Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium		
Agency Code:	P260	Section:	48

Fiscal Year FY 2026-2027
Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS *(FORM B1)*	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):
X	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS *(FORM B2)*	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):
X	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	Not requesting any changes.

CAPITAL REQUESTS *(FORM C)*	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):
	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
X	Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS *(FORM D)*	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):
	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
X	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Emily Osborne	(843) 953-2078	emily.osborne@scseagrant.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Ryan C. Bradley	(843) 953-2076	ryan.bradley@scseagrant.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2026-2027 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	9/17/2025	
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Susan Lovelace	Robert H. Boyles Jr.

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium
Agency Code:	P260
Section:	48

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Agency Operations Package (Inflation Costs)	85,508	0	0	0	85,508	-0.75	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Long-term Establishment of a Commercial Seafood Apprenticeship Program	90,000	0	0	0	90,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	B2 - Non-Recurring	General Funding for Sea Grant	1,649,692	0	0	0	1,649,692	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			1,825,200	0	0	0	1,825,200	-0.75	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.00

Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium		
Agency Code:	P260	Section:	48

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	**Agency Operations Package (Inflation Costs)**

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $85,508** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $85,508**

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	**0.00**

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:

X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	Consulted DTO during development
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:

	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Strategic Planning and Performance Measurements: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 3.1.1, 3.1.2,3.1.3, 3.1.4

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium's funding request will provide facility lease funds and inflationary resources needed to cover the agency's day-to-day operational costs. The agency has not requested an inflationary-associated budget increase since 2023; therefore, the increasing cost of operations have been carved out of funds used by the agency to meet its mission. This request directly supports all three of the agency's management and administrative goals. The Consortium is seeking recurring funding to enhance:

Programmatic Impact: The agency's core function is to provide science-based information that supports the social and economic well-being of coastal communities while ensuring the responsible use and conservation of marine and coastal resources. To achieve this, it is essential that government-supported data collections remain secure, preserved, and accessible to the public.

Societal Impact: The Consortium collaborates with numerous partners and stakeholders—including SCOR, SCDES/BCM Bureau of Coastal Management, SCDNR–Marine Resources Division, industry partners, organizations, and individuals—to apply coastal science in ways that enhance economic growth, public safety, and maritime industries. Expanded capacity will strengthen partnerships with state programs, enhance virtual planning and presentations, and help retain highly skilled, community-focused staff. Improved information access will enable decision-makers to plan for growth, prepare for hazards, foster economic development, and conserve natural resources.

Economic Impact: The Consortium faces challenges in keeping pace with security needs through high-quality but annually leased software. Expanding access to tools such as Microsoft Office 365 and Adobe Acrobat will reduce service disruptions, streamline communication, and improve staff engagement with stakeholders.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Various outside vendors that support the agency's mission and day-to-day operations. Funds will be used to supplement current funds for a new lease beginning May 1, 2026. Other funds will be focused on general operations due to the increase in costs for services and materials.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

The Consortium requests $85,508 in state recurring funds to ensure operational capacity in FY2026-27 and out-years. These funds will be used to cover an increase in facility lease costs and inflation of day-to-day operational costs. The inflation request is calculated based on a cumulative inflation rate of 6.3% (since 2023 utilizing https://www.usinflationcalcula...) of the $1,357,262 base State funding level, which excludes Margaret A. Davidson Scholarship Funds from the calculation, as these awards have not increased.

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium is a partnership of nine member institutions that work together to generate, translate, and apply coastal science and information. Its mission is to support the health and well-being of coastal communities—serving as engines of economic growth, stewards of ecosystem services, and public servants to all segments of society in a rapidly changing world. In alignment with the NOAA National Sea Grant Program, the Consortium's efforts address a wide range of local, regional, and national priorities, including healthy coastal ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, weather and climate resilience, sustainable coastal development and economies, and environmental literacy and workforce development.

