



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Guide to Federal Aquaculture Grant Services (2021)



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This grant guide was prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in consultation with the [Subcommittee on Aquaculture](#) (SCA) under the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). This guide focuses only on grant programs that aquaculture farmers or aquaculture researchers may be eligible for. Updates will include Federal cooperative agreements, contracts, loans, or other direct support programs for aquaculture farmers or (non-federal) aquaculture researchers, for the purpose of aquaculture siting, research, development, and operations.

Coordination of Federal Aquaculture-related Programs

The National Aquaculture Act of 1980 provides for an interagency coordinating body to provide leadership and to facilitate the coordination of federal programs associated with development of aquaculture in the United States. The Subcommittee on Aquaculture (SCA)—previously known as the Interagency Working Group on Aquaculture (IWGA) and the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture (JSA)—serves as the Federal interagency coordinating group to increase the overall effectiveness and productivity of Federal aquaculture research, regulation, technology transfer, and assistance programs. The SCA reports to the [National Science and Technology Council](#) (NSTC) and the [Office of Science and Technology Policy](#) (OSTP) in the [Executive Office of the President](#).

This guide is intended to be a dynamic document subject to updates every 12 months.

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Grant Portals and Information

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

The [Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance](#) (CFDA) provides a full listing of all federal programs available to state and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally recognized Indian tribal governments; territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, private for-profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.

Grants.gov

All applications for grants and loans from the federal government must be submitted through [grants.gov](#). This website is also a resource to search for grants, loans, and other federal application procedures including research, education, and extension proposals.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)

The [Small Business Innovation Research](#) (SBIR) program encourages domestic small businesses to engage in Federal Research/Research and Development (R/R&D) that has the potential for commercialization. This competitive, awards-based program encourages small businesses to engage in research in scientific and engineering areas (including aquaculture) that have the potential for commercialization. Several federal agencies, including NOAA, USDA-NIFA, NIST, and NSF, allocate R&D money to SBIR. Open solicitations, eligibility, and the application process can be found at [sbir.gov](#), or at the agency-specific SBIR programs listed below.

SBIR-participating Agencies

Each year, Federal agencies with extramural research and development budgets that exceed \$100 million are required to allocate 2.5 percent of their R&D budget to these programs. Each agency administers its own SBIR program within guidelines established by Congress. These agencies designate R&D topics in their solicitations and accept proposals from small businesses. Awards are made on a competitive basis after proposal evaluation.

Participating Agencies:

1. [Department of Agriculture](#)
2. Department of Commerce - [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#)
3. Department of Commerce - [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)
4. [Department of Defense](#)
5. [Department of Education](#)
6. [Department of Energy](#)
7. Department of Health and Human Services – [National Institutes of Health](#)
8. [Department of Homeland Security](#)

9. [Department of Transportation](#)
10. [Environmental Protection Agency](#)
11. [National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#)
12. [National Science Foundation](#)

Business and Farm Grant Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The USDA's [Agricultural Marketing Service](#) (AMS) administers programs that create domestic and international marketing opportunities for U.S. producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. The [Federal State Marketing Improvement Program](#) (FSMIP) offers grants with a one-to-one dollar match to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving marketing efficiency and performance. The [Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program](#) (FMLFPP) provides grants to help farmers and local food businesses create market opportunities to increase the accessibility of fresh, healthy, local foods (including seafood).

AMS also has [Research and Promotion Programs](#) to provide a framework for agricultural industries to pool resources and efforts to develop new markets, strengthen existing ones, and conduct research and promotion activities. AMS provides oversight, paid for by [industry](#) assessments, which helps ensure fiscal accountability and program integrity. The [Regional Food System Partnerships \(RFSP\)](#) program supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems. Effort is focused on building and strengthening local or regional food economy viability and resilience by alleviating unnecessary administrative and technical barriers for participating partners.

[Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) provides technical expertise, conservation planning, and financial assistance for farmers, ranchers and forest landowners wanting to make conservation improvements to their land. Technical assistance for aquaculture producers is provided in the areas of:

- Agriculture Engineering for aquaculture infrastructure,
- Water Quality technical assistance for both clean water inputs and nutrient management outputs,
- Energy Conservation Engineering,
- Water Management Engineering for water conveyance systems, and
- Wildlife enhancement – both terrestrial and aquatic opportunities.

