

Maine Aquaculture Hub: Building capacity for industry-driven innovation, diversification, and workforce development

Requesting **Letters of Intent (LOI)**
for projects seeking to
Address Barriers to the Growth of Aquaculture in Maine

Deadline for LOI: Wednesday, February 12, 2020*

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* Late applications may not be considered

A. Introduction

The Maine Aquaculture Hub is intended to create a statewide, transdisciplinary collaboration that will enhance efficiency and communication, leverage resources and expertise, and focus collective efforts to build capacity for industry-driven innovation, diversification, and workforce development in Maine's aquaculture sector. The steering committee consists of Maine Sea Grant, the Maine Aquaculture Association, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, and the University of Maine Aquaculture Research Institute.

The Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center and the University of Maine Aquaculture Research Institute conducted a 2019 survey to elicit and prioritize the research, development, and education needs of the aquaculture sector in Maine. Topics for research and development and barriers to growth identified by Maine's aquaculture industry include:

Shellfish:

- Seed collection strategies
- Nursery/hatchery technology
- Shellfish disease research

Finfish:

- Sea lice management
- Effluent treatment
- Vaccine development

Sea Vegetables:

- Processing infrastructure
- Development of new value-added products

All Industries:

- Risk management strategies
- Business tools
- Biofouling control

The Maine Aquaculture Hub seeks to support a series of investments to the industry that will provide the capacity for innovation, realizing shared priorities, and addressing emergent barriers. For the purposes of this call for letters of intent, we define “industry” to include both growers and companies that provide goods and services to growers. The Maine Aquaculture Hub invites projects that seek to advance the Maine aquaculture industry by addressing one or more of these barriers. Letters of intent must identify the barrier and propose actions to overcome associated challenges. Applicants that receive funding through this call will become a part of the Hub network and be engaged in discussions to keep the steering committee abreast of emergent industry needs and potential barriers to growth.

Supporting Documents:

- Maine Aquaculture Research & Development Priorities 2019
Available on January 17th, 2020 at www.maineaquaculture.org
- 10 Year NOAA Sea Grant Aquaculture Vision document:
https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Handouts/AquacultureVisionNOAA_March2016.pdf

B. Funding, Duration, and eligibility (who can apply)

A total of up to \$200,000 is available to support 1 or 2 year projects. Awardees will be required to provide 1:1 match to the total funds requested. Matching funds must come from non-federal sources. For example, if an applicant requests \$25,000 for a project, then they will be required to provide non-federal match of \$25,000. Match may either be through expenditure (i.e., cash), or in-kind (goods, services, personnel time). Proposals without sufficient match will not be considered. Existing equipment cannot be considered as match. ***Funding may not be used toward the purchase or rental of any land or the purchase, rental, construction, preservation, or repair of any building, dock, or vessel. Payment under this grant may be applied to the short-term rental of buildings or facilities for meetings.***

Applicants must be industry members as defined in section A, *growers or companies that provide goods and services to growers*. We encourage industry members to collaborate with other growers, industry members, or partners. We encourage applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, cultures, religions, citizenship types, marital statuses, educational levels, job classifications, veteran status types, and income, and socioeconomic status types to apply for this competitive opportunity.

C. Letter of Intent Guidelines

Letters of Intent are evaluated primarily on how well the question or problem is described, the emergent barrier addressed (part A) is clearly identified, and actions proposed to overcome the barrier are outlined with major goals and objectives that will advance the growth of Maine's aquaculture industry.

Letter of Intent must be submitted through eSeaGrant (<http://esg.umaine.edu/>). Applicants must first create an eSeaGrant account. A short walkthrough tutorial on how to use eSeaGrant can be found at <https://seagrant.umaine.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/467/2019/05/2019-eseagrant-instructions.pdf>

There will be two information sessions one held January 24th from 3:30 – 4:30 pm ([webinar](#)), and an in-person meeting on February 5th at noon in Belfast at the Hutchinson Center (80 Belmont Ave, Belfast, Maine). More details can be found on page 7 of this document. For questions please contact Dan Weaver, Research Coordinator, sgresearch@maine.edu.

Letters of Intent must be submitted through eSeaGrant (<http://esg.umaine.edu>) and received by **Wednesday, February 12 by 5:00 p.m.**

Letters of Intent must contain the following 3 elements and be a maximum of 2 pages. Letters that do not contain the 3 elements listed below will not be reviewed.

- 1) Team leadership
 - Name(s)
 - Position(s)
 - Contact information
- 2) Proposal narrative
 - **Identification of the Barrier:** Describe the question or problem that you propose to address and clearly reference the barrier(s) from Part A.
 - **Steps to address the Barrier:** Describe the major goals and objectives of the proposed work. Outline the conceptual approach that will be used.

As described above, proposed projects must conform to the following identified Maine aquaculture industry needs:

Shellfish:

- Seed collection strategies
- Nursery/hatchery technology
- Shellfish disease research

Finfish:

- Sea lice management
- Effluent treatment
- Vaccine development

Sea Vegetables:

- Processing infrastructure
- Development of new value-added products

All Industries:

- Risk management strategies
- Business tools
- Biofouling control

3) Funding request and justification

- State the *approximate funding to be requested* and
- State the *expected sources of match*
- Provide a *few sentences* on what the money would be used for

Note: A detailed budget for Letters of Intent is not required.