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium reports to both the State of South Carolina and NOAA's National Sea Grant Office. Due to the success of our program in obtaining resources to build our research and engagement portfolios we identified and reported to National Sea Grant Office impacts and accomplishments, 72 products, 79 trainings and $22,437,538 in economic benefits from these projects for the state in 2024-25. These activities are benchmarked against our strategic plan. Success is critical in leveraging the funding and resources needed to conduct this level of output for our stakeholders.

This year we utilized our state appropriations to match $3,995,661 the Consortium received in competitive federal opportunities and base National Sea Grant College Program funds. Inflation and the current costs of operating a science agency have stretched our abilities to meet the needs of constituents efficiently and the present request accounts for increased operational costs.

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	Lease: The Consortium requests recurring state funds to offset the newly negotiated lease rate increase with its current landlord, the Washington Light Infantry (WLI). Under the existing lease, which expires in May 2026, the Consortium pays $24.01 per square foot—a rate well below market value for downtown Charleston and coastal South Carolina. A competitive search and lease renewal negotiations, led by Real Property Services within the Department of Administration's Division of General Services, have been completed in 2025. The most cost-competitive lease candidate continues to be with the Charleston-based office leased from WLI. A new five-year agreement includes a reasonable 3% annual increase, raising the effective rate by $3.82 per square foot to approximately $27.83 by 2031. Even at this level, the lease remains an excellent value compared to alternative proposals received during the procurement process. Support for this request will allow the Consortium to remain in its current location—conveniently situated near many member institutions—without disrupting operations or reducing services. Without these funds, the Consortium would be forced to cut further into operational costs and, given recent competition for lease space, would be unable to secure facilities that meet its needs. Continuity at the WLI location ensures staff have the space and resources necessary to conduct business effectively, while providing constituents with consistent access to agency personnel, technology, and services. Operations: The Consortium requests additional recurring state funds to sustain operational capacity now and into the future. Routine inflationary increases in operating costs have not been addressed since 2023, and they are increasingly straining the agency's ability to meet its mission and serve constituents effectively. Although the Consortium leverages federal and other funds to support operations, rising day-to-day expenses are outpacing these supplemental resources. The agency has adopted cost-saving measures and new technologies, but the associated costs of these tools continue to rise. In addition, the shift from perpetual software licenses to subscription-based models has significantly increased expenses. For example, vendors such as Adobe and Microsoft no longer support older versions of Acrobat and Office, requiring the Consortium to adopt annual subscription services to maintain essential functionality and data security. The requested funds will provide the Consortium with the standard tools needed to enhance workforce productivity, strengthen data security, and ensure continuity of operations. This investment will allow staff to deliver programs efficiently, improve communication, and comply with statewide information technology initiatives required of all state agencies.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium		
Agency Code:	P260	Section:	48

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	**2**

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	**Long-term Establishment of a Commercial Seafood Apprenticeship Program**

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	**General: $90,000** **Federal: $0** **Other: $0** **Total: $90,000**

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	**0.00**

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:

	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
X	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
	HR/Personnel Related
	Consulted DTO during development
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:

X	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	Government and Citizens

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Strategic Planning and Performance Measurements: 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 3.1.1, 3.1.3

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium's funding request will provide annual support for the Commercial Seafood Apprenticeship Program

Programmatic Impact: Two of the Consortium's five focus areas are Sustainable Seafood and Aquaculture and Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development. This project helps fulfill objectives in our programmatic strategic plan that we developed in concert with coastal organizations, agencies and businesses that have a stake in fisheries and aquaculture.

Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture: Objective 1.4: Support the seafood industry through the development of applied programs to provide technical training, experiential learning, and relevant science that enhances an ecosystem approach to fishing and harvesting practices and lessens barriers to industry entrance in South

