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SEAFOOD ECONOMIC ACCELERATOR

Request for Proposals

Seafood Economic Accelerator for Maine (SEA Maine)
Maine's Marine Living Resources Economy: Capacity Building Grants
Workforce and Talent Development Committee

Issue Date: 10/20/2022

Closing Date: RFP responses will be reviewed on a monthly basis until funds are exhausted or through January 2023, whichever comes first.

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 (MLR) 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 MLREconomy. Important to the MLR 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 Anne Langston Noll, Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, and Keri Kaczor, Maine Sea Grant, 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:

- 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
- 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. Further, recent court rulings and related policy changes will dramatically change the future course of the lobster fishery.

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. 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:

Supported by investments in workforce, infrastructure and innovation, Maine's MLR Economy is poised to attract and retain more workers, pump more money and investments into emerging technologies, and to capitalize on emerging markets. The Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029 identifies the need for an additional 75,000 workers to meet the State's workforce needs. This need will be met in a variety of ways, including engaging the approximately 100,000 work-age adults who are currently underemployed or unemployed, many of whom come from populations historically underrepresented, and underserved within the MLR sector. 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. Additional strategies include, attracting Maine's youth to the depth and breadth of careers and opportunities available within Maine's MLR Economy through diverse education and training programs.

SEA Maine is seeking partners to implement workforce development programs to support Maine's MLR Economy. In particular we are seeking programs that will:

- A: BUILD WORKFORCE CURRICULUM AND TRAINING MODULES
- B: ATTRACT NEW TALENT AND YOUNG TALENT TO THE SECTOR

We encourage respondents to be creative and use their expertise to address the needs of the project in unique and innovative ways. Industry engagement is highly valued and expected. Appropriate communication platforms to reach new and diverse audiences are expected, and trying new and different things is encouraged.

Project Scope:

The SEA Maine Workforce & Talent Sub-Committee has identified the following topics as areas that are important for advancing the workforce for Maine's Marine Living Resource Sector. This Request for Proposals aims to provide Capacity Building Grants to workforce and education organizations across Maine to support projects on the following topics:

- Access to affordable/available student/workforce housing
- Student recruitment/youth interest/enrollment in trainings
- Seafood career awareness
- Career aspirations curricula for youth
- Raising career awareness with communities that are historically underrepresented in Maine's Marine Living Resource workforce
- Develop and pilot hands-on, experiential programming (e.g. field trips)
- Increasing familiarity of K-12, CTE, and adult education educators with the seafood sector



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Training/education programs which build a pipeline for university, community college, apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship, and other experiential training programs

Deliverables:

Each project will be required to provide a written report outlining the project and its impact on workforce development for Maine's marine living resource economy. This written report will be presented to: (1) the SEA Maine workforce and talent sub-committee, and (2) the SEA Maine Executive Committee. It is essential that an executive summary is provided that captures the main objectives, outcomes, and how this work/model may be replicated by others.

In addition, projects will be requested to present their work and results to the Maine Seafood Educators' Network as a seminar either in-person or virtually. Impacts of the projects will be shared, as well as any lessons learned. Project deliverables are due by May 21, 2023.

2. INSTRUCTIONS

Key Dates

Any questions regarding the RFP should be submitted to the committee contact email address no later than November 3, 2022.

SEA Maine anticipates providing more than one grant as a result of this RFP. RFP responses will be reviewed on a monthly basis until funds are exhausted or through January 2023, whichever comes first. Applications should be submitted by 5pm the first Thursday of the month for consideration within the same month. Any proposals received after the first Thursday of the month will not be considered until the following month and if funds remain.

Committee Contact

The following individual is the contact for the RFP:

Erica Watson, Senior 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 MLR Capacity Building 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.



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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.

RFP responses will be reviewed on a monthly basis until funds are exhausted or through January 2023, whichever comes first. Applications should be submitted by 5pm the first Thursday of the month for consideration within the same month. Any proposals received after 5pm on the first Thursday of the month will not be considered until the following month and if funds remain. 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. 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. A description of the proposed workforce project.
- B. Work program outline detailing:
 - a. Tasks to be performed.
 - b. When each will be completed (timeline).
 - c. Expected outcomes.
 - d. Replicability of the work/model
- C. Identification of key personnel to be assigned to the project and their roles, with resumes of key personnel.
- D. Budget: including hourly rates (inclusive of overhead and profit) for personnel or personnel categories.

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



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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) The sub-committee would appreciate experience from other states or countries with high-performing seafood economies.
- e) 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.

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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 (0-30 points): Proposals must align with the issues outlined in the "Project Scope" section. Proposals that are action-oriented, creative, and have high impact will be scored higher.

Expertise, experience and previous work (0-30 points): Project teams will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of the proposed project.

Value and cost (0-30 points): Proposals will be evaluated on the value and cost of the proposed project.

Replicability of the training or education project. (0-20 points)

Demonstration of partnerships with industry, education institutions, and others as appropriate. (0-20 points)

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.

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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 of the proposed 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](https://theavarnagroup.com/resources/hiring-practice-better-practices/Maine-Aquaculture-Workforce-Development-Strategy)

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

[Innovative Workforce Strategies in Maine's Seafood Economy](#)

<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>



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