Sea Grant
MIT

Request for Proposals – STREAM Awards

Solutions Through Research, Education & Art in Massachusetts

Important Dates and Details
- **Informational Webinar:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 1:00pm ET (Register).
- **Optional STREAM Interest Form:** Submit by Tuesday, September 2, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.
- **Deadline to request eSeaGrant access:** Friday, September 12, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.
- **Deadline for full proposal:** Monday, September 15, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.
- **Eligibility:** STREAM Awards are open to a broad range of applicants who are affiliated with Massachusetts organizations such as institutions of higher education, preschool through high school (P-12) schools, museums, tribes, industry, and nonprofit groups. Students are encouraged to submit proposals but must apply through an eligible faculty member or educator. Your organization must have a Unique Entity Identity (UEI) number (or have an active application pending) and be registered with SAM.gov to submit a proposal.
- **Requested Funding:** Budget requests must not exceed $9,999. Matching funds or in-kind contributions of 50% of the requested amount are required. See the Budget and Matching Funds section below for additional information.
- **Project Duration:** No longer than 12 months. The 2026 project period will run from February 1, 2026 to January 31, 2027.
- **Submitting:** Submittals are through eSeaGrant, our online proposal system. Please contact Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) for access by Friday, September 12, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.

Contact Information
Please feel free to contact Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration and Lily Keyes, Communications Specialist (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) with any questions about the STREAM Awards, RFP process, or eSeaGrant.

Purpose
The purpose of this award is to allow small amounts of funding to have big impacts on communities, education, and research focusing on coastal and marine science in Massachusetts. MIT Sea Grant allocates a portion of its program development funds to this award to engage communities and partners in new ways and support projects that advance MIT Sea Grant's Strategic Plan Goals. **Please reach out to Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration and Lily Keyes, Communications Specialist (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) for a copy of the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan.**

The STREAM Award program supports projects such as:

1. small research projects and seed funding for exploratory or innovative efforts in industry, education, extension, or research;
2. undergraduate/graduate student support to expand a classroom or independent research project into a larger project with a more significant educational or outreach component;
3. innovative ideas to bring coastal and marine science and engineering into P-12 classrooms, after-school activities, and community events; and
4. rapid response projects that necessitate timely action in response to a current situation or driver.

Proposals may also include extension, education, communications, and graduate student support. **Applicants must express how the proposed project will meet the needs and reflect the wide range of Massachusetts communities and amplify MIT Sea Grant's research, extension, education, and outreach efforts as outlined in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan**. Proposals should be designed to reach as many people and communities as possible.

All proposals meeting the criteria above are welcome. We highly encourage proposals that align with one or more of the following:

- advance areas of emerging interest (e.g. community resilience, marine debris, contaminants of concern) or focus on other important resources and issues;
- connect communities with coastal and marine science and explore the intersection between art and science; or
- provide innovative approaches to solving problems and leveraging opportunities in resource management, development, or public outreach.

Award and Deadlines
STREAM proposals will be considered on an annual basis. No more than one proposal may be submitted by any Project Lead or Co-Lead / Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI during any one application period. Budgets cannot exceed $9,999 and projects must take place between February 1, 2026 and January 31, 2027. Proposals must be submitted no later than September 15, 2025 by 5:00pm ET (Note: applicants should request eSeaGrant access as early as possible, and must request access to eSeaGrant by September 12, 2025 by 5:00pm ET). Decisions will be communicated prior to the start date.

Eligibility
The following applicants in the state of Massachusetts may submit proposals: faculty, students, educators, artists, researchers, and others who are affiliated with one or more of the following in Massachusetts: institutions of higher education, P-12 schools, student groups, museums, tribes, industry, and nonprofit organizations. Applicants are welcome to reach out to us to confirm whether or not their group is eligible to apply (seagrantinfo@mit.edu). While students must apply through an eligible faculty member or educator, students are encouraged to lead the development and submission of proposals.

Budget

STREAM Award funding may be used for equipment, materials and supplies, outreach, as well as P-12 student and teacher workshop and field trip costs (e.g., teacher training costs, fees, and transportation). However, proposals requesting support for travel to or participation in conferences or research unrelated to the STREAM Award will not be considered. Direct salary support for individuals is not permitted. Additional details for budget preparation can be found under the Proposal Process section.

Matching Funds

Matching funds are funds, goods and services provided by the applicant organization to support the project in addition to STREAM Award funds being requested. These types of funds can be supplies, equipment already owned by the applicant, non-federal salaries, volunteer services, etc. Non-federal salaries can be counted as matching support for the project. MIT Sea Grant requires a 50% match on these proposals. For example, if you are requesting $5,000 from MIT Sea Grant, you are asked to provide or show at least $2,500 from qualified, non-federal matching sources. Please contact Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration, or Lily Keyes, Communications Specialist, at seagrantinfo@mit.edu to discuss what your group may use as matching funds.

Cross-Cutting Principles

MIT Sea Grant is committed to bringing a range of voices and values together to find solutions that are innovative, creative, and responsive to the complex problems facing coastal communities. Applicants should articulate how the project will engage and reflect the wide range of Massachusetts communities and constituents. STREAM Awards will support projects that uphold our cross-cutting principles:

- Cultivate and sustain partnerships by integrating the expertise and capabilities of partners from international, federal, tribal, state, and local communities, and from academia, non-governmental organizations, and industry.

