



Rhode Island Sea Grant Law Fellow Program

Information for Partners

The Rhode Island Sea Grant Law Fellow Program provides low-cost or free analysis of law and policy questions from the ocean and coastal community. Part of the Marine Affairs Institute at Roger Williams University School of Law / Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program, the Law Fellow Program matches current law students with projects for outside partners in Rhode Island and beyond, including state and local governments, non-profits, industry associations, and other entities. Marine Affairs Institute staff hire and oversee the Law Fellows, ensuring that partners receive legal research and analysis that is thoroughly researched and expertly drafted.

What types of work can the Law Fellow Program produce?

The Law Fellow Program primarily provides written products such as legal memoranda, white papers, and fact sheets. In-person and web-based oral presentations may be included to assist in communicating project results. Upon completion, all projects are made available to the public and posted to the National Sea Grant Library.

How can I start a project with the Law Fellow Program?

Interested partners should contact the Marine Affairs Institute. We will work with you to identify a suitable research question and timeline. We will select and oversee a Law Fellow and ensure the quality of the research and final product. We will maintain regular communications with you throughout the process to ensure that the project remains consistent with the agreed scope and evolving needs.

How much does the Law Fellow Program cost?

Projects typically operate under a fee-for-service contract at a rate of \$3,000 per Law Fellow per trimester, which includes student wages, supervision, and access to complete legal research resources. The Law Fellow Program can also participate as a partner in grant proposals. Pro bono opportunities may be available at the discretion of the Marine Affairs Institute.

Is my organization eligible?

The Law Fellow Program will collaborate with any organizational entity. It does not work with individuals.

Does the Law Fellow Program provide legal representation?

The Law Fellow Program is non-partisan and does not represent clients or engage in litigation, lobbying, or other advocacy. Projects are limited to legal research and analysis and do not provide legal advice.

For more information, please contact:

Marine Affairs Institute

Ph: 401-254-5392 or Email: marineaffairs@rwu.edu

Selected Law Fellow Projects

Topic	Requesting Organization(s)	Project Description
Community and Economic Resilience	Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council	The Law Fellow researched legal authorities in support of development of the Ocean Special Area Management Plan (Ocean SAMP).
	Connecticut Sea Grant	The Law Fellow produced fact sheets summarizing state law related to municipal liability for adaptation to sea level rise and coastal erosion.
Fisheries and Aquaculture	Rhode Island Natural History Survey, Resilient Fisheries RI	The Law Fellow studied legal theories of adaptive management to identify opportunities for fisheries law to improve the ability of Rhode Island fishermen react to changing conditions.
	Woods Hole Sea Grant, Environmental Law Institute, New England Aquarium	Two Law Fellows contributed to a GIS-based permitting tool that will facilitate shellfish aquaculture by studying Massachusetts state and municipal law and policy affecting farm location.
	National Marine Fisheries Service	The Law Fellow researched fisheries agencies' use of reservation authority to prescribe fishways under Section 18 of the Federal Power Act.
Healthy Coastal Ecosystems	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	The Law Fellow researched prevention of "ghost" fishing gear in New England through interviews with harbormasters and analysis of state gear placement laws and regulations.
	University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, University of Rhode Island Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials, and Save the Bay	The Law Fellow researched legal authority related to the production of the document, "A Local Official's Guide to Regulating Land Use in Wetland Buffers and High Water Tables to Protect Water Quality."
Admiralty and Maritime	Quonset Development Corporation	The Law Fellow researched the required processes to engage in a marine construction or dredging project, as applied to the expansion of the Davisville Port in North Kingstown, RI.
	Bluewater Wind	The Law Fellow researched the implications for offshore energy projects of U.S. cabotage laws, including the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Jones Act) and Passenger Vessel Services Act.
	Rhode Island Sea Grant	The Law Fellow researched state boat registration requirements to identify models for funding of a fiberglass recycling program for end-of-life boats.