D. Overview of the Letters of Intent and Proposal Development

The development and review of Letters of Intent and subsequent proposals is a multi-step process:

- 1) Letters of Intent will be evaluated by the Maine Aquaculture Hub steering committee. The objective at this stage of review is to identify projects that provide the most promise in advancing the Maine aquaculture industry through identified barriers to growth and will focus on the relevance and potential of the proposed project. Letters of Intent are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant (esg.umaine.edu) by **5:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 12th, 2020**. Applicants will receive written feedback on their submission.
- 2) Applicants who submit the most promising project ideas will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will only be reviewed if a Letter of Intent was submitted. Full proposals are to be submitted electronically to Maine Sea Grant through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by **5:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 18th, 2020**. Full proposal guidelines will be available after applicants have been invited to submit full proposals.
- 3) Briefly: Full proposals expected to describe in greater detail how the proposed project will accomplish the stated objective(s) for overcoming the barrier. This may involve a description of proposed methods, engineering, testing, surveys, meetings, trainings, or professional development that will be conducted. Anticipated results and implications of the work. A detailed budget that itemizes how the requested funds will be spent is required. These details will be provided in the full proposal guidelines.
- 4) Full proposals will be evaluated by experts in the proposed area of research or development. Each proposal will receive 3 technical reviews. Applicants may suggest potential reviewers and must identify potential conflicts of interest. Reviewers may be those suggested by the applicant, although this is not guaranteed. Applicants will be provided anonymous copies of the reviews and will be provided an opportunity to respond to the reviews.
- 5) *More specific guidelines for full proposal evaluation criteria will be provided to all applicants who have submitted Letters of Intent.*

Important Notes Regarding Full Proposals:

If an applicant is encouraged to submit a full proposal, then a detailed budget and justification will be required. A 100% match of federal funds (i.e., one dollar of match for every one dollars of federal money received) will be required on all proposals. If applicants do not have a negotiated Facilities and Administrative rate, a minimum rate of 10% of direct costs must be used.

If an applicant is encouraged to submit a full proposal, then the applicant will be responsible for completing a Data Management Plan and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questionnaire. Maine Sea Grant can provide assistance with completing these forms.

Awards are made as subaward contracts from the University of Maine and may have several requirements including reporting, and insurance and financial audit records depending on the awardee. You should expect to complete a Subaward Commitment form. A sample can be found at:

http://www.pars.umesp.maine.edu/ORAWeb/Subrecipient_Commitment_Form.pdf

A guide to the possible requirements from the Office of Research Administration can be found here under Subrecipient Guide to Proposing, Receiving, & Managing a Subaward.

<https://umaine.edu/ora/resources/>

University of Maine must meet the requirements of the Federal Government rules regarding grant awards.

The subaward funds are released when invoices are submitted - either monthly or quarterly.

E. Contacts for further information

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Maine Sea Grant's Director and Research Coordinator to discuss project ideas for letters of intent and proposal development and our Fiscal Officer to discuss budgeting.

Director:

Gayle Zydlewski

gayle.zydlewski@maine.edu

Tel: 207-581-1422

Research Coordinator:

Daniel Weaver

sgresearch@maine.edu

Tel: 207-581-4880

Fiscal Officer:

Lynn Wardwell

wardwell@maine.edu

Tel: 207-581-1448

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University of Maine

Orono, Maine 04469-5784

F. Request for Proposals Timeline

Tuesday, January 21: Announce request for Letter of Intent.

Friday, January 24, 3:30 PM: [Informational Zoom Webinar](#) introducing the RFP and members from the Maine Aquaculture Hub.

Wednesday, February 5, 12:00 PM: In-person meeting introducing the RFP and members from the Maine Aquaculture Hub. This meeting will be held at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast (80 Belmont Avenue, Belfast, Maine) and also available via [zoom](#).

Wednesday, February 12: Letters of Intent due electronically through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 13: Letters of Intent sent to Aquaculture Hub steering committee for review

Late February: Aquaculture Hub steering committee meets to review and evaluate Letters of Intent. The steering committee identifies projects that will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Late February: Applicants receive invitations regarding development of full proposals, including full proposal evaluation criteria. Applicants provide a list of suggested reviewers to Maine Sea Grant Research Coordinator via email (sgresearch@maine.edu)

Wednesday, March 18: Full proposals due electronically through eSeaGrant (esg.umaine.edu) by 5:00 p.m.

Friday, March 20: Full proposals emailed to technical reviewers.

Friday, April 10: Full proposal technical reviews due. Applicants are given the opportunity to respond to the technical reviews.

Monday, April 20: Applicant responses to technical reviews due.

Thursday, April 23: Proposals and technical reviews sent to Aquaculture Hub steering committee for review

Early May: Aquaculture Hub steering committee meets to review and evaluate proposal packages. The steering committee makes decisions on which projects to fund.

Mid May: Applicants are notified of funding decisions.