

Request for Proposals: Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response Fund



Issue Date: April 15, 2025

Deadline for Submissions of Pre-proposal: May 16, 2025

Deadline for Submissions of Qualifying Proposals: July 31, 2025

Proposal Schedule

April 15, 2025: Request for Proposal (RFP) issued and distributed

April 30, 2025: Deadline for written questions regarding this RFP. Please email questions to Michael Arredondo at: rfps@psmfc.org

May 5, 2025: Q&A document, including the answers to the written questions posted on the PSMFC website at: <http://www.psmfc.org/procurements>

May 16, 2025: Deadline for submission of PRE-PROPOSAL

PRE-PROPOSALS must be submitted by e-mail to: rfps@psmfc.org

Subject line for submissions: AIS Rapid Response Pre-proposal

Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.

May 19 - June 16, 2025: Review of PRE-PROPOSAL

June 20, 2025: Notification of invitation to submit full PROPOSAL

July 31, 2025: Deadline for submission of full PROPOSAL

PROPOSALS must be submitted by e-mail to: rfps@psmfc.org

Subject line for submissions: AIS Rapid Response Full Proposal

Faxed and hard copy proposals will not be accepted.

August 1 - 22, 2025: Proposal review

August 25, 2025: Project finalists selected (Projected)

September 1, 2025: Funding available

September 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026: Anticipated Project Period

Funding Opportunity Description

Summary

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), in cooperation with and funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be issuing approximately **\$510,000** in grants to fund efforts to plan a rapid response or deploy rapid response measures to a new detection of a potentially invasive species. Response efforts must target an aquatic invasive species, defined as non-native plants or animals that reside in fresh, wetland, estuarine, or marine waters.

Background

This rapid response funding opportunity is intended for proposals that support the rapid response to a new species introduction within freshwater, estuarine, or marine waters of the United States, including the U.S. territories. The ability to respond rapidly to new detections of potential invasive species is critical to prevent further spread and avoid harmful impacts to the environment, economy, human health, and cultural resources. Once a new non-native species is detected, there is a short window of opportunity to respond with efforts to eradicate or contain the species. Such activities are often undertaken by state agencies with funds either taken out of budgets that were developed without allocations for such activities or provided on an emergency basis. However, too often funding is absent, resulting in delayed action or no action. Rapid response funding is needed to ensure timely and more effective responses to aquatic invasive species (AIS) and avoid the need for costly long-term and wide-spread control efforts.

This funding opportunity addresses the need for readily available financial resources to assess and support response actions for quick containment or eradication of newly detected species. PSMFC invites proposals to support the rapid response to a new species introduction within freshwater, estuarine, or marine waters of the western United States.

1. For the purposes of this funding opportunity, rapid response is defined as a process employed to eradicate the founding population of non-native, potentially invasive, species in a specific location before that species begins to reproduce or spread so widely that eradication is no longer feasible.
2. Eradication is defined as the removal or destruction of an entire population of an invasive species within a specified area.
3. Delimiting a population is defined as a process to identify the geographic distribution of a newly detected AIS.
4. Monitoring is defined as a process to conduct repeated sampling events to understand the presence or absence of a species in a defined geographic area.

Eligibility requirements for this rapid response funding opportunity are described below. Applications will be evaluated and scored using a process and merit criteria as described below.

Scope of Work

Rapid Response funding may be used to respond to a new species introduction within freshwater, estuarine, wetland, or marine waters of the western United States or U.S. territories. The geographic scope of the proposed projects must be within the western United States. For the purposes of this

funding opportunity the western United States is represented by the 19 western U.S. states West of the 100th Meridian. Funding may also be used to respond to AIS already present in the western United States or U.S. territories in areas where the species has not been previously detected. For response efforts directed towards species with existing populations in the United States or U.S. territory, priority will be given to incipient populations that are either a secondary invasion, were introduced a significant distance away from an existing population (e.g., introduction into a new watershed), or pose a new threat to vulnerable, high priority, or protected areas.

