

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Due Date: March 31, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. EDT

OVERVIEW

The Nationwide Fishing Trap Removal, Assessment, and Prevention Program (TRAP) focuses on derelict trap removal in four areas: 1) standardization of data collection and monitoring, 2) reduction of economic and ecological impacts, 3) prevention and mitigation of harmful effects, and 4) comprehensive data sharing and analysis. The TRAP Program provides a unique opportunity to protect marine ecosystems, preserve local economies, and make a lasting impact on the health of waterways. The Program will coordinate the removal of derelict fishing traps (blue crab, American lobster, spiny lobster, Dungeness crab, stone crab, and potentially other types of traps) nationwide.

This Program will benefit coastal and estuarine natural resources by reducing target species and bycatch mortality of living marine resources and by the removal of abandoned and derelict traps from sensitive habitats, as well as providing economic benefits such as increased harvests. Projects should also foster awareness of the effects of derelict fishing traps to further the conservation of living marine resources and their habitats and contribute to the understanding of nationwide derelict fishing trap distribution and impacts. This competition is supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program (NOAA). Successful proposals in this solicitation will be funded through cost-reimbursable subawards and will be subject to NOAA terms and conditions.

The Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program anticipates distributing between 6 and 15 awards under this solicitation. At this point in time, it is expected that this will be the last round of funding available. The exact number of awards to be awarded and the exact amount of funds made will be at the discretion of the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program following pre-award negotiations with highly meritorious applicants. The Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program may request that a highly ranked applicant submitting more than one meritorious proposal combine all or parts of its proposals into one award. Publication of this opportunity does not obligate the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program to award any specific project or obligate all or any part of available program funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for any or all proposals. The number of awards to be made under this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funding requested by recommended applicants, the merit and ranking of the proposals, and the amount of funds available. Funding of up to \$1,475,000 is expected to be available for Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program removal grants in Fiscal Year 2027. Awards are for 18-month projects; longer-term projects are not permissible under this program. The minimum amount of award funding that may be requested is \$50,000. The maximum award amount is \$150,000. The anticipated project start date for awards made under this

competition is December 1, 2026. Applicants should build in administrative time (4-6 months) at the beginning of the award with debris survey and removal activities starting after April 1, 2027.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The program priorities for this solicitation are the detection and removal of derelict fishing traps and the collection of standardized data associated with the removed traps. Derelict fishing traps are passive cage-style gear that are lost, abandoned, discarded, or otherwise no longer under control of a commercial or recreational fisher. These traps target crustaceans and some types of finfish, and they include, but are not limited to, abandoned crab or lobster pots/traps. Such projects must comply with applicable federal and state laws regarding handling and ownership of derelict fishing traps. This program does not focus on other types of derelict gear, such as lost nets and lines.

We encourage proposals involving projects that take place in Sanctuaries, Reserves, or Tribal fishing grounds, or other protected areas. Projects are not limited to these areas, however, and may take place anywhere that derelict fishing traps are present. All proposals must primarily emphasize removal activities that provide ecological and/or economic benefits and must clearly lay out the direct links to such benefits.

The collection of high quality, standardized data is a critical priority of the TRAP Program. Proposals should place an emphasis on methodical data recording which reflects a commitment to quality data standardization over speed and volume of removals.

Participation in the program's standardized data process helps establish a critical foundation for understanding and addressing this pressing issue. All applicants **must express** an ability to use the ArcGIS Survey123 TRAP Program form for data submittal.

Strong proposals will integrate innovative, sustainable approaches to the "end of life" of derelict fishing traps (e.g., re-use, recycling, energy recovery, partnering with local waste management companies, etc.).

Prevention, outreach, education, and volunteer activities are valuable aspects of derelict fishing trap removal efforts, but they are not a priority focus of this program. Proposals including one or more of these aspects are allowed but not required.

