Environmental Literacy for Community Resilience

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

NATIONAL ACADEMIES *Sciences Engineering Medicine*

GULF RESEARCH PROGRAM

Contents

Funding Opportunity: Environmental Literacy for Community Resilience

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Gulf Research Program (GRP), along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Environmental Literacy Program, aims to enhance community resilience and increase the environmental literacy of community members across the U.S. Gulf States (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida) through place-based education. This funding opportunity will support projects that educate community members on local environmental challenges, engage learners in solutions-oriented activities, and empower participants to engage in them.

Specifically, the GRP is seeking applications that engage learners in place-based activities that empower participants to contribute to local resilience efforts informed by a local understanding of socio-environmental challenges. Competitive applications should be tailored to community needs and contexts, incorporate scientific information and best practices in education, enable participants to take action in their community, and empower future leaders to help address the complex environmental challenges facing the Gulf States now and into the future.

A total of $4M is available for this funding opportunity. Applicants must request between $100,000 and $750,000 for projects, commensurate with the scope of work, that are between 12 and 36 months in duration.

Key Dates

- **February 26, 2025:** Online application submission opens
- **May 21, 2025:** Deadline for submissions of applications due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- **August 2025:** Award selection and notification
- **October 1, 2025:** Anticipated funding start date

Online submission website: https://gulfresearchprogram.smapply.io/

The Gulf Research Program seeks to support the development of an environmentally and scientifically literate populace capable of solving complex social and environmental challenges facing the five U.S. Gulf States of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, referred to as the Gulf States. The Gulf Research Program hopes to engage a wide range of learners in addressing the scientific, social, and environmental challenges in this region through education, outreach, research, and experiential opportunities. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Environmental Literacy Program supports programs that educate and inspire people to use Earth system science to improve ecosystem stewardship and increase resilience to environmental hazards. In an effort to achieve these overlapping goals and better serve the people in the Gulf States, the GRP and NOAA ELP are collaborating to support place-based educational opportunities that seek to build community resilience and increase scientific and environmental literacy.

To prepare for a future of increasing environmental impacts, communities need to implement more policies and practices that allow their members, regardless of socioeconomic status, to thrive and be resilient. These policies and practices should be informed by engaged community members and leaders who understand the causes of natural hazards and its impacts on their own lives now and in the future. Decisions about how to build more resilient communities should be based on scientific, traditional, and community knowledge, and represent the values of society because this contributes to better accepted and more robust policies.[1]

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, place-based education (or place-based learning opportunities) is defined simply as using the local environment as the context for teaching and learning. The history of place-based education can be traced back to teaching philosophies and practices of indigenous peoples such as Native Americans and Alaska Natives[2] and the locally situated, culturally and environmentally informed pedagogies used by educators, described and advocated by Dewey.[3] Similarly, while many definitions of resilience exist, we are looking to support projects that inspire and educate people to use Earth system science to increase ecosystem stewardship and understand, prepare for, and address local environmental challenges. By incorporating scientific information and best practices, competitive applications will empower current

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[1] Bozeman, B., and Sarewitz, D. 2011. *Public Value Mapping and Science Policy Evaluation. Minerva* 49(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-011-9161-7

[2] Cajete, G. 1994. *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education.* Skyland, NC: Kivaki Press.
[3] Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.* New York: Macmillan.

and future environmentally literate leaders with solutions-oriented activities that contribute to local resilience efforts.

Purpose

This grant opportunity aims to support projects that educate community members on local environmental challenges, engage learners in solutions-oriented activities, and empower participants to address their local environmental challenges. Activities should focus on place-based education/learning opportunities in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and/or Florida that advance community resilience and environmental literacy. Activities may take place in formal (K-12) or informal educational settings and may target children, youth, and/or adults. Projects focused on children and youth as participants should incorporate activities that are complementary to formal [K-12] education standards and learning objectives.

