

2026 SEED GRANT APPLICATION



Institute of Environmental
Research and Education

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Institute of Environmental Research and Education (IERE) Seed Grant program is to support UNF tenured, or tenure-earning faculty conduct environmental research. Our goal is to facilitate innovative environmental research by providing funding on a competitive basis. This program provides needed funding to faculty to start or realize environmentally focused research projects. Specific funding criteria are detailed in the evaluation criteria.

Support for these faculty research development grants is provided through the River Branch Foundation and Vulcan Materials Company Foundation.

Research proposals must address one or more of the Institute of Environmental Research and Education priorities:

- Coastal Resilience and Water
- Nature and Health
- Conservation and Resources

Two grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$10,000. Funds can be used for the purchase of supplies and equipment, associated travel, faculty stipend, publishing fees and student wages (see the ***ALLOWABLE EXPENSES*** below for details).

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of UNF faculty and are competitively awarded to the most meritorious proposals (see the ***EVALUATION CRITERIA*** section below for details).

Applications for funding must be received no later than **Monday, Nov. 3 at 5:00 p.m.** Completed applications, including the signed acknowledgment form, must be received electronically in PDF format by the deadline. ***Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered for funding.***

Proposals should be submitted to IERE via e-mail at environment@unf.edu.

ELIGIBILITY

All projects must involve at least one UNF faculty member who is tenured or in a tenure-earning position. University staff and community partners are eligible to be team members, but not the principal investigator.

Faculty members who were the principal investigator for Seed Grants funded in 2024 or 2025 ***are not*** eligible to apply as the principal investigator for funding in the 2025 funding cycle.

All faculty involved in a project must be in “good standing” with Academic Affairs and the Institute of Environmental Research and Education, meaning that proper execution and reporting requirements have been met in conjunction with previous awards such as:

- Summer Scholarship Grants sponsored by Academic Affairs
- Proposal Development Grants sponsored by Academic Affairs

- Seed Grants sponsored by the Institute of Environmental Research and Education

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The Institute of Environmental Research and Education will provide administrative assistance for purchasing equipment and supplies, as well as hiring student assistants. Travel associated with research will be managed by the researcher's home department, unless other arrangements are made in advance.

Allowable expenditures may include:

- Student funding (*students must be paid hourly and cannot work more than 20 hours per week*)
- Travel for field work and/or presentations related to the funded project
- Materials, equipment and other expenses directly related to the funded project (*include quotes, including shipping costs, for all major purchases that are greater than \$1,500*)
 - *All receipts or receipt copies should be sent to IERE*
- Publication fees associated with the funded project (*requires approval from dean's office*)
- Faculty stipends (7.65% must be calculated into the overall budget submitted for all stipends requested)

Funds will become available to faculty on **Thursday Jan. 1, 2026**, and the deadline for all expenditures is **Friday Dec. 4, 2026**.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

General Policies and Guidelines:

For a proposal to be considered, it must conform to the general policies and guidelines as outlined in this application, including:

- Applications include ***all required*** sections and information
- Principal investigator did not receive a Seed Grant in 2024 or 2025
- If awarded a previous Seed Grant, faculty have successfully completed all requirements
- Research team includes a tenured or tenure-earning faculty member
- All expenses are allowable (*contact IERE for questions*)
- The total expenditures requested, including fringe benefits, shipping and other incidental charges, do not exceed the grant maximum

Scoring Criteria - Proposal Priority

For a proposal to be considered, it must address at least three of the priorities listed below. IERE prescreening will determine “yes” (one point each) or “no” (no point) for each category below.

- Faculty who ***have not*** previously received Seed Grant funding
- Principal Investigator is a junior tenure-track faculty
- Northeast Florida regional focus
- Interdisciplinary focus with faculty members representing different disciplines
- Faculty are members of the [IERE Environmental Research Consortium](#)

- Budget used for paid research opportunities for students and or purchasing supplies and equipment for use in continued research

Scoring Criteria - Proposal Evaluation

Each proposal will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary committee of UNF faculty on the below criteria. Reviewers will score each proposal with the below criteria on a likert scale, with each criterion below ranging from a top score of five to a low score of one. The total proposal evaluation score, along with the total priority score, will be used for funding decisions. As with all UNF internal grant proposals, awards, or dossiers, applicants are reminded that reviewers will be outside of your discipline and thus you are encouraged to use language that can be understood by a diverse audience.