Applications addressing other types of pollution not fitting the definition of derelict fishing traps provided above are not priorities for this solicitation and will not be considered.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

All projects must take place within the coastal waterways of the United States, territories, or the Freely Associated States (FAS) of the Pacific, which include the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. Projects in international waters will not be considered.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state and territorial government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, commercial (for-profit) organizations, American Indian and Alaska Native governments, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander organizations, and educational institutions. Tribal governments include both federal and state recognized tribes. The Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program is strongly committed to broadening the participation of American Indian Tribes. The Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program encourages proposals from, or involving, any of the above types of institutions. For-profit applicants should see the Budget section below for specific budget considerations for for-profit entities. Applicants with a proven record of success in implementing derelict trap removal projects with specific, measurable results are encouraged to apply. First-time applicants are also encouraged to apply.

Ineligible applicants include federal agencies or employees of federal agencies, foreign organizations, foreign public entities, and unincorporated individuals.

OTHER CRITERIA THAT AFFECT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must have the capacity to collect basic data described in the Basic Data Collection Requirements section and enter the data via the ArcGIS Survey123 TRAP App (provided to all successful applicants) or through an online browser. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DOCUMENT TRAP REMOVAL DATA IN SURVEY123 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRAP PROGRAM.

INELIGIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS

TRAP Funds may not be used to support political advocacy, food costs, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations, or any illegal activities. TRAP funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with existing legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation, and settlement agreements.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through the Nationwide TRAP Program online application system, WizeHive.

1. Go to the [WizeHive grant application portal](#) to register in our Nationwide TRAP online system. New users of the system will be prompted to register before starting their application. If you are already a registered user, use your existing login. Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on the homepage, click on the “Get Started” box in the Submissions section of the WizeHive homepage.
3. Follow the instructions to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION FORMAT AND CONTENT

Applications must adhere to an eight-page limit (one-page project summary, five-page project narrative, and two-page budget narrative) that is single spaced with a font size of 11 or larger. Any pages that exceed the limit for each section may not be reviewed. Files that cannot be opened or downloaded will not be reviewed. Proposals must be submitted online through the WizeHive portal and will not be accepted if sent via mail, fax, or email.

Applications should be sufficiently detailed in accordance with the guidelines and information requirements listed below and elsewhere in this announcement, and proposed work should be able to be completed within the proposed period of performance.

1. **Project Summary** (One-page maximum):

A brief project summary must include the following components:

- Applicant Organization;
- Project Title;
- Principal Investigator(s) Name, Address, Telephone Number and Email Address;
- Project Location: List the geographic area(s) in which the project will be implemented. Include geographic coordinates of removal sites if known;

- Project Description: Clearly state the purpose of the project, briefly list specific tasks to be accomplished with requested funds and proposed techniques that will be used, and indicate the duration of the project;
- Removal activity start date (not the proposed award start date);
- Funding: Approximate funds requested

2. Project Narrative (Five-page maximum)

When writing the project narrative, applicants should understand the components of the evaluation criteria (see Section "Evaluation Criteria" in this announcement) as they explain how proposals will be scored for the application to be competitive. The project narrative must not be more than five pages long and should give a clear presentation of the proposed work.

Generally, the project narrative should include:

- Introduction: A summary of what the removal project will do, why the removal project is needed, project goals and objectives, and anticipated ecological and/or economic benefits.
- Description: Describe all phases and aspects of the proposed on-the-ground project activities, fishery information including target species, fishery range, description of the derelict trap type/structure, removal techniques, data collection processes, and disposal arrangements to ensure derelict traps would not potentially be reintroduced. Describe data collection protocols, including the required use of Survey123, that will meet the requirement to collect and report basic data on removed derelict fishing traps in a standardized format (see DERELICT TRAP METRICS section for details).

Applicants should note that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires NOAA to analyze a project's potential environmental impacts; hence, applicants are required to provide as much detailed information as is reasonable on the project's activities in this section.

- Performance Metrics: Describe potential performance measures (listed below) that will be used to track the success of the project.
- Project Location: Provide maps, exact coordinates of all proposed removal locations, and the time of year that removal activities will take place in each location, including any location-specific timing considerations (such as closed fishery seasons). Be as specific as possible. Include city/county/state, river mile markers, water body name, and other descriptive features for all locations and distinct phases of the proposed activity. Include a map(s) of activity location(s) that define the project site if it is a single location, or polygon(s) if it is an area that covers more than one location (shapefiles preferred if available). If

exact locations are unknown at the time of application, describe removal site locations in as much detail as possible. Supplementary maps and shapefiles are not part of the application page limit.