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Carolina; Objective 2.1: Seafood businesses adopt socially and economically viable and sustainable production practices. *Environmental Literacy and Workforce Development*: Objective 2.1: Train the future workforce to meet workforce needs in ocean sciences fields; Objective 2.2: Support the development of a coastal and ocean industry workforce. Societal Impact: The Consortium worked with SCDNR-Marine Resources Division as well as industry-based partners, communities, organizations and individuals to develop the SC Commercial Seafood Apprenticeship Program as there is a lack of employees coming into the workforce that are trained to harvest seafood safely and sustainably. Growing the potential pool of seafood growers and harvesters not only sustains the industry but creates new jobs for South Carolinians and supports local production of high-quality protein. Economic Impact: Given the shrinking entry-level workforce and aging industry, the apprenticeship program provides readily available employees to sustain the industry in hopes of growing the social and economic impact. In the second year. Five apprentices from the 2025 cohort are currently employed in the industry in SC with four more preparing to harvest and sell oysters when the season opens in the fall.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Funds will support apprentices from South Carolina; local businesses from the McClellanville, Charleston, Georgetown, and Beaufort areas; and the provision of safety and training support services in developing apprentice seafood workforce skills.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	The Consortium requests $90,000 in recurring state funds to sustain the South Carolina Commercial Seafood Apprenticeship Program. This one-month, paid training program, based in McClellanville, South Carolina, provides apprentices from across the state with both classroom instruction and on-the-job experience to prepare them for careers in commercial fishing and mariculture, such as oyster and clam farming. Upon completion, graduates receive assistance in securing full-time, entry-level employment with local seafood businesses. From 2024 to 2026, the program has been supported by NOAA Sea Grant, USDA Rural Development, the S.C. Department of Agriculture, and the S.C. Farm Bureau. Although federal funding was originally provided for two years, the Consortium stretched these resources to cover three. Given the program's success in strengthening South Carolina's seafood workforce, sustained state-level support is now needed to maintain momentum and ensure its continuation. State funds will be used to compensate instructors, seafood business mentors, and boat captains; provide modest stipends to graduating apprentices; secure liability insurance and dorm-style housing; purchase gear and supplies; market the program to target audiences; and support a dedicated program coordinator. The apprenticeship builds the next generation of professionalized seafood workers through practical training and industry exposure. Program topics include safety, seamanship and navigation, boat and gear operation and maintenance, fisheries science and management, and seafood business and marketing. Apprentices spend multiple days at sea gaining direct fishing and mariculture experience, and all participants receive U.S. Coast Guard-approved safety training and certifications. Instruction is provided by seafood industry members, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Clemson University, the Alaskan Marine Safety Education Association, and the U.S. Coast Guard. Program coordinators have been drawn from the McClellanville community, ensuring strong local ties.

	The program has already delivered measurable results. Five apprentices graduated in 2024, and eleven in 2025, representing communities across the state including Charleston, Awendaw, Moncks Corner, Andrews, Murrells Inlet, Hilton Head, Greenwood, Cowpens, Clinton, Columbia, and Seabrook. Of the 2025 graduates, five are currently employed in the seafood industry, and four more are preparing to launch oyster harvesting operations when the season opens this fall. This program is made possible through a strong partnership between the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, Clemson University, the local seafood industry, the Town of McClellanville, the McClellanville Watermen's Association, and the McClellanville Community Foundation.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium		
Agency Code:	P260	Section:	48

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	General Funding for Sea Grant

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	$1,649,692

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

	Mark "X" for all that apply:
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
	Consulted DTO during development
	HR/Personnel Related
X	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding
	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:
	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Strategic Planning and Performance Measurements: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 3.1.1, 3.1.2,3.1.3, 3.1.4

The S.C. Sea Grant Consortium's funding request will support the agency's core mission and goals. Therefore, this request would support all three of the agency's management and administrative goals and corresponding strategies and objectives. The Consortium is seeking one-time funds to continue:

1. Programmatic Impact: The agency's core function is to provide science-based information that supports the social and economic well-being of coastal communities while ensuring the responsible use and conservation of marine and coastal resources. To achieve this, it is essential that government-supported data collections remain secure, preserved, and accessible to the public.

2. Societal Impact: The Consortium collaborates with numerous partners and stakeholders—including SCOR, SCDES/BCM Bureau of Coastal Management, SCDNR–Marine Resources Division, industry partners, organizations, and individuals—to apply coastal science in ways that enhance economic growth, public safety, and maritime industries. Expanded capacity will strengthen partnerships with state programs, ensure quality service to constituents and coastal businesses, , and help retain highly skilled, community-focused staff. Improved information access will enable decision-makers to plan for growth, prepare for hazards, foster economic development, and conserve natural resources.