- MIT Sea Grant will tackle problems facing coastal communities by utilizing a range of perspectives, values, and tools to develop solutions that are more innovative, creative, and responsive.

Proposal Process

Proposals exceeding $5,000 should be discussed with MIT Sea Grant prior to submission. However, **we strongly encourage all potential applicants to fill out the STREAM Interest Form by September 2, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.** This form has specific questions that can help us determine if your project is a good fit for this RFP and better guide you in the application process. The form will also help you to understand how your idea can best align with our mission. If you do choose to fill out the form, we will follow up with you within one week. In some cases, we will set up a time to discuss your project ideas.

If you are new to writing proposals, please read this section carefully and follow the directions. Feel free also to reach out to Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration and Lily Keyes, Communications Specialist (seagrantinfo@mit.edu), or any of our Marine Advisory Services Group with questions.

Proposals are submitted to MIT Sea Grant through our online portal, eSeaGrant. Please contact Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration at seagrantinfo@mit.edu as early as possible and no later than September 12, 2025 by 5:00pm ET to request access and receive your password. You will receive instructions once you request access, and we are happy to provide eSeaGrant tours and other assistance to any applicants. The deadline for submittals is September 15, 2025 by 5:00pm ET.

Your proposal must follow the outline below. Your references, resumes/CV(s), and budget do not count towards the page limit, but each resume/CV should be no more than two pages.

<u>Application Materials</u>

1. *Project Narrative*: In 2-5 pages (12-point type, Times New Roman or equivalent font, single-spaced with one-inch margins), please provide clear and concise information in the following sections. Any text over the 5-page limit will be removed and will not be shared with the STREAM Review Committee. Images are welcome. Links to short videos are allowed but considered supplemental material. Include enough detail below to show innovation and the project's relevance to the 2024-2027 MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan. **Please reach out to Mary Newton Lima, Assistant Director, Administration and Lily Keyes, Communications Specialist (seagrantinfo@mit.edu) for a copy of the Strategic Plan.**
   a. *Title and Contact Information*: Include the proposal title and the name, affiliation, email address, and phone number of the lead investigator/applicant. Provide your institutional Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and indicate if your institution has received federal funding during the past 5 years. You must have a full SAM registration and UEI number (or have an active application pending) at the time of submission in order to be considered for this award.
   b. *Project Start and End Dates*: Project start and end dates must fall within February 1, 2026 and January 31, 2027. The project may not be more than 12 months in duration, and the start date must begin on the first day of a month and end on the last day of a month. Please note that applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start and end dates depending upon funding and processing timelines.
   c. *Coastal- or Marine-Related Issue or Opportunity to be Addressed*: Identify the coastal or marine-related idea, issue or hypothesis requiring this work. You must identify the project's relevance to one or more Focus Areas (Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development; Healthy Coastal Ecosystems; Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture; Resilient Communities and Economies) and one or more Goals detailed in the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan, including how these areas and goals will be advanced through the proposed work.
   d. *Objectives*: Provide your specific objectives in a numbered list format.

e. *Methods/Approach:* Include a description of how you will achieve your objectives, including any lesson plans, field trips, fieldwork, laboratory analyses, or studies, and the approximate amount of time needed for these activities. If your proposal involves fieldwork, copies of all sampling licenses and permits will be required prior to the start of the project if your project is selected for funding.

f. *Outcomes/Benefits to MA Communities/Constituents:* Describe the potential outcomes or impacts that can be seen and measured as a result of this project. Include details about whether the anticipated impacts of the project will have practical applications or if they will lead to new understanding, changes in attitude or behavior, economic benefits, improved policy understanding, etc. Here is a list of specific metrics MIT Sea Grant tracks and reports to the National Sea Grant Office. While your project does not have to incorporate all of these metrics, we encourage you to identify at least one metric associated with your project outcomes.

g. *Cross-Cutting Principles:* Describe how the proposed work cultivates partnerships, integrates knowledge and perspectives from various groups, or broadens the participation of individuals in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. Provide details about how this work will have broader societal impacts on constituents from specific communities.

h. *Outreach Plan:* Proposals must include a plan for meaningful engagement with the identified communities or constituents. Outline the project's outreach goals, methods, and how the work will impact or serve specific constituents. If you have questions or would like additional guidance, please contact Communications Specialist Lily Keyes at seagrantinfo@mit.edu.

2. *Personnel and CVs/Resume of Lead Applicant/Student/Educator:* Each resume/CV should be no more than two pages.

