

Request for Proposals

Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEA Maine) *Maine's Marine Living Resources Economy*

Development of Career Profiles, Pathways, and Resources

Workforce and Talent Subcommittee

Issue Date: January 24, 2022

Closing Date: February 18, 2022

1. BACKGROUND

SEAMaine Background

The Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEAMaine), is an industry-led initiative committed to growing Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy by developing a roadmap and action plan that will ensure a vibrant, innovative and resilient marine economy. We define Marine Living Resource Economy as seafood (capture and culture fisheries), processing and distribution, transportation/logistics, edible and non-edible products and product development, and related innovation, marketing and market development. Funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Maine Technology Institute, FocusMaine, and Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, SEAMaine brings together leaders from aquaculture and commercial fishing to identify strategies and targeted investments to help transition our heritage living marine economy into a modern engine for sustainable economic and job growth.

This initiative has working subcommittees focused on advancing key issues important to the future of Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy. Important to the Marine Living Resource Economy's competitiveness and growth is the ability to match the supply of skilled workers with the workforce demand of industry. Therefore, one of these subcommittees is concentrated on the sector's Workforce and Talent Development. Co-chaired by Kim Hamilton, president of FocusMaine, and Anne Langston Noll, Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, this group includes approximately 14 members located across the state including associations and public and private entities including industry, associations, non-profits, and academia.

Subcommittee member organizations include:

- Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
- Bristol Seafood
- Educate Maine
- FocusMaine
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Island Institute

- Maine Aquaculture Association
- Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center
- Maine Community College System
- Maine Lobster Dealers' Association
- Maine Sea Grant (including The Maine Aquaculture Hub)
- Southern Maine Community College
- University of Maine Aquaculture Research Institute
- University of New England
- Washington County Community College

SEAMaine is a 3-year, \$2.1 million project, initiated in June of 2020, to strategically plan for the future of Maine's living marine economy. The results of our final report and the network we have established is intended to endure far into the future.

Project Background

Maine's extensive, sparsely developed, 3,500 mile undulating coastline and proximity to the nutrient rich waters of the Gulf of Maine have favored an economy based on marine resources, and strong economic and cultural traditions connecting working waterfronts to the sea. In the twentieth century, wild harvests of fish and shellfish have declined because of overharvesting, disruption of marine ecosystems, and most recently from the impacts of climate change (warming waters, ocean acidification and the threat of invasive species). Within the New England groundfish industry, one study in 1998 estimated that 20,000 jobs had been lost resulting in a \$349 million reduction in regional revenues (McGinn, 1998). In the decade from 2001 to 2011 the number of New England groundfish boats making at least one annual fishing trip declined from more than 1,000 to under 400 (Labaree, 2012). Maine's active groundfish fleet now only contains about 40 boats. Thousands of Maine fishermen whose families may have been fishing for generations are challenged to find ways to make a livable wage from the sea (Johnson *et al.*, 2014). Former staples of the harvest like Atlantic cod, soft shell clams, sea urchins, and northern shrimp have been depleted or forbidden to catch by increasingly severe regulations. Other fisheries have imposed limited entry provisions (e.g. lobsters, glass eels and rockweed) with the effect that displaced fishermen may no longer seek income diversification by moving into another type of fishery. About 73% of Maine's commercial landings value is derived from lobster (Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2019). This puts the majority of Maine's commercial harvesters at financial risk if the lobster fishery ever collapses.

As the numbers of commercial fishermen decline, working waterfronts and the supporting infrastructure are also declining. Coastal communities whose culture and societies were traditionally centered on the ocean and the commercial exploitation of its resources are experiencing fundamental sociological change. Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to enter fisheries; and families who have fished for generations are abandoning their maritime heritage out of necessity. Members of the fishing industry are currently seeking ways to diversify from a reliance on a single species (e.g. lobster; Cleaver *et al.* 2018). Imagine what Maine could be if our wild-caught fisheries, aquaculture businesses, fishermen, and sea-farmers, were granted opportunities to diversify their businesses and put more seafood on

plates in Maine, the US and across the globe. Already, the seafood that comes from our coastal waters and the working communities along Maine's coast drive a large portion of the \$6 Billion tourism industry within the state. With global trade pressures and the impacts of the looming climate crisis on Maine's most treasured export, the lobster, we need to capture more benefits from this industry to ensure a strong and resilient living marine economy. Through diversification of markets, products, and species we can build more resiliency into Maine's marine resource economy so that the economy can fully maximize its potential. Seafood is one of the most sustainably grown and harvested foods for human consumption. Compared to other types of food production, it has far less environmental impact, and in some cases even improves environmental quality. Supported by investments in workforce, infrastructure and innovation, Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy is poised to attract and retain more workers, pump more money and investments into local economies, and to preserve the working characteristics of our coastal communities that attract millions of tourists (and their dollars) each year. In the 1800's Maine's farm sector gave the State the moniker of the 'Breadbasket of New England'; Our seafood economy, well supported by these efforts, can transform Maine into the "Fish-tote" for New England and beyond for years to come.