USDA grants for eligible producers are provided through a variety of programs, including:

1. [USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants](#) (CIG) are competitive grants that drive public and private sector innovation in resource conservation. CIG projects inspire creative problem solving that boosts production on farms, ranches, and private forests - ultimately, they improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and other resource concerns.

2. The [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.
3. [Rural Development](#) (RD) helps improve the quality of life in rural America through loans, grants, and loan guarantees to help with job creation, economic development, and essential services. RD promotes economic development by supporting loans through banks, credit unions, and community-managed lending pools. RD offers assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their operations. Finally, RD helps communities implement empowerment programs.
4. [Rural Business Cooperative Service](#) (RBS) offers programs to help businesses grow, as well as job training for people living in rural areas. RBS helps provide the capital, training, education, and entrepreneurial skills to help residents start and grow businesses or find jobs in agricultural markets and the bio-based economy.
5. [Rural Housing Service](#) (RHS) offers a variety of programs to build or improve housing and essential community facilities in rural areas. RHS offers loans, grants and loan guarantees for single- and multi-family housing, childcare centers, fire and police stations, hospitals, libraries, nursing homes, schools, first responder vehicles and equipment, housing for farm laborers and much more.
6. [Rural Utilities Service](#) (RUS) provides financing to build or improve infrastructure in rural communities. This includes water and waste treatment, electric power and telecommunications. These services help expand economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for rural residents.

See also:

- [Rural Business Development Grants Program](#)
- [Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\) Grants](#)

U.S. Department of Commerce

The [U.S. Economic Development Administration's \(EDA\) Investment Priorities](#) are designed to establish a foundation for sustainable job growth and the building of durable regional economies throughout the United States. The EDA encourages its partners around the country to develop initiatives that advance new ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions, including aquaculture. For example, the EDA's [Build to Scale](#) (B2S) program has a focus on the Blue Economy that includes aquaculture.

The [National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) offers several programs geared toward advancing environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and business practices:

1. [NOAA's SBIR program](#) supports investment in aquaculture research and development, which encourages small businesses to leverage federal funds to invest in innovative technologies and next-generation products and processes that may lead to commercialization.

2. [NOAA Sea Grant's Marine Aquaculture Grant Program](#) encourages demo projects and research geared toward the development of sustainable U.S. marine aquaculture. The program fosters dynamic partnerships that channel resources toward the development of sustainable aquaculture technologies. Awards often involve partnerships among commercial companies, research institutions, universities, state governments, and coastal communities. The program also supports [Sea Grant Extension](#) efforts.
3. The [Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program](#) includes aquaculture as an eligible topic area to fund projects that encourage the development of environmentally and economically sound aquaculture, as well as relieve fishing pressure and improve market availability of U.S. seafood products.
4. The [Marine Fisheries Initiative](#) (MARFIN) promotes programs that optimize economic and social benefits from marine fishery resources through cooperative efforts that evoke the best research and management talents within NOAA's Southeast Region. The intent is to focus projects funded by MARFIN into cooperative efforts that provide clear answers for fishery needs covered by the NMFS Strategic Plan. Funding priorities for MARFIN are formulated from recommendations received from non-federal scientific and technical experts, and from NMFS research and operations officials.
5. [Regional Aquaculture Pilot Projects](#) are supported by NOAA Fisheries through the Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions. These competitive grants are managed through the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions. Emphasis for pilot projects is placed on promising but less commercially developed technologies for finfish, shellfish, seaweed, and other relative newcomers to the domestic aquaculture industry. Grants emphasize the development and deployment of economically and environmentally sustainable aquatic farming techniques and business practices.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

[EPA Research Grants](#) fund the development of science and tools to meet the challenges of 21st century water resource problems, ensure water quality and availability, and protect human and ecosystem health. The EPA also offers [other grants and funding opportunities](#).

U.S. National Science Foundation

[America's Seed Fund powered by NSF](#) helps startups and small businesses transform their ideas into marketable products and services. Each year, the program awards \$200 million in funding to entrepreneurs across the country.

Disaster Assistance Grant Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish (ELAP) provided for losses not covered by other disaster assistance programs authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, such as losses not covered by the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). Only for farm-raised fish feed and death losses.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants provide grants to state and local governments, individuals, businesses, and private nonprofits. Individuals may not apply directly for funding, but may be sponsored through an appropriate sub-applicant via a local government, state agency, tribe or tribal agency, or private nonprofit. Applications are submitted to the state, eligible tribe, or territory, which receives funds from [FEMA](#).

