

Alabama Coastal Area Management Program Annual Request for Proposals Application Guidance

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	2
A. Eligible Applicants	2
B. Funding Amount	2
C. Match Requirement	2
D. Agreement Period	3
E. Project Location	3
F. Proposal Timeline	3
G. Proposal Submittal	3
H. Questions and Assistance	3
I. Additional Information for Applicants	4
II. PROPOSAL FOCUS AREAS	4
A. Government Coordination and Local Government Planning	4
B. Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities	4
C. Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship	5
D. Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control	5
E. Public Access to Coastal Resources: Construction or Land Acquisition	5
III. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA	6
IV. APPLICATION CHECKLIST	8

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP or Coastal Program) is to balance economic growth with the need for conservation of Alabama's coastal resources for future generations. ACAMP promotes wise management of the cultural and natural resources of the state's coastal areas and fosters efforts to ensure the long-term ecological and economic productivity of coastal Alabama. ACAMP is administered by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), State Lands Division.

State Lands' Coastal Program annually seeks to provide coastal management grant funds on a competitive basis to Alabama's coastal communities and partners for planning and implementation of projects that address conservation needs of the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development. Funding is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) pursuant to the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA).

The Coastal Program is accepting applications through its Request for Proposals (RFP) for projects that protect, enhance, and improve the management of natural, cultural, and historical coastal resources and that increase the sustainability, resiliency and preparedness of coastal communities. Applications must meet the purpose of at least one of the following focus areas:

- ❖ Government Coordination and Local Government Planning
- ❖ Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities
- ❖ Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship
- ❖ Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control
- ❖ Public Access to Coastal Resources

Details regarding application focus areas are included in Section II. The complete RFP Application Package can be found at www.alabamacoastalprograms.com.

A. Eligible Applicants

- ❖ Units of coastal government including Mobile County, Baldwin County, and municipalities within those counties (and any boards, departments, agencies, corporations or instrumentalities of such coastal governments) or tribal governments within Mobile and Baldwin counties
- ❖ Alabama state agencies whose activities affect or are affected by activities in the coastal area
- ❖ Non-profits assisting coastal governments and/or state agencies with efforts to effectively exercise responsibilities and manage coastal resources for public benefit in the coastal area
- ❖ Area-wide agencies, regional planning agencies, conservation districts, and port authorities
- ❖ Alabama school districts, public colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning

B. Funding Amount

The preferred minimum funding amount is \$20,000 federal funds; the preferred maximum is \$50,000 federal funds. Applications for funding less than the minimum will be accepted, but the applicant must provide justification and the proposal must meet a unique or critical need. Grant funding will be disbursed for allowable project expenditures on a reimbursement basis.

C. Match Requirement

All applications require at least a 1:1 ratio of non-federal matching funds. Match may consist of cash or in-kind services that support the project. Federal funds received directly or passed through by a state agency cannot be used as match. If volunteer services will be used as non-cash match, applicants may calculate the hourly match value of volunteer time by visiting the following website: http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time. While evidence of matching funds availability is not required at time of application submission, such evidence must be presented prior to execution of an agreement with ADCNR. Failure to provide such satisfactory documentation of

match requirements will nullify the initial selection of a proposal by ADCNR. (See 2 CFR 200.306: Cost Sharing or Matching.)

D. Agreement Period

The anticipated project start date is on or after October 1, 2026 for a period not to exceed 12 months, although subaward agreements may be executed prior to the start date. Projects will be evaluated on project readiness and feasibility for completion within this project time frame.

E. Project Location

Due to CZMA requirements, funding is geographically limited to Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

F. Application Timeline

March 27, 2026	Proposals must be received by Coastal Section office by 5:00 PM.
July 30, 2026	State Lands will seek to notify applicants close to this date.
October 1, 2026	If approved by NOAA, funding is anticipated to become available on or after this date. If time allows, grant subaward agreements may be executed prior to this date for commencement on this date.
September 30, 2027	Projects must be completed.

