



AQUACULTURE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2026

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A: INTRODUCTION

The Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center (MAIC) was established in 1988 as one of the original Industry Outreach Centers under the Maine Science and Technology Commission (MSTC), created through LD 2193, An Act to Establish the Maine Science and Technology Commission.

Our Vision

We envision Maine as a leader in sustainable aquaculture, advancing the production of aquatic species that benefits our communities and the planet.

Our Mission

We advance **economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable** aquaculture as an innovative and competitive solution that contributes to food and economic security, provides goods and services, sustains livelihoods for healthy Maine communities, and supports ecosystem conservation.

MAIC serves as a source of educational information to enhance public visibility and acceptance of aquaculture, and encourages strategic alliances tasked with promoting research, technology transfer, and the commercialization of aquaculture research. MAIC currently has a portfolio of over 20 projects that aim to address key workforce and production barriers for Maine's aquaculture sector.

This grant opportunity provides support to new and scaling aquaculture businesses in Maine. The goal of this program is to foster the growth of aquaculture businesses. MAIC recognizes that the growth of aquaculture businesses in Maine may be assisted by partnerships with consultants located elsewhere in the US or internationally.

Examples of projects may include:

- Aquaculture businesses who have completed MAIC's Business & Economic Research Program and wish to continue market research efforts either in-house or with a named consultant*,
- Aquaculture businesses who are interested in hiring a subject matter expert in a consultant role for improving product branding, messaging, and marketing,
- Aquaculture businesses who have completed an MAIC funded Farmer to Farmer Exchange and would like to further explore the transfer and/or adoption of a new technology or practice into their business,
- Aquaculture businesses looking to trial innovative gear types or an emerging aquaculture species on their farm*.

**We encourage businesses to utilize the Maine Entrepreneurship Resource Corps (MERC) and Maine Technology Institute programs. This MAIC program aims to fill gaps not covered by MERC and MTI.*

B. FUNDING, DURATION, AND ELIGIBILITY

Funding: This is a competitive program and we cannot guarantee that all applicants will be awarded. Funding will be awarded based on the potential impact and feasibility of the proposed project. MAIC can fund applications **up to \$5,000** and applicants must be able to **match** all requested funds.

Duration: Projects should be no longer than 2 years (24 months).

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants must be aquaculture businesses registered in Maine.
- 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, income levels, and socioeconomic statuses to apply for this opportunity.
- If choosing to work with an outside consultant, the named consultant must provide a letter of commitment to be submitted with the application. The consultant does not have to be located in Maine.

C. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications must contain the following elements and sub-sections described below.

Applications that fail to include all the following elements will not be reviewed. Proposals must be limited to a maximum of 5 pages, including the budget and budget justification (12-point font, double spaced, 1-inch top and bottom margins). **Email completed applications to info@mainequaculture.org and CC savena@mainequaculture.org with the following subject line:** LAST NAME, FIRST INITIAL- Aquaculture Business Development Grant App. (*Example: Smith, J - Aquaculture Business Development Grant App*).

Applications must include:

- Title page
 - Business name and mailing address
 - Contact details (including phone number) for the applicant
 - Names and contact information of any consultant(s) involved in the proposed project.
- Project narrative
 - Introduction
 - Justification
 - Goal and objectives
 - Methodology
 - Outcome measures
 - Timeline
- Budget (including match funds)
- Budget justification
- Letter(s) of commitment from named project consultants

Match Policy:

It is MAIC policy that all funding is matched 1:1. To be eligible for this grant, applicants must detail match, meaning for every \$1 of grant funding received, the applicant must contribute an additional \$1 from their own funds towards the project costs. The match can be one or a combination of the following:

- Simple cash match: Applicants must provide a cash match equivalent to the grant award amount.
- In-kind match: The required match can be provided through in-kind contributions, such as staff time, with documented valuation.

Budget and Budget Justification:

The budget should contain at least three columns; titled requested funding, cash match, and in-kind match. Applicants must include a detailed itemized budget justification of what the requested funds will be used for. MAIC cannot cover the salary of employees and will not make purchases or bookings on behalf of the applicant.

Example Budget Justification:

- A. **Salaries and Wages:** The PI (Jane Doe) will devote 0.01 person-months at \$750 for project kick-off and management. A summer intern will be hired for 3 person-months at \$2400 and will be responsible for initial stocking, net maintenance, and measuring growth and survival of scallops and urchins. Personnel time on the project is contributed as an in-kind match.
- B. **Permanent Equipment:** We will be using buoys that we already own to mark the nets, which is contributed as an in-kind match of \$550.

- C. Expendable Supplies & Equipment:** A total of 5,000 scallop spat will be purchased from Green Sea Farms at a rate of \$0.05 per animal for a total of \$250 in requested funds. A total of 1,000 juvenile sea urchins will be purchased from Blue Research Center at a rate of \$0.50 per animal for a total of \$500, \$250 of which is requested funds and \$250 is a cash match. We are requesting funds to purchase 10 pearl nets at \$100 each and 15 lantern nets at \$130 each from Great Aquaculture Supply Company, for a total of \$1000 for pearl nets and \$1950 for lantern nets.
- D. Other Costs:** We are requesting \$500 to be used for fuel costs for our farm boat.

Example Budget:

PROJECT TITLE: Co-growing sea scallops and sea urchins in lantern nets						
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Jane Doe			DURATION (months): 18			
A. SALARIES AND WAGES:	people-months					
	No. of People	Amount of Effort	Requested Funding	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total Funds
1. <i>Personnel</i>						
a. (Co) Principal Investigator	1	0.01			\$750	\$750
b. Staff						
c. Consultant						
d. Intern	1	3			\$2400	\$2400
e. Other:						
B. PERMANENT EQUIPMENT:						
1. Marker buoys					\$550	
C. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT:						
1. Purchase of scallop seed (5,000 at \$0.05/animal)			\$250			
2. Purchase of juvenile sea urchins (1,000 at \$0.50/animal)			\$250	\$250		\$500
3. Purchase of pearl nets (10 at \$100 each)			\$1000			
4. Purchase of lantern nets (15 at \$130 each)			\$1950			
D. OTHER COSTS:						
1. Fuel for boat			\$500			
TOTAL COSTS (A through D):			\$3950	\$250	\$3700	\$7900
TOTAL MATCH (Cash and in-kind)			\$3950			
TOTAL REQUESTED FUNDS			\$3950			

D. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS AND EVALUATION

Review Process:

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Evaluation:

The evaluation of applications is a multi-step process:

1. Applications will be reviewed by MAIC staff to ensure the application is complete.
2. Once complete, applications will be reviewed by a review committee. All applications received by the end of each month will be reviewed together.
3. The applicant may be asked to provide further information.
4. The applicant will be notified of the application outcome.
5. Applicants will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

E. CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the program or how to apply, contact Sydney Avena at savena@maineaquaculture.org.