

# Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship Program Fellow Handbook

## Program Description

The Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship program aims to build and strengthen the future workforce dedicated to a healthy coastal environment and resources by encouraging enthusiastic, bright new professionals to launch their careers in Alaska. The program matches highly motivated soon-to-graduate or recently finished graduate students with hosts in Alaska-based organizations or state or federal agencies in Alaska for a 12-month paid fellowship.

The Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship provides a unique first professional opportunity for finishing graduate students who are interested in both marine resources and marine policy in Alaska. Modeled after the highly successful Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship and the California Sea Grant State Fellowship, the Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship provides an opportunity to acquire on-the-job experience in planning and implementing marine/coastal resource policies and programs in Alaska. It can be a “kick-start” to a successful career in these fields.

## What is Alaska Sea Grant looking for?

Alaska Sea Grant wants new professionals who are interested in making a 12-month commitment to full-time work related to marine resources and policy in Alaska. Our goal is to choose hard-working and dedicated Fellows who understand the mission of Alaska Sea Grant and will represent themselves as Alaska Sea Grant Fellows during the year.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for this fellowship program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

1. Be close to completing or have completed their graduate degree within the last year.
2. Degrees should be in a discipline applicable to marine policy in Alaska including but not limited to marine sciences, physical sciences, social sciences and Arctic sciences.

## Schedule/Timeline

December:	Call for fellows and hosts
February:	Fellow and host applications due
February–March:	Eligible applicants interviewed
March–April:	Match fellows with hosts
July–September:	12-month fellowships begins, Initial Professional Development Plan (PDP)
October–June:	Monthly fellow cohort meetings
January–March:	6-month meeting & PDP updated
June–August:	Exit interview, final reporting & final PDP submitted
June - September:	Fellowship ends

## **Your Year as an Alaska Sea Grant Fellow**

We are pleased to welcome you into the family of talented Alaska Sea Grant fellows that have represented this fellowship since its inception in 2015. A Sea Grant fellowship has the potential to launch you on a valuable career. We anticipate that being an Alaska Sea Grant Fellow will be a strong positive reflection on your talent and future in Alaska.

### **Fellow Responsibilities**

You will be representing Alaska Sea Grant during your fellowship, and we expect both your Host and you to refer to you as an Alaska Sea Grant Fellow.

### **Fellowship length and start date**

The length of the fellowship is 12 months. It is your responsibility to arrange your start date with your Host office and inform your Alaska Sea Grant fellowship coordinator as soon as possible. Finalizing your start date will give you an opportunity to ask about any necessary reading, opportunities to visit the office prior to the start, or possible early travel opportunities with your Host.

The fellowship start date can range July 1- Sept 30, and is to be negotiated between the Fellow and Host upon each party's commitment to the fellowship program. A Fellow's graduation/thesis completion date or Host project start dates and training are common factors in determining the fellowship year start date. The fellowship will run one year from the day you start (e.g., start: July 1; end: June 30). We strongly recommend you inform your Hosts during the placement process of your scheduling needs. While Hosts are understanding and flexible on this topic, they prefer not to have any surprises. It is standard for offices to think about their staffing schedules well in advance.

### **Beginning the fellowship**

At the start of the fellowship, review the Host's office policies including dress code, work hours, time needed (if any) to work on school commitments, vacation, sick leave, and attendance at conferences and meetings.

Expectations for your workplace will be set by your Host supervisor. Time off requests need to go to your Host Supervisor who will determine the approval process based on the Host's policies. Alaska Sea Grant does not advise the Host on this topic. The stipend amount and frequency does not change, so the Host will keep this in mind when reviewing time off requests.

You may be asked by Alaska Sea Grant to attend some meetings throughout the year to discuss your experience with the program. It is the expectation that you will attend as long as there is not a conflict with your work schedule for the host agency.

### **Conflict Resolutions**

Participation in the fellowship program is a privilege, not a right, for both Fellows and Hosts. To earn this privilege, Fellows must continue to justify this benefit by demonstrating diligence and adaptability to the Host environment. Likewise, the Host should be sensitive to the Fellow's educational needs. The Alaska Sea Grant director and associate director, after due consultation with and consideration of the

mutual rights and interests of the Fellow, the Host, and Alaska Sea Grant, will adjudicate problems that may arise.

## **Early Withdrawal from the Program**

Early withdrawal from the Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship program is highly discouraged. However, situations may arise over the course of the fellowship year causing a Fellow to decide to leave the program early. This may be due to personal reasons or to move on to an employment opportunity. Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please notify your Host office and Alaska Sea Grant as soon as possible.

There will be an open discussion between the Host, Fellow, and the Alaska Sea Grant associate director to determine the Fellow's transition out of the program in a way that is acceptable to all parties. Fellows who do not complete at least 6 months of the fellowship will not be considered alumni.

## **Essentials**

### **Stipend and Benefits**

Alaska Sea Grant administers the overall award over a 12-month period. The Fellowship provides a stipend in equal, biweekly installments. The Alaska Sea Grant associate director will coordinate the appropriate paperwork for your stipend. The fellowship stipend is set at a rate that includes funds to be used to individually purchase your own health insurance plan. For fellowships starting in 2023, each fellow will receive \$60,000 in stipend for the twelve-month assignment.