- Location Details: Describe the characteristics of the location of the proposed activity:
 - Indicate the degree to which the location has been developed/disturbed. Examples include highly developed, light development, active harbor use, public beach, open space, etc. Also indicate whether the location is within a protected area, such as a national marine sanctuary, national marine monument, national park, national monument, and/or national wildlife refuge.
 - Indicate whether corals are present in the removal area.
 - Describe any biological surveys that have been completed in the location, if known, which document any federally threatened or endangered species. Provide any associated written reports (to be forwarded to NOAA).
 - Describe any anticipated changes over time to the natural landscape and/or viewshed that would result from the proposed activity.

 - List any federal or state recognized tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations in the project area, including those which may potentially be interested in and/or affected by the proposed activity, if known.
- Derelict Trap Assessment: If applicable, describe the mapping/surveying techniques that will be used to identify and assess the derelict traps. Examples include use of visual surveys, side-scan sonar, submersible vehicles, etc.
- Derelict Trap Removal: Describe the removal techniques that will be used, including how the removal site(s) will be accessed, and what equipment is expected to be used.
- Derelict Trap Data Collection Protocols: Describe planned data collection protocols that will be applied to meet the requirement to collect and report basic data on removed derelict fishing traps in a standardized format (see DERELICT TRAP METRICS section for details)
- Derelict Trap Disposal: Describe the plan to dispose of, recycle, reuse, and/or repurpose the traps removed.
- Post-Trap Removal Monitoring: Describe the monitoring work, if any, which will be conducted after removal during the project period to assess the benefit or change created by the removal. If post-removal monitoring will not occur, please indicate that as well.

- Project Implementation Timeline and Milestones: Describe the anticipated project duration and the timeline and milestones for completing all project objectives. If the region where derelict trap removals will occur has restrictions on the timing of when traps may be removed (such as closed fishery seasons), include that information. Proposed timelines should begin with the award start date (approximate start date of December 1, 2026), **include an upfront planning window before removal activity is scheduled to begin**, and not exceed 18 months.
- Permits and Authorizations: Are federal, state, territorial, local, or tribal permits, authorizations, waivers, etc. required for the proposed activities (assessment, removal, storage, and disposal of traps) to begin? If yes, then:
 - List and provide all required permits, authorizations, waivers, etc., as applicable;
 - Describe who will be responsible for obtaining those permits, authorizations, waivers, etc.; and
 - Provide copies of all required permits, authorizations, waivers, or determinations that you have secured. Please note that these documents are not included in the five-page limit.
- Notifications: What trap owner notifications are required in your state/territory following removal?
- Previous Work: Is the proposed activity a continuation or part of an ongoing activity? If yes, then:
 - Describe any changes to the proposed activity since it was initiated; and
 - Provide any additional information, previous environmental review documents, and/or reports from previous years. Relevant documents may be uploaded in addition to the five-page limit.
- Qualifications of applicants, including ability to report standardized data

3. Budget Narrative (Two-page maximum)

Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with the Nationwide TRAP Program's Budget Instructions cost categories. This funding opportunity will award grants of federal financial assistance funds; applicants must be able to comply with the OMB Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200). It is recommended to include travel funds for the required attendance at the annual TRAP Program PI meeting, which will be held in early autumn 2027. While in-person attendance at the annual meeting is encouraged, virtual attendance is acceptable in cases where travel opportunities are limited (e.g., budget constraints and timing conflicts). Each applicant must provide all applicable details for the budget information listed in the [SF-424A form](#). **Including the SF-424A form in your proposal is a requirement.** The form does not count toward the two- page maximum length for the budget narrative.

While for-profit entities are eligible applicants, charges to a potential award may include actual costs only; recipients may not apply loaded rates or realize profit from an award of federal financial assistance funds.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

The proposed budget may include an amount for indirect or “Facilities and Administrative” costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, and insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. See [2 CFR 200.1](#) and [200.412-415](#).

A copy of the current approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government should be included with the application package. If an award recipient does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, it may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) unless subject to an exception in 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f). Non-federal entities may use this rate indefinitely but may choose to negotiate an indirect (F&A) cost rate at any time. This de minimis rate option is not available to state governments, local governments, or Tribes.

