

Request for Proposals
RFP No. 2023-01
Date of Issue: April 25, 2023
Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Inc.

PUBLIC RELATIONS, OUTREACH, AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Inc. (AMA) is soliciting proposals from organizations to develop a public relations, outreach, and engagement plan (Public Relations Plan or Plan) for Alaska’s developing mariculture industry.¹ The Plan will be AMA’s road map for communicating with stakeholders about shellfish and aquatic plant farming. To facilitate the growth of the shellfish and aquatic plant industries in Alaska, the AMA needs to understand the concerns held by communities and other stakeholders about the industry’s growth. Identifying these concerns and methods for addressing them is the core objective of the Plan, with the goal of building community-based support for Alaska mariculture (sometimes referred to as “social license”).

Background

The AMA is an outgrowth of the work of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force, originally established by Governor Walker in 2016 and subsequently supported by Governor Dunleavy, the culmination of which was the Final Report to Governor Dunleavy in 2021 (2021 Mariculture Report). This report recommended that AMA be created to lead and coordinate a broad spectrum of entities and individuals interested in the development of mariculture in Alaska. AMA’s mission is to “develop and support a robust and sustainable mariculture industry, producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska’s economy, environment, and communities.” It’s a growing organization with 130 current members, including ocean farmers and processors, research institutions, state agencies, economic development authorities, municipalities, environmental organizations, and others interested in mariculture development in Alaska. The AMA is in its first year of operation and currently has two staff - an Executive Director and Alaska Sea Grant fellow. Its board consists of 13 volunteer directors.²

The Public Relations Plan is a vital element within the Governance, Coordination & Outreach component of the Alaska Mariculture Cluster (AMC) Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant. The AMA, as part of its sub-award from Southeast Conference, will oversee the contract for the Plan.³

The Alaska shellfish and seaweed industries are at different stages of development, but face many similar challenges to growth. As of 2022, there were 87 permitted aquatic farm sites with a total of 1,270 acres, of which 24 were aquatic plant sites, 35 were shellfish and 28 were a combination of aquatic plant and shellfish. About half of permitted sites are in Southeast Alaska,

¹ As used in this RFP, the term “mariculture” means the farming of kelp and shellfish (finfish farming is prohibited in Alaska waters).

² For the Final Report to Governor Dunleavy and more information about the AMA, see www.alaskamariculture.org.

³ For more information on the AMC and the BBBRC grant, see alaskamariculturecluster.org.

with the remainder located in Prince William Sound, Kachemak Bay and in bays surrounding Kodiak Island.

Shellfish farming in Alaska is currently dominated by farming of Pacific oysters, but includes farming of geoducks and mussels. Interest exists in and research is ongoing into farming other invertebrate species including abalone and sea cucumbers. Demand for Alaska-grown oysters is high and exceeds the current supply.

Although seaweed farming in Alaska is more nascent, it is generating substantial interest. The first harvest of farmed kelp in Alaska occurred in 2017 and the estimated total harvest of farmed kelp in 2022 of 871,911 wet pounds. Products derived from Alaskan kelp include food products such as salsa, pickles, and seasonings. Other products under development include nutritional supplements, food additives, livestock feed, and biostimulant fertilizers, among others. Challenges to scaling up the seaweed industry include the development of primary processing facilities that can stabilize the product for transportation, and developing wholesale and retail markets. Substantial investment has been made to overcome these challenges.

Shellfish and seaweed farms are currently mostly operated under 10-year tideland leases issued by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The equipment used to farm and the respective footprints on the water differ, with equipment and design modifications that may reduce the size under development. As the number of farms increases to meet the industry's goals for growth, concerns may arise about potential conflicts with existing uses, such as fishing and subsistence harvests, and impacts on coastal communities and the environment. Therefore, the stakeholders who should be addressed in the Plan include, but are not limited to, the Alaska fishing community, policymakers, Alaska Natives, underserved communities, coastal landowners, and local governments (Stakeholders).