What We Are Looking For

Projects should use evidence-based educational approaches to engage project participants with locally relevant, place-based activities that are designed to increase community-level environmental literacy. Projects should be tailored to community needs and contexts, incorporate scientific information and best practices in education, enable participants to take action in their community, and empower current and future leaders to help address complex environmental challenges. Particular attention should be paid to communities that have greater exposure to, and fewer resources to deal with environmental challenges.

Projects are strongly encouraged to develop and advance meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) from the communities supported by the project. Projects should be co-designed with CBO partners. CBO partners should be involved in project implementation as well as included in project leadership or as advisors.

One way to reduce the impacts of disasters on the nation and its communities is to invest in enhancing community resilience (National Research Council, 2012).[4] Community resilience education can lead

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[4] National Research Council. 2012. Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative. Washington, DC: *The National Academies Press.* https://doi.org/10.17226/13457

to increased community engagement and civic action, ultimately leading to a healthier and more resilient society (NASEM, 2019).[5]

There are a number of NOAA programs that offer a significant amount of science and resilience expertise. If the project location includes areas that are served by NOAA's Sea Grant College programs, National Estuarine Research Reserves, the National Coastal Zone Management Program, NOAA RESTORE, and/or NOAA's Climate Adaptation Partnerships, applicants are encouraged to consider involving representatives from these programs as project advisors or partners. Applicants can locate their local/regional NOAA resilience expertise as well as other non-NOAA experts at https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/elp/resilience-hub/resilience-assets.

Applicants should carefully review and take into consideration the Merit Review Criteria provided in this funding opportunity prior to submitting an application.

Project Structure

All proposed activities should focus on place-based education/learning opportunities that engage learners in active and social learning activities rooted in local socio-environmental challenges and local resilience efforts. Applications should be tailored to community needs and contexts, incorporate scientific information and best practices in education, enable participants to take action in their community, and empower current and future leaders to help address the complex environmental challenges facing the Gulf States (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida) now and into the future. The focus of this funding opportunity is programmatic activity with individuals; however, applications with complementary professional development activities for teachers and other educational professionals will be considered.

Applicants seeking funding to sustain and expand existing programming activities should include evidence that demonstrates significant positive impact(s) and the benefits of anticipated programmatic growth. Competitive applications include project partners, such as teachers and/or community members, throughout the project lifecycle, from design through implementation. Activities currently under consideration for funding from other sources are not eligible.

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[5] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. Building and Measuring Community Resilience: Actions for Communities and the Gulf Research Program. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: https://doi.org/10.17226/25383.

Project Evaluation

All applicants will be required to include details around a project evaluation plan within the application. Project evaluation should be handled by external professional evaluators or by internal staff who have significant experience with each type of evaluation and are not otherwise involved with the project. Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. While the costs for project evaluation may vary considerably, 10 to 20 percent of the total budget is a reasonable estimate of costs associated with a comprehensive project evaluation. The GRP will ask recipients to submit fully developed and updated evaluation plans after the start date of their award.

The Gulf Research Program intends these project evaluations to:

- Help build an evidence-base that both grantees and GRP can use to understand and communicate their impact.
- Enable organizational learning and increase capacity to enhance community resilience and environmental literacy.
- Support the sharing of successes, challenges, and insights among funders, grantees, and stakeholders.

If awarded, Project Directors and Evaluators will participate in a Grantee Peer Learning Meeting at the close of the period of performance to share their evaluation results, project highlights, success stories, and lessons learned with their fellow grantees and GRP staff. Additionally, those individuals will be invited to participate in NOAA's Environmental Literacy Program Community of Practice meetings.

Award Information

This section describes the total funding available and additional information that is necessary for budgeting purposes. The award notification date is also included in this section.

- Total funding available: $4 million
- Specifications for award amount: Applicants must request between $100,000 and $750,000 for projects; requested amounts must be commensurate with the scope of work.
- Award duration: Grants will be awarded to support projects between 12 and 36 months (3 years) in length.