DERELICT TRAP METRICS

BASIC DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, applicants will be required to report on specific metrics. Additional data collected and maintained by state fisheries or other groups (e.g., harvest information) may enhance your project. See Appendix A for more information.

Successful applicants **must** be able to collect basic metrics for removed derelict fishing traps:

1. Trap type (i.e., Dungeness crab, blue crab [hard, peeler], American lobster, spiny lobster, stone crab)
2. Trap materials
3. Trap location (GPS coordinates)
4. Trap location method (visual, sonar, other)
5. Target species entrapped (alive/dead)
6. Bycatch species entrapped/entangled
7. Trap condition (functional: able to continue to capture; nonfunctional: no longer able to capture)
8. Trap components present (e.g., vents, biodegradable components, buoy, line)

9. Picture of trap and catch - At least one photograph of each recovered trap and its bycatch is required for data collection.

The above metrics will be customized to the specific fishery and trap type. The Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program team will work with successful applicants to confirm the ability to collect basic derelict trap metrics based on the fishery. Use of the ArcGIS Survey123 App will ease data collection.

Successful applicants must be able to provide the following Derelict Trap Metrics and Project Performance Measures:

1. Geographic area surveyed (square miles, square kilometers, or shoreline kilometers)
2. Number of tribal groups engaged
3. Number of tribal and/or community members hired
4. Number of jobs supported
5. Number of jobs created
6. Number of commercial fishers supported
7. Derelict fishing trap removal site(s) occurring in community-identified important waters (if known)
8. Number of person hours used for the removal activities
9. Removal data, including number of traps removed and number of traps reused/recycled/converted to energy

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be screened to determine if they are eligible, complete, and responsive to this funding announcement. The Nationwide TRAP Program, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for an application with a minor administrative discrepancy that can be easily rectified or cured to confirm accuracy of submitted materials. Eligible proposals will then undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the Nationwide TRAP Program prior to the award. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Coordinated with State/Territorial/Tribal Regulatory Agency (20%): Applications that are not submitted by the relevant state/territorial/Tribal lead agency for marine resources should include a letter from said agency indicating that they are aware of, and supportive of, the proposed effort. Indicate if the project will take place in Sanctuaries, Reserves, Tribal or Indigenous community fishing grounds, or other protected areas.

Technical Merit (50%): Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, removal, and disposal to ensure activities are technically sound, feasible, will reduce interaction/harm to the environment, and comply with applicable laws regarding handling and ownership of derelict fishing traps. The project activities provide ecological and/or economic benefits. The project integrates innovative, sustainable approaches to the "end of life" of derelict fishing traps.

Cost-Effectiveness (10%): Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget.

Program Coordination (10%): Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to the TRAP Program team and participate in an annual hybrid meeting hosted at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, Virginia.

Funding Need (10%): Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that removal activities would not move forward without funding.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Nationwide TRAP Program may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, or defer applications to the future. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific Nationwide TRAP Program cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and the Nationwide TRAP Program. Applicants with a proven track record of success in implementing derelict trap removal projects with specific, measurable results are encouraged to apply. The balance and distribution of funding across fisheries, regions, and applicant types will be considered in selecting projects for funding. Therefore, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored proposals. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the Nationwide TRAP Program.

Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified that their proposal was not among those selected for funding.

OTHER

Project Period: All project dollars must be secured and expended within the period of performance. The period of performance is the period of time in which all activities in the proposed scope of work occur and is defined by the start and end dates selected in

the application. Projects should be able to be completed within 1.5 years of the start date of the grant, which includes the project planning period when required environmental compliance review for fieldwork is conducted that takes place before removal activity (see NEPA section for details). **Successful proposals should include four to six months of project planning in their timelines before fieldwork begins (including survey work).** Applicants selected to receive funding may be asked to modify the project start date. In some cases, the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program may fund a project with incremental funding, usually in the form of a multi-year award. If incremental or multi-year funding is awarded, in which the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program only obligates funds initially for the first phase of a project, the Nationwide Fishing TRAP Program has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent time periods; additional funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance, continued relevance to program mission and priorities, and the availability of funds.

Matching Contributions: Matching funds are allowed but are not a required part of this program. Match will not be considered in proposal review.