Objectives

The primary objective of this RFP is to create a strategic public relations plan that will guide AMA's public relations activities for the next five to ten years. The AMA's goals for mariculture growth are ambitious and it needs to understand the associated concerns held by Stakeholders. It then needs a plan for effectively addressing those concerns and communicating how it has done so.

The Plan will outline a strategy and recommend tactics for conducting effective, culturally-appropriate, outreach and engagement among stakeholder groups in Alaska. Grant funding is secured to support implementation of the Plan with staff time at AMA and regional economic development districts. The Plan will also be a resource for regional mariculture liaisons (Mariculture Liaisons), who the AMA is engaging under a separate contract. In addition, the Plan will inform AMA's work generally, including future grant and fundraising priorities.

Including and encouraging the involvement of Alaska Natives in the development of the AMA's Public Relations Plan is a key objective of this RFP.

Scope of Work

The scope of work for the entity awarded this contract (Contractor) includes:

- I. Onboarding and Stakeholder Research;
- II. Public Relations Plan Development; and
- III. Consultations.

Task I – Onboarding and Stakeholder Research

The Contractor must develop an understanding of the mariculture industry and the AMA's and AMC's goals to grow and support the industry. Then it must perform research needed to understand concerns related to the growth of mariculture at the local and statewide level. The Contractor shall be responsible for research methods but, to build on its existing knowledge about the mariculture industry in Alaska, it is expected that the Contractor may perform the following work:

- Conduct desktop research and interview AMA staff and members of its board of directors.
- Meet with other members of the coalition implementing the Alaska Mariculture Cluster BBB grant, including members of AMC's governance body and key subrecipients and contractors.
- Meet with the regional Mariculture Liaisons funded through AMA and the BBB grant. These liaisons are currently being procured and will be hosted by organizations with deep experience working with communities in their assigned regions and insights into concerns about mariculture within their communities.
- To inform plan development, create and conduct a public opinion survey or an alternative process that results in a data-driven understanding of stakeholders' perceptions of and concerns about mariculture in Alaska.
- Interview representatives of Stakeholders throughout each region. More than 30 Stakeholder interviews are expected to be conducted, with the exact number and identity of the interviewees to be determined by the contractor and AMA. Interviews with Alaska Native entities and representatives shall be prioritized and, at a minimum, shall include no less than four from each region.

Information obtained from the above processes will be central to developing the Public Relations Plan and building alignment within the industry on public relations priorities.

Task II – Public Relations Plan Development.

This task primarily involves drafting the Public Relations Plan. The Plan's design should be informed by the research performed in Task I. The Contractor should consult with the AMA

about its proposed contents. The Plan shall be a strategic document that should include, but not be limited to, the following elements.

- o Findings. The Plan should identify the stakeholders' primary concerns about the growth of mariculture within their communities and statewide. Based on data and information collected, it should include an attempt to rank or prioritize those concerns.
- o Data summaries. The Plan should include summaries of the data and information collected, organized by stakeholder and region, so that Plan users can understand the basis for the Contractor's findings.
- o Recommendations. The Plan should include recommendations for implementing the Plan, including, without limitation:
 - products, such as studies, analyses, reports, and other materials, that should be prepared;
 - training opportunities for AMA staff, contractors and partners, such as on digital media, crisis management;
 - messaging to be used with different audiences and regions;
 - methods for effective information exchange tailored to each stakeholder group (e.g., Alaska Natives, fishing communities, coastal landowners, etc.) and locality;
 - tasks that the AMA board and staff, Mariculture Liaisons, and AMA partners could implement; and
 - funding sources and partnerships that could be leveraged to implement specific recommendations.
- o Schedule. The Plan should include a proposed schedule for implementing the recommendations.
- o Metrics of success. The Plan should include measurable objectives that can be reasonably achieved within specific timeframes.

Task III – Consultations

As a primary user of the Plan, the AMA will likely need to periodically consult with the Contractor. During the first year after receipt of the Plan, the Contractor shall perform the following tasks.