- Estimated number of awards: Resources made available under this funding opportunity will depend on the applications received. The Gulf Research Program reserves the right to negotiate, some, one, or none of the applications received in response to this solicitation.
- Award notification: Fall 2025

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to institutions of higher education; K-12 public and independent schools and school systems; other nonprofits, including community-based organizations and informal education institutions, such as museums, zoos, and aquariums; state and local government agencies; and Indian tribal governments in the United States. Federal agencies, for-profit organizations, foreign institutions, and individuals are not eligible to apply or receive funding; however, they may participate as project partners. The applying organization will be referred to as the "applicant" hereafter. The individual who will lead the proposed project will be referred to as "Project Director" hereafter. All eligible applicants must have a valid federal tax ID number in order to apply.

The Program will not consider funding:

- Applications for political lobbying or advocacy activities.

Project Directors usually initiate applications that are officially submitted by their employing organizations (the applicant). When initiating an application, the Project Director typically is responsible for ensuring the application meets all the requirements outlined by the Gulf Research Program as well as any requirements set by the employing organizations.

The Gulf Research Program requires individuals named as Project Director or Key Personnel in an application to adhere to the following:

- An individual may be proposed as Project Director in only one application. If an individual is proposed as Project Director in any application, they may also be proposed as Key Personnel in up to two additional applications.
- An individual not proposed as a Project Director in any application may be named as Key Personnel in up to three applications.
- It is the responsibility of each individual being named as Project Director or Key Personnel in any application to ensure that they are not named in more than three total applications.

Applicants can submit an application for this funding opportunity via the online application system. Applications submitted by other means (e.g., mail, fax, or email) will not be considered. Application materials must be submitted in English.

Project Directors should review the application preparation and submission instructions and submit any questions to gulfgrants@nas.edu.

The Gulf Research Program strives to respond to applicants' questions within two business days, but cannot guarantee that applicants' questions will be answered before submission deadlines.

Application Guidelines

All complete applications will be reviewed by an external review panel and evaluated using the Merit Review Criteria.

The application must provide the following information:

I. Project Team:
- A. Project Director
- B. ORCID (Open Research and Contributor ID)
- C. Key Personnel
- D. Applicant Overview (maximum 1500 words)
  1. Describe the applicant (e.g., location, service area, mission)
  2. Describe the applicant's experiences working with communities affected by environmental hazards
  3. Describe the applicant's existing resilience or environmental education projects
- E. Involvement of Project Director or Key Personnel in other applications related to this funding opportunity
II. Project Details:
- A. Project Title (maximum 15 words)
- B. Project Key Words: please highlight key features of your application that make it unique, as well as the grade or age ranges of targeted participants, if any. (maximum 10 words)
- C. Project Summary (maximum 250 words)
- D. Project Timeline (excel upload)

E. Project Description (maximum 3000 words)
    1. Discuss the proposed place-based, community resilience education project. Please clearly describe the setting and types of activities with which participants will engage, along with any ages or grades that the project focuses on, if relevant. Please detail the states and locations where the project will occur. (maximum 1000 words)
    2. Discuss how the proposed project will provide opportunities for participants to (1) learn about and apply scientific information as it relates to preparing for, solving, or addressing local environmental challenges; (2) engage in active and social learning that is solutions-oriented, hopeful, and contributes to local community resilience efforts; (3) empower environmentally literate, community-minded leaders; (maximum 1250 words)
    3. Discuss the educational approaches for the proposed project, including any corresponding formal education standards and learning objectives (if applicable), and how the proposed project will build local community resilience to natural hazards; (maximum 750 words)
F. Project Evaluation (maximum 750 words)
    1. Describe the intended outcomes participants will experience, such as increased scientific or environmental literacy for participants or increased capacity to address and solve local problems. Describe your goals and anticipated outputs and outcomes related to providing participants with opportunities to learn about local environmental challenges and ways to apply scientific information to community resilience efforts related to those challenges; (maximum 500 words)
    2. Describe the qualifications of the evaluator(s), or the qualifications that you are looking for in an evaluator and how you plan to find that evaluator. (maximum 250 words)
        a) Project evaluation should be handled by external professional evaluators or by internal staff who have significant experience with each type of evaluation and are not otherwise involved with the project. Applicants should include funding for project evaluation in their budgets. While the costs for project evaluation may vary considerably, 10 to 20 percent of the total budget is a reasonable estimate of costs associated with a comprehensive project evaluation.

The GRP will ask recipients to submit fully developed and updated evaluation plans after the start date of their award.

    G. At the end of the application, you will have the opportunity to upload additional files, including a logic model. Uploading a logic model is not mandatory but can be helpful in communicating the goals of your project.

III. Proposed Budget

    A. Total Budget Requested

    B. Budget Justification: Please submit a budget justification. A [sample budget justification](#) document is provided.

    C. Budget Form: Download the [budget template](#). Complete this form to provide information on the proposed budget. Budget requests should be developed commensurate with the support needed to achieve the project goals. Adequate compensation should be provided for community-based organization partners and community members for the effort they are contributing to the project. Budget requests should, if relevant, include competitive teacher stipends commensurate with the proposed activities, as appropriate.

IV. Other Attachments

    A. Data Management Plan: A description of how data will be collected, managed, stored, made accessible, and protected throughout the project (maximum 1,500 words). Please refer to GRP's [Data Management Policy](#) for guidance on the development of the project Data Management Plan.

    B. Resume(s): Resumes are required for the Project Director and every individual identified as a Project Team member. A resume may be included for the evaluator. Resumes may not exceed two pages per person. See resume specifications for additional guidance. All resumes should be combined and uploaded as a single PDF document. Do not include resumes for individuals not named as a Project Director or Project Team member.

    C. Collaborators and Other Affiliations Form: The purpose of this form is to help the GRP eliminate potential conflicts of interest during reviewer recruitment. Download the [Collaborators and Other Affiliations form](#) and complete it to provide information on the following:

        1. All persons (including their current organizational affiliations) who are currently, or who have been collaborators (i.e. an individual with whom you work closely to co-design or conduct a project) or co-authors with the

individual on a project, book, article, report, abstract, or paper during the 48 months preceding the submission of the application.

2. The individual's own graduate and postdoctoral advisor(s) and their current organizational affiliations.

3. A list of your past and current advisees (including their current organizational affiliations)

D. Current and Pending Support from Other Sources Form: Download the [Current and Pending Support from Other Sources form](). Applicants must provide information on the current and pending support of the Project Director, and other Project Team members, if applicable, and upload it to the online application system. The form calls for required information on current and pending support for ongoing projects and applications. All current project support from whatever source (e.g., federal, state, local or foreign government agencies, public or private foundations, industrial or other commercial organizations) must be listed. The proposed project and all other projects or activities requiring a portion of time of the project personnel and other senior personnel must be included, even if they receive no salary support from the project(s). The total award amount for the entire award period covered (including indirect costs) must be shown as well as the number of person-months per year to be devoted to the project, regardless of source of support.

Merit Review Criteria

It is important that all applications clearly describe how the anticipated outputs and outcomes are appropriately aligned to the goals of the proposed project.

All complete applications will be evaluated on the basis of the Merit Review Criteria described below. Applicants should consider the Application Guidelines as well as Merit Review Criteria in the development of their application. Reviewers may raise additional issues that are not covered by the criteria.

Place-Based Education (30%)
- To what extent does the proposed project have the potential to increase participants' scientific and environmental literacy?
- To what extent does the proposed project provide opportunities for participants to learn about local environmental challenges and possible solutions to prepare for, address, or solve those challenges?
- To what extent is the proposed project based on established scientific evidence about current and future natural hazards and stresses facing communities and considers relevant socio-economic and ecological factors in the targeted geographic area(s)?

Project Design and Feasibility (25%)

- To what extent is the proposed project well designed and feasible within the criteria of this funding opportunity?
- To what extent does the proposed project use an appropriate method for engaging participants in active and social learning?
- To what extent does the proposed project complement formal education standards and learning objectives, where applicable?
- To what extent are the anticipated outputs and outcomes clearly described and appropriately aligned to the goals of the proposed project?