3. *Budget and Budget Justification:* Applicants must budget for all costs of the project and include a written justification for each budget item. The budget must include all costs of the project, including research, education, communications, and outreach activities, as well as matching funds. Please note the following:

   a. Matching Funds: Matching funds are funds and non-cash contributions, goods, or services provided by the applicant that support the funds being requested. STREAM funds may not be used for salary, but non-federal salaries may be used for matching funds. Please contact MIT Sea Grant's Assistant Director, Administration Mary Newton Lima at seagrantinfo@mit.edu for any questions you may have regarding the budget or matching funds.

   b. Indirect Costs (IDC): IDC are costs that are not easily attributable to individual awards such as utilities or data storage. You may apply for IDC as part of your budget, but your proposal may not be only IDC. If you do wish to include IDC in your proposal and your organization has a negotiated IDC rate, please include that rate and a copy of the agreement identifying the rate. If you wish to waive your organization's IDC, verify that you have permission to do this with your organization, and document that in writing. If you do not have a negotiated rate, then you can use

the up to 15% standard rate that the federal government allows. Upload IDC-related documents on the narrative page of eSeaGrant.

4. *Letters of Support (Optional):* Letters of support are letters from other organizations or members of the community who support your application but do not have a financial investment in your project, i.e., they are not in your requested budget (organizations providing matching funds may submit a letter of support). Letters of support are optional.

5. *Data Management Plan (DMP):* If your project does not include data collection, enter a simple statement such as, "This proposal will not generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the proposal." If your proposal does include data collection, you will need to create a DMP. The plan must conform to NOAA's Data Management Handbook. If you are unsure what is needed for a DMP please contact MIT Sea Grant's Assistant Director, Administration Mary Newton Lima at seagrantinfo@mit.edu, who will be glad to support you in preparing a DMP.

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

The Assistant Director, Administration and Communications Specialist will oversee the submission and review process. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the STREAM Review Committee composed of MIT Sea Grant staff members and one external member who is knowledgeable about Sea Grant's mission and outreach activities

Committee members will evaluate each proposal according to the criteria listed below and assign a rating of Very High (5)-High (4)-Medium (3)-Low (2)-Very Low (1) for each criterion. The Committee will then meet to discuss the proposals and arrive at a ranking of proposals for funding relative to the criteria scores.

The following criteria will be used in evaluating the proposals:

Criteria	Percentage of Score
Robustness of outreach plan: Are there plans to reach out to non-academic groups? Will relationships be created/strengthened? How will your project positively impact the targeted communities or constituents? The outreach plan should specify who will benefit from the project and what will be improved as a result (e.g., knowledge, skills, habitat).	40%
Innovation, timeliness, relevance to emerging issues, and, if applicable, proof of concept for further development.	20%
Cross-Cutting Principles: MIT Sea Grant is committed to cultivating partnerships as well as engaging and serving the varied communities in Massachusetts. Reviewers will consider how the applicant supports these efforts.	20%
Alignment with the purpose of the STREAM Award program, Focus Areas, and Goals outlined in the MIT Sea Grant Strategic Plan.	15%
Feasibility of the project being completed within one year with the proposed funding amount.	5%

The final selections will be made by the MIT Sea Grant Director, Professor Michael Triantafyllou, primarily based on evaluation rank order and taking into account the number of

proposals within each topic, variety in applicant pool (e.g., institution, geography), prior award performance (e.g., timeliness of reports); and availability of funding. The Director's decision will be communicated by the MIT Sea Grant Assistant Director, Administration, who will also provide a summary of the Committee's review. It is expected that funding recommendations will be communicated to applicants within six to ten weeks of the Committee's meeting.

Post-Award Requirements

Award Type

Awards under this RFP will be cost-reimbursable. This means that the awardee will receive payment after submitting receipts and invoices for approved, allowable budget cost items and matching funds. Detailed invoicing instructions will be provided. If you have any questions or concerns about the invoice and payment process, please contact us at seagrantinfo@mit.edu so that we can provide guidance and discuss workable methods to assist your organization.

Post-Award Documentation

After award notification and acceptance and prior to funds being awarded, the applicant must provide additional documentation as outlined below. Please contact Mary Newton Lima at seagrantinfo@mit.edu for help with any of these documents.

All awardees must provide a Letter of Commitment from their organization that must be signed by an authorized official of the organization, and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Questionnaire, which is used by NOAA to assess the proposal for environmental compliance to federal laws. If the recipient has not received funds from MIT prior to this STREAM funding, they may also need to submit a Subrecipient Profile Questionnaire and a New Organization Registration Form. Funding will not be awarded until these items have been received. These items will be further explained in the post-notification documentation.

Post-Project Reporting

At the end of the project period, STREAM Award recipients will be expected to participate in MIT Sea Grant's annual reporting required by NOAA. Reporting instructions will be provided upon funding. Here is a list of specific metrics MIT Sea Grant tracks and reports to the National Sea Grant Office. While a project does not have to incorporate all of these metrics, applicants should identify at least one metric associated with the project outcomes.

Acknowledgement of NOAA and MIT Sea Grant funding on any publication or product resulting from a STREAM Award project is required. The MIT Sea Grant logo, NOAA logo and award language will be provided to awardees at the start of funding.

Project/Award Period

The requested award start date must begin on the first day of the month and end on the last day of the month. Project start dates will be no earlier than February 1, 2026, dependent upon availability of federal funding as provided by Congress, acceptable completion of all NOAA/applicant negotiations including NEPA analysis and permit requirements, and the provision of other supporting documentation as requested. Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start and end dates.