- Give up to two presentations at venues of AMA's choosing on the Plan's findings and recommendations.
- Respond to periodic questions from AMA staff. The total time for consultations shall not exceed 80 hours.

Deliverables

- The Public Relations Plan. The Plan is the key deliverable.
- A presentation summarizing the key elements of and recommendations in the Plan.
- Timely and substantive responses to AMA inquiries for one year after AMA's receipt of the Plan.
- Content. Proposers should indicate whether they propose to develop content (e.g., marketing language and other assets). Such content is not a required part of the Plan or other deliverables but it may be standard practice for some contractors to develop such content in the course of preparing a Plan.

Depending on the availability of funding, there may be opportunities for additional work to support AMC entities responsible for administering the BBBRC grant.

Qualifications and Evaluation

Required qualifications. Responsive proposals must demonstrate experience with the following:

- Preparing strategic public relations plans that may be implemented by others.
- Preparing plans for communicating and engaging with:
 - rural or Alaska Native communities;
 - the fishing industry;
 - local governments; and/or
 - state policymakers.
- Collaborating on projects involving economic, community, tribal, or natural resource development.

Preferred qualifications. Proposals should also include, wherever applicable, demonstrated experience with the following projects and topics.

- Grassroots and community engagement.
- Culturally-sensitive meetings with Alaska Native communities.
- Public relations strategies that address:
 - job opportunities in rural and Alaska Native communities;

- the promotion and development of Alaska’s seafood industry; and/or
- climate change impacts on ocean ecosystems and coastal communities.
- Aquatic farming, hatchery and nursery operations, and other aspects of Alaska’s shellfish and aquatic plant farming industry.
- Coastal resource management and working waterfronts.

In addition to the above experience, it is preferred that proposers have a demonstrated relationship with a regional or tribal entity.

SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.01 Return Mailing Address, Contact Person, Telephone, and Deadline for Receipt of Proposals

All proposals shall be submitted by email to: info@alaskamariculture.org

Proposals must be received by no later than 5:00 pm Alaska Time on Friday, May 25, 2023. The AMA’s review committee will consider all proposals received by the deadline. Proposals may be accepted until a contractor is selected.

It is the offeror’s responsibility to email the issuing agency at info@alaskamariculture.org to confirm that the proposal has been received. The AMA is not responsible for unreadable, corrupt, or missing attachments.

Any changes or addenda will be posted on the AMA website (alaskamariculture.org) and sent directly to respondents who have specifically requested notification.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS RFP MUST BE DIRECTED TO THE PROCUREMENT OFFICER:

Jason Lessard
(907) 351-2575
info@alaskamariculture.org

1.02 Contract Term and Work Schedule

The contract term and work schedule set out in this RFP represent the AMA’s best estimate of the schedule. If a component of this schedule, such as the deadline for receipt of proposals, is delayed, the rest of the schedule may be shifted by the same number of days at the discretion of the AMA.

The Plan shall be delivered to the AMA within three to six months from the date of the award. To accommodate the 12-month Consultation Period, the contract length shall extend for 12 months after AMA's receipt of the final, approved Plan. Deliverables will be scheduled per contract terms, with the target for project completion in the first quarter of 2025.

More detail on the proposed project schedule is outlined in the attached spreadsheet.

The proposed schedule for awarding the contract is as follows.

- Issue RFP: April 25, 2023
- Deadline for Receipt of Initial Proposals: May 25, 2023
- Notice of Intent to Award: June 10, 2023
- Date of Award (AMA issues contract): June 17, 2023

1.03 Budget

This RFP is intended to result in the award of a single contract in the range of \$80,000 to \$120,000. Please make sure that your proposal does not exceed this budget.

1.04 Location of Work and Travel

The project will be managed by the Alaska Mariculture Alliance, which is located in Anchorage. Regular communications and meetings (virtual and in-person) will be required for a successful project.