- Focus area addresses one or more of the Institute of Environmental Research and Education priorities:
 - Nature and Health (New Nature and Health Center)
 - Coastal Resilience and Water
- Conservation and Resources
- Clear statement of purpose or research question, goals, and objectives
- Rational and need of study is well supported
- Clear methodology, timeline, plan of work, and or project design
- Reason to believe that the project will be successfully completed within timeline provided, including the consideration of possible delays
- Significance of the proposed study to the discipline and to society
- Potential of project and faculty to attract additional external funding, publish, present, produce quantifiable results related to this proposal (*committee will also consider attached CVs*)

REQUIRED FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

Document must be 11 point or larger font, double-spaced and one-inch margins.

Section 1: Cover page – Proposal name with PI and Co-PI contact information

Section 2: Proposal abstract – Abstracts should be 150 words or less.

Note: Abstracts will be published on the Institute of Environmental Research and Education website, annual report, etc. Thus, it is recommended that the abstracts be written for a general audience and not include any proprietary information or intellectual property the authors do not wish to publicly disclose.

Section 3: Proposal narrative – Maximum of six pages (*not including references*). Ensure to include all information from scoring criteria such as purpose, methodology, significance, and next steps and external funding)

Section 4: Proposal budget – Include a budget narrative (*review the **ALLOWABLE EXPENSES** section*).

Section 5: Past grants – For any author who has previously been awarded a seed grant in the past, please elaborate on the outcome of that grant project. Specifically, include the seed grant citation and a list of any publications and presentations, as well as the status of any external funding applications that resulted from that project. Include that for each author.

Section 6: Letters of support (Optional) – Letters can come from department chair, dean, community partner or others.

Section 7: Curriculum vita of lead author

Section 8: Signed acknowledgement form

POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Faculty who accepts Seed Grant funding must agree to the following terms. Future Seed Grant applications ***will not be considered*** if the requirements are not met on previous grants.

Marketing and Promotion

The Institute of Environmental Research and Education works hard to raise external funding to support the Seed Grant program and faculty research. Publicizing the impact of the Seed Grant program, both on and off campus, is critical to attracting additional resources and supporting this program. We need your help to accomplish our goal!

All Seed Grant recipients are required to:

- Acknowledge support by the Institute of Environmental Research and Education in all publications, presentations, media releases and interviews related to the funded project
- Advise the Institute of Environmental Research and Education about any proposals, grants or publications resulting from this funded project
- Provide a headshot of all faculty and students involved in the funded project (*optional; a photographer can be provided if requested*)
- Participate in a photoshoot with professional photographer that highlights the research and any student involved with the funded project

Faculty Social

Recipients and their research team are expected to attend IERE's faculty social during the Spring semester. The event is typically hosted late January and faculty will be given advanced notice about the event.

COJ-UNF Environmental Symposium Research Presentation

Recipients and their research team are expected to attend and present their findings at the City of Jacksonville Environmental Symposium in February 2026.

Written Report

A final written report, including photos, is due no later than Sunday, Jan. 24, 2027, unless granted an extension by the Institute of Environmental Research and Education in advance. Reports should be submitted electronically in PDF format to the Seed Grant coordinator.

Document must be 11 point or larger font, double-spaced and one-inch margins.

Section 1: Cover page – Grant title and contact information of research team

Section 2: Executive summary – Summaries should be 150 words or less.

Note: Executive summaries may be published on the Institute of Environmental Research and Education website, annual report, etc. Thus, it is recommended that the summaries be written for a general audience and not include any proprietary information or intellectual property the authors do not wish to publicly disclose.

Section 3: Report narrative – Expanded report that should clearly describe results directly attributable to the grant. The final report can be formatted as a manuscript for publication and should include the following sections:

- Introduction (*this can come from grant proposal*)
- Methods (*this can come from grant proposal*)
- Results. Please include both narrative text and graphs and tables (*if results are not processed yet, please describe. Discuss the important indicators of success and progress of the project*).
- Discussion and Implications

Section 4: Future Plans – Describe plans for publication, presentation, and or funding.

Section 5: Acknowledgments – Include the acknowledgment that will be included on subsequent dissemination efforts. Make sure to include that the University of North Florida's Institute of Environmental Research and Education was the funding source.

Section 5: Photos – Include attachments of any related photos. Any photos included in the report should also be submitted as separate .jpg files.