G. Application Submittal

Proposal application forms along with any supporting documentation must be submitted **by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 27, 2026**. Proposals can be submitted by email, overnight courier, hand delivery or regular mail (however, due to recently experienced delays with regular mail, the listed alternative delivery methods are strongly suggested).

For overnight courier, hand delivery and regular mail use the following address:

State Lands Division Coastal Section
c/o Will Underwood
31115 Five Rivers Boulevard
Spanish Fort, AL 36527

Electronic submissions should be e-mailed in Portable Document Format (.pdf) to DCNR.Coastal@dcnr.alabama.gov with ACAMP Funding Application in the subject line.

It shall be the sole responsibility of the submitting entity to ensure actual receipt by the State Lands Division, Coastal Section prior to this deadline. ADCNR makes no guarantee that any project proposal will be implemented.

ADCNR does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, pregnancy, genetic information or veteran status in its hiring or employment practices nor in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities.

H. Questions and Assistance

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Coastal Section staff far in advance of the submission deadline as to questions related to the application process. In the event State Lands determines clarification as to the RFP announcement or this document would be helpful, additional information may be posted at www.alabamacoastalprograms.com prior to the submission deadline. It is the sole responsibility of applicants to check this site for any updates.

ADCNR, State Lands Division, Coastal Section, Phone: (251) 621-1216

Staff Contacts: Amy King Amy.King@dcnr.alabama.gov
 Will Underwood Will.Underwood@dcnr.alabama.gov
 Emily Carter Emily.Carter@dcnr.alabama.gov

I. Additional Information for Applicants

Proposal information will not be kept confidential. All materials submitted in response to this request for proposals are considered public information.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant subaward agreement with ADCNR which includes terms and conditions at ADCNR's sole discretion. Prior to execution of a grant subaward agreement, recipients will be required to satisfactorily complete a subrecipient risk assessment. In addition, as applicable, satisfactory evidence of the subrecipient's compliance with Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) requirements will be required. Failure of a successful applicant to promptly fulfill these obligations or provide sufficient evidence of required match amounts will nullify the initial selection of a proposal by ADCNR and will result in cancellation of the grant subaward agreement as applicable.

Grant subaward agreements and subsequent funding will be subject to ADCNR's actual receipt of funds from NOAA as well as availability of funds pursuant to state law, policies, and procedures.

II. PROPOSAL FOCUS AREAS

The Coastal Program is accepting applications through this RFP for projects that conserve, enhance, and improve the management of natural, cultural, and historical coastal resources and that increase the sustainability, resilience, and preparedness of coastal communities. Proposals must meet the purpose of at least one of the following focus areas. If you have questions as to potential eligibility of project activities, you can contact Coastal Program staff. However, no determination as to eligibility will be made prior to submission and review of proposals.

A. Government Coordination and Local Government Planning

The purpose of this focus area is to increase local government capacity to plan and implement projects that address conservation issues affecting the coastal area and that promote sustainable economic development. Projects should demonstrate a balance of economic development and resource conservation.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Comprehensive and community planning
- ❖ Smart growth planning
- ❖ Zoning and ordinance development for resource protection
- ❖ GIS applications for coastal management
- ❖ Spatial data collection for coastal management
- ❖ Working waterfront revitalization planning
- ❖ Planning for sustainable tourism to ensure long-term economic and environmental benefits
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to government coordination and planning

B. Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities

The purpose of this focus area is to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards in Coastal Alabama. Projects within this focus area should help coastal communities prepare for and respond to the effects of natural hazard events, disasters and sea level rise.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Hazard mitigation planning
- ❖ Floodplain management planning
- ❖ Post-disaster recovery and redevelopment planning
- ❖ Conducting vulnerability analyses and risk assessments
- ❖ Developing policies, guidance and best management practices to increase resilience and reduce vulnerability to natural hazards
- ❖ Development of policies and practices that support community participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS)
- ❖ Development of flood damage prevention ordinances and supplemental building codes to account for storm surge, flooding, erosion and scour
- ❖ Development of resilience and/or adaptation strategies for incorporation into local comprehensive plans or ordinances
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to coastal hazards, resilient communities, coastal hazard risk communication, and conservation education