The Contractor may be required to travel to at least one meeting of the Governing Body to present the Plan. Locations of the Governing Body's periodic meetings may vary, but will likely occur in Juneau or Anchorage.

1.05 Assistance to Offerors with a Disability

Offerors with a disability may receive accommodation regarding the means of communicating this RFP or participating in the procurement process. For more information, contact the procurement officer.

1.06 Questions Received Prior to the Deadline for Receipt of Proposals

Questions should be directed to AMA's procurement officer. Two types of questions generally arise. One may be answered by directing the questioner to a specific section of the RFP. These questions may be answered directly over the telephone or via email. Other questions may be more complex and may require a written amendment to the RFP. The procurement officer will make that decision.

1.07 Amendments

If an amendment is issued, it will be published in the same manner in the original RFP and all offerors will be directly notified.

1.08 Alternate Proposals

Offerors may submit only one proposal for evaluation.

1.09 Right of Rejection

Offerors must comply with all the terms of the RFP. The procurement officer may reject any proposal that does not comply with all the material and substantial terms, conditions, and performance requirements of the RFP.

Minor informalities that do not affect responsiveness may be waived by the procurement officer. The AMA reserves the right to refrain from making an award.

1.10 AMA is Not Responsible for Preparation Costs

The AMA will not pay any cost associated with the preparation, submittal, presentation, or evaluation of any proposal.

1.11 Subcontractors

If an offeror intends to use subcontractors, the offeror must identify in the proposal the names of the subcontractors and the portions of the work the subcontractors will perform.

If a proposal with subcontractors is selected, the offeror must provide the following information concerning each prospective subcontractor within five working days from the date of request:

- (a) complete name of the subcontractor;
- (b) complete address of the subcontractor;
- (c) type of work the subcontractor will be performing;
- (d) percentage of work the subcontractor will be providing;
- (e) evidence that the subcontractor holds a valid Alaska business license; and
- (f) a written statement, signed by each proposed subcontractor that clearly verifies that the subcontractor is committed to providing the services required by the contract.

An offeror's failure to provide this information, within the time set, may cause the AMA to consider the proposal non-responsive and reject it. The substitution of one subcontractor for another may be made only at the discretion and with the prior written approval of the AMA.

1.13 Offeror's Certification

By signature on the proposal, offerors certify that they comply with the following:

- (a) all terms and conditions set out in this RFP;
- (b) all applicable state and federal laws, including:
 - i. the Equal Employment Opportunity Act and its implementing regulations;
 - ii. the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its implementing regulations;and
 - iii. the applicable portion of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- (c) a condition that the proposal submitted was independently arrived at, without collusion, under penalty of perjury; and
- (d) that the offers will remain open and valid for at least 30 days.

If any offeror fails to comply with [a] through [d] of this section, the AMA reserves the right to disregard the proposal, terminate the contract, or consider the contractor in default.

1.14 Conflict of Interest

Each proposal shall include a statement indicating whether the firm or any individual working on the contract has a possible conflict of interest and, if so, the nature of that conflict. The AMA reserves the right to consider a proposal non-responsive and reject it or cancel the award if any interest disclosed or undisclosed could either give the appearance of a conflict or cause speculation as to the objectivity of the program to be developed by the offeror. The AMA's determination regarding any questions of conflict of interest shall be final.

1.15 News Releases

News releases related to this RFP will not be made without prior approval of the AMA.

1.16 Assignment

The Contractor may not transfer or assign any portion of the contract without prior written approval from the procurement officer.

1.17 Disputes & Severability

Disputes: The Parties agree to enter into good faith negotiations to resolve any disputes that arise out of or relate to this Agreement. If such a dispute cannot be settled through negotiation, the Parties agree first to try in good faith to settle the dispute by non-binding mediation. Any and all litigation shall be filed in Alaska Superior Court, in Anchorage, Alaska.

Severability: If any provision of the contract or agreement is declared by a court to be illegal or in conflict with any law, the validity of the remaining terms and provisions will not be affected and the rights and obligations of the parties will be construed and enforced as if the contract did not contain the particular provision held to be invalid.

