

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** Z-RIN 0648-ZB48
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.429, NOAA, NOS, National Marine Sanctuary Program
- **Dates:** Applications must be received by the Program Manager between February 11, 2005 and April 15, 2005 at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program provides support for independent graduate-level studies in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, particularly by women and members of minority groups. Individuals who have been admitted to a graduate program and are U.S. citizens may apply for the scholarship. Scholarship selections are based on financial need, academic excellence, recommendations, and research and career goals. Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships may provide, subject to appropriations, support of up to \$32,000 per student: a 12-month stipend of \$20,000 in addition to a tuition allowance of up to \$12,000. A maximum of \$64,000 may be provided to masters students (up to 2 years of support) and up to \$128,000 may be provided to doctoral students (up to 4 years of support). Up to 4 scholarships may be awarded. Information about the scholarship can be obtained from the web site: [www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov](http://www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov)

**FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT**

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Program Objective**

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is authorized at 16 U.S.C. 1445c-1 to recognize outstanding scholarship in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, particularly by women and members of minority groups, and encourages independent graduate-level research through financial support of graduate studies in such fields. Gender and minority status are not considered when selecting award recipients. However, special outreach efforts are employed to solicit applications from women and minorities. Scholarships are distributed by disciplines, institutions and geography, and by degree sought, with selections within distributions based on financial need, the potential for success in a graduate level studies program, and the potential for achieving research and career goals. The program is administered through NOAA's National Ocean Service and is funded annually with 1% of the amount appropriated each fiscal year to carry out the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

### **B. Program Priorities**

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program's endeavors to support those individuals, particularly women and members of minority groups, who otherwise would not be able to pursue an advanced degree in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology due to financial constraints. The Program seeks to increase the numbers of women and minorities in these scientific disciplines.

### **C. Program Authority**

16 U.S.C. 1445c-1

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Funding Availability for FY2005**

Subject to appropriations, approximately \$128,000 will be available for FY 2005. Up to 4 awards may be made. The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program provides support of up to \$32,000 per student: a 12-month stipend of \$20,000 in addition to a tuition allowance of up to \$12,000.

### **B. Project/Award Period**

The award periods are 2 and 4 years respectively. A maximum of \$64,000 may be provided to masters students and up to \$128,000 may be provided to doctoral students (up to four years of support). The anticipated start date is August 1, 2005. If an application is selected for initial funding, the NOAA, NOS has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

### **C. Type of Funding Instrument**

The funding instrument is a grant to the individual applicant

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Only United States citizens currently pursuing or intending to pursue a masters or doctoral level degree in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, including the curation, preservation, and display of maritime artifacts are eligible for an award under this scholarship program. Prospective scholars do not need to be enrolled, but must be admitted to a graduate level program in order to apply for this scholarship. Recipients of scholarship awards may be employed at the time of the award if it is a requirement of their degree program or directly related to their research effort. Other forms of employment will not be allowed and scholars will be required to submit a letter certifying that they are in compliance with this requirement. Eligibility must be maintained for each succeeding year of support and annual reporting requirements, to be specified at a later date, will apply.

#### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

There are no matching requirements for this award.

### **IV. Application and Submission Information**

#### **A. Address to Request Application Package**

There is no application package. Information that should be included in the applications submission is shown below. Further information about the scholarship and NOAA's research priorities can be found on the web site at [www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov](http://www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov) Information in hard copy may be requested from: Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Attention: Office of the Assistant Administrator, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The above address should also be used for submitting applications.

Information Contact(s): Send your request for information to the Program Manager at the address shown above, by telephone (301) 713-3074, or by internet to <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov>

#### **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

Each application package must include the following items: Failure to submit these items exactly as described in each section below will disqualify the application from consideration.