Eligible Activities

The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) will be issuing **\$510,000** in grants to qualified projects. Proposals submitted for consideration should be in pursuit of eradication of a targeted species from the defined location. Proposals are particularly encouraged that address the emerging threats from golden mussels (*Limnoperna fortunei*). Funds cannot be used for long-term management or remediation.

Eligible activities for this fund are those that should support the goal of eradication including:

Planning and site delineation:

- Delineation to determine the spatial extent and abundance of an isolated AIS population
- Analysis and assessment of potential response measures
- Planning, environmental documentation and/or permit acquisition
- Measures to contain the population during the species assessment or while a long- term response plan is formulated

Deployment of response action:

- Implement actions on site that support or lead up to eradication of the targeted species.
- Survey surrounding areas
- Monitor the population and effectiveness of applied response measures

Examples of relevant project proposals include:

- Containment of new species detection
- Evaluation of control options to address a new species population
- Possible eradication of newly detected species
- Development of a rapid response plan to address new species detection

Examples of project proposals that will **not** be considered include:

- Education and outreach
- General or routine monitoring
- Research that is not directly tied to eradication action

Eligible Applicants

This funding opportunity is open to state governments, Native American tribal governments, and interstate organizations. These entities may collaborate with and provide subawards to other entities to assist with the response, such entities may include local governments, institutions of higher learning and non-governmental organizations. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome.

Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. U.S. territory agencies, and Federal agencies are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation.

Regulatory and Environmental Compliance Requirements

Potential projects or proposed actions will be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). If proposed actions fall under a categorical exclusion, this may minimize NEPA compliance requirements. However, all proposed actions must demonstrate that they are covered by a categorical exclusion if this is the case. Potential projects or proposed actions may also be subject to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 7 compliance. Therefore, all proposed actions must address ESA requirements. Inclusion of NEPA, ESA and NHPA compliance understanding based on proposed project or proposed actions must be included in pre-proposal and proposal submissions.

Eligibility Requirements

- A. Prior to submitting a pre-proposal, the target species must be confirmed in identity and reported to the US Geological Survey Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Database.
- B. The applicant must have an existing rapid response plan that can apply to the situation or complete a rapid response plan within 60 days of date of award.
- C. To apply to the fund, the applicant must provide a pre-proposal that includes a project narrative, budget and timeline as described below.
- D. Applicants who have submitted a pre-proposal and been identified for submission of a full proposal must submit a project summary, narrative, project budget and timeline as described below.

Application and Submission Information of Pre-Proposal

Content and Form of Pre-Proposal

Eligible entities must submit an approximately 3-page pre-proposal that contains:

1. A project narrative that outlines the activities to be conducted with the requested funding, including:
 - a. Narrative description of each activity to address new species detected
 - b. Clear identification and description of entity applying for funds
 - c. Clear identification of regulatory compliance associated with each activity
 - d. A prioritization of all the proposed activities
 - e. A timeline for the performance of each activity

2. A budget in tabular form: Budget must show individual entries for each proposed activity, applicable match, and that administrative costs will not exceed 5% of the total budget.
3. A budget narrative that describes the cost of activities to be conducted and how the numbers were derived.

Application and Submission Information of Proposal

Content and Form of Proposal

- A Project Summary of no more than one page must be included.
- The Proposal must be no more than five pages using at least a 12-point font.
- Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 5-page proposal limit.
- Appendices (additional pages to the 5-page proposal limit and 1-page summary) may include budgets and justifications, any project related permits and/or access agreements, previous, current and pending support, and information such as resumes.
- Letters of support are encouraged.
- Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals.

Proposals must include the following information in the format outlined below.

- A. Project Summary (1-page limit) shall include the following:
 1. Organization
 2. Principal Investigator(s)
 3. Address, telephone number, and email address of Principal Investigator(s)
 4. Project title
 5. Identification of the species that will be the focus of the response
 6. Project objectives for the project period
 7. Summary of work to be performed within the project period
 8. Budget Information
 - a. Total funds requested from PSMFC
 - b. Current and pending support (if applicable)
 - c. Cost sharing to be provided for this project, if any (not required). Specify whether contributions are cash or in-kind
 - d. Total project cost
- B. Project Description (5-page limit): Each project must be completely and accurately described. The main body of the proposal should be a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and include specific objectives and performance measures for the period of the proposed work and the expected significance; relation to longer-term goals of the project; and relation to other work planned, anticipated, or underway.

