address reserve management needs. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until **September 30, 2018**.

What's new in this version of the guidance?

This revised guidance reflects the following major changes:

- The requirements for capacity building grants are less prescriptive, to allow reserves to adopt approaches that meet their own unique capacity building needs.
- Funds may now be used to improve a proposal previously submitted to the Science Collaborative.
- Reserves can now choose to receive approved capacity building funds in one of two ways: 1) via a contract or 2) by submitting a one-time request for reimbursement. The latter approach allows applicants to avoid indirect cost charges and avoids the time lag required for contracting. However, the reserve or designated fiscal agent may only request reimbursement **after** all approved expenses have been incurred.

More about this opportunity

The objective of Science Collaborative capacity building funding is to *enhance the reserves' capacity to develop and submit high-quality, user-driven collaborative research and integrated assessment proposals in response to NERRS Science Collaborative Requests for Proposals*. To that end, this funding offers all reserves the opportunity to engage in activities that are tailored to meet their own unique collaborative science proposal development capacity needs.

Examples of eligible activities and expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Personnel time – for example, to support staff time to coordinate and facilitate workshops or meetings with end users and researchers to elicit and advance collaborative research ideas;
- Training – for example, collaboration, facilitation, or proposal development training;
- Convening of end users and researchers – travel and meeting expenses, e.g., food, meeting space rental and supplies, and web collaboration software licenses, related to the convening of potential proposal collaborators; and
- Needs assessment – a structured needs assessment process 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;
- Equipment purchase; or
- Professional proposal writing services.

A reserve may choose to dedicate the entirety of the funds to the development of a single or multiple research and/or integrated assessment proposals to the Science Collaborative. Cross-reserve capacity building activities are possible and encouraged; each reserve involved in such an effort should account for its respective activities within its own application. This funding may include a Science Transfer component but is not intended to support the development of Science Transfer proposals alone.

Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs of capacity building efforts must include a:

- Framework for developing a Science Collaborative research and/or integrated assessment proposal(s), and
- 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 the desired outcomes include:

- The reserve is better positioned and prepared to submit a needs-based, competitive Science Collaborative proposal;
- Existing relationships among the reserve(s) and existing 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.

Requirements

Each reserve is eligible to receive **up to \$10,000 total** in capacity building funding; these funds may be used to support one or more capacity building efforts.

Eligible efforts must:

- Demonstrate responsiveness to reserve capacity needs as they relate to collaborative science proposal development;
- Support the scoping and/or development of user-driven Science Collaborative research and/or integrated assessment proposals that meet reserve management needs.

Funds must be expended by August 31, 2019.

The applying reserve must request to receive approved capacity building funds in one of the following ways:

1. **Contract:** In this case, the fiscal agent for the capacity building grant will enter into a contractual agreement with the University of Michigan; the fiscal agent organization may submit monthly invoices for approved expenses throughout the duration of the grant. The fiscal agent organization 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 fiscal agent organization 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 and a detailed invoice is presented to the Science Collaborative. The Science Collaborative can only reimburse up to \$9,999 in expenses. ¹

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is open to NERRS staff working in partnership (as appropriate) with applicants from the United States (U.S.) academic, private, or public sectors. Each application must designate a single fiscal agent. The person in this role must be from the reserve, agency, institution, or friends group who will receive the award, if granted. Researchers from institutions outside the U.S. may be included in the grant activities but cannot serve as the fiscal agent. Foreign researchers may also be funded by sub-awards through an eligible U.S. entity. Federal employees and agencies are not eligible to receive funding from the Science Collaborative program, but they can participate as unfunded contributors to the work.

¹ This is a contracting threshold set by third-party administrators.

How to Apply

To apply for capacity building funding, reserves must submit an application to the NERRS Science Collaborative. Applications must be submitted online at:

<http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31864>

An application must be submitted for each capacity building effort. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through September 30, 2018.

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

Title page - including the following:

1. Title
2. Name of reserve
3. Lead – name, title, institution, telephone, address, and email
4. Additional team members (anyone receiving resources or contributing significant resources to the proposed activities)
5. Duration (start and end dates)
6. Application type – indicate if you are applying for contractual funding or reimbursable funding

Narrative – a brief narrative (no more than 3 pages) that describes the following:

1. Description – 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 integrated assessment 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 a framework for developing a Science Collaborative proposal(s) and final report.
3. Desired Outcomes (consequences of the proposed activities) – Describe the desired outcomes resulting from the proposed activities.
4. Team Members – Provide a list of team members and their roles.

Appendices:

1. Timeline – Using the timeline template (<http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31864>), identify start and end dates of the proposed activities. Include all key activities and tasks that will help document progress and the development and completion of outputs.
 - a. For contract proposals only: When determining a start date, please anticipate receiving contract award details approximately eight weeks after notice of approval of your application.
2. Budget – Use the budget template (<http://graham.umich.edu/application-request/31864>), including the budget categories provided. Eligible expenses include the following: 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. If you have questions regarding eligible expenses, please email NERRS-info@umich.edu.
- a. For contract proposals only: Overhead may be charged up to the fiscal institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate.
3. Budget Narrative – Provide a budget narrative to justify expenses in all budget categories. Personnel costs shall be broken out by team member including number of months and percentage of time requested. Any unnamed personnel (e.g., graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, technicians) must be identified by their job title, and their personnel costs explained similar to that described above. All reserve staff time anticipated for the work must be accounted for, even if funds are not being requested to support that time. Travel costs must be broken out by number of people traveling, destination and purpose of travel, and projected costs per person.
 - a. For contract proposals only: If applicable, a separate budget and budget narrative are required for each subcontract. The Science Collaborative will reimburse overhead costs up to the subcontractor's federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.
 4. Reserve Manager Support – If the lead is someone other than a reserve manager, applications must include a signed statement of support from the relevant reserve manager.

Application Review Process

The Science Collaborative has set aside enough resources such that all reserves that have not yet received capacity building funding can submit applications until September 30, 2018. To be eligible, applications must meet all of the requirements set forth in this funding guidance.

Applications will be reviewed internally by Science Collaborative staff. If necessary, the Science Collaborative team will provide feedback and comments that must be addressed before funding is granted. We expect to notify applicants of funding decisions within 30 days of receiving a complete application for a capacity building award.

Contractual grants:

Once approved for funding, the Science Collaborative will immediately initiate the contracting process. This process takes approximately 6-8 weeks; however, the reserve may begin incurring approved expenses on the start date, if the fiscal agent organization 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.

Questions regarding this funding guidance?

Questions regarding this funding opportunity should be directed to Melissa Zaksek (734-763-0034) or Maeghan Brass (734-763-0727) or submitted to NERRS-info@umich.edu.

Other Information

More information about the NERRS Science Collaborative can be found at:

<http://graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs>