

Large Marine Debris Removal Project

Frequently Asked Questions

DISCLAIMER: *This FAQ document is provided for informational purposes only. If there is any discrepancy between this document and the official RFA, the RFA and applicable federal regulations take precedence.*

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Any additional questions can be directed to

LMDproposals@oceanconservancy.org

Program Information

What is the purpose of this Request for Application (RFA)?

The purpose of this RFA is to remove large marine debris from remote and hard to reach environments in coastal United States waters and the Great Lakes. Eligible debris for removal includes bulky marine debris requiring special resources to remove, such as boat parts, construction materials and tires; and abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear, also known as “ghost gear,” including large fishing nets and “gear balls” containing tangled masses of rope traps and other fishing equipment. Vessel removals are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Successful projects will provide support to local entities to conduct at-sea or shoreline removals of derelict fishing gear or large marine debris as well as efforts to prevent re-accumulation and gear loss. Successful projects will document removal efforts and contribute data to relevant databases supporting large marine debris and derelict fishing gear removal. Project outcomes will benefit local fishers; coastal economies dependent on seafood, tourism, and recreation; and coastal and marine habitats.

What is the geographic focus of this funding opportunity and what individuals or entities are eligible to apply for funding?

As outlined in the Marine Debris Act, eligible applicants for projects taking place in the coastal United States, Great Lakes, territories, and freely associated states (or their adjacent waterways), are state, local, Tribal, and territory governments whose activities affect research or regulation of marine debris. Equally eligible are any institution of higher education, nonprofit organization, or commercial (for-profit) organization with expertise in a field related to marine debris. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Interested federal agencies may collaborate with eligible applicants but may not receive funds through this competition. Foreign public entities (see 2 CFR 200.1) from outside of the freely associated states are not eligible to apply.

Application

Where must applications be submitted?

All portions of the completed application must be submitted to LMDproposals@oceanconservancy.org. We recommend downloading and saving the PDF form to your computer before completing any parts of the application, to avoid loss of information.

If you are unable to access and complete a PDF form due to software limitations, you may request a Microsoft Word version of the RFA by emailing LMDproposals@oceanconservancy.org.

If you need to access an application previously submitted by your organization, you may request a copy by emailing LMDproposals@oceanconservancy.org.

When is the application deadline?

All portions of the completed application must be submitted to LMDproposals@oceanconservancy.org by the deadline of 5:00 P.M. EDT on May 31, 2026. No late applications will be accepted or reviewed.

Can applicants submit more than one application?

No. Only one application will be accepted and reviewed per organization.

How will the applications be evaluated?

The applications will be reviewed based on the evaluation criteria and RFA eligibility requirements outlined in the RFA.

What are the compliance expectations?

- Agree to comply with all applicable U.S. Government requirements associated with this funding, including but not limited to 2 CFR Part 200, as adopted pursuant to 2 CFR § 1327.101, the U.S. Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, and all applicable provisions outlined in [the Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) # NOAA-NOS-ORR-2024-2007993](#), [Executive Order 14151](#), and [Executive Order 14332](#), which are associated with this program. Applicants are encouraged to review these materials and contact Ocean Conservancy with any questions.
- Agree to comply with Ocean Conservancy's Subaward terms and conditions, which are in addition to, and do not replace, applicable U.S. Government requirements.

- Certify that the applicant and its principals are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in U.S. Government programs.
- Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) and have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or be willing and able to obtain both prior to Subaward issuance.
- Disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest and agree to mitigate such conflicts as required.
- Acknowledge that costs incurred in preparing and applying for this Subaward are not reimbursable, and that Ocean Conservancy reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications, and to amend or cancel this RFA at any time.

What is permits and Environmental Compliance Review?

Projects are subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act(s) (state and federal), among others. The required environmental compliance review for fieldwork may take several months before it is completed. Successful applicants must comply with all federal, state and local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances before conducting activities in the field. Successful applications cannot begin on-the-ground assessment or removal activities until the environmental compliance process has been completed.

Successful applicants for removal projects will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any federal, state or local requirements.

Funding and Budget

How much money will be awarded?

Ocean Conservancy anticipates that the majority of subawards will range from \$75,000 to \$125,000, with a minimum subaward of \$50,000 USD and a maximum subaward of \$200,000.

Are matching funds required?

Matching funds may be indicated in your application but it is not a requirement and will not impact your organization's eligibility for an award. If applicants include cash or in-kind matching contributions in their application, they must be included in the submitted budget and budget narrative.

Project Implementation and Reporting

What reporting will be required?

Awardees will be required to submit semi-annual narrative reports on progress towards key implementation activities, accomplishments, milestones, program metrics and challenges. A final comprehensive programmatic report will be required at the conclusion of the project. Templates will be provided for both.

To track removal results, key partners and awardees will be required to collate and submit data on recovered debris to one of Ocean Conservancy's two databases: 1) [The International Coastal Cleanup TIDES](#), the world's largest database of marine debris, or 2) the [Global Ghost Gear Initiative's Data Portal](#), the largest repository of ghost gear data in the world. Additionally, awardees are required to track removal results in MS Excel workbooks from NOAA, provided by Ocean Conservancy.

In addition to recording the debris removed during this project, these data are used by scientists, environmentalists, journalists, governments and other key stakeholders to better understand and characterize the global marine debris crisis. These tools ensure that important data about the gear and debris being removed by Ocean Conservancy and partners are captured in a systematic way and that each removal effort helps to build a global picture of the problem and the solutions available.

What is the expected project period?

Projected start dates will be late summer 2026, with an average project duration of 18 -20 months that includes a mandatory environmental compliance review period prior to any field activity. All proposed timelines should include an upfront planning window before removal activity is scheduled to begin to account for environmental compliance.