C. Coastal Habitats, Wetland Protection and Coastal Resource Stewardship

The purpose of this priority area is to promote conservation, restoration and stewardship of Alabama's coastal resources through an ecosystem approach to management.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Developing policies, guidance and best management practices to restore and preserve coastal wetlands and shorelines
- ❖ Developing long-term conservation and/or restoration strategies for sensitive natural areas
- ❖ Shoreline and wetland restoration planning to mitigate the effects of natural hazards (also fulfills the Coastal Hazards and Resilient Communities focus area)
- ❖ GIS applications for natural resource management
- ❖ Spatial data collection for coastal habitats
- ❖ Measuring land use changes and developing long-term protection strategies
- ❖ Community education and outreach related to wetland conservation, coastal resource stewardship, coastal hazard risk communication, conservation education, and ecotourism

D. Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

The Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program was established by Congress in 1990 to encourage better coordination between state coastal zone managers and water quality experts to reduce polluted runoff in the coastal zone. The Program establishes management measures for states to utilize in controlling polluted runoff. More information on the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program can be found at <https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/pollutioncontrol/>. Alabama's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program received full approval in October of 2024.

Potential projects include but are not limited to planning, engineering and design, data collection/analysis, monitoring, mapping, modeling, and education and outreach related to the following areas:

- ❖ Storm water runoff from new development
- ❖ Comprehensive planning for development to protect sensitive ecological areas, minimize land disturbances and retain natural drainage and vegetation
- ❖ Watershed planning (must be done using EPA Section 319 elements and guidelines)
- ❖ Nutrient/pathogen loadings to surface water and groundwater from new and operating onsite disposal systems (OSDS, e.g., septic tanks)
- ❖ Hydromodification improvement to address existing nonpoint source pollution issues caused by dams, dredge and eroding streambanks and shorelines
- ❖ Wetland and riparian area protection and restoration
- ❖ Engineered vegetated treatment systems

E. Public Access to Coastal Resources: Construction and Land Acquisition

The Public Access focus area is designed to help Alabama's coastal communities identify and improve public access to cultural, historical, and natural areas while protecting resources from overuse and damage. Projects may conserve, restore, or enhance public access opportunities through small-scale construction or land acquisition.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Engineering design and construction of fishing piers, kiosks, dune crossovers, boardwalks, observation decks, kayak launches
- ❖ Design and installation of educational and interpretive signage
- ❖ Fee simple acquisition of land to minimize development in high hazard areas while increasing public access to coastal resources
- ❖ Natural shoreline restoration for habitat enhancement (primary goal cannot be erosion control)

The uses of public access grant funds may include:

1. Low-cost construction projects that provide for public access including but not limited to paths, walkways, dune walkovers, boardwalks, public piers, fences, parks and the rehabilitation of historic buildings and structures
2. Educational, interpretive and other management
3. Engineering designs, specifications and other appropriate reports related to the above
4. Land Acquisition

NOTE: Funds shall not be used to finance large-scale erosion-prevention structures, such as beach nourishment or hard structure erosion control projects.

Public access grant funds are for public benefit and may not be used to improve private property. Sites must be open to the general public and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In general, user fees should not be charged to access sites. See Project Location section above for additional information on geographic areas eligible for funding.

III. REVIEW PROCEDURE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications that meet the minimum requirements listed below will be reviewed by State Lands staff using the numeric criteria outlined in this section. Staff may seek assistance as to the review of the applications from other state agency staff and/or other entities, as appropriate, and will recommend the highest scoring projects that, in total, fall within funding limitations to the ADCNR Commissioner. Projects ultimately approved by the ADCNR Commissioner will be submitted to NOAA for final review and approval.