The following information should be detailed in the project description:

1. Project Title
2. Agency or Organization applying for funds.
3. Point of Contact: Provide contact information (name, affiliation, address, phone, and email) for at least one individual who can answer questions regarding the application.

4. Species Description:
 - a. State the AIS that will be the focus of the response, including how the species confirmation was made.
 - b. Describe the potential and known impacts of the targeted species, including environmental, economic, cultural, and health impacts. Include citations, as appropriate. If a formal species risk assessment has been performed, attach it to this proposal. Novel species where potential impact is less certain should include a statement reinforcing the degree of concern and, if applicable, reference similar species with an invasion history.
 - c. If applicable, identify any watch lists, or similar prioritization tools, that identify the targeted species
 - d. Describe the invasion history of the species.
5. Location Description:
 - a. State the precise location where the species was found and the date and manner by which the species was detected.
 - b. If known, state the method of introduction.
 - c. If known, state the size and percentage of the area infested.
 - d. Describe the location where the targeted species was detected, including characteristics of the location that may facilitate survival and potential range expansion of the targeted species.
6. Rapid Response Plan:
 - a. If a Rapid Response Plan exists, describe how it will be used for this project. Attach the Rapid Response Plan to this proposal.
 - b. If a Rapid Response Plan does not exist, state the intent and timeline to complete a Rapid Response Plan.
7. Management Goal and Objectives:
 - a. Clearly articulate the management goal of the proposed project in terms that are specific and quantified.
 - b. List project objectives. Objectives are meant to be realistic targets or benchmarks that, if achieved, will accomplish the management goal.
 - c. Provide a statement that describes, and provides evidence for, the level of confidence in accomplishing the management goal, noting any challenges or barriers that may hinder success.
 - d. State the estimated start and end dates of activities, including any significant milestones.
8. Description of entity(ies) undertaking the project:
 - a. Describe the organization proposing to conduct the project, expressing the specific skills, experience, and capacity related to tasks to be performed.
 - b. As applicable, describe how the applicant has coordinated with other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in the response.
9. Approach or Treatment Options:
 - a. Describe the specific conservation actions or efforts necessary to accomplish the management goal and objectives.
 - b. Provide detail of how the objectives will be accomplished by describing the actual work to be done.
 - c. Demonstrate that the applicant will use sound design, appropriate procedures, and accepted fish and wildlife conservation or management principles.
 - d. Include contingency plans to address any unexpected event or situation that occurs.
 - e. Describe any connection of this project to broader management or funding efforts.

- f. Any actions to be taken to protect non-target species should be noted in this section.
 - g. If applicable, include any information to support environmental compliance review requirements such as:
 - i. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NEPA.
 - ii. Endangered Species Act (ESA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with the ESA.
 - iii. National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NHPA, such as locations of historic or cultural properties.
 - iv. Other Permits – list and provide the status of any other required Federal permits.
 - v. The proposal also must describe whether the investigators have the necessary approval/permits in hand, or what steps the investigators have taken to obtain the necessary permits.
- C. Project Budget: You must include in the proposal a detailed narrative for each category providing an explanation and/or process for how the funds will be used and/or allocated. Describe and justify the budget for each organization or agency requesting funding in this proposal using the mandatory budget categories listed below.
- Personnel (including Fringe Benefits): Include the salary details for all employees assigned to this project. Explain the duties for each individual identified by name and position. State the time commitments such as hours and percentage of time for each position. List the total charges for each person. Provide details on all fringe benefits in correlation to the employee's hourly wage and the number of hours to be worked in association with the proposed project. Identify what types of fringe benefits are being covered. Describe the total charges for each person listed along with an explanation of how the charges were calculated.
 - Travel: These costs include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation and other directly related expenses incurred while traveling for the purpose of the proposed project. Include each traveler's name, dates of travel, purpose of travel, destination, and itemized costs to include lodging, airfare, per diem, ground transportation, etc. Identify why the requested travel is directly relevant to the successful completion of the project. If there are any actual trip details that remain unknown, please explain the basis for the proposed travel charges.
 - Contractual: Include all expenditures associated with contractually related activities that are directly associated with the proposed project. List each contract as a separate item. Describe the applicability of the project for each contract to be acquired.
 - Supplies: Include a description of all equipment that individually costs under \$5,000 and miscellaneous supplies and materials that are required for the purpose of the proposed project. Itemize supplies by type of material or nature of expense. Identify how the proposed supplies are necessary for the successful completion of the project.
 - Equipment: Include items that individually cost more than \$5,000. For any items of equipment whose costs exceed \$5,000, a description of the item and associated costs is required. List each item of equipment being requested. For each item of equipment, please identify the number of

