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Mariculture Equipment RFP Round III

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP #2025-05

Timeline: Equipment Round III

Date Opens: July 11, 2025

~~Closing Date: October 13, 2025~~

Closing Date: November 14, 2025

Summary

Under the Equipment & Technology component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) grant, Southeast Conference is soliciting proposals from eligible entities for the purchase of equipment to support mariculture operations. The goal of this RFP is to stimulate mariculture industry growth through strategic investments in nursery, hatchery, and processing capacity in Alaska. Equipment purchases will help industry participants:

- Safely and cost-effectively handle and process seaweed and shellfish into products with strong market demand.
- Reduce operating costs, increase production capacity, and improve seed quality and consistency.
- Add capacity where needed to address any regional seed supply gaps.

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 (EDDs), trade organizations, and more. A Governance Body,

composed of AMC coalition leads as well as tribal representatives from each of the project regions, will guide the work and evaluation of the overall grant.

The AMC grant is composed of seven 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**

The project period for the AMC BBBRC project is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2026 (extension requests through the end of 2026 can be considered on a case-by-case basis). More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) is available at www.alaskamariculturecluster.org, including the Overarching Narrative, which explains how the seven components work together to grow the mariculture industry in an equitable and environmentally responsible manner.

A total of \$7.2 million in equipment funds are included in the AMC grant. Additionally, \$378,000 in supplies is included with a focus on hatchery/nursery supplies. SEC intends to use the supplies budget to support equipment purchases.

Proposals are solicited from qualified applicants with equipment programs that broadly stimulate the growth of the mariculture industry in their region. Consideration will be given to ensure a spread of projects between the four regions identified in the AMC grant (Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak/Aleutians).

Eligible Entities

Due to EDA rules, only the following types of entities are eligible for proposing equipment purchases through the AMC grant: (For profit entities are not eligible to apply for equipment funding.)

- EDA-designated Economic Development Districts
- Indian Tribes, consortium of Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, Tribal Cooperatives
- States, boroughs, cities, or other political subdivisions of a State
- Institutions of higher education or consortiums of institutions of higher education
- Non-profit organizations.

Eligible Equipment and Expenses

Equipment purchases must be for use at mariculture hatcheries/nurseries or processing facilities/sites. Farming equipment is not eligible for funding. Equipment is defined in 2 CFR 200.1 as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 (these regulations were updated in 2024 but the AMC grant is operating off the rules in place when the grant was finalized in 2022). Equipment maintenance and use are not funded under this RFP, only the cost of equipment purchase, shipping, and calibration.

It is important to note that this RFP is for equipment purchases, not construction projects.

Construction activities, such as electrical or plumbing modifications to buildings as just one example, cannot be funded through the AMC grant.

AMC Equipment Procurement and Purchase Process

Prior to receiving funding, applicants must have a plan for housing and maintaining the equipment for its useful life, among other requirements.

Applicants should be aware that EDA will maintain first priority lien on any equipment purchased with BBBRC funds and will require recipients of BBBRC-funded equipment to follow specific procurement and filing processes detailed in the [Equipment Process Overview document](#) found on the AMC website's [resources page](#). Applicants also must not be disbarred from receiving federal funds and have

an active UEI number through sam.gov. Applicants are advised that additional requirements may be added by EDA or SEC to meet federal requirements.

Successful applicants to this RFP can elect to either be reimbursed for the relevant equipment or have SEC pay equipment vendors directly on behalf of the applicant. Both options require applicants to assume ownership of the equipment and fulfill the requirements listed in the equipment purchasing overview document describe above. Please contact SEC with any questions.

Funding Available:

Funding is secured through the Equipment & Technology component of the AMC grant, which includes \$7.2 million in equipment funding and \$378K in supplies funding. [Round I of the Equipment program](#) resulted in the allocation of approximately \$2.25 million for nine projects. [Round II of the Equipment program](#) resulted in the allocation of approximately \$2.96 million for six projects. The remaining funding – and potentially additional funding – is allocated for the third round of the Equipment program under this RFP. The amount of equipment funding obligated will depend on the quantity and quality of proposals received. Completion of the necessary steps to acquire equipment through the AMC grant can take many months if not more than a year. All grant funds through the equipment and technology component project must be invoiced and reimbursed by September 2026 (extension requests through the end of 2026 can be considered on a case-by-case basis).