SECTION TWO STANDARD PROPOSAL INFORMATION

2.01 Authorized Signature

All proposals must be signed by an individual authorized to bind the offeror to the provisions of the RFP. Proposals must remain open and valid for at least 30 days from the date set as the deadline for receipt of proposals.

2.02 Supplemental Terms and Conditions

After award of contract:

- a) if conflict arises between a supplemental term or condition included in the proposal and a term or condition of the RFP, the term or condition of the RFP will prevail; and
- b) if the AMA's rights would be diminished because of the application of a supplemental term or condition included in the proposal, the supplemental term or condition will be considered null and void.

2.03 Clarification of Offers

To determine if a proposal is compliant and eligible for award, communications by the procurement officer or review committee are permitted with an offeror to clarify uncertainties or eliminate confusion concerning the contents of a proposal. Clarifications may not result in a material or substantive change to the proposal. The evaluation may be adjusted because of a clarification under this section.

2.04 Discussions with Offerors

The AMA may conduct discussions with offerors. The purpose of these discussions will be to ensure a full understanding of the requirements of the RFP and proposal.

Offerors with a disability needing accommodation should contact the procurement officer prior to the date set for discussions so that reasonable accommodation can be made. Any oral modification of a proposal must be reduced to writing by the offeror.

2.05 Evaluation of Proposals

The procurement officer and review committee will evaluate proposals. The evaluation will be based on the evaluation factors set out in Section Six of this RFP.

However, the AMA may elect to also conduct interviews, in which event all offerors that submitted responsive proposals will be afforded the opportunity of an up to one-hour interview.

After receipt of proposals, if there is a need for any substantial clarification or material change in the RFP, an amendment will be issued. The amendment will incorporate the clarification or change, and a new date and time established for new or amended proposals. Evaluations may be adjusted as a result of receiving new or amended proposals.

2.06 Vendor Tax ID

A valid Vendor Tax ID must be submitted with the proposal or within five days of the AMA's request.

2.07 Alaska Business License and Other Required Licenses

Offerors must comply with any and all applicable state laws.

2.08 Contract Negotiation

After final evaluation, the procurement officer will negotiate first with the offeror(s) of the highest-ranked proposals. Negotiations, if held, shall be within the scope of the request for proposals and limited to those items which would not have an effect on the ranking of proposals. If the highest-ranked offeror(s) fails to provide necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner, or fails to negotiate in good faith, the AMA may terminate negotiations and negotiate with the offeror of the next highest-ranked proposal. If contract negotiations are commenced, they will be held virtually.

2.09 Failure to Negotiate

The AMA may terminate negotiations with the offeror initially selected and commence negotiations with the next highest ranked offeror, if the selected offeror:

1. fails to provide the information required to begin negotiations in a timely manner;
2. fails to negotiate in good faith;
3. indicates they cannot perform the contract within the budgeted funds available for the project; or
4. if the offeror and the AMA, after a good faith effort, simply cannot come to terms,

2.10 Notice of Intent to Award (NOI) — Offeror Notification of Selection

After the completion of contract negotiation, the procurement officer will issue a written Notice of Intent to Award (NOI). The NOI will identify the proposal selected for award.

2.11 Protest

Offerors have three (3) days from the date of the NOI to protest the award of the Contract. All protests must be received in writing at the AMA office no later than the close of business on the third day after NOI publication. The AMA will respond within three business days. Protests based on any omission or error, or on the content of the solicitation, will be

disallowed if these faults have not been brought to the attention of the procurement officer, in writing, at least seven days before the deadline for receipt of proposals.

SECTION THREE STANDARD CONTRACT INFORMATION

3.01 Contract Type: Fixed Price Contract

This RFP is intended to result in the award of a fixed-price contract. The contract may be amended and extended as needed to accomplish the scope of work.