##### **1. General Information Sheet**

a. Personal Data: Provide your full name, country of citizenship, current address, permanent address, and home and work telephone numbers. If you can be reached by fax or e-

mail, include that information. Optional – for statistical collection purposes only: indicate your gender, and race or ethnicity.

b. Degree Sought: State your proposed field of study (oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology) and degree type you are seeking (e.g. M.S., M.A., Ph.D.). Include the month and year you expect the degree to be awarded. State the name and location of your institution.

c. Education: List the academic degrees you have received, or expect to receive by the start of your proposed graduate studies for this program, including the date of receipt and institution.

d. Statement of Financial Need: In a concise paragraph, discuss how you plan to fund your graduate level education. Provide the estimated amount needed for tuition and fees. List all resources currently available to you to cover your graduate studies (e.g., grants, student loans, scholarships, research or teaching assistant positions, personal funds). Indicate the length of time these resources will be available and if they include work requirements. List other sources to which you have applied, but have not received a response. Discuss what the impact would be on your graduate education if you do not receive this scholarship.

## 2. Statement of Intent

The Statement of Intent is a self-description of your academic research and career goals, and how your proposed course of study or research will help you achieve these goals. This is your opportunity to present yourself, your beliefs, and your aspirations. Include any background information you believe is pertinent, and provide insight into why you have chosen the goals you are pursuing. This statement should not be a research proposal or scientific abstract. This statement will be used to evaluate you as an individual, not necessarily as a scientist, and your motivation for applying for this scholarship. This statement should demonstrate your organizational, analytical, and written communication skills. The statement of intent should be typewritten, single-spaced on a blank sheet of paper, and should not exceed one page in length. Statements longer than one page will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified.

## 3. Institute Certification

A letter from the applicant's institution certifying that the student is enrolled or has been accepted to a graduate program must be submitted with the application. The letter should consist of the following information on school letterhead and be signed by a school official: Name and location of the academic institution, the school and department that you are currently attending or plan to attend, and the month and year your studies will begin if you are not currently enrolled. If you have a graduate advisor, list his/her name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and an e-mail address, if available in the Institute Certification portion of your application. Current transcripts or letters of acceptance will not be accepted in lieu of the Institute Certification. Failure to include the Institute Certification specifically as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified.

#### 4. Transcripts

Provide transcripts for all previous university/college level studies. Photocopied transcripts are acceptable. Transcripts must be included with all other application materials. Those mailed separately will not be accepted. Failure to include transcripts from all previous university/college-level studies will result in the application being disqualified.

#### 5. Three Letters of Recommendation

Each application must include three, and only three, signed letters of recommendation from individuals who have knowledge of your academic record, research effort, work and/or life experience. Relevant paid work, such as internships and volunteer efforts, is applicable. If you have a sponsor or advisor in the program, one of these letters should be from that individual. Letters of recommendation sent apart from the application will not be accepted. Applications without three, signed letters of recommendation or with more than three letters of recommendation will result in the application being disqualified.

#### 6. Declaration

Applicants must certify that all statements and information in their application are true and correct by copying the following on a plain sheet of paper, signing it, and including it in their application:

I, the undersigned, declare, under penalty of perjury, that all statements and information in my application are true and correct.

Executed on [insert date] \_\_\_\_\_  
Print or type Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Failure to include this statement, signed by the applicant, will result in the application being disqualified.

C. Submission Dates and Times -- Applications must be received between February 11, 2005, and April 15, 2005 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. Each envelope is time and date stamped as they are received. Applications received prior to February 11, 2005 will be returned to the sender with a statement that the application should be submitted within the application period. Applications received after April 15, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time will not be reviewed or considered, and will be disqualified.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

#### E. Funding Restrictions

No special restrictions apply.

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

Applications should be sent to the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Attention: Office of the Assistant Administrator, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Only hard copies of applications will be accepted.

