**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202204054 - Maine Industry Partnerships for Workforce Development Initiative, Grant Funding FY 2022 Application |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Labor,  State Workforce Board |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | June 13, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | June 22, 2022 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | June 28, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received, and the Department’s answers.**

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| **1** | **Question** |
| Is it a requirement to partner with an actual educational entity? |
| **Answer** |
| No. Applicant(s) **must** partner with at least four employers from the target industry in addition to partnering **with at least one** of the following types of entities:   * Education and training provider * Workforce system partner, and/or * Community-based organization.   Examples of an educational provider include, but are not limited to, colleges, universities, adult education providers, K-12 schools, career and technical educational schools, and vocational schools. |

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| **2** | **Question** |
| Can 2-3 associations partner as the leaders of the grant and from there include other partners? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, industry associations are one of several eligible applicants including:   * 1. Employers,   2. Nonprofit & community-based organizations,   3. Local workforce boards,   4. Industry associations,   5. Labor unions,   6. Apprenticeship organizations,   7. Local governments,   8. Local or regional economic development entities,   9. Chambers of commerce,   10. Small business development centers,   11. WIOA service providers & partners,   12. Human service organizations,   13. Criminal justice organizations,   14. K-12/local education,   15. Career & technical education,   16. Colleges and universities,   17. Adult education, and   18. Public libraries   Applicants must represent at least one of the targeted industries listed in the RFA and meet the minimum threshold for partnership:   * Applicant(s) must partner with at least four employers from the target industry in addition to partnering with at least one education and training provider, workforce system partner, and/or community-based organization. * Employers must include representatives from at least 2 small employers (< 50 employees) must be included. |

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| **3** | **Question** |
| If we have already started a career pathways site that links to the USDOL, would we have to create a new one for this grant or could we expand upon the one we have? |
| **Answer** |
| The Industry Partnerships initiative requires the development of career pathway maps that will be utilized by the state of Maine in creating a uniform set of career pathways maps with linkages that will be a main feature of a unified career portal site. Technical assistance will be made available to support partnerships in this work. Proposals do not require the development of new career pathways sites. |

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| **4** | **Question** |
| In the RFA you list the targeted industries, “life sciences” is not on that list. Does this mean life sciences is not able to submit a proposal? |
| **Answer** |
| Proposals must be focused on at least one of the 9 targeted industries listed in the RFA:   1. Clean Energy 2. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries 3. Healthcare and social assistance 4. Information 5. Infrastructure (construction, building trades, broadband, logistics) 6. Leisure and hospitality 7. Manufacturing 8. Education 9. Retail |

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| **5** | **Question** |
| I have never written a grant before but am thinking this might be the right time. I don’t know how this whole process works or if my idea is even in the right vein. Is it possible to set up a time to have a conversation? |
| **Answer** |
| Here are a few resources that may be helpful in preparing a proposal:   * Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers – [https://www.aptac-us.org/](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aptac-us.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7CChristopher.Quint%40maine.gov%7Caa0e7c6f65a54553c93508da497e22d7%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C637903103339191109%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=U4zxI708aC0e7lwiQdc7S3AfsIOiuaW4u5iaOQjeegE%3D&reserved=0) * Regional Planning Organizations – <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/technical/regional_council.shtml>   We also encourage reviewing Appendix F in the RFA for Additional Resources that may prove useful in putting together your proposal |

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| **6** | **Question** |
| My organization has an education program for high school students who are interested in entering the fisheries and seafood workforce. One of our training modules is about safety and first aid. I am wondering if a training program that provides safety training for fisherman and results in a certification/credential of value would qualify for funding under this grant. |
| **Answer** |
| Proposals must clearly advance one of the three following goals:   1. Increase the labor pool by breaking down employment barriers and attracting talent 2. Increase the number of Mainers with a credential of value through training and education 3. Increase average wages by supporting individuals in connecting to and employers in offering high-quality jobs   If training and education programs are proposed as an expense, the applicant must demonstrate no other funds, including APRA funds, are available for the training. |