Fellows are not university employees, therefore fellows are not covered by UAF workers' compensation insurance, fellows do not receive health insurance benefits from the University of Alaska, nor do fellows receive other employee benefits. For fellows conducting field work, hosts may need to include the fellow as a volunteer, or similar role, so that they can be covered for liability and/or injury by the host.

### **Professional Development and Fellowship-related Activity funding including travel**

There is a \$5,000 budget available to cover expenses for domestic travel or conference registrations, etc. for fellowship-related activity and/or to support professional development goals. Hosts may provide and coordinate supplemental funding for opportunities that surpass the original budget.

Your host and Alaska Sea Grant must approve requests in advance. This process must generally be completed at least two weeks in advance of travel expenditures being incurred to ensure adequate opportunity for both organizations' approval. Start by sending an email to your Host supervisor requesting permission to travel and include an estimate of expenses. Once the Host approves your travel, please coordinate with the Alaska Sea Grant travel coordinator.

Then you will work directly with the UAF Travel Customer Service Office (TCSO) to secure travel arrangements according to university travel processes and regulations. University travel information can be found at [www.uaf.edu/travel/](http://www.uaf.edu/travel/). It is essential that you make arrangements well in advance, ideally a month before your travel dates. The TCSO can help you to create a travel request in Concur, the travel management tool. Please reach out to Alaska Sea Grant to obtain a fund number. Airfare and

lodging are usually purchased directly by the university. Expenses for ground transportation and per diem are reimbursable after the trip. Additional costs for personal dates and destinations are the responsibility of the traveler. The TCSO representative can assist you with determining these costs. Please retain all receipts during your travel. Shortly after the conclusion of your trip you will need to complete an expense report in Concur to include providing copies of all receipts. TCSO can assist you with completing the report.

### **Taxes**

Alaska Sea Grant and your Host are not allowed to give you tax advice. We suggest you consult with a tax advisor regarding tax implications during your fellowship year. UAF does not issue any documentation of stipend payments because the stipend payments are not contingent upon a deliverable good or service. UAF does not withhold taxes from fellow stipends and does not issue IRS forms to fellows for reporting fellowship stipend income. Fellows are responsible for keeping accurate records and for filing the appropriate tax returns with State and Federal tax agencies. See <https://uaf.edu/finserv/finance-accounting/resources/student-payments.php#fellowship> for more information.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Fellows are administratively responsible to Alaska Sea Grant, but must be responsive to the project, administrative, and technical needs of the Host to whom they report. Alaska Sea Grant requires a professional development plan (PDP) from each Fellow written at the beginning of the fellowship, updated at 6 months, and a final version at the end of the fellowship year. The plans should be written with the guidance of your host supervisor using the [PDP Template](#).

During your fellowship and within your professional development update, it is your responsibility to keep track of your accomplishments and completed tasks at your Host office including:

- Meetings, conferences, or workshops attended
- News or media coverage
- Publications
- Presentations
- Awards
- Collaborations
- Products, patents, or copyrights

### **Alaska Sea Grant Events & Meetings**

Throughout the year, Alaska Sea Grant conducts a variety of events and meetings. You may be invited to attend Alaska Sea Grant monthly meetings, the annual Alaska Sea Grant Advisory Committee meeting, and/or workshops with content overlapping with your fellowship project(s).

### **Announcements/News**

Throughout the year, Alaska Sea Grant communicates information about the Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship program to a variety of audiences through a variety of communication tools. Each summer, Alaska Sea Grant typically makes an announcement about the new fellowship cohort. We will ask you to submit a headshot (highest resolution image you have) for this announcement. During your

fellowship year, you will receive requests from Alaska Sea Grant for additional information about your project and progress. Please respond timely to those requests.

### **Concluding the Fellowship**

Within one month prior to your fellowship end date, Alaska Sea Grant will hold an exit interview with each Fellow.

Within two weeks prior to your fellowship end date, you will submit a final professional development to the Alaska Sea Grant associate director with a final list of accomplishments and tasks completed during your fellowship including:

- Meetings, conferences, or workshops coordinated or presented at. Include an estimate of the number of people at the event;
- News or media coverage in newspapers, TV, radio, or the Web, and/or videos or websites created. Provide links where applicable;
- Scientific or general-audience publications. Provide links if publications are available online or email PDF copies to the fellowship coordinator;
- Presentations given to scientific, public, or stakeholder groups. Include the title, date, place, sponsoring organization, and purpose of the presentations. PDFs of PowerPoint presentations can be emailed to the fellowship coordinator;
- Partners and collaborators with a description of the nature of the collaboration;
- Awards;
- Number of K-12 students who attended fellowship related events or presentations;
- Volunteer hours, if your project used volunteers. Include one or two sentences to describe the volunteer work;
- Products, patents, or copyrights; and
- Tools, technologies, or information services (e.g the application of technology to coastal resource management through synthesis, integration, training and the development of new management tools.)

Prior to the end of the Fellowship, please send the Alaska Sea Grant associate director with updated contact information for future correspondence. As an Alaska Sea Grant State Fellow Alum, you will be invited to events in the future. We want to keep in touch!

### **Alaska Sea Grant State Fellowship Program Contact:**

Molly Cain, Associate Director

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[Alaska Sea Grant's Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)