Purpose of the RFP

SEAMaine is seeking to attract and retain new and diverse talent to Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy and to raise awareness of current and future career opportunities by creating career pathways and career descriptions that are linked to currently available occupational standards and career pathways for youth/adults for entry and advancement within Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy. This project has the goal of spurring interest among youth/adults in a career in Maine's Living Resource Economy and aiding those serving youth/adults to better understand the career opportunities and pathways available. This work has been recommended by the Workforce and Talent Development sub-committee of SEAMaine and in consultation with Phase 1 workforce research by the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Southern Maine. The Phase 1 workforce report will be made available and will include current workforce data.

SEAMaine is looking to partner with individual organizations and/or coalitions actively engaged in workforce development to identify and improve existing resources, create new resources as needed, and recommend effective dissemination options of materials developed. It is expected that the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion will be integral to the development of related materials. Maine has approximately 100,000 work-age adults currently underemployed or unemployed, many of whom come from often marginalized and underserved populations, it is expected that this project will increase workforce attraction of historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities. This includes but is not limited to those who are Black and African Americans, Latinx and Hispanics, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, LGBTQ+, women, immigrants, differently abled, veterans, and formerly incarcerated individuals and communities. The committee also recognizes the need to develop resources related to emerging careers within Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy. The committee encourages innovative solutions to attract and retain new and diverse talent to Maine's Marine Living Resource Economy.

Respondents may address all or parts of this RFP based upon area of expertise. We encourage respondents to be creative and use their expertise to address the needs of the project in unique and innovative ways. In addition to the development of products related to this RFP, it is important that a system for evaluating impact is integrated. Recommendations for strategic benchmarks and evaluation metrics to monitor progress over time should be included in responses to this RFP. In addition, demonstrated engagement with industry is highly valued and expected.

Project Scope:

PART A: DEVELOP RESOURCES TO ATTRACT DIVERSE TALENT TO MAINE’S MARINE LIVING RESOURCES ECONOMY (RESOURCES FOR POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES)

i: Review existing career pathways, career descriptions, and occupational standards focused on pathways for youth/adults for entry and advancement within Maine’s Marine Living Resource Economy. This should include career opportunities across all levels of the value chain. Assessment includes highlighting the opportunities for innovation, resilience and discovery within the sector. Applicants should refer to the Phase 1 report and other existing reports .

ii: Identify gaps, based upon the review carried out under A(i), and **create resources to fill gaps and integrate with currently available resources** related to career pathways and career descriptions for youth/adults for entry and advancement within Maine’s Marine Living Resource Economy. We encourage applicants to review similar resources and models (some of which are listed in Appendix B) from a variety of industries. Innovative approaches to presentation and delivery of information are encouraged.

iii: Create a toolbox/resource to disseminate materials and information. Create a repository (or “toolbox”) to house existing and new resources to attract diverse talent to Maine’s Marine Living Resources Economy. This toolbox must include resources accessible to historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities.

PART B. DEVELOP RESOURCES/TOOLBOX TO SUPPORT EMPLOYERS WITH RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE TALENT TO MAINE’S MARINE LIVING RESOURCES ECONOMY (RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS)

i: Inventory, review, and evaluate common recruitment, hiring, and retention practices across the Maine Living Resource Economy, including additional industries as needed, and make recommendations for what is working well and areas for improvement. Industry representation and participation is required for successful completion of this inventory.

ii: Identify gaps based upon the review carried out under B(i), and **create new resources** for businesses to support their recruitment, hiring, and retention practices, as required to address these gaps and **fully integrate currently available resources**.

iii: Develop a recruitment, hiring, and retention “toolbox” for businesses based on the strategies/ best practices/successful models that are currently being utilized by businesses within and outside of Maine. This toolbox must include employer resources for recruiting, retaining, and creating opportunities for advancement among historically marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities, as listed in the purpose of the RFP section.