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| **7** | **Question** |
| We received two questions that are similar:   1. Does the total number of businesses represented in an Industry Partnership apply to ALL partners? For this grant, we are partnering with retail businesses, adult ed, and industry associations. Would the number be each employee per partner? For the association, would it be the total “members” or their total employees? 2. In the grant RFP a small business is defined as 50 or less. If a business hires seasonal workers and that goes above 50, only during the season, will that bump the small business out of that category? |
| **Answer** |
| The total number of employees for each business should be counted similar to how the Center for Workforce Research and Information counts employment for their labor statistics programs. The total number of employees should be based on the average employment throughout the year. For example, if an employer has 50 employees for six months out of the year (say May through October) and 30 employees during the other six months of the year (November through April), their average annual employment would be 40. |

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| **8** | **Question** |
| Can we utilize the Career Navigators that may already be funded through another ARPA grant? (i.e., Adult Ed has navigators that are being funded via another grant, can they also work on this grant project?) |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, grantees may use ARPA funds in a way that is complementary to other available resources and supplements, expands, and creates new opportunities vs. supplants existing activities. A description of how existing funds and programs will be leveraged to complement your proposal should be included as part of your application. |

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| **9** | **Question** |
| Can we add dollars in the budget for the employee and/or prospective employee to take our credential course if the time to take the course would take them away from their working hours? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, if all expenses to be paid using Maine Industry Partnerships for Workforce Development funds are related to the goals that the partnership develops and its implementation.  MDOL/SWB may limit the percentage of grant funds that may be used for administrative costs but recognizes the need for partnerships to build capacity to achieve broader workforce gains. The need for and reasonableness of all costs must be fully justified and detailed in the Budget Narrative (Appendix D).  Finally, no business or organization receiving Maine Industry Partnership (MIP) funds may supplant other funds with ARPA MIP funds that assist similar services. |

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| **10** | **Question** |
| Can we include research costs if we were to hire a research firm to conduct studies pertaining to DEI, workforce, and populations in Maine? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |

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| **11** | **Question** |
| In the budget it indicates leveraging other ARPA funds. What if we have not received any other ARPA funding? Will this negatively affect our proposal? |
| **Answer** |
| No. |

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| **12** | **Question** |
| Can we add employer partners as the program moves forward? At this point we have met the minimum criteria for partners but would very much like to include more if the grant is awarded. |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, proposals must meet minimum collaboration requirements of at least four employer partners—and must include representatives from at least 2 small employers (< 50 employees). Additional partners can be added as the partnership develops after receiving funding. |

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| **13** | **Question** |
| On page 10 of the grant RFA, question 4 section B, the sentence reads “Collaborate to address common organization and human resources challenges, including”. It does not appear to be a complete thought. Is there a missing part to this section? |
| **Answer** |
| We apologize for the confusion this sentence has caused. The sentence should have read:  b. Collaborate to address common organizational and human resource challenges including, but not limited to, retention, recruitment, and hiring. |

***Q&A Summary continues next page***

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| **14** | **Question** |
| On page 10 of the grant RFA, question 5, section A, subsection ii, related to recruitment activities - we would like to create a marketing campaign as part of a recruitment initiative. Are marketing dollars considered an eligible expense? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, if the marketing campaign address the workforce challenges your industry partnership had identified and clearly advances one of the following goals:   1. Increase the labor pool by breaking down employment barriers and attracting talent 2. Increase the number of Mainers with a credential of value through training and education 3. Increase average wages by supporting individuals in connecting to and employers in offering high-quality jobs     Examples of recruitment activities provided in the RFA include:   * + 1. Create a more inclusive and welcoming workplace to attract and retain potential employees from a diverse pool of persons seeking jobs, including:        1. People of color,        2. Women,        3. Veterans,        4. Persons who are economically disadvantaged,        5. New Mainers,        6. People with disabilities,        7. Youth,        8. Older workers,        9. Justice involved individuals, and others.        10. Rural communities   1. Recruit new workers through innovative, inclusive activities (e.g., implementing new recruitment strategies or hiring foreign-trained professionals) |