Applications must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be reviewed by the evaluation committee:

- ❖ Application must be submitted using the provided application form
- ❖ Application must be complete and received by the application deadline
- ❖ Applying organization must be an eligible applicant
- ❖ Project must be in an eligible project location

Applications meeting the above minimum qualifications will be scored using the evaluation criteria detailed below (with all criteria being equally weighted). Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

- 1) **Purpose and Scope of Work:** Purpose of the proposed project is clear and concise. Description of activity or work to be conducted is logical and technically sound. Highest scoring projects will provide a clear overview of the project and work to be undertaken. (0-5 points)
- 2) **Focus Area Connection:** Applicant has clearly explained how the proposed project addresses issues related to at least one focus area. Highest scoring projects will demonstrate the degree to which the project will result in improved management of coastal resources and uses. (0-5 points)
- 3) **Public Benefit:** Applicant has clearly explained how the proposed project fulfills an existing public need or benefit. Applicant describes the geographic area to be served by the project. Highest scoring projects will have the potential to benefit citizens outside of the immediate local government jurisdiction and will have a high degree of public benefit. (0-5 points)
- 4) **Outreach:** A significant and proactive public education and/or community outreach component has been incorporated into the project. The applicant describes components of the outreach effort and lists the tasks to be performed. Highest scoring projects will make the target audience aware of the project and/or coastal resources and will encourage community participation in the project where appropriate. Outreach materials should be transferable to the entire Alabama Coastal Area. (0-5 points)
- 5) **Partnerships and Support:** Applicant has identified project partners and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Highest scoring projects will include partnerships across departments, organizations and jurisdictions and will be supported by the local community. (Note that letters of support and/or commitment serve to evidence an applicant's assertion of support but are not required. Therefore, points will not be deducted for failure to include letters of support. However, State Lands staff may contact identified potential partners to verify willingness and capacity to participate in the project.) (0-5 points)
- 6) **Schedule:** A project schedule has been completed and includes key project tasks by quarter (Oct. 1-Dec. 31, Jan. 1-March 31, April 1-June 30, and July 1-Sept. 30) with associated outcomes and deliverables. Method to achieve each deliverable is appropriate. Schedule is feasible and demonstrates that all tasks will be completed within the agreement period. Highest scoring projects will include well-defined tasks with deliverables listed in chronological order and planned within a reasonable timeframe. (0-5 points)
- 7) **Measuring Success and Next Steps:** Applicant has clearly described how success of the project will be measured and includes specific performance measures, if applicable. Applicant has described next steps for the project after funding expires including how the product or outcome will be used. Highest scoring projects will include performance measures and will demonstrate a long-term commitment through ongoing actions after project completion. (0-5 points)
- 8) **Budget:** The budget appears reasonable, appropriate, and accurate. The budget justification, in addition to establishing feasibility of successful project completion, details all funds requested with reasonable justifications, and budgeted items are consistent with the project description and tasks for the project. If applicable, the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) is attached to the application. Highest scoring projects will pose a high overall public benefit relative to its cost. (0-5 points)
- 9) **Data Management Plan:** NOAA requires that grantees and subaward grant recipients comply with data management requirements as outlined in NOAA Administrative Order 2 12-15. If data will be collected and/or created as part of this proposed project, please describe the types of data and data collection methods. If this project is selected for funding, Coastal Section staff will assist the project applicant in completing a data management and sharing plan for the project. However,

it will be the sole responsibility of the applicant to satisfactorily complete data management plan requirements in order to receive funding.

- 10) **Project Eligibility for Public Access Improvement Projects:** Complete this section for proposed public access improvement projects. If this project is selected for funding, Coastal Section staff will assist the project applicant in completing a more detailed Section 306a Public Access Questionnaire as required by NOAA for the project. However, it will be the sole responsibility of the applicant to satisfactorily complete the requirements of the public access questionnaire in order to receive funding.

IV. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Ensure your completed application package includes the following information:

_____ (1) Completed application.

_____ (2) Optional letters of support from the public and letters of commitment from project partners (for online applications, letters should be included as PDF files).