



9360 Glacier Hwy, Ste 201
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-4360

www.seconference.org
www.alaskamariculturecluster.org

Alaska Mariculture Cluster

AMC Hands-On Farm Training RFP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP #2025-09

Date of Issue: June 24, 2025
Closes: ~~August 4, 2025~~ August 18, 2025

Summary

Southeast Conference, through the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC), is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or organizations to develop and implement a hands-on farm training program focused on oyster and kelp farming, hatchery operations, and processing activities. The program aims to facilitate short-term placements for students and new entrants to mariculture across Alaska's mariculture industry, with the goal of building workforce capacity and supporting the growth of mariculture businesses statewide.

Background

Southeast Conference – the state and federally recognized economic development organization for Southeast Alaska – is the lead institution administering a federal grant from the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to grow Alaska's mariculture industry through the Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) program. The Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant coalition includes a diverse group of stakeholders including Alaska state regulatory agencies, Alaska's university system, Economic Development Districts, trade organizations and more. A Governance Body, composed of AMC coalition leads as well as Tribal representatives from each of the project regions, guides the work and evaluation of the overall grant.

The AMC grant is composed of eight component projects (listed below), which have been purposely designed to be complementary to address barriers to growth and break out of the “chicken or egg” cycle of industry development:

- Revolving Loan Fund
- Governance, Coordination and Outreach
- **Workforce Development**
- Research and Development
- Market Development
- Green Energy
- Equipment and Technology
- Grant Administration

The full project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30th, 2026. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the eight components work together to grow the mariculture industry.

Related AMC Projects

Applicants are encouraged to review and consider existing AMC research and initiatives related to this RFP, including but not limited to the following:

- **AMC [Workforce Development](#) through the University of Alaska:** The hands-on farm training program will complement the work done by our three (3) workforce development subawards: University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Alaska Southeast, and Prince William Sound College.
 - UAF offers a variety of trainings, workshops, online courses, and resources through [Alaska Sea Grant](#).
 - UAS offers a for-credit mariculture semester in the Fall as part of its [Applied Fisheries](#) Program, along with supplementary workshops and 3-day intensive courses.

- PWSC offers a [Marine Natural Resources Technician](#) Program, which includes courses in marine electrical, outboard engine repair, boat handling and safety, and more.
- **The Native Conservancy** leads hands-on [Immersion Trainings](#) for Native Alaskans wanting to learn how to jumpstart their own regenerative kelp and mariculture ocean farms.

Scope of Work

Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals to develop and implement hands-on mariculture training programs that provides skill-building experiences for people interested in work in the mariculture sector. Programs can target opportunities across Alaska’s mariculture sector, including oyster and kelp farms, hatcheries, and/or processing facilities.

Southeast Conference is open to a variety of program models, including but not limited to fellowships, internships, mobile trainings, peer mentorship programs, train-the-trainer events, and others. The approach should prioritize collaboration with Alaska-based mariculture operations, be responsive to local context and capacity, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of Alaska’s mariculture workforce and industry.

Project specifics may be refined in negotiation with SEC, building on submitted proposals.

Funding Available:

Roughly ~~\$150,000~~ \$520,000 in funding is anticipated to be allocated through this RFP, secured through the AMC’s [Workforce Development](#) component project. Depending on proposals received, multiple contractors may be selected to complement industry sector areas and geographies.

General Requirements:

Timeline. A notice of intent to award is expected to be announced by August 22th, 2025. Project work is to begin as soon as possible. Selected proposals will be funded through August 2026.

Single Point of Contact. The selected entity will designate one person as the project manager and point of contact with SEC.

Progress Reports. Updates will be submitted to SEC monthly, detailing progress to date, any difficulties encountered in accomplishing the work, and next steps planned.

Disbarment. Applicants must have or acquire a UEI through SAM.gov prior to award finalization. Applicants, including any subcontractors, must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds.

Public Information. All products produced under this RFP will become publicly available on completion.

Proposal Contents:

Proposals are expected to be no more than 8 pages in length, excluding attachments such as resumes, project examples, letters of support, and/or budget templates. Proposals should include the following components:

1. Introduction and Project Understanding

- Demonstrate understanding of the Alaska mariculture industry and its workforce challenges.
- Overview of team.

2. Methodology

- Outline your approach to accomplishing the scope of work, including anticipated deliverables, timeline, and major activities.
- Explain how success will be measured for each component of the proposed project.

3. Experience and Qualifications

- Describe relevant experience of the firm, key team members, and any subcontractors. Relevant experience includes work on similar projects, in related sectors, or with rural, coastal, and indigenous communities.

4. Management Plan

- Describe how the work will be managed and coordinated, including the role of each key team member and subcontractor.
- Provide a project timeline with major milestones.

- Explain quality control measures and approaches for addressing potential challenges or uncertainties.

5. Budget and Cost Effectiveness

- Provide a summarized budget in the proposal as well as spreadsheet budget using the [Contractor Budget Template](#). Details will be further refined and negotiated with the selected contractor.
- Include a table that breaks down costs by major activity/deliverable.
- Include fully loaded hourly rates for personnel working on the project.

Proposal Submission Process:

Deadline. Submit proposals by August 4, 2025, via email to Stephane Granato at stephane@seconference.org and Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

- Proposers are encouraged to verify with SEC that the proposal has been received prior to the deadline.
- Additional information provided after the deadline may also be considered but only if such information can be accommodated by the review process.

Public Information: Proposals and work plans may be distributed throughout the organization for review and comment. Proprietary information should not be submitted in any proposal. SEC will not knowingly reveal the contents of a proposal that is not subsequently accepted for contract; however, SEC accepts no liability should such contents inadvertently be revealed to third parties.

Changes. Any changes or addendum to the RFP will be posted on the [Alaska Mariculture Cluster website](#) and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

Preparation Costs. SEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the proposer during the proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries regarding this request for proposals shall be directed to Stephane Granato at stephane@seconference.org and Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process:

Criteria for evaluating proposals are as follows:

- **Strategic Approach and Impact (40%):** The quality and potential effectiveness of the proposed hands-on farm training program approach, including consideration of innovative strategies that address the unique challenges and opportunities of Alaska's mariculture industry.
- **Experience and Capability (40%):** The qualifications, experience, and demonstrated success of the proposer in similar workforce development initiatives.
- **Cost Effectiveness (20%):** The reasonableness of the proposed budget relative to the scope of work and expected outcomes. Efficient use of resources and clear budget justification.

Scoring of each proposal against the criteria listed above will be conducted by an RFP review committee. SEC reserves the right to reject any and all of the proposals received. If necessary, SEC may select the proposals that, in its sole view, most nearly conform to its needs as outlined in this RFP and then negotiate directly with that proposer to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC's needs.

About Southeast Conference:

As the state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska, Southeast Conference serves as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. SEC has 240 member organizations, representing governments and businesses from the region's 35 communities and 19 Tribes. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska. Southeast Conference formed in 1958 with a group of people supporting the establishment of a regional transportation system in Southeast Alaska, which led to the formation of the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). After that success, Southeast Conference stayed together through more than a half-century to focus on concerns unique to the region, including transportation, maritime, tourism, timber, seafood, mining, health care, government, and overall quality of life.