There is no cap set on each individual equipment purchase, but impact is expected to scale with project budget.

Applicants may indicate if a proposed project can move forward with partial funding and identify funding sources that have been previously sought, if applicable. Match is not required though financial resources, and experience will be considered as part of the applicant's ability to house and maintain the equipment for its useful life.

Proposal Contents:

Proposals should be fully developed and include specifics relating to budget, operations, and maintenance. There is no page limit. Supporting documents including resumes, letters of support, designs, equipment quotes, etc. can be included. The details and documentation will prepare your project for the next steps of the equipment procurement process should your proposal be funded.

Proposals should include the following:

1. Name of organization, Title of project, and Project Leader and team members with email contact(s) and description of experience (resumes or CVs may be attached).
2. Focus area (hatchery/nursery or processing).
3. Description of equipment requested – please include cost estimates with supporting documentation (quotes, designs, etc).
4. Discussion of project context and importance, including any related work completed to date. How is the equipment purchase necessary to stimulate growth within the relevant focus area (hatchery/nursery/processing) and region?
5. Description of how the equipment purchase will have a broad benefit to multiple stakeholders and contribute to the equity goals in the BBB program. Please include letters of support from local and regional stakeholders. All proposals must demonstrate collaboration with and/or support from local or regional Alaska Native entities.
6. Description of the organization requesting funding and proposed equipment program. Where present, include a description of the organization's activities related to mariculture; experience with federal grants/contracts; experience with housing, maintaining, and/or using equipment comparable to that requested. Proposals should include a detailed plan for housing, maintaining, and using equipment purchased, including sources of funding identified for

maintaining and operating the equipment. Please include a layout of the facility with the location marked where the equipment will be used/installed.

7. Detailed Budget- Provide a total project cost and breakdown, using the [Equipment Subaward Budget Template available at this link](#). Only equipment and supplies can be funded through this RFP, though other expenses can be included to document other funding secured to support the applicant's overall equipment program.
8. Letter of commitment from the governing body of the organization requesting equipment indicating support for the acquisition, placement, use, and maintenance of the equipment.

Proposal Submission Process

Deadline. Submit proposals in pdf format ~~by October 13, 2025~~ **November 14, 2025** for consideration in Round III. Submit proposals via email to Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org and Darrin Kelly at darrin@seconference.org.

Proposers are encouraged to verify that the proposal has been received before 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 pre-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 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 pre-proposal preparation.

Questions. Inquiries regarding this request for proposals can be directed to Dan Lesh at dan@seconference.org and Darrin Kelly at darrin@seconference.org.

Evaluation Criteria and Award Process

Consideration will be given to ensure a spread of projects between the four regions identified in the AMC grant (Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound, Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak/Aleutians).

Criteria for evaluating proposals are listed below. There is no cap set on each individual equipment purchase, but the larger the budget the more impact will be expected:

- Organizational capacity – Does the entity receiving equipment have the resources needed to house, maintain, and use the equipment for its useful life (or a credible plan to gather the necessary resources)? (35%)
- Regional impact – Does the equipment purchase represent a coordinated solution that addresses a barrier to mariculture industry growth in the state or region? How much does this investment stimulate private sector job creation/investment and benefit multiple stakeholders? (50%)
- Cost effectiveness – Does the proposed purchase use appropriate technology to accomplish goals in a cost-effective way? (15%)

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 SEC staff and its consultant to refine the proposal to achieve a contract that fully satisfies SEC needs.

Decisions on proposals are expected to be announced by ~~November 14~~ **December 31, 2025** for Round III.

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. Southeast Conference has over 200 member organizations representing 1,200 people from 32 regional 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. 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, seafood, natural resources, health care, government, and overall quality of life.