### **V. Application Review Information**

#### A. Evaluation Criteria.

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives of student (goals and objectives described in the Statement of Intent). (20%)
2. Quality of project and applicability of program priorities. (For the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship, quality of project relates to the applicant's research goals.) (7%)
3. Recommendations and/or endorsements of students. (18%)
4. Additional relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards, interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills. (For the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship relevant experience related to diversity of education, extra-curricular activities; honors and awards do not apply. This information should not be included in the application. Interpersonal and written skills will be evaluated from information in the Statement of Intent.) (15%)
5. Financial need of student (40%)

#### B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review of applications is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of applications. A panel of at least three NOAA experts will individually review and rate applications based on the evaluation criteria. A numerical ranking will be assigned to each application based on the average of the panel members ratings. The Selecting Official, the Associate Assistant Administrator for Management, will award in rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the selection factors below.

#### C. Selection Factors

1. Balance/Distribution of Funds
  - a. Across academic disciplines (not applicable to this program)
  - b. By types of institution
  - c. Geographically
2. Availability of funds
3. Program-specific objectives

#### 4. Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates - The names, academic institutions, degrees being sought, research plans, and biographical information of the scholarship awardees will be posted on the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program web site: [www.fosterscholar.noaa.gov](http://www.fosterscholar.noaa.gov) in mid-July. The information posted on the web site may also be published in marketing materials developed to advertise the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program.

### **VI. Award Administration Information**

#### A. Award Notices

A hard copy congratulatory letter is sent to each successful applicant along with an award document describing the terms of the award and providing forms that the applicant must complete. These forms include the CD-346, Applicant for Funding Assistance; CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying; and SF270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement and requesting a letter from the awardee stating that he/she will not be working during the award period. The award document must be signed and returned along with the completed forms listed above. The annual reporting requirements are also included in the award package.

#### B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

##### 1. Pre-Award Notification Requirements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register Notice published October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917) as amended by the Federal Register Notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109) are applicable to this solicitation.

##### 2. Limitations of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project.

3. It has been determined that the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships are categorically excluded from the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

#### C. Reporting

Awardees are required to provide an annual report discussing the scholar's activities, accomplishments, academic progress and research progress. The report must include a certification from the scholar's academic advisor indicating that the student's work is on track.

#### D. Classification

This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). This application has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control number 0648-0432. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is 4.5 hours for an application and 45 minutes per letter of recommendation. These estimates include the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection-of-information subject to the PRA unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

E. This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

F. Because notice and comment are not required under 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, for notices relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits or contracts, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, 5 U.S.C. 601 et.seq is not required and has not been prepared for this notice.

#### VII. Other Information

A. The Stipend and Tuition. The annual stipend will be paid directly to the scholar. The stipend is intended to defray cost-of-living expenses, and not to support research costs. NOAA anticipates the student and their faculty advisor will secure research funds independent of the scholarship. Tuition and academic fees will be negotiated between the academic institution and the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship program manager at NOAA prior to the receipt of funds. This negotiation is intended to leverage scholarship funds and enhance opportunities for scholarship recipients. In those instances in which tuition and academic fees are not totally waived by the academic institution, the tuition allowance in an amount equal to the tuition and fees not waived (but not to exceed \$12,000) will be paid directly to the scholar for remittance to the academic institution. If tuition and fees are reduced or waived by the academic institution, then that portion of the tuition allowance not needed (i.e., up to \$12,000 in the case of a total waiver) will be retained by NOAA for future scholarships. No money will be paid directly to the student from the tuition allowance for purposes other than the payment of tuition and fees.

B. General Scholarship Information. Specific instructions regarding the disbursement, management, and reporting requirements for all stipend and tuition allowance payments will be provided to the scholarship recipients upon selection for the award. The awarding of funds beyond the first year will be based on availability of funds, continued eligibility of the student, periodic certification by the academic institution that adequate academic progress is being made, and compliance with applicable reporting requirements. At its discretion, each academic institution may supplement a scholar's stipend from institutional funds in accordance with the supplementation policy of the institution.

VIII. Agency Contact(s)

Send requests for information to <http://fosterscholars.com> or mail requests to the attention of the Program Manager, Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Office of the Assistant Administrator, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, National Ocean Service, 1305 East-west Highway, Silver Spring 20910.

Dated:

Alan Neuschatz,  
Associate Assistant Administrator for Management  
National Ocean Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce