

What is CSSF?

Coastal States Stewardship Foundation (CSSF) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that functions as a sister organization to CSO (which is a 501c4). The CSSF Board of Directors is made up of coastal management professionals; new board members are nominated by the existing CSSF board and approved by the CSO executive committee; the CSO executive director is the ex officio secretary of the board for CSSF and serves as the CSSF staff director. CSSF currently has two full-time staff – Lisa Schiavinato, Managing Director, and Emma Johnson, Grants Coordinator – whose positions are funded by CSSF, but CSO serves as the “paymaster.” The CSO Executive Director and Operations Director also work part time for CSSF. CSSF and CSO have an MOU that directs 90% of CSSF income to CSO, in exchange CSO pays for staff and all CSO-CSSF shared expenses.

What Does CSSF Do?

CSSF empowers coastal organizations and leaders to meet the economic, social, cultural, and environmental challenges facing the nation’s coasts and ocean. CSSF provides general fiscal sponsorship and administrative services to coastal and ocean-oriented organizations that complement the missions of CSO and CSSF. Since 2014, CSSF has managed more than \$20 million in funding on behalf of our partners to help them address the critical issues facing our nation’s coasts, Great Lakes, and ocean.

CSSF Services:

- Grant management and administration.
- Contract and sub-award negotiation, management, and administration.
- Legal and compliance monitoring.
- Financial management services.
- Other administrative services as needed.

CSSF currently provides fiscal sponsorship and administrative services to three of the nation’s four regional ocean partnerships – [Northeast Regional Ocean Council](#), [Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean](#), and [West Coast Ocean Alliance](#) – as well as the [Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind](#) and the [National Working Waterfront Network](#). We currently manage more than \$13 million in funding on behalf of our partners.

What is CSSF’s Strategic Vision?

When CSSF was established in the early-2000s, it developed a mission statement and a business plan. These have become obsolete, so in 2024 CSSF Board is working to develop a “Strategic Vision”. The Strategic Vision will likely end up as a 2-4 page document that outlines a vision/mission, with high level goals, possibly milestones, and “guardrails” on areas that CSSF does not want to prioritize. It will not include specific objectives and timelines to meet the goals/milestones. Details of implementation will be left up to staff with ongoing input from the board. It will be a compass, not a map; a vision, not a plan.

This will be developed by the CSSF board, led by Mike Friis (WI, board chair) and Tancred Miller (NC, vice chair), with specific input from a CSO “advisory committee” of Lisa Phipps (OR), Steve Holland (OH), Steve Couture (NH), and Kevin Hassell (NJ). We will also be soliciting input from the entire CSO membership, via a survey in advance and an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a completed (but not finalized) draft.

The CSO survey will be circulated in April, with the Strategic Visioning meetings occurring in May/June. A completed draft will be circulated to membership in late-summer 2024.