**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**

*Office of Teaching and Learning*

**RFA# 202403064**

**Pre-K Expansion Pilot Grant**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Lee Anne Larsen **Title:** Director of Early Learning**Contact Information:** Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov |
| **Informational Session** | *An informational session regarding this RFA was held on March 13, 2024:***Link to recording:** [Pre-K Expansion Pilot Grant Informational Session](https://youtu.be/63yyCH4ScaQ) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** April 8, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **ApplicationSubmission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** April 25, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Applications must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov |

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Page** |
|  |  |
| **RFA DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS** | **3-4** |
|  |  |
| **PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY** | **5-8** |
| 1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
 |  |
| 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS
 |  |
| 1. ELIGIBILITY TO SUBMIT BIDS
 |  |
| 1. AWARDS
 |  |
| 1. APPEAL OF CONTRACT AWARDS
 |  |
| 1. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION
 |  |
|  |  |
| **PART II ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS** | **9-13** |
|  |  |
| **PART III KEY PROCESS EVENTS** | **13-14** |
| 1. INFORMATIONAL SESSION
 |  |
| 1. SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS
 |  |
| 1. AMENDMENTS
 |  |
| 1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION
 |  |
|  |  |
| **PART IV APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION** | **15-22** |
| 1. EVALUATION PROCESS – GENERAL INFORMATION
 |  |
| 1. SCORING PROCESS
 |  |
| 1. SCORING WEIGHTS
 |  |
| 1. SELECTION AND AWARD
 |  |
| 1. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS
 |  |
|  |  |
| **PART V APPLICATION FORM and BUDGET TABLES** | **23** |
|  |  |
| **APPENDIX A** – EMERGENCY AND CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION INFORMATION**APPENDIX B** – SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**APPENDIX C** – BUDGET TABLE EXAMPLES  | **24****25****26** |

**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFA, have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Chapter 124** | Maine Department of Education’s Basic Approval Standards for Public Preschool Programs. |
| **CLASS** | Classroom Assessment Scoring System. Used to identify observable teacher-student interactions that lead to improved developmental and academic child outcomes as well as improved teaching practices.  |
| **Community Partner** | A licensed childcare provider in the community that partners in the provision of public Pre-K programming. Examples include, but are not limited to: ​   * Private family childcare ​
* Private center-based childcare​
* YMCA​
 |
| **ED 279** | A display of the calculation of the cost of education per the Essential Programs & Services model for each SAU.  |
| **Essential Programs and Services** | School funding in Maine is based on essential programs and services (EPS), which are defined as the programs and resources that are essential for students to have an equitable opportunity to achieve Maine's Learning Results.  |
| **Full Day/Full Week Programming** | State funded Pre-K programming offered 5 days a week which children attend for the hours during which the school is regularly in session (e.g., 8:30-3:00, 8:00-2:30, etc.).    |
| **Half-Day Programming** | State funded Pre-K programming offered 4 hours a day for 5 days a week.   |
| **High- Quality**  | Providing what research has indicated results in positive outcomes for young children and their families. High-quality public Pre-K programs in Maine meet programming standards outlined in Chapter 124. Programs can show this by obtaining a star 4 or 5 on the QRIS.   |
| **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** | An Individualized Education Plan or IEP is a legal document designed to ensure that a child with an identified disability is provided with specific accommodations, materials and teaching approaches needed to learn effectively.  |
| **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** | Children receiving special education services should be receiving it in the same classroom with typically developing peers to the maximum extent possible.  |
| **MELDS** | **M**aine **E**arly **L**earning and **D**evelopment **S**tandards; A compilation of expected academic and developmental learning standards for children ages 3-5. The MELDs are neither a curriculum nor an assessment but should align with and inform both in early childhood settings. |
| **MOU** | **M**emorandum **o**f **U**nderstanding agreement between SAU and any partner outlining each entity’s responsibilities in the partnership.   |
| **Public Pre-K**  | A public Pre-K program offered by an approved Maine public school. Public Pre-K classrooms must comply with Rule Chapter 124 and be free to all enrolled. In this application, Pre-K refers to a public Pre-K program.    |
| **Pre-K Eligible Students** | Refers to children who have turned 4 years old on or before October 15th of the school year they enroll.    |
| **Universal Pre-K**  |  Programs with the ability and capacity to serve all 4-year-old students and families in the SAU, whether partnering or not.   |
| **QRIS** | **Q**uality **R**ating and **I**mprovement **S**ystem--a quality rating system designed to promote continuous improvement in licensed child care programs.​   |
| **SAU** | **S**chool **A**dministrative **U**nit as defined by [20-A M.R.S. §1(26)](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1.html) |
| **Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG)**  | Child assessment used to assess all areas of child development.    |
| **Technical Assistance** | The Department’s goal to support SAUs and their community partners in many aspects related to public Pre-K program start-up and ongoing high-quality programming resources.    |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