3.02 Contract Approval

This RFP does not, by itself, obligate the AMA to negotiate with any party or award a contract. The AMA's obligation will commence when the contract is approved by the Executive Director of the AMA, as stipulated by the Board of Directors. Upon written notice to the contractor, the AMA may set a different starting date for the contract. The AMA will not be responsible for any work done by the contractor, even work done in good faith, if it occurs prior to the contract start date set by the AMA.

3.03 Standard Contract Provisions

The contractor will be required to sign and submit a Contract for Professional Services (Contract) provided by the AMA. The contractor must comply with the contract provisions. No alteration of the Contract will be permitted without prior written approval by both parties.

3.04 Proposal as a Part of the Contract

This RFP and the successful proposal will be incorporated into the Contract.

3.05 Additional Terms and Conditions

The AMA reserves the right to add terms and conditions during contract negotiations. These terms and conditions will be within the scope of the RFP and will not affect the proposal evaluations. The Contract will be subject to the execution of AMA's subrecipient agreement between the AMA and Southeast Conference (Subrecipient Agreement).

3.06 Insurance Requirements

Offerors are responsible for the health, safety and conduct of their employees and subcontractors and shall hold the AMA, AMA staff, AMA's Board of Directors, and all other parties harmless. Offerors are responsible to supply any and all insurance requirements needed for performance of this work.

3.07 Contract Funding

Funding for this contract is secured through the BBBRC grant.

3.08 Proposed Payment Procedures

Payments will be made under a negotiated payment schedule. Each billing must consist of an invoice and progress report. No payment will be made until the progress report and invoice has been approved by the AMA. The final payment will not be made until the entire Contract has been completed and approved by the AMA.

3.09 Contract Payment

The AMA will be administering this contract using BBBRC grant funds. Contract payments will be made as provided in the Subrecipient Agreement. Final award of the Contract shall be subject to the execution of the Subrecipient Agreement. Upon receipt of a written request, the AMA will provide the Contractor with a copy of the Subrecipient Agreement.

No payment will be made until the Contract is approved by AMA's Executive Director, as directed by AMA's Board of Directors. Under no conditions will the offeror be owed the payment of any interest charges associated with the cost of the Contract.

3.10 Contract Personnel

Any change of the project team members or subcontractors named in the proposal must be approved, in advance and in writing, by the AMA. Personnel changes that are not approved by the AMA may be grounds to terminate the Contract.

3.11 Inspection & Modification - Reimbursement for Unacceptable Deliverables

The Contractor is responsible for completing all work set out in the Contract. All work is subject to inspection, evaluation, and approval by the AMA. The AMA may employ all reasonable means to ensure that the work is progressing and being performed in compliance with the Contract. The AMA may instruct the Contractor to make corrections or modifications if needed to accomplish the Contract's intent. The Contractor will not unreasonably withhold such changes.

Failure of the Contractor to perform and complete the Contract may cause the AMA to terminate the Contract. In this event, the AMA may require the Contractor to reimburse monies paid (based on the identified portion of unacceptable work received) and may seek associated damages.

3.12 Termination for Default

If the AMA determines that the Contractor has refused to perform the work or has failed to perform the work with such diligence as to ensure its timely and accurate completion, the AMA may, by providing written notice to the Contractor, terminate the Contractor's right to proceed with part or all of the remaining work.

3.13 Contract Changes - Unanticipated Amendments

During the Contract, the Contractor may be required to perform additional work. That work will be within the general scope of the initial Contract. When additional work is required, the AMA will provide the Contractor a written description of the additional work and request the Contractor to submit a firm time schedule for accomplishing the additional work and a firm price for the additional work. Cost and pricing data must be provided to justify the cost of such amendments.

The Contractor will not commence additional work until the project director has secured any required AMA approvals necessary for the amendment and issued a written contract amendment, approved by the Executive Director of the AMA.

3.14 Contract Invalidation

If any provision of this Contract is found to be invalid, such invalidation will not be construed to invalidate the entire Contract.