Community Resilience (25%)
- To what extent does the proposed project address local community resilience efforts (e.g., considers local or state level plans)?
- To what extent does the proposed project offer solutions-oriented approaches to enhancing, bolstering, or developing community resilience?
- To what extent does the proposed project empower participants with community-specific and solutions-oriented activities?
- To what extent does the proposed project seek to use appropriate methods to engage and empower community members who have greater exposure to and fewer resources to deal with environmental challenges?

Project Team (10%)

- To what extent are Project Team members and Collaborators well-qualified in their experience, knowledge, and skills to ensure the completion of a successful project?
- To what extent are the evaluator(s) well-qualified in their experience, knowledge, and skills to ensure the completion of a successful project evaluation?

Budget (10%)

- To what extent is the budget commensurate with the proposed activities?
- To what extent is the budget being directed towards ultimately supporting the professional learning of educators and/or towards participant experiences?
- To what extent is the budget sufficiently supporting the scope of the evaluation planned?

Research Involving Human Subjects

All projects involving human subjects must be submitted to an institutional review board (IRB) for review and either receive IRB approval or be granted exemption from human subjects regulations before an award can be made. Proposers should file their application with their local IRB at the same time the application is submitted to the Gulf Research Program so that any approval procedure determined as necessary will not delay the award process. An application may be submitted to the Gulf Research Program prior to receiving IRB approval or being granted exemption; however, if the application is selected for funding, the award will be made conditional upon IRB granting approval or exemption from human subjects regulations within 60 days of the notice of conditional award. If a proposed project involving human subjects is granted exemption from human subjects regulations [see 45 CFR §46.101(b)], the applicant must provide documentation that an IRB (or the appropriate authority other than the Project Director or Key Personnel) has declared the project exempt from the human subjects regulations. Documentation should include the specific category justifying the exemption. Organizations without internal access to an IRB must seek approval or exemption from an independent review board or other appropriate authority. Visit our website for more information about human subjects regulations.

Data Management

The GRP's [Data Management Policy](#) applies to this funding opportunity. To facilitate sharing of data and information products, all applications submitted to the GRP must include a data management

plan and follow FAIR guiding principles (FAIR stands for "Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable." To learn more about FAIR guiding principles refer to the National Academies report "Open Science by Design: Realizing a Vision for 21st Century Research").

The GRP follows the federal government's definition of data in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 200.315: "...the recorded factual material commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to validate research findings." Information products may include documents (i.e., reports, workshop summaries, etc.), multi-media curricula for education and training (i.e., video and/or online tutorials, manuals, and handbooks, etc.), and other media and communication platforms. Even in the unlikely case in which no data or any other information products will be produced, a plan must be submitted that states "No data or information products are expected to be produced from this project."

The GRP's Data Management Policy and Data Management web page provides information on what must be included in the data management plan submitted as part of an application.

Making the Award

This section describes the process of awarding the funds, and any other related information.

Selection Notice

The GRP reserves the right to select all, some, one, or none of the applications received in response to this solicitation.

When the evaluation of an application is complete, the Project Director will be notified that (1) the application has been selected for funding pending contract negotiations, or (2) the application has not been selected. These official notifications will be sent via email to the Project Director identified on the application. If an application is selected for award, the GRP reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, indirect cost information or other budget information.

Award Notice

The GRP transmits award notices to organizations via e-mail. The award is not finalized and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is not obligated to provide any funding until a signed copy of the award agreement has been received by the Academies.

Grant Periods

Upon receipt of the award notice, the awardee should note the effective date and the expiration date. The effective date is the date specified in the grant notice on or after which expenditures may be charged to the grant. Charging expenditures to the grant prior to the effective date is prohibited. The expiration date is the date specified in the grant notice after which expenditures may not be charged against the grant except to satisfy obligations to pay allowable project costs committed on or before that date. Once an award is made, the effective date cannot be changed. The expiration date may be changed as a result of approval of a request for a no-cost extension. If approved, the GRP will issue an amendment to the grant.