Through funding provided through Maine’s Preschool Development Grant Renewal, the Maine Department of Education intends to conduct a pilot to provide grant funding to school administrative units (SAUs) to increase the number of eligible 4-year-olds attending high-quality public Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) programming in licensed community partner settings (center based and family child care). In order to realize its goal of reaching universal access to public Pre-K, the State will need to increase the number of partnerships with licensed community-based providers (e.g., center based and family child care) to ensure equitable access to high-quality early care and education, especially for our most vulnerable children.

Partnerships with licensed community-based providers enable SAUs to achieve full day/full week programming for children and to meet the needs of working families. A partnership is characterized by meaningful involvement in the planning, development, and delivery of the proposed program for students and families.

SAUs awarded these grant funds will be required to partner with licensed community-based providers (e.g., center based and family child care) to provide either full day/full week or half day/full week Pre-K programming. For the purpose of this pilot, Head Start partnerships will not be considered. More than one SAU may develop a partnership with the same licensed community partner. Partner sites will need to meet the program standards outlined in [Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 124, Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs,](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Chapter%20124%20Basic%20Approval%20Standards_1.pdf) with the exception of credentialing of teachers. Options for how lead teachers who do not currently hold the 081 or 029 Certifications may satisfy credentialing expectations are outlined in APPENDIX A.

SAUs may apply for grant funding awards for a 1-year period that will support new programming and collaborations with up to one family or center based child-care setting for the 2024-25 school year. Funding will be allocated by classroom based on the number of spots being provided for Pre-K. Maximum allocations per range of students are listed below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Classroom Allocation** | **Full Day/Full week** | **20 Hours/Week (4 hours a day x 5 days)** |
| 4-8 Students | Up to $88,000.00 | Up to $68,000.00 |
| 9-12 Students | Up to $132,000.00 | Up to $102,000.00 |
| 13-16 Students | Up to $176,000.00 | Up to $136,000.00 |

Funding for this grant is not attached to the school funding formula. Students attending public Pre-K in the partnership classroom will be enrolled in the SAU, but those students will not be included in the SAU’s ED279 student count. SAUs will need to establish memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements with licensed community providers. Upon successful implementation during school year 2024-25, grantees will be eligible for a second year of grant funding for the 2025-26 school year.

Only eligible children may be supported by these Pre-K Partnership Grant funds. Eligible children are defined as children who will be at least 4 years of age on October 15 of the school year in which they are enrolled. All proposed public Pre-K slots should be inclusive of eligible 4-year-olds, including those who are economically disadvantaged, those with disabilities, and those who are multilingual learners. Children with disabilities must be placed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) determined by the IEP team. This is beneficial for all children and in compliance with federal and state law.

Each partner site will receive a technical assistance visit in the fall and spring which will include a CLASS observation to inform resource and coaching needs. Sites will be required to utilize Teaching Strategies Gold at 3 check points to track children’s progress across all learning domains.  Technical assistance will be available to support partnerships and programs.

SAUs that apply shall retain responsibility for setting and meeting program goals, ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and rules as evidenced through on-site visits and reporting, as well as maintaining fiscal controls and records. The applicant SAU will serve in the capacity of fiscal agent.

SAUs will be required to demonstrate how program sustainability will be achieved beyond the period of grant fund availability, including assurance that SAUs will plan for the funding for the Pre-K slots in the partnerships supported through this grant by adding them to the student count for the SAU’s ED 279 in school year following the end of the grant funding.

This document provides instructions for submitting applications, the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded Applicant(s).

## General Provisions

1. From the time this RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding this RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of this RFA. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the application process, at the State’s discretion.
2. Issuance of the RFA does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a response to the RFA. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings, where applicable.
3. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Applications are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified in Part III of the RFA.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. The application must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFA and the awarded Applicant’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFA will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in applications received in response to the RFA.
9. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

## Eligibility to Submit Applications

All Maine School Administrative Units (SAUs) as defined by [20-A M.R.S. §1(26)](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1.html) and elementary schools operated under [Chapter 20-A, Chapter 119](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Ach119sec0.html) (EUT) seeking to establish new partnerships with licensed community providers are eligible to submit bids in response to this Request for Applications. Each SAU applicant must identify the licensed community provider agreeing to be a partner in the proposed project, but the SAU remains the applicant and must be the fiscal agent for the proposed program.

## Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this Request for Applications. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received and available funds. The minimum number of spots per classroom allocation in a Family child care provider will be no less than four (4). The maximum number of spots per classroom allocation by a Center based childcare provider will be no more than 16.

Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to make grant awards. Applications will be evaluated after the due date, and a Selection Package will be posted to the Division of Procurement Services website. Award amounts in approved grant requests will be finalized through contract negotiations following award announcements. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring application(s) and/or make awards at amounts less than that requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State. The Department reserves the right to issue partial awards.

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

1. **Applicable Legislation**

Pre-K expansion grants are authorized under [Title 20-A, Part 3, Chapter 203, Sub-chapter 3-Public Preschool Programs for Children 4 Years of Age.](https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4271.html)

**PART II**  **APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

#

A complete and scoreable application for Pre-K Partnership grant funding will include the following components. Please refer to the descriptions in this section when filling in the provided application.

**Component A: General Information**

SAUs must complete the following documents as part of their application:

* Application Cover Page & General Assurances
* Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification
* Partner Listing with Letter of Intent from partner.

**Component B: Specifications of the Work to be Performed**

**Overview of the project:** The project overview should clearly describe the proposed partnership strategy to be implemented beginning in the 2024-25 school year and its intended goals, including but not limited to the following details:

* Current status of public Pre-K in the SAU
* Name and type of licensed community partner
* Number of Pre-K eligible children that will be served through the grant request.
* Proposed hours of instructional programming.

**Identification of Need and Community Coordination:** The proposal should include a description of the needs of the SAU related to the provision of public Pre-K and of how the needs of the SAU have been identified and will be re-evaluated on a regular basis. The SAU should outline how the funded partnership will enable them to overcome identified barriers related to the provision of public Pre-K and to equitably serve eligible four-year-olds in their SAU. Demographics of the SAU (free and reduced meal rates, percentage of children served by CDS, percentage of children in SAU (K-12) identified for special education, percentage of English learners, etc.) should be provided. Consideration of the following factors within the partnership must also be evident:

* Availability of extended child care options to meet the needs of working parents, including but not limited to before and aftercare options for the families being served in the partner site.
* Provision of public notice regarding the proposal to the community being served, including the extent to which public notice has been disseminated broadly to other early childhood programs in the community; and
* Demonstrated coordination with Child Development Services (CDS), through a MOU between the SAU local and CDS site that will need to include the partner program.

The SAU should build a case for how the proposed project will address identified needs and lead to better outcomes for children and families.

**Component C: Project Description**

Please provide a thorough description of the project you are proposing to address these needs. The description must include the following:

**High-Quality Programming**

Applicants developing public Pre-K programming in partnership with licensed community providers should describe the nature of the collaboration between the SAU and the partner. This description should provide an outline of what each partner (SAU and community provider) will contribute to the successful outcomes of the programming, including:

* Name of the licensed community provider,
* Roles and responsibilities of each partner (SAU and community provider)
* Details about staffing for the Pre-K partnership classroom that adhere to the credentialing requirements outlined in Chapter 124 or will meet the requirements for emergency or conditional certification (see **APPENDIX A**). SAUs and partner programs are strongly advised to hire educators, both lead and ed techs, that have early childhood classroom experience and educational background.
* Description of the evidence-based, whole child instructional materials that align with Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards that will be implemented,
* Description of how the child assessment, Teaching Strategies Gold, will be utilized and information shared with families.
* Description of transition strategies that will be utilized as children enter and exit Pre-K.
* Description of family engagement strategies that will be incorporated, including how families will be informed about students’ progress.
* Description of the multi-tiered system of support and plans for inclusion, including:
	+ - * evidence-based methods for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English learners within the regular classroom setting,
			* evidence-based methods for utilizing culturally sustaining practices,
			* coordinated participation by staff in IEP processes and meetings; and
			* collaboration among teachers, special education staff and intervention teams built into the schedule,
	+ Description of joint professional learning opportunities for partner Pre-K staff and SAU.
	+ Description of the community provider’s organizational capacity and ability to meet the assurances.
	+ Description of administrative coordination and management plan for Pre-K partner programming

**Recruitment and Enrollment**

Plans for how SAUs will recruit students to participate in the proposed programming must be outlined. This includes provisions for any child that is currently enrolled in the partner program who is eligible for public Pre-K to ensure continuity of care.

