



Call for Applications

Farmer Knowledge Exchange Grant Program 2025

I. Introduction

Aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food production sector, and innovations in the industry are occurring at a rapid pace. With its maritime background, extensive coastline, and reputation for producing some of the highest quality seafood in the world, Alaska's shellfish and seaweed (mariculture) industry is well positioned for expansion. Due to the remote nature of the state, staying abreast of current technologies and innovations occurring nationally and internationally presents a challenge for Alaskan mariculturists.

To assist Alaskan mariculturists in taking advantage of the most up to date technology and husbandry practices, Alaska Sea Grant is accepting applications from farmers for travel funding to visit mariculture operations elsewhere. This funding is available for travel within the state of Alaska and nationally. Along with bringing information to the state of Alaska, this program seeks to build awareness of the Alaskan mariculture brand by encouraging reciprocal knowledge exchange from Alaskan industry members to other regions.

II. Funding

Applications for up to \$3,500 per farmer per calendar year will be considered. This figure is the estimated cost of a trip for one person for a weeklong visit to another farming region in the continental US, including airfare, car rental, lodging, and per diem.

Generally, funding will be considered for up to two staff per farming business. Larger group trips, including staff from multiple farms, are encouraged to make for more efficient knowledge sharing and travel.

Applicants should not book travel until confirmation of award is received if trip is contingent upon funding from this program. While travel and lodging can be booked up front by the UAF travel office, some expenses, including per diem, will need to be reimbursed after travel has concluded.

III. Eligibility

This application is primarily targeted to commercial mariculture businesses, including farmers and hatchery/nursery operators. Not-for-profit organizations or individuals that are actively involved in the cultivation of marine organisms for commercial, subsistence, or restoration purposes may also be considered. Preference will be given to applicants that have over a year of experience with cultivation.

In cases where individuals from multiple farms are applying for joint travel, staff from not-for-profit organizations may be included to assist with travel logistics and knowledge capture for sharing back to Alaska.

IV. Application Guidance

Applications can be submitted in eSeaGrant for a single individual or groups of individuals. During the online submission process, be prepared to provide the following information:

- 1. Applicants:** Name, business/group, position, address, phone, and email of all applicants
- 2. Trip details:**
 - a. Letter of support from at least one host farm you plan to visit (an email is sufficient)
 - b. Tentative trip itinerary, including approximate dates of travel
- 3. Narrative** (maximum two pages, single-spaced) answering the following questions:
 - a. How did you decide on the proposed location for your trip?
 - b. What knowledge do you hope to gain and how will it benefit your business or endeavor?
 - c. Why is travel necessary to achieve this knowledge?
 - d. How will you work to share the information learned with the broader Alaska mariculture industry?
- 4. Budget table:** A completed budget table, using the [provided template](#), should be uploaded in eSeaGrant.

V. Selection criteria and review process

Selection will be determined by the following criteria:

- *Impact:* the degree to which the knowledge obtained has the potential to positively impact the Alaska mariculture industry as a whole. Applications targeting innovations that are specific to a single grower will be less competitive than if these innovations are more broadly applicable to the Alaskan industry.

- *Travel necessity:* applications should demonstrate that travel is necessary to obtain the information sought, or that connections made while traveling will be highly valuable to the applicant going forward. Applications should propose an itinerary that is centered around mariculture and makes good use of time for learning purposes.
- *Information sharing plan:* While not required, applicants that propose going beyond the reporting requirements (below) to share the knowledge and innovations they learn with other farmers will be given priority.
- *Experience farming:* Farmers that have been actively cultivating a crop for over a year will be given priority

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis by a review panel of at least three individuals. Travel must commence within the 2025 calendar year.

VI. Reporting Requirements

Awardees will be required to complete a trip summary (two pages single spaced) detailing travel activities and highlights from what they have learned. Awardees will be required to present on trip findings at a webinar with other awardees. We LOVE photos and video for sharing via social media and other outreach. *Proprietary information shared by host farms will not be required to be reported.*

VII. Contact Information

With questions or to discuss proposal ideas, contact Alaska Sea Grant Shellfish Mariculture Specialist James Crimp (jcrimp@alaska.edu).

For *eSeaGrant* technical issues or questions contact Alaska Sea Grant Communications and Technology Specialist Dave Partee (dave.partee@alaska.edu, 907-474-2432)

VII. Funding Background

This project is part of the Workforce Development component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster, a coalition funded by a U.S. Economic Development Administration Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant (project number 07-79-07901). A Governance Body guides the work and equity metrics of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster. More information on the Alaska Mariculture Cluster is available at 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.

Established at the University of Alaska in 1970, Alaska Sea Grant is one of 34 programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Sea Grant College Program, authorized by Congress in 1968. We are funded by federal and state appropriations, as well as project-specific funds from local governments, federal and state agencies, community organizations, and industry. Alaska Sea Grant supports research, education, and extension activities that enhance the ability of Alaskans to understand, conserve, and sustainably use our rich and diverse marine and coastal resources.