**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFA# 202312241 – Energy Efficiency Priorities Grant |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | January 12, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | January 22, 2024 |
| **APPLICATION DUE DATE:** | February 16, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **APPLICATIONS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Below are the questions asked and responses given verbally during the RFA informational webinar on January 4, 2024.**

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, Page 5 | Can a few towns that are enrolled work together on a project, because, for instance, some of our communities are so small they might struggle to come up with a project that's at that size. *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Multiple communities may apply jointly for projects that address mutual goals and have interrelated scopes of work. |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, Page 6 | I had a question because it specifies this grant can't be used for scope of work that's been previously funded through a community action grant. But I wanted to ask about expansions on projects in the works. For example, if there was a solar installation on a town building, but wanting to expand that solar, would that be an ineligible activity? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Proposals that build upon a previously completed construction project are eligible. The application should clearly delineate the previous work from the proposed work. Proposals that continue or extend components of a previous scope of work may not be deemed ineligible. |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section D, Page 6 | I was just curious with the 10 grants at $100,000 and if you have any intentions on awarding partially funded projects, say $50,000 project, or if the priorities will come from a full $100,000 project? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Individual communities, as defined in the RFA, are eligible for a minimum award of $80,000 and a maximum award of $100,000. Groups of communities applying jointly are eligible for awards of up to $100,000 per community. |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section D, Page 8; Section H, Page 12 | How do I align community engagement that is already underway for our Community Action Grant project with EEPG communication efforts? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Use community engagement that’s already underway, such as community workshops, meetings, newsletters, etc., to communicate with your community what the benefits are of energy efficiency technologies, how community members might participate or do something similar in their home or their business, and then, seek engagement from the community around how the cost savings might be invested in the future. |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Pages 7-9 | Would the project also cover the cost of purchase and installation of a stand-by generator to accompany the installation of heat pumps led lighting and charging stations? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Generators powered by fossil fuels are not listed as an eligible activity in the RFA. |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 8 | If NEPA is required, is there funding outside of the grant award to allow them to hire capacity to produce that documentation? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Capacity to complete the reporting requirements should be included in the Administrative costs. |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9; Section H, Page 13 | Can you talk a little bit if there's not a match requirement? Is there some kind of bonus for having a significant local match for these grants. *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| There is no local cost share (match) requirement to access the Energy Efficiency Priority Grants. There is no bonus for local match.  |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9; Section H, Page 13 | Can this Grant be used in conjunction with other Federal funds, such as ETIPP? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| EEPG funds cannot be used as match for another Federal grant. If a project is using funding from another grant program and is adding funding from this EEPG program to build up a budget to do the project, that is allowable. If an applicant is considering pairing this EEPG funding with other funding, check the rules of the other funding to make sure it's allowable, and then check in with GOPIF to ensure it's allowable as well. |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9 | I'm looking for some guidance on the how cost savings are calculated. I know that there's a reinvestment piece in this grant. What does that include? Is that strictly operating cost savings or does include maintenance costs? Is the payback period included in that? Or is that up to the municipality to decide? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| It is up to each community to decide how to calculate the cost savings and timeline. In some cases, applicants might be able to make a quick determination of the cost savings, and in other cases applicants might have to make estimations, or in the case of fuel savings, applicants might have to do some conversions.  |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9 | Can we incorporate multiple town buildings into a single project? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, applicants are encouraged to combine multiple technologies in a proposal and can apply those technologies to multiple buildings. |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 10 | Question regarding the federal compliance regulations, who’s making the determination about NEPA? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| The Department of Energy will make the determination. If the project is moving dirt, that’s a ground disturbance. Applicants should describe the ground disturbance in their application.  |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section H, Page 13 | Do we need to have an installer selected, or can we apply with an RFP in mind? *(Asked during January 4 informational webinar)* |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants do not need to have an installer selected, but a vendor estimate is highly encouraged to help make an applicant’s budget narrative stronger, as well as knowing that the vendor is well-versed in the federal requirements.  |

**Below are the submitted questions received by email and the Department’s responses.**

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9 | Regarding Energy Cost Savings Tracking and Capture, for how long are communities expected to "track, capture, and retain for future use?" *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants may propose a process and timeline for tracking, capturing, and retaining energy cost savings that fits with their project.  |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 8 | Can RFP development and management be included in the project cost? *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, under administrative costs. |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 9  | My town is nearing completion of its new public safety building which will house the police and fire departments among other uses. The project financing allowed for solar readiness but not installation of the solar panels and other solar generation equipment. Would the acquisition and installation of this equipment qualify for the Energy Efficiencies Priorities Grant even though the building is new construction? *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| New building construction that is completed and granted occupancy before this RFA’s application due date will be considered by the state to be an existing building and eligible for further improvements that were not part of the original construction. Final eligibility may be determined by the US Department of Energy. |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 8 | Eligible activities include this description (page 8):“c) Clean Energy and Distributed Energy Systems sited at or on public property and developed for purpose of increasing municipal energy efficiency, including: Purchase and installation of on-site renewable energy technologies (e.g., solar energy, wind energy, fuel cells, or biomass)….” Does geothermal energy qualify as an on-site renewable energy technology? *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| Solar, wind, battery storage, fuel cells, biomass, and microgrid are the allowable technologies.  |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 7 | I am wondering if we would be able to use this grant for Energy Efficiency towards an Energy efficient (new) learning center. I was recently at an event at the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket and observed some beautiful 'Eco' lodges that are used for educational and recreational purposes. I have studied these houses in the past. Their energy efficiency is quite amazing; you can heat one the amount of energy it takes to run a hair dryer! Quite amazing, truly. I am currently looking into opportunities to fund this project, vs upgrading the current structure. *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| New construction, major structural improvements, and roof replacements are not eligible uses of funds. |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section G, Page 7 | Can we combine several items that address the same building? Such as request heat pumps, new exterior doors and a new roof to complete the weatherization of the Community Building? *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants are encouraged to combine multiple technologies in a proposal. For example, installing heat pumps, solar panels, and battery storage on site to make a building more resilient for emergency operations or community sheltering purposes.New construction, major structural improvements, and roof replacements are not eligible uses of funds. |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, Page 6 | Would a community with an approved extension on a Community Action Grant be eligible if they meet all other eligibility requirements? *(Submitted via email)* |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, applicants must state in the application whether an extension has ever been requested for a Community Action Grant, and, if the EEPG application is successful, what specific steps the community will take to ensure both grants are completed on-time. |