A copy of the SAU’s enrollment protocol or a description of what will be included in the SAU’s enrollment protocol for public Pre-K should be included. Enrollment protocols should demonstrate an inclusive approach and a commitment to serving children from economically disadvantaged families, children with disabilities, and children who are multilingual learners. Enrollment policies should show evidence that the make-up of Pre-K classrooms will mirror, to the greatest extent possible, the demographics of the SAUs K-12 population and be responsive to identified needs within the community.

**Evaluation**

Proposals should include a description of how the SAU will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the public Pre-K program. This plan should include methods for collecting information that will be useful to program development and ongoing improvement, including opportunity to plan for individual children’s needs, track children’s growth across domains of development, and provide timely and actionable feedback to teachers. SAUs are strongly encouraged to utilize structured observation tools and performance-based assessments in addition to developmental screeners and diagnostic tools. SAUs will indicate in the assurances section of their application compliance with Chapter 124 which requires participation in ongoing technical assistance, including classroom observations. Aggregate data collected through these observations will be shared with SAUs to help inform program development efforts.

The SAU and its proposed partner will also participate in all required Preschool Development Grant evaluation activities.

**Sustainability**

Proposals will include a description of how the SAU and its partners will ensure sustainability of Pre-K programming started through the Pre-K Partnership Pilot Grant when the grant funding ends. This description should include an explanation of how the SAU will work to secure funding from other sources including state and local contributions as necessary.

**Component D: Project Budget**

The budget should include overall projected expenses for the proposed project. The proposed budget for public Pre-K programming through the partnership should include only allowable costs under this grant program. Costs should be reasonable and justifiable for achieving high-quality programming and meeting program standards. The project budget worksheets should be completed and should include descriptions of how projected costs were determined. Estimation of the number of students to be served in the proposed project must be provided. SAU and partner coordination and administrative costs should not exceed 6% of the overall budget and should be negotiated between the partner program and SAU and noted in the MOU agreement. Please see Appendix C for Budget table examples. Please note that these are just examples and are not reflective of any actual budget.

**Component E: Competitive Priorities**

The Department shall award competitive priority points for those proposals meeting the following criteria:

1. **Level of Economic Disadvantage:** Competitive priority points will be awarded to proposals seeking to serve Maine school(s) with high numbers of economically disadvantaged students as indicated by the Department’s Free and Reduced School Lunch Report – [ED 534 for FY 2023.](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ED534byDistrict_0.pdf)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percentage of school population eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch  | Less than 45%  | Between 45% and 60%  | More than 60%   |
| Priority Points  | 0 points  | 3 points  | 5 points  |

1. **Commitment to achieving pay parity for lead teacher in Partner program**: Competitive priority points will be awarded to proposals with a detailed plan for addressing pay parity between community partner and K-12 teaching staff. If the lead educator and ed tech are employees of the child care partner, they will qualify for the [Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement Program](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/early-childhood-educator-workforce-salary-supplement-program).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No evidence | Limited evidence | Detailed evidence |
| Priority Points  | 0 points  | 3 points  | 5 points |

1. **Partnership with a Licensed Family Child Care Provider:** Competitive priority points will be awarded to SAUs that are establishing a partnership with a licensed Family Child Care provider.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | No | Yes |
| Priority Points  | 0 points  | 5 points  |

1. **Number of instructional programming hours:** Priority points will be awarded for full day/full week programming.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | At least 20 hours per week but less than full day | Full Day/Full Week Programming |
| Priority Points | 0 points | 5 points |

**PART III** **KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

## Informational Session

## The Department hosted an informational session on March 13, 2024. Access to the recording is available through this [(link)](https://youtu.be/63yyCH4ScaQ).

## Submission of Questions

* 1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
		1. Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix B** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
		2. Questions must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFA as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
		3. Submitted Questions must include the RFA Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
	2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the State’s Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

## Amendments

All amendments released in regard to this RFA will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

## Application Submission

* 1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFA.
		1. Any e-mails containing original application submissions or any additional or revised application files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.
1. **Submission Instructions:** Applications must be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at proposals@maine.gov.
	1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.

Application submission e-mails that are successfully received by the proposals@maine.gov inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.