3.15 Nondisclosure and Confidentiality

Contractor agrees that any and all confidential information shall be used only for purposes of providing the deliverables and performing the services specified herein and shall not disseminate or allow dissemination of confidential information except as provided for in this section. The Contractor shall hold as confidential and will use reasonable care (including both facility physical security and electronic security) to prevent unauthorized access by, storage, disclosure, publication, dissemination to and/or use by third parties of the confidential information. "Reasonable care" means compliance by the contractor with all applicable federal and state law. The Contractor must promptly notify the AMA in writing if it becomes aware of any storage, disclosure, loss, unauthorized access to or use of the confidential information.

Confidential information, as used herein, means any data, files, software, information or materials (whether prepared by the AMA or its agents or advisors) in oral, electronic, tangible or intangible form and however stored, compiled or memorialized that is classified confidential as defined by the AMA classification and categorization guidelines provided by the AMA to the Contractor or a Contractor agent or otherwise made available to the contractor or a contractor agent in connection with this Contract, or acquired, obtained or learned by the Contractor or a Contractor agent in the performance of this Contract. Examples of confidential information include, but are not limited to: technology infrastructure, architecture, financial data, trade secrets, equipment specifications, user lists, passwords, research data, and technology data (infrastructure, architecture, operating systems, security tools, IP addresses, etc.).

3.16 Indemnification

The Contractor shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the AMA from and against any claim of, or liability for the independent acts, errors, and omissions of the Contractor. If there

is a claim of, or liability for, a joint negligent act, error or omission of the Contractor or the AMA and, the indemnification, defense and hold harmless obligation of this provision shall be apportioned on a comparative fault basis. In this provision, the Contractor and the AMA include their respective employees, agents, and other contractors who are directly responsible to each.

3.17 Proposals and Deliverables are Property of the AMA

By submitting a proposal, the offeror agrees that its proposal and all associated information, data and supplementary material are the property of the AMA. All deliverables and work product, and associated information and data prepared for this contract, are the sole property of the AMA.

SECTION FOUR PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

4.01 Proposal Format and Content

The AMA discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals, however, for the AMA to evaluate proposals fairly and completely, offerors must follow the format set out in this RFP and provide all information requested. Proposals are expected to be no more than 10 pages in length, excluding resumes and work product samples which may be attached.

Offeror's proposal shall encompass all tasks in the Scope of Work.

4.02 Introduction

Proposals must include the complete name and address of the offeror's firm, and the name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the person the AMA should contact regarding the proposal.

Proposals must confirm that the offeror will comply with all provisions in this RFP. Proposals must be signed by a company officer empowered to bind the company. An offeror's failure to include these items in the proposals may cause the proposal to be determined to be non-responsive and the proposal may be rejected.

4.03 Understanding of the Project

Offerors must provide narrative statements that illustrate their understanding of the requirements of the project and the project schedule. This should not simply be a copy and paste of statements made in the RFP.

4.04 Methodology Used for the Project

Offerors must provide narrative statements that set out the methodology they intend to employ, and illustrate how the methodology will serve to accomplish the work and project

schedule. In describing its methodology, the offeror shall, at a minimum, address the following topics:

- 1) Onboarding. Explain the initial steps you would take during the onboarding process.
- 2) Stakeholder research. Outline your anticipated approach for researching stakeholders and creating a data-driven basis for plan recommendations.
- 3) Public Relations Plan Drafting. Outline your anticipated approach to developing the Plan.

4.05 The Public Relations Plan

Offerors must describe a vision for the Public Relations Plan, given the information provided in the RFP. The AMA understands that the design and substance of the plan will be informed by the findings from Task I. But the AMA expects the proposal to include sufficient detail so that it can obtain an idea of what the offeror expects the Plan to include.

4.06 Qualifications and Sample Work Product

Offerors must designate the individual(s) responsible and accountable for the completion of each task and deliverable, as well as the individual(s) who shall be assisting that person in performing the task or deliverable. For each identified individual, the proposal must include a description of that person's experience performing similar work (official resumes are optional).

