



Funding Opportunity: please see full Request for Response (RFR) [here](#).

DMF Seafood Marketing Grant Program 2021: Supporting Seafood-related Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

RFR SUMMARY:

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is accepting applications for the 2021 Massachusetts Seafood Marketing Grant Program. The goal of this Grant Program, established by [DMF's Seafood Marketing Program](#) (which seeks to increase awareness and demand for Massachusetts seafood) in 2016, is to enhance the viability and stabilize the economic environment for local commercial fishing and seafood industries and communities.

This year, the Seafood Marketing Grant Program is partially funded by Woods Hole Sea Grant (WHSG), enabling a total of \$150,000 to be awarded to projects supporting the seafood industry which has been so negatively affected by COVID-19. Proposals should support the commercial seafood and fishing/aquaculture industries and communities through education, promotion, and marketing, among other strategies.

The 2021 Massachusetts Seafood Marketing Grant Program anticipates funding 5-10 projects. Typical award sizes are expected to be in the range of \$10,000-\$25,000, however the program will allow for awards from \$5,000 up to \$50,000 per project (exceptions can be made). This program is open to industry, advocates, organizations, communities, and individuals. The project can be specific to species or region and can be a piece of a larger undertaking. Priority will be given to those proposals that are for the greatest good of the Commonwealth's seafood industry as a whole, and that will address the continued impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic on the seafood industry in Massachusetts. Project outcomes, materials created, and reporting from the project should provide information and insight to those in the region doing work with similar goals.

Application Process: This year's Seafood Marketing Grant Program application process will be two-step:

1. Applicants will submit a one-page description of their proposed project and a one-page estimated budget. The project proposal should include: a rationale, goals, target demographic/beneficiaries, implications for the MA seafood market, and shareability of the project outcomes (see Evaluation Criteria for more details). The budget can include broad expense categories. The written submissions will be ranked by a team of reviewers from MA DMF and WHSG;

2. The top ranked project ideas will be selected and invited to present a five-minute virtual project pitch before a panel of judges, followed by a 5-minute Q&A session. Specifics on the pitch event will be given to those teams that are selected. The judges, representing a range of seafood-related industries, will make the determination of which projects are funded.

Our intent is to attract a broad sector of grant applicants by conducting a pitch event rather than the standard written proposal because this format may be more attractive to groups unfamiliar with the more traditional grant application process.

This opportunity is intended to reach all components of the seafood industry, including but not limited to the fishing community, commercial shellfish harvesters, aquaculturists, retailers, wholesalers, processors, restaurants, tourism, and related non-profit organizations. We value inclusivity and encourage applications from minoritized communities/businesses/individuals. We will not discriminate against applicants based on race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, status as a veteran, and basis of disability or any other federal, state or local protected class.

Projects shall support the commercial seafood and fishing industries and communities including (but not limited to) increasing awareness and preference for seafood from Massachusetts, economic development, resilience on the working waterfront, and strategies that can help strengthen Massachusetts businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of such projects can include:

- a. education about seafood and commercial fishing industries, history, fishing practices, Massachusetts seafood availability, health benefits, environmental sustainability, etc. or;
- b. consumer engagement, outreach, and events or;
- c. enhancing value-added or consumer-driven product attributes or;
- d. development of harvest, handling, or processing technology or;
- e. market access, supply chain efficiencies, or traceability or;
- f. community, demographic, or infrastructure insights or;
- g. showcasing of environmental sustainability in MA seafood products or;
- h. strategies to increase the resilience of the seafood resources sector to respond to future disruptions or;
- i. demonstrating new ways to reach consumers displaced from traditional channels by the pandemic or;
- j. development and distribution of educational materials;
- k. strengthening the seafood supply chain: production and distribution or;
- l. increasing markets/market share/market access or;
- m. community networking and organization or;
- n. research on any of the above topics

Priority will be given to projects that serve the greatest good of the Commonwealth's seafood industry as a whole and be within the scope of the goals of DMF's Seafood Marketing Program. Scope of Services is not limited to this list.

Performance Measures: Performance measures will be described in the project narrative. Proposed projects must include metrics for measuring impact and success. It must be evident that the applicant’s project team has the experience or expertise required to complete the development of the proposed product or project within the allotted time frame after receiving funding. The project outcomes will provide information, insight, and advance the Commonwealth’s seafood sector.

Evaluation Criteria: As described in the first section of this RFR, the proposal review process will happen twice: the written proposal will be evaluated by a team from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and Woods Hole Sea Grant then chosen projects will be invited to present their ideas at a virtual pitch event and a panel of judges made up of industry and other sectors will do the final evaluation of the projects. Both rounds of evaluation will use the criteria below. The pitch presentation is a chance to demonstrate enthusiasm and discuss the project in more detail.

Relevancy (60%)

- a. background, context, and rationale for the proposed project
- b. goal(s) of the project, beneficiaries, and statewide/regional/species/market implication
- c. transferability: shareable outcomes (report, materials, research, etc.) that can be used by others in the seafood, commercial fishing, and related industries.

Execution (40%)

- d. estimated budget, estimated timeline, and feasibility of completion within timeframe
- e. partnerships, experience, or related ongoing work of applicant
- f. performance measures/achievement: reasonable and quantifiable metrics presented

Instructions for Submission of Responses: By October 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. email a PDF of your application as an attachment to wendy.mainardi@mass.gov OR attach a document to your application in COMMBUYS containing the following:

1. Cover sheet including title of project, and COMPLETE contact information of applicant. If applying as a partnership, please indicate principal applicant contact person.
2. Project narrative (no more than ONE page). Please see evaluation criteria for guidance.
3. Project budget (no more than ONE page). Project budget can be educated estimates, however refinement is expected for pitch event.

Estimated Calendar

Activity	Date	Time
Bid Release Date	August 30, 2021	
Deadline for Quotes/Bid Responses	October 15, 2021	11:59 p.m.
Notification of Apparent Successful Bidder(s) (Estimated)	November 15, 2021	
Pitch Event	December 2021 (TBD)	
Funding Notification	Early 2022 (TBD)	
Estimated Contract Start Date	Upon notification and acceptance of required paperwork	
Contract End Date	June 30, 2023	11:59 p.m.

Contact Wendy Mainardi, Seafood Marketing Coordinator at the Division of Marine Fisheries, at wendy.mainardi@mass.gov with questions.