units, cost per unit and total cost specified. Explain why each item of equipment is necessary for the successful completion of the project.

- Indirect Costs: These are costs incurred by the organization as a result of administering the proposed project but not directly associated with project implementation. Indirect costs generally include space rental, utilities, postage, data processing, training, safety management, affirmative action programs, administrative support, and supervisory oversight. NOTE: All proposals must include a copy of the approved negotiated indirect cost rate document or similar verifying your indirect rate as part of your proposal package.

Instructions, Conditions and Notices to Proposers

1. Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing no later than April 30, 2025 to: Michael Arredondo
PSMFC
Email: rfps@psmfc.org
Phone: (503) 595-3100/Fax: (503) 595-3444

The answers to the written questions will be posted on PSMFC's website by May 5, 2025.

2. Amendments to the Solicitation

If this solicitation is amended, all terms and conditions that are not amended remain unchanged. Proposers shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this solicitation in the proposer's cover letter.

3. Submission, Modification, Revision and Withdrawal of Proposals
 - a. The deadline for pre-proposals is May 16, 2025
 - b. The deadline for proposals is July 31, 2025

Submitted to Michael Arredondo, PSMFC

Email: rfps@psmfc.org

- c. PSMFC reserves the right to consult with and to consider information from its own sources, including information from state and federal agencies regarding the proposer's prior performance or the status of outstanding investigations or warrants involving the proposer.
- d. Late proposals
 - i. Any proposal, modification, or revision at the PSMFC office designated in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt to offers is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the PSMFC Fiscal Manager determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the acquisition; and
 - ii. There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the PSMFC installation designation for receipt of offers and was under the PSMFC's control prior to the time set for receipt to offers; or
 - iii. It is the only proposal received.
 - iv. However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal that makes its terms more favorable to the PSMFC, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

- v. Acceptable evidence to establish time of receipt at the PSMFC installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of PSMFC personnel.
- e. If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal PSMFC processes so that proposals cannot be received at the office designated for receipt of proposals by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent PSMFC requirements preclude amendment of the solicitation, the time specified for receipt of proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal PSMFC processes resume.
- f. Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before awarded. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by an offer or an authorized representative, if the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the proposal before being awarded.
- g. Applicants shall submit proposals in response to this solicitation in English and in U.S. dollars.
- h. Applicants may submit modifications to their proposals at any time before the solicitation closing date and time, and may submit modifications in response to an amendment, or to correct a mistake at any time before award.
- i. Applicants may submit revised proposals only if requested or allowed by PSMFC.
- j. Proposals may be withdrawn at any time before they are awarded. Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of notice by the Finance Officer.
- k. Each Proposal must state that it is a firm offer which may be accepted within a period of ninety (90) days. Although the contract is expected to be awarded prior to that time, the ninety-day period is requested to allow for unforeseeable delays.
- l. Applicant shall submit the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with the authority to bind the firm, as well as to answer questions or provide clarification concerning the firm's proposal.
- m. PSMFC is not liable for any costs incurred by vendors/contractors in developing or submitting their response to this RFP.