Offerors must include a description of three similar projects for which they have delivered plans on time and within budget, and a reference for each project.

4.07 Cost Proposal

Cost proposals must include an itemized budget that includes, but should not be limited to, the expected number of hours and costs associated with each task.

Please also include your rate schedule for any work in addition to Tasks I-III in this RFP. Rates should be presented as blended, fully loaded, rates.

4.08 Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed to determine if they are responsive. Proposals determined to be responsive will be evaluated using the criterion that is set out in Section Six.

An evaluation may not be based on discrimination due to the race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, sexual-orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, disability, or political affiliation of the offeror.

SECTION FIVE
EVALUATION CRITERIA AND CONTRACTOR SELECTION

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS USED TO SCORE THIS PROPOSAL IS 100

5.01 Understanding of the Project (10 Percent)

NOTE: Proposers should not merely repeat statements in the RFP.

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- [a] How well has the offeror demonstrated a thorough understanding of the purpose and scope of the project?
- [b] How well has the offeror identified pertinent issues and potential problems related to the project?
- [c] Has the offeror demonstrated an understanding of the deliverables?
- [d] Has the offeror demonstrated an understanding of the project schedule and shown an achievable plan for meeting it?

5.02 Methodology and Public Relations Plan (40 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- [a] How comprehensive is the methodology and does it depict a logical approach to fulfilling the RFP requirements?
- [b] Does the methodology match and achieve the objectives, tasks, and deliverables set out in the RFP?
- [c] Does the methodology align with the project schedule attached to the RFP?
- [d] Does the description of the Public Relations Plan match the RFP objectives?

5.03 Cost (15 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

- [a] How competitive is the fixed price for the services offered? This will include an evaluation of any content generation included in the proposal.
- [b] How well are the overall project objectives met through the itemized budget?

5.04 Experience and Qualifications (35 Percent)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below.

Personnel questions

- [a] Do the individuals assigned to the project have demonstrated experience working with Alaska Native and rural Alaskan communities?

- [b] Is the description of prior experience complete and does it demonstrate backgrounds that would be desirable for the individual(s) responsible for the deliverables?
- [c] How extensive is the applicable education, training, and experience of the personnel designated to work on the project?

Firm questions

- [d] To what degree does the firm have the required and preferred qualifications described in the RFP?
- [e] What is the firm's history of providing timely and successful completion of projects?
- [f] If a subcontractor will perform work on the contract, how well does it measure up to the evaluation used for the offeror?
- [g] Does the proposer have a demonstrated relationship with a regional or local tribal entity?

Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant
Subawardee: Alaska Mariculture Alliance, Inc. (AMA)
Contract: Public Relations, Outreach, and Engagement Plan (RFP# 2023-01)
Project Period: June, 2023 - March, 2025
Timeline & Tasks

Description of Goals/Objectives/Tasks	2023				2024				2025				Responsible Party (Initials)
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	
Issue RFP, identify preferred proposal, and negotiate and award contract													ED, OC
Task I: Onboarding and Stakeholder Research													
Task I-1: Conduct desktop research and interview AMA staff													CON, ED, OC
Task I-2: Meet with Alaska Mariculture Cluster members													CON, ED, OC
Task I-3: Meet with the regional Mariculture Liaisons													CON, ED, OC
Task I-4: Create and conduct survey(s)													CON, ED, OC
Task I-5: Stakeholder interviews													CON
Task II: Public Relations Plan Development													
Task II-1: Share initial findings with AMA and solicit input on outline of Plan													CON, ED, OC
Task II-2: Draft Plan													CON
Task II-3: Incorporate feedback from AMA and finalize Plan													CON, ED, OC
Task III: Consultations													
Task III-1: Presentations on Plan's findings and recommendations													CON
Task III-2: Periodic consultations with AMA													CON, ED, OC

ED = AMA Executive Director, AOC = AMA Outreach Coordinator, CON = Contractor