* 1. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail application submissions that have the requested files attached will be accepted.
	2. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to check with its organization’s information technology team to ensure that security settings will not encrypt its application submission.
	3. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time as described above.
	4. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202403064 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed **Application Form** (found in Part V of the RFA) and must include pages 1-10 of the Application Form and all 3 tables of the budget form.
3. The Application Form must be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file.
4. Applicants are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFA or Application Form for the purpose of extending their response. Materials not requested will not be considered part of the application and will not be evaluated.

**PART IV APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. **Evaluation Process – General Information**
	1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.
	2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that all contracts are awarded to the Applicants that provide the best value to the State of Maine.
	3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the applications received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to applications, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Applicants must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.
	4. Failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFA may result in the application being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFA specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal.
2. **Scoring Process:** The Grant review team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed below. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.
3. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Component A: General Information  | 5 Points |
| Component B: Project Overview  | 5 Points |
| Component B: Identification of Need and Community Coordination | 10 Points |
| Component C: High-Quality Program Design | 20 Points |
| Component C: Recruitment and Enrollment | 5 Points |
| Component C: Evaluation | 5 Points |
| Component C: Sustainability | 5 Points |
| Component D: Budget Forms and Budget Narrative | 25 Points |
| Component E: Priority Points | 20 Points |
| **Total Points**  | **100 points** |

**Scoring Criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Component A- General Information- 5 Points total (see Page 10)** | **No** | **Yes** |
| Application Cover Page & General Assurances | 0 | 2 |
| Debarment, Performance, Non-Collusion Certification and School Board Acknowledgement | 0 | 1 |
| Partner Listing with Letter of Intent from community partner | 0 | 2 |
| **Total Points:** |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component B- Specifications of the Work to be Performed.** **55 Points Total** |  |  |  |
| **Overview of the Project****5 Points total** **(See Page 10)** | **Limited Evidence****0-1** | **Adequate Evidence****2-3** | **Detailed Evidence****4-5** |
| **Evidence includes:*** Current status of public Pre-K in the SAU
* Name and type of licensed community partner
* Number of Pre-K eligible children that will be served through the grant request.
* Proposed hours of instructional programming
 |  |  |  |
| **Identification of Need and Community Coordination** **10 Points total****(See Page)** | **Limited Evidence****0-2** | **Adequate Evidence****3-6** | **Detailed Evidence****7-10** |
| **Evidence Includes:*** Demographics of the SAU related to the Pre-K population
* How the needs of the SAU have been identified and will be re-evaluated on a regular basis.
* How the extended childcare needs of working parents have been considered
* How public notice regarding the proposal of public Pre-k has been provided and disseminated
* How coordination with CDS has been achieved
* How grant funding will help overcome identified barriers to serving Pre-k students in the catchment area
 |  |  |  |
| **Total Points:**  |  |  |  |
| **Component C: Project Description** **40 Points Total** |  |  |  |
| **High-Quality Program Design****20 Points total** **(See Page 11)** | **Limited Evidence****0-7** | **Adequate Evidence****8-16** | **Detailed Evidence****17-20** |
| **Evidence Includes:** * Roles and responsibilities of each partner (SAU and community provider,
* Details about staffing for the Pre-K partnership classroom that adhere to the credentialing requirements outlined in Chapter 124 or the need for emergency or conditional certification
* Description of the evidence-based, whole child instructional materials that align with Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards that will be implemented,
* Description of transition strategies that will be utilized as children enter and exit Pre-k.
* Description of family engagement strategies that will be incorporated, including how families will be informed about students’ progress.
* Description of the multi-tiered system of support and plans for inclusion into the schedule,
* Description of joint professional learning opportunities for partner Pre-k staff and SAU.
* Description of the community provider’s organizational capacity and ability to meet the assurances.
* Description of administrative coordination and management plan for Pre-K partner programming
 |  |  |  |
| **Recruitment and Enrollment****5 Points total** **(See Page 12)** | **Limited Evidence****0-1** | **Adequate Evidence****2-3** | **Detailed** **Evidence****4-5** |
| **Evidence of:*** Strategies for recruitment and enrollment
* Inclusive enrollment protocols for public Pre-K in the partner program
 |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation****5 Points total****(See page 12)** | **Limited Evidence** **0-1** | **Adequate Evidence****2-3** | **Detailed** **Evidence****4-5** |
| **Evidence of:** * Description of how the SAU will evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the public Pre-K program.
* Methods for collecting information that will be useful to program development and ongoing improvement.
 |  |  |  |
| **Sustainability** **5 Points total****(See Page 12)** | **Limited Evidence****0-1** | **Adequate Evidence****2-3** | **Detailed** **Evidence****4-5** |
| **Evidence of:** * Strategies for sustaining programming and partnership beyond the period of grant funding.
* Strategies for continuing to meet Chapter 124 Program Standards
 |  |  |  |
| **Total Points:** |  |  |  |
| **Component D: Budget Forms and Budget Narrative****25 Points total****(See page 12-13 and Budget table attachments)** | **Limited Evidence****0-7** | **Adequate Evidence****8-17** | **Detailed** **Evidence****18-25** |
| **Evidence:*** The budget should include overall projected expenses for the proposed project
* Budget is reasonable and justifiable for achieving high-quality programming and meeting program standards
* The project budget worksheets should be completed and should include descriptions of how projected costs were determined.
* Detailed explanation of proposed project expenses
* Estimation of the number of students to be served in the proposed project
* Explanation of SAU administrative costs
* Capacity for successful implementation
* Forward planning for sustainability
 |  |  |  |
| **Total Points:** |  |  |  |
| **Component E: Competitive Priorities****20 Points total****(See page 13)** | **Less than****45%****0** | **Between 45% and 60%****3** | **More than** **60%****5** |
| **1**. Percentage of school population eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch |  |  |  |
|  | **No Evidence****0** | **Limited Evidence****3** | **Detailed Evidence****5** |
| **2.**Commitment to achieving pay parity for lead teacher in Partner program: |  |  |  |
|  | **No****0** | **Yes****5** |
| **3**.Partnership with a Licensed Family Child care provider |  |  |
|  | **At least 20 hours per week but less than full day****0** | **Full day/ Full week****5** |
| **4**.Number of instructional programming hours: |  |  |