Procurement: Applicants should seek fair and open competition in all procurement activities to the extent practicable. If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, justification should be provided. An award by the Nationwide TRAP Program to the applicant does not constitute the Nationwide TRAP Program's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, award recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Drones: Under the American Security Drone Act (ASDA), all grantees may only use drones on the [Blue UAS Cleared List](#).

Receiving Award Funds: Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement after completing a signed agreement with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). Each award will be funded via a cost-reimbursable subaward. Each subaward will be issued a subaward contract with the full authorized amount but will only be paid as requested via invoicing. Each subaward shall submit invoices not more often than monthly and not less frequently than quarterly for allowable costs incurred. Funding intervals will be based on project start and end dates. The VIMS Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) will be responsible for tracking the start and end dates as well as issuing project contracts and funds. A final statement of cumulative costs incurred marked 'FINAL' must be submitted no later than 60 days after the final budget period end date. A request of an advance of funds may be approved and must conform to OMB Uniform Guidance for Grants [OMB Uniform Guidance for Grants](#) (2 CFR 200.305(b)(1)).

Subaward Requirements

This competition is supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program. As such, successful applicants will be subject to NOAA terms and conditions, some of which are indicated below. The full list of terms and conditions will be shared with successful applicants upon selection.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support: Award recipients will be required to grant the Nationwide TRAP Program and the NOAA Marine Debris Program the right and authority to publicize the project. Recipients must also acknowledge NOAA and the Nationwide TRAP Program's financial support for the grant in press releases, publications, and other public communications. Recipients are also required to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting project activities.

Invoicing: Payments will be issued within 30 days of receiving an invoice from subawardees.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Projects are subject to requirements under NEPA and the Endangered Species Act (state and federal), among others. **PLEASE NOTE: *The required environmental compliance review for fieldwork may take several months before it is completed. No fieldwork, including surveys, may take place before the environmental compliance review is completed and approved.*** Successful applicants must comply with all Federal, state, and local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances before conducting activities in the field.

Permits: 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.

Successful applications cannot begin on-the-ground assessment or removal activities until the NEPA process has been completed.

Programmatic Reporting Requirements: Award recipients will be required to submit semi-annual reports in WizeHive on progress towards key implementation milestones and program metrics in addition to a comprehensive final programmatic report.

Quality Assurance: Grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality) and must comply with NOAA's Data Sharing Policy for all environmental data. Applicants should budget time and resources to complete these tasks.

SELECTION TIMELINE

Proposal Due Date March 31, 2026, by 11:59 p.m.
EDT Anticipated award notification by August 2026

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

An FAQ page is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This page can be found [here](#).

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on trapprogram.org. For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact the TRAP Program team at trapinfo@vims.edu.

APPENDIX A.

Table 1. Additional data collection field options for project tracking and evaluation

Data element	Frequency	Suggested format	Programmatic use
Removal date	Per trap removed	MM/DD/YYYY	Evaluate impacts over project time horizon
Removal method	Per trap removed	By hand, motorized trap puller, grappling hook, etc.	Evaluate frequency and costs of different removal methods
Removal costs	Per removal day/event or project	Itemized costs related to derelict trap removal activities	Evaluate cost effectiveness of removals and drivers that may influence marginal (per unit) removal costs

Fishery description	Per removal project	Target species, gear description, fishing effort (# individuals, # gear fished)	Contextualize drivers, scale, and potential impacts of gear loss; inform policy solutions
Fishery harvest information	Per removal project	Total annual fishery harvest, harvest per trap for fishery, and areas where removals occurred	Contextualize drivers, scale, and potential impacts of gear loss; inform policy solutions
Human community description	Per removal project	Non-fishery stakeholders, dominant uses of coastal resources, fishery interactions	Contextualize drivers, scale, and potential impacts of gear loss; inform policy solutions
Habitat description	Per removal project	Habitat(s) where fishing takes place or might be impacted by derelict gear	Contextualize drivers, scale, and potential impacts of gear loss; inform policy solutions
Derelict trap management	Per removal project	Existing, proposed, and/or former fishery management measures related to derelict trap prevention and mitigation	Contextualize drivers, scale, and potential impacts of gear loss; inform policy solutions