3. Economic Impact: In 2024, Dr. Von Nessen produced a report estimating the total annual economic impact of the Consortium at $9.0 million, including $3.6 million in labor income for South Carolinians. This corresponds to a statewide multiplier of 1.8, meaning that for every $100 spent on Sea Grant activities, an additional $80 in economic activity is generated elsewhere in the state. A return-on-investment analysis shows a 923% yield: for every $1 appropriated, the Consortium generates an average of $9.23 in new economic activity for South Carolina.

National Sea Grant funding has grown from $62.8 million in 2010 to $94 million in 2024, including $14 million designated for aquaculture and $4.25 million for coastal resilience. The program was reauthorized in 2020 through 2025, affirming its importance and updating its appropriations framework, and several reauthorization bills are now before Congress. The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium receives both formula-based and merit-based allotments to implement its four-year research, extension, communications, and education plan. Currently, federal support totals $1,649,692 annually, including base funds, merit awards, and coastal resilience allocations. Approximately $500,000 is distributed through a competitive biennial research program to South Carolina universities, with the remainder supporting extension, communications, education, and administration.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Funds will be used to supplement current funds to complete general operations, programming, research and other fiscal obligations.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Through its core programs, the Consortium administers competitive research that addresses pressing coastal challenges such as flooding, water quality, sustainable fisheries, aquaculture development, and community resilience to sea-level rise and changing environmental conditions. It engages directly with communities, local governments, and industries through an extensive Extension program that translates scientific findings into practical tools and solutions. This outreach connects researchers and decision-makers to strengthen planning, resource management, and economic vitality in South Carolina's eight coastal counties.

This budget request will support competitively selected research slated to begin in FY26 across Consortium member institutions. The funded projects support research to protect and improve South Carolina's coastal environments and communities. Scientists are studying how best to restore salt marshes, manage polluted sediments in stormwater ponds, and how to sustainably manage key fisheries like blue crab, striped bass, and red drum. Other projects connect water quality to public health in Charleston's waterways and test how green infrastructure in Folly Beach can reduce flooding and improve local resilience. Together, these efforts combine science, community engagement, and practical solutions to sustain healthy coasts and thriving coastal communities.

This budget request will also support the Consortium's education and communications programs that advance scientific literacy and public engagement. Through teacher training, student fellowships, classroom resources, and the award-winning Coastal Heritage magazine, the agency reaches thousands of students, educators, and residents each year. Its fellowships and internships—such as the NOAA John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship and the Margaret A. Davidson Undergraduate Resilience Scholars program—prepare the next generation of coastal and marine professionals who will serve South Carolina and the nation.

This investment ensures that South Carolina remains a national model for how science can guide resilient growth, protect natural resources, and sustain the state's blue

	economy. With strong partnerships across universities, government agencies, and communities, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium continues to deliver measurable impact—advancing research, supporting coastal livelihoods, and safeguarding the state's invaluable coastal heritage.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Sea Grant Consortium		
Agency Code:	P260	Section:	48

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan

AMOUNT	$41,618

What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	N/A

How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	This plan, if implemented, would result in a 16.2% reduction of the agency's operating funds, which currently total $256,428. Of this total amount, approximately fifty-five percent (55%) is allocated for our office space lease in Fiscal Year 2025-26 ($140,485); the remainder supports our office equipment rentals, state insurance premiums, utilities, IT equipment replacement, IT software needs, and information security support. A reduction of $41,618 would greatly restrict the ability of the agency from meeting our administrative, fiduciary, and programmatic responsibilities.

What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	The loss of 16.2% of the agency's operating funds would jeopardize the agency's ability to meet its administrative responsibilities, would impact the ability of the agency to meet its programmatic and fiduciary responsibilities, and could affect our current office lease agreement (see Program/Activity Impact).

Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS	The Sea Grant Consortium is not proposing to implement any cost savings measures over $50,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than $50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?