If additional time beyond the performance period and the established expiration date is required to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work with the funds already made available, the awardee may apply for a one-time, no-cost extension of up to six months. A formal request must be submitted to the GRP at least 45 days prior to the expiration date of the grant. The request must explain the need for the extension and include an estimate of the unobligated funds remaining and a plan for their use. This one-time extension will not be approved solely for the purpose of using the unliquidated balances.

Post-award Management

Coordination with GRP: This section describes the process of coordination as it pertains to the funding opportunity.

After the award is conferred, grantees shall coordinate with the GRP to formally initiate the project. GRP staff will periodically request status meetings during the project implementation phase to discuss progress and any unanticipated developments that may affect the project outcomes as specified in the grant agreement. These interactions will help ensure successful management of the grant.

Reporting Requirements: After an award is conferred, the grantee shall provide an annual financial report to the GRP to report on grant expenditures to date under the grant. The grantee shall provide an annual written report to the GRP to report on activities being carried out under the grant, including but not limited to project accomplishments to date and grant expenditures. No later than 60 days after the expiration of the award, the grantee shall provide in writing a final grant report.

The final grant report shall address the original objectives of the project as identified in the grant application, describe any changes in objectives, describe the final project accomplishments, and include a final project accounting of all grant funds. Once a final project evaluation report is completed, the grantee shall provide the final evaluation report to the GRP in a reasonable and timely manner. If awarded, Project Directors and Evaluators will participate in a Grantee Peer Learning Meeting at the close of the period of performance to present their evaluation results, grant highlights, success stories, and lessons learned with their fellow grantees and GRP staff.

Data Management: Implementation of a data management plan will be monitored through the annual and final report process. All data, including modeled and observational data when available, shall be made available with minimal delay to the GRP for each dataset, through submission to the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Information and Data Cooperative (GRIIDC) and/or other appropriate national repositories as approved by GRIIDC for use by intermediate and end-users. Even when no data or any other information products will be produced, a plan must be submitted that states "No data or information products are expected to be produced from this project." Please see the GRP's [Data Management Policy](#) and [Data Management web page](#) for more information on this requirement.

Scientific Integrity

A fundamental purpose of the GRP is to facilitate the advancement of knowledge and the application of science to address challenges relevant to the GRP's mission. All activities of the GRP will be conducted to meet the highest standards of scientific integrity. All grantees have a responsibility to use the funds wisely.

Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions

Please review the Grant Agreement prior to submitting an application. It is the policy of National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to entertain potential modifications to the Grant

Agreement only under the most exceptional circumstances. Rather, successful applicants are strongly encouraged to sign the Grant Agreement as presented.

- View a [sample grant agreement if the applicant is a public institution](#).
- View a [sample agreement if the applicant is a private institution.](#)

About the Gulf Research Program

The GRP is a division of the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)—a private, nonprofit organization with a 150-year history as an independent advisor to the Nation on issues of science, engineering, and medicine. The GRP was founded in 2013 as part of legal settlements with the companies involved in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster, and received an endowment to carry out studies, projects, and other activities in the areas of research and development, education and training, and monitoring and synthesis.

The GRP seeks to enhance offshore energy safety, environmental protection and stewardship, and human health and community resilience in the Gulf South and beyond. It focuses its work on the Gulf Coast and other outer continental shelves of the United States where there is hydrocarbon production, and on their coastal zones; specifically, this includes the areas of the Southcentral region of Alaska that are or could be impacted by activities (e.g., drilling, production, and transportation) associated with hydrocarbon production in the offshore. Where appropriate, the GRP's work may extend farther inland or into adjacent seas.

The GRP uses four strategic approaches to "catalyze, implement, and track positive impact in the Gulf of Mexico and beyond":[6]

1. Advance science and understanding
2. Bridge knowledge to action
3. Build partnerships and engage networks
4. Monitor for progress and change

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[6] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. *Gulf Research Program: 2020-2024 Strategic Plan*, pp. 3-4. Available at
https://nationalacademies.org/docs/D338E0B99EA9934258F59C96E29C09D39F5BE04FFAA4