PART C. DEVELOP RESOURCES/TOOLBOX TO SUPPORT EDUCATORS & EMPLOYMENT

ADVOCATES

i. Develop resources to support educators and those serving youth by creating a career exploration toolbox for K-12. Integrate career opportunities and pathways identified to inform a toolkit for schools, career counselors, etc. Toolbox resources may include the development of asynchronous professional development training opportunities, development of micro-credentials or badging as related to careers/pathways, and more. Respondents are encouraged to consider designing the resource to be compatible with and/or augment existing repositories (e.g. Maine Agriculture in the Classroom).

ii: Inventory, review and evaluate resources for HR professionals, social service agencies supporting adult learners, educators, NGOs etc. This review should include additional industries as needed and make recommendations for what is working well and areas for improvement.

iii: Identify gaps based upon the review carried out under C(ii), and **create new resources** for HR professionals, social service agencies supporting adult learners, educators, NGOs etc to address these gaps and **fully integrate currently available resources**. **These resources** are to support HR professionals, social service agencies supporting adult learners, educators, NGOs etc to encourage recruitment and retention of diverse talent to Maine’s Marine Living Resources Economy. This should include resources to support organizations specifically focused on bringing diverse talent to the sector. In addition this should include **innovative strategies** to energize, attract, and recruit talent from inside and outside of Maine.

iv: Develop a “toolbox” for HR professionals, social service agencies supporting adult learners, educators, NGOs and more. This toolbox will be based on the strategies/ best practices/successful models that are currently being utilized by organizations within and outside of Maine. This toolbox must include identification and inclusion of pathways for historically underserved and marginalized populations to enter and advance within Maine’s Marine Living Resource Economy, including consideration of barriers to access and work readiness. This work will inform/connect to organizations/efforts working to recruit workforce (e.g. Live and Work in Maine, career counselors, etc.)

Project Deliverables may include, but are not limited to:

- Inventory of identified gaps
- Developed resources created to fill identified gaps and full integration with currently available resources. This could include the development of written and/or career related videos, apps, or additional innovative methods of presentation or delivery.

- Tool box(es) to host integrated existing and new resources.
- Recommendations for strategic benchmarks and evaluation metrics to monitor progress over time.
- Additional items as recommended by respondents.

Helpful Resources:

The committee has used and reviewed a range of resources that have inspired this RFP. These can be found in Appendix B.

2. INSTRUCTIONS

Key Dates

Any questions regarding the RFP should be submitted to the committee contact email address no later than **February 2, 2022**.

All responses to this RFP are due no later than **February 18, 2022 at 5pm (EST)**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

Committee Contact

The following individual is the contact for the RFP:

Erica Watson, Program Director, MDF

Email: ewatson@mdf.org

Questions

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFP content or process to the RFP contact. All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFP question period indicated above. The Committee may choose to convey responses to submitted questions to all suppliers so that each is equally informed.

Proposal Methods

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

By email to: ewatson@mdf.org. The subject heading of the email shall be **SEAMaine Workforce Pathways RFP**. Only electronic copies are to be submitted in PDF format and Suppliers may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – ex. Email 1 of 3) if attached files are deemed too large to suit a single email transmission.

Proposal Requirements

This request for proposals represents the requirements for an open and competitive process under federal guidelines for procurement by competitive proposal. In competitive proposal procurement, the proposal that is most advantageous to the program is selected, considering both price and other factors.

Proposals will be received until **February 18, 2022 at 5pm (EST)**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

Proposals must be no longer than 5 pages including a project narrative that clarifies the proposed study method, an itemized project budget, a budget justification, an example study outline, a list of proposed resources and references to be used in the generation of the studies and a project timeline. Respondent qualifications and references may be submitted in addition to the 5-page limit and should include any experience with logistics and transportation studies. No overhead charges will be allowed. Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the determination of the selected proposal. Bidders must complete the Fixed Price Summary Sheet (found below).

Suggested proposal outline:

- A. Detailed description of the methodology being proposed.
- B. Work program outline detailing:
 - a. Tasks to be performed.
 - b. When each will be completed (timeline).
 - c. Tentative allocation of person days by task.
 - d. Schedule of work products.
- C. Methods the Consultant proposes to use to manage the project and communicate with SEA Maine as to project progress and reviews.
- D. Identification of key personnel to be assigned to the project and their roles, with resumes of all key personnel.
- E. Budget: including hourly rates (inclusive of overhead and profit) for personnel or personnel categories.
- F. Data expected to be provided by SEA Maine.

If the organization submitting the proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, all costs included in the proposal must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. Any

proposals which call for outsourcing or contracted work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted. All costs included in the proposal must be itemized to include an explanation of all costs and fees.

Please note that all deliverables will become public information.

Contract terms will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to legal review and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Bidders must return a completed copy of form CD-512, with their bid. Available at http://ci.noaa.gov/sites/lci/Documents/Forms/funding_forms_CD-512.pdf

Project Budget

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. All costs and fees must be clearly described in the attached Fixed Price Summary Sheet. Proposals should include a breakdown of cost and hours for each task of the scope of work.

