



Request for Proposals:

Marine Technology Startup Scholarship Funding
Testing & Demonstration Activities

Date of Issue: July 8th, 2026

Responses Due: August 15th, 2026

Please submit proposals to:

nora.mccarthy@nboc.org

I. About New Bedford Ocean Cluster

The New Bedford Ocean Cluster (NBOC) was launched to accelerate and sustain the growth of New Bedford’s ocean economy by championing business development, technology innovation, and strategic partnerships. NBOC fosters collaboration across industry, academia, and the public sector to grow the region’s ocean economy across four regionally significant industry pillars: **Aquaculture, Commercial Fishing & Seafood Processing, Offshore Renewable Energy, and Marine Innovation & Technology**. By leveraging New Bedford’s coastal position, extensive maritime strengths, and rich historical and cultural ties to the sea, NBOC aims to attract investment, support the formation and growth of maritime businesses, and foster new initiatives that can create greater economic and coastal resilience for New Bedford and the surrounding region.

II. Marine Technology Scholarship Funding for Startups

NBOC is pleased to invite marine technology startups (TRL 4–9) to apply for scholarship funding to support product validation and testing activities in and around the Port of New Bedford. The scholarships are intended to reduce barriers to commercialization by helping startups de-risk technologies, demonstrate solutions, and accelerate advancement toward market readiness. Scholarships of up to \$20,000 per company are available, with awardees required to provide a 50% cost share toward eligible project expenses. NBOC is seeking proposals from technology companies developing solutions for the aquaculture, commercial fishing, seafood processing, or offshore renewable energy sectors. Scholarship funding is made possible through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center’s Ocean Innovation Network.

III. Eligibility & Requirements

Eligibility:

- Startup or early-stage company (TRL 4-9) in ocean, maritime, or climate tech with strong technical feasibility and commercialization potential.
- Registered business in Massachusetts OR can demonstrate a meaningful economic connection to the Commonwealth through activities such as employing Massachusetts residents, engaging Massachusetts-based vendors or suppliers,

conducting operations in the state, or otherwise contributing to the Massachusetts economy.

- Alignment with ocean innovation/climate tech/blue economy priorities, with applications in aquaculture, commercial fishing, seafood processing, and offshore renewable energy.

Cost Match:

- 1:1 cost-share match required
- Up to \$20,000 per company
- Reimbursable based on documentation

Eligible Expenses:

- Makerspace, lab, equipment, and facility fees
- Vessel services and marine logistics fees
- Deployment and field operations costs
- Prototyping directly tied to product development/modification

Ineligible Expenses:

- Salaries, wages, stipends
- Overhead (rent, utilities)
- Routine business expenses
- Legal, accounting, fundraising

Reporting:

Scholarship recipients will be required to submit regular progress reports on a mutually agreed-upon schedule, detailing project activities, expenditures, and key performance metrics used to measure project outcomes and impact.

IV. Timeline

The timeline below is subject to change at NBOC's discretion.

- RFP Release: July 8th, 2026
- Proposal Deadline: August 15th, 2026
- Awards Issued: September 1st, 2026

V. How to Apply

Applicants should submit all materials as a single PDF to nora.mccarthy@nboc.org before August 15th, 2026, at 5:00 pm EST.

Applications must include the following information:

1. Company Contact Information

- Contact Name
- Contact Email
- Address
- Phone
- Website

2. Company Overview

- Description of company and technology solution to be validated
- Team members & experience
- Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

3. Project Description & Impact Statement

Please describe your project and the potential impact. Your response should address:

- Technology Advancement
 - ✓ How will the proposed work advance the technology toward commercialization and market readiness?
 - ✓ What technical, operational, or regulatory risks will be reduced through the testing?
- Testing & Validation Activities
 - ✓ Describe what kind of testing/validation/support services are needed to advance technology. What is your timeline? What is the budget and how will you cover the match requirement?
- Industry Impact
 - ✓ What challenge or opportunity does the technology address within the aquaculture, commercial fishing, seafood processing, or offshore renewable energy sectors?
 - ✓ How could successful validation benefit industry stakeholders?

- Economic Impact
 - ✓ Describe any anticipated impacts on job creation, workforce development, supply chain activity, business growth, or future investment in Massachusetts and/or New Bedford.

 - Future Growth and Scalability
 - ✓ What are the expected next steps following project completion?
 - ✓ How will successful testing position the company for future customers, pilots, deployments, partnerships, fundraising, or revenue generation?
-

VI. Questions?

For questions, please contact Nora McCarthy, Business Engagement & Navigator Services Lead at nora.mccarthy@nboc.org.

VII. Disclaimer

NBOC may modify or cancel this RFP at any time for any reason with or without notice. NBOC reserves the right to request supplemental information after RFPs have been submitted. NBOC reserves the right to issue awards and reject proposals at their sole discretion.