



Request for Proposal (RFP)
Maine Seafood Promotional Council Marketing

Issue Date: August 13, 2025

Proposal Due Date: September 5, 2025

Contact: Courtney Crossgrove, courtney@focusmaine.org

FocusMaine, on behalf of the Maine Seafood Promotional Council, seeks a qualified consultant or firm to lead the development and, if funding permits, implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Maine seafood.

I. Introduction

FocusMaine is a nonprofit organization dedicated to propelling the growth of Maine's most promising industries and transforming Maine into a hub for top talent. Through targeted investments and partnerships, FocusMaine strengthens sectors such as agriculture, aquaculture, and life sciences to foster business expansion, innovation, and long-term economic sustainability. More information on FocusMaine can be found at www.focusmaine.org.

FocusMaine deploys a unique, coordinated, sector-level economic development model, engaging the organizations that best provide the needed expertise and support to strengthen the businesses and the sectors.

In 2024, FocusMaine was awarded a Domestic Trade Grant from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development to support the pilot of a [Maine Seafood Promotional Council](#). The concept of a Maine Seafood Promotional Council was identified as a crucial recommendation in the [SEA Maine Roadmap for the Future of Maine's Seafood Economy](#). The Maine Seafood Promotional Council is dedicated to showcasing the state's rich seafood offerings from its 3,478-mile coastline along the North Atlantic. Home to diverse wild-caught and farmed species, Maine's fishermen and sea farmers are committed to quality products and responsible harvesting, cultivation, and handling practices.

The objectives over the two-year pilot period are to:

- Create a Seafood Promotional Council, and
- Execute pilot projects to advance market development of Maine's seafood regionally and nationally.

Since the initial award, the Seafood Promotional Council has adopted a governance document, appointed Co-chairs and Members, established monthly meetings, executed a showcase event, added value to the Maine Seafood Reception at the Seafood Expo North America in Boston,

developed collateral, and participated in the UMass Amherst 31st Annual Chef Culinary Conference.

Ultimately, this initiative intends to lay the foundation for an industry-led, financially sustainable permanent Council to advance the Maine seafood brand and expand sales into out-of-state markets, strengthening Maine's overall food economy through the responsible use of the state's natural resources.

FocusMaine, on behalf of the Maine Seafood Promotional Council, seeks a qualified consultant or firm to lead the development of a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Maine seafood. The goal of this work is to define a clear, research-informed, and stakeholder-aligned direction for how best to elevate Maine seafood's brand identity and market reach.

Final contract terms will be negotiated upon selection and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary elements, subject to legal review. The contract is estimated to start September 22, 2025, and last through December 31, 2025.

II. Scope of Work

Marketing Strategy Development (Immediate – December 31, 2025)

Objective: To develop a marketing strategy that defines value proposition, priorities, messages, audiences, and approaches for promoting Maine seafood, grounded in research, data, and stakeholder input.

Key Responsibilities:

- Landscape Assessment
 - Work with FocusMaine and Seafood Promotional Council Co-Chairs to identify and prioritize possible deliverables.
 - Review and synthesize relevant reports, existing brand materials, previous marketing efforts, and opportunities for promotion.
 - Assess current and potential domestic markets
 - Analyze available data on consumer perceptions, seafood purchasing trends, and market opportunities.
 - Identify additional data needs and gather supplemental data as needed (e.g., short surveys, interviews, market research).
 - ★ Key existing reports include but are not limited to: [A Seafood Promotional Council for Maine](#), [Maine Seafood Market Report 2023](#), [Multicultural Marketing Analysis - Cambodian and Vietnamese Seafood](#), [Cambodian Seafood Purchase Intent Study](#), [Maine Brand Study](#), [Maine's Food Sector Industry Profile](#), Seafood From Maine Dealer Distribution Report, US Seafood Consumer Sentiment Report
 - ★ Key reports in development include: Maine Seafood Promotional Council Market Research Survey, Maine Seafood Promotional Council Industry Interest Survey
- Stakeholder Engagement

- Engage relevant stakeholders (e.g., seafood producers, processors, retailers, chefs, industry groups, and marketing professionals) to understand perspectives, goals, and challenges.
- Facilitate conversations or workshops as needed to inform the strategy and ensure alignment with industry priorities.
- Marketing Strategy Development
 - Deliver a comprehensive marketing strategy based on identified priorities and opportunities that may include, but is not limited to:
 - Brand strategy recommendations, such as a brand promise, attributes, and architecture
 - Brand design, positioning, and messaging recommendations
 - Overview of customers' needs and priorities
 - Priority audience identification and segmentation
 - Recommendations for the best market channels
 - Opportunities for collaboration or amplification through partner efforts

Deliverable: A final marketing strategy document, shaped by research and engagement, that provides a roadmap for future promotion efforts.

Project Coordination and Communication

- Regular check-ins (biweekly or as needed) with MSPC staff and key stakeholders.
- Drafts of all deliverables will be shared for review and input before finalization.
- A summary of insights and recommended next steps will be provided at the close of the project period.

III. Qualifications and Experience

- Demonstrated experience developing marketing strategies, preferably for food, seafood, agriculture, or marketing collaboratives
- Strong research and analytical skills, including the ability to synthesize existing reports and data
- Experience designing and facilitating stakeholder engagement processes
- Ability to develop actionable, audience-informed marketing plans
- Familiarity with brand development and messaging frameworks
- Clear communication skills and ability to present findings and recommendations to diverse audiences
- (Preferred) Familiarity with the seafood industry in Maine
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with internal teams, stakeholders, and external partners
- Ability to work independently

IV. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested applicants should submit a proposal that is no longer than 5 pages that includes:

- **Cover Letter:** A brief introduction and summary of relevant experience.
- **Professional Experience and Resume:** Description of financial modeling and fundraising experience, including examples of success
- **Approach and Methodology:** Outline of the consultant's approach to both financial modeling and fundraising
- **Fee Structure and Budget:** Detailed breakdown of pricing, hourly rates, flat fees, or other structures. The total proposed budget should not exceed \$40,000.
- **References:** Contact information for professional references or past clients.

Submission: Proposals must be submitted in .pdf format via email to Courtney Crossgrove at courtney@focusmaine.org, with the subject line: "Seafood Promotional Council Marketing Proposal – [Your Organization Name]"

All proposals must be signed by an authorized representative of the submitting organization.

Please Note:

- No indirect charges will be allowed.
- Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated with the selected consultant.
- If subcontracting or outsourcing is required, this must be clearly stated, including the names and descriptions of all subcontracted organizations. All costs must be itemized and all-inclusive, covering any subcontracted work.
- All deliverables will become public information.

V. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Demonstrated experience in developing marketing strategy** – 25%
- **Experience in food, seafood, agriculture, or marketing collaboratives**– 25%
- **Quality and clarity of the proposal** – 25%
- **Cost-effectiveness and value** – 25%

Proposals with material deficiencies, omissions, or inconsistencies will not be considered.

VI. Timeline

- **Proposals Due:** September 5, 2025
- **Interviews Scheduled:** September 8-17, 2025 (expected)
- **Consultant Selected:** September 19, 2025 (expected)
- **Contract Start Date:** September 22, 2025 (expected)
- **Contract End Date:** December 31, 2025

Final contract terms will be negotiated upon selection and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary elements, subject to legal review.

VII. Contact Information

For any questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

Courtney Crossgrove
Program and Metrics Manager, FocusMaine
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