Bidder Qualifications

All bidders should provide the following information as part of their proposal for consideration

Personnel

- a) Anticipated personnel you will assign to this project (name, title, summary of their academic background and professional experience) and description of what their role in this project will be and where they are located.

Supplier Details

- a) Supplier name (Trading and Registered), registered address.
- b) Details of supplier operating locations.
- c) Supplier ownership information.
- d) Relationships with any parent company (if applicable).
- e) Details of joint venture arrangements (if applicable).

Supplier Capabilities and Experience

- a) A description of the core supplier business, listing relevant case studies or examples (a maximum of three) that support this description. Where possible, include case studies that may relate to activities consistent with the Opportunity. Within necessary boundaries of confidentiality, please be as specific as possible.
- b) Additional services, products and works provided outside of your core business.

- c) Describe why you would be uniquely qualified to meet or exceed the requirements of this request.
- d) If you have conducted similar projects, please indicate other factors not listed in the Opportunity that the committee should consider exploring to get the best result.

Certifications and Awards

- a) Details of all certifications held (ex. ISO 9001) including date of last certification and details of the certifying body (copies of certifications may be appended to your response).
- b) Details of any recent external corporate awards, including the awarding body, if relevant to the Opportunity.

Other Information

- a) Briefly address your suggested approach for each of the project areas
- b) Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.
- d) Any further information/opportunities you believe the Committee may require.

Suppliers to inform themselves

The Committee has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the RFP is accurate; however, the Committee gives no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or sufficiency of the contained information.

Costs of preparing the response

All costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response are the sole responsibility of the supplier. The Committee shall not pay the supplier, wholly or in part, for its response.

Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of a proposal, suppliers must not, without the Committee's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the RFP documents. Suppliers must ensure that their employees, consultants, and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

Acceptance of these Conditions

Suppliers, by submitting a response to this RFP, are deemed to have acknowledged and agreed to the conditions set out in this RFP.

3. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals received in advance of the solicitation deadline will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability (0-40 points): Proposal must meet the scope and needs included here and be presented in a clear and organized manner. Proposals that are action-oriented, and provide products and recommendations that can be quickly implemented will be scored higher.
- Expertise, experience and previous work (0-30 points): bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project and previous projects completed successfully, as well as on their staff's expertise and experience.
- Value and cost (0-30 points): bidders will be evaluated on the cost of their analysis based on the work to be performed in accordance with the scope of this project.

Non-response bids or proposals (i.e., those with material deficiencies, omissions, errors, or inconsistencies) will not be considered.

No contracts shall be made with parties listed on the General Services Administration's List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs. All necessary steps will be taken to solicit participation of locally owned, minority-owned, female-owned, and small businesses.

Committee makes no obligations or undertakings in any way to:

1. go to tender; or
2. accept any RFP information received from suppliers; or
3. include suppliers responding to this RFP in any future tender invitation; or
4. any other commitment to suppliers whatsoever, including any intention to form a contract with any supplier for provision of the Opportunity.

The committee may choose to schedule one hour conference call meetings with suppliers to review the submitted information and provide the opportunity for the supplier to provide additional background relevant to this project.

A contract will be made in writing to the proposal which is most advantageous to the program considering the evaluation criteria specified. This will be the finalist with the highest score assigned by the review committee.

The committee may select project components from multiple proposals and seek to arrange opportunities for collaboration between suppliers.

Thank you for considering a response to this RFP. Please reach out to Erica Watson (ewatson@mdf.org) with questions.

APPENDIX A: FIXED PRICE SUMMARY SHEET

Bidder: _____

Instruction to Bidder:

Complete all the sections below; failure to do so may disqualify the bids. If the inquiry is divided into more than one bid item, complete a "Summary Sheet" for each item.

a. **Labor Cost** \$ _____
Estimated hours _____

b. **Materials** \$ _____

c. **Direct Expenses**
Sub-Contractors (add additional sub-contractors as necessary)

Name
Description of Work

• \$ _____

Travel \$ _____

Other Expenses
• \$ _____

d. **In Person Meetings** \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE FOR THIS COMPONENT:

A fixed price summary sheet should be completed for each component A,B,C of the project.

APPENDIX B

Resources that have inspired this RFP

www.seamaine.org/resources/

<https://theavarnagroup.com/resources/hiring-practice-better-practices/>

[Maine Aquaculture Workforce Development Strategy](#)

[Occupational Standards for Maine Aquaculture Training Providers](#)

<https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/resources/collections/career-profiles>

https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/assets/resource/files/2016_Career%20Profiles%20and%20Pathways_small.pdf

<https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/assets/resource/files/ExploringFoodSystemCareers.pdf>