Proposal Evaluation

1. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be evaluated to determine if they are complete and meet the requirements specified in this RFP.
2. All proposals received in accordance with these RFP instructions will be reviewed, analyzed, evaluated and scored in accordance with the criteria described below. If needed, additional information may be requested from one or more applicants. Each submitted and complete full proposal is distributed to at least three external reviewers for written evaluation and comments. Reviewers may be representatives from academia, state resource agencies, non-governmental organizations and PSMFC staff.
3. Request for additional information. During the evaluation period, PSMFC may request additional information to fairly evaluate a proposer's offer. If such information is required, the proposer will be notified in writing (or by email) and will be permitted a reasonable period of time to respond.
4. Evaluation Criteria. By use of numerical and narrative scoring techniques, proposals will be evaluated by PSMFC against the factors specified below. The relative weights of the criteria – based on a 100-

point scale – are shown in parentheses.

The evaluation criteria are:

- a. Potential impact of the invasion (30 points). Detailed information that characterizes
 - i. Known impact of species on environmental, economic, cultural or human, animal or plant health
 - ii. Probability of spread from colonized area
 - iii. Proximity to vulnerable, high priority or protected areas
 - iv. Any existing prioritization or watch list designation of species by applicant
- b. Proposed Approach (30 points)
 - i. Management goals align with funding opportunity objectives
 - ii. Proposed methods are clearly defined, valid, effective and timely
 - iii. Measures of project success are defined
 - iv. Environmental compliance and permitting requirements are identified
- c. Preparedness (10 points)
 - i. Capacity to secure staff, equipment or other items to perform project
 - ii. Existing rapid response plan(s) of applicant
- d. Experience and Qualifications (10 points)
 - i. Ability to conduct proposed project in a rapid manner
 - ii. Prior involvement in rapid response efforts
- e. Cost/Project Budget (10 points)
 - i. Financial match or in-kind contributions
 - ii. Cost effectiveness and detail of project cost
- f. Post-response Commitment (10 points)
 - i. Post-response activities or efforts

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal or professional benefit could influence or appear to influence the professional judgment of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. Improper influence could be used to not only advance one's own research program, but also to unfairly promote a family member's, colleague's or former student's program. Thus, care must be exercised to avoid a conflict of interest during the proposal review process and the discussion of past, current or proposed research. A conflict of interest also exists when circumstances simply have the appearance of compromising the professional judgement of a member of the Proposal Review Committee. It is the policy of PSMFC that conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest shall be avoided wherever possible and disclosed and minimized in situations where interests cannot be reasonably separated. Whenever a conflict of interest arises during discussions of the Proposal Review Committee, the member in question shall disclose the possible conflict and excuse themselves from the discussion.

Grant Award

1. All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and awards will be made to those proposed projects whose combination of cost and technical offers is deemed to best address the research themes of this RFP. It is estimated that the final awards for selected projects will begin in August 2025.

2. PSMFC reserves the right to make an award for a project at a cost that is less than what was proposed.
3. PSMFC expressly reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and make no award under this RFP if such action is in the best interest of the PSMFC.
4. PSMFC shall award in the technical rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:
 - a. Availability of funding.
 - b. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - i. Geographically,
 - ii. By type of institution,
 - iii. By type of partners,
 - iv. By research priority,
 - v. By project types
 - c. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by federal agencies.
 - d. Program priorities and policy factors.
 - e. Applicant's prior award performance.
 - f. Partnerships with/participation of targeted groups.
 - g. Adequacy of information necessary for US Fish and Wildlife Service to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before funding is approved.

Reporting Requirements

Awardees will be required to submit an interim performance report every 6 months after the date of the award that describes actions, progress and significant developments. The final performance report will include the following:

- Overview of project
- Description, location, and timeline of actions taken
- Any natural, cultural, or economic resources (e.g., Threatened or Endangered species, sensitive habitats, commercial operations) that may have influenced the choice of response measures
- Roles of all entities involved in response
- Barriers or challenges experienced, and contingency actions taken
- Summary of key issues and lessons learned
- Outcome of rapid response
- Description of any post-response actions conducted or planned