FEMA provides up to 75 percent of the funds for mitigation projects. The remaining 25 percent can come from a variety of sources. A cash payment from the state, local government, or in some cases, directly from the individual is the most direct option. Other sources may include donated resources, such as construction labor; Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) funds from a flood insurance policy; or loans from other government agencies, such as the Small Business Administration.

Research Assistance Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The **Agricultural Research Service** (ARS) and its partners conduct intramural research and deliver technologies that improve domestic aquaculture production efficiency, animal health nutrition, genetic improvement, and product quality while minimizing impacts on natural resources. Current research includes shellfish and freshwater and marine finfish farmed across a diverse array of production systems. Research is conducted under [National Program 106: Aquaculture](#).

The **National Institute of Food and Agriculture** (NIFA) addresses national needs for aquaculture research, education, extension, and technology transfer to support U.S. aquaculture production through extramural capacity and competitive funding programs.

Capacity Grants:

- Evans-Allen
- Hatch Research
- Animal Health and Disease
- Smith-Lever Formula for Extension
- McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry

Competitive Funding:

- [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative](#)
- [Special Research Grants for Aquaculture Research](#)
- [1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grants \(CBG\) Program](#)

- [Small Business Innovation Research](#)
- Regional Aquaculture Centers:
 - [Northeast](#)
 - [South](#)
 - [North Central](#)
 - [Western](#)
 - [Tropical and Subtropical](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture Program](#)
- [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#)

The [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS) conducts both the [Census of Agriculture](#) and the [Census of Aquaculture](#), which provide comprehensive pictures of the aquaculture sector at the state and national levels every five years. Annually, NASS also publishes three aquaculture reports: The February [Catfish Production Report](#), the July [Catfish Processing Report](#) and the February [Trout Production Report](#).

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research

The [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) builds on public-private partnerships to fund innovative research addressing today’s food and agriculture challenges. Congress established FFAR in the [Agricultural Act of 2014](#). FFAR’s funding model leverages federal funding, allocated through the Farm Bill, via a one:one match with non-federal sources. FFAR has funded [several aquaculture projects](#) focused on improving the survival of early life-stages of marine finfish, geoduck, and scallop genetics and production practices, open-ocean cultivation of seaweed for enteric methane mitigation and novel vaccine development for freshwater finfish.

Competitive Funding:

- [Seeding Solutions](#)
- [New Innovator in Food and Agriculture Research Award](#) (no match required)

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The [Minor Use Minor Species](#) (MUMS) Grants Program is a competitive program established by the Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act of 2004. It provides grants to veterinary pharmaceutical sponsors or their research partners to support the development and approval or conditional approval of new animal drugs intended to treat uncommon diseases (minor uses) in major species (horses, dogs, cats, cattle, pigs, turkeys and chickens) or to treat minor species (such as finfish and shellfish). The FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine must have granted “designation” status to the drug under investigation and must have previously concurred with the study protocol submitted by the applicant. The MUMS Grants Program funds safety (including target animal safety, human food safety, and environmental impact), effectiveness and some manufacturing studies to support the FDA approval of designated drugs, including those for aquaculture uses.

U.S. Department of Commerce

The [National Marine Fisheries Service](#) (NMFS) supports aquaculture research grant opportunities. Funding may address issues such as environmental monitoring, recirculating aquaculture systems, shellfish farming, alternative feeds for aquaculture, new species research, and offshore aquaculture.

NOAA's [Sea Grant College Program](#) integrates research, extension, and education through 34 Sea Grant programs across the U.S. coasts and Great Lakes. Sea Grant leads NOAA's competitive, extramural research portfolio for aquaculture, relying on partnerships between NOAA and universities to fund projects that respond to local, state, and regional priorities (via [Sea Grant programs](#)), as well as national priorities. The Sea Grant Extension Network helps lead NOAA's engagement in aquaculture, with extension agents and specialists living and working in coastal communities, providing science-based information for local governments, industry, and citizen groups.

U.S. National Science Foundation

The NSF's [Small Business Innovation Research](#) (NSF SBIR) program is a key source of federal backing for research in many fields, including mathematics, computer science, and the social sciences. The NSF also funds basic research important to the aquaculture industry.