1. **Selection and Award**
	1. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
	2. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFA, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.
	3. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
	4. All proposals must meet a combined score of 50 or more points for Component B: Specifications of the Work to be Performed, Component C: Project Description and Component D: Project Budget to be considered eligible for award. The Department reserves the right to issue partial awards.
2. **Contract Administration and Conditions**
	1. The awarded Applicants will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with the appropriate riders as determined by the issuing Department.
	2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110)). This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.
	3. Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Applicants in the finalization of the contract.
	4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Applicant must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

**PART V** **APPLICATION FORM and BUDGET TABLES**

## Applicants must use the Application Form and Budget Tables embedded below to submit their application in response to this RFA.

## The Application Form may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.





**APPENDIX A – EMERGENCY AND CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION INFORMATION**

**Emergency certification** is based on [20-A MRS §13012-B](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mainelegislature.org%2Flegis%2Fstatutes%2F20-a%2Ftitle20-Asec13012-B.html&data=05%7C02%7CMichelle.Belanger%40maine.gov%7C87a52926cad140f5978608dc2f19c5e7%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C638437034947108972%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=3GSnly0z3%2F4ESGrMxj1syS9wwCfbJ1FFZia4pctjD8U%3D&reserved=0) and, because of the stipulation that the certificates are designed to address “an educator staffing shortage in the State,” are only an option if the certification area an applicant is seeking is listed on the [Maine state teacher shortage area list](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmainedoenews.net%2F2023%2F08%2F02%2Fteacher-shortage-areas-for-2023-2024-school-year%2F&data=05%7C02%7CMichelle.Belanger%40maine.gov%7C87a52926cad140f5978608dc2f19c5e7%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C638437034947120524%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Rgglj9vBBtREcHOb6hFR%2Bkxn1Sf7RoHCtKy9yclgawk%3D&reserved=0) for the year in which they are applying. Currently, early childhood teachers are included in the shortage area list. Emergency certification for the 081 certification will be acceptable for lead teachers in Pre-K Partnership Pilot grant classrooms.

According to State Board Rule Chapter 115, to qualify for an emergency certification, an applicant shall:

*Satisfactorily complete a CHRC in accordance with, and meet one of the following requirements:*

*(1) Hold a 4-year post-secondary degree or the equivalent in work or academic experience;*

*(2) Be enrolled in an approved educator preparation program; or*

*(3) Hold a certification as an Educational Technician III [note: the Ed Tech III certification can’t be an Emergency Ed Tech III].*

According to [State Board Rule Chapter 115](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm), to qualify for a conditional certificate, an applicant shall:

# (a) (Have) earned at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university,

# (b) Meet the general eligibility requirements of [Section 5.1 (page 4-5) and Section 6.1(page7-8).](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/071/071c115-1.docx)

# (c) (Have) completed a minimum of nine (9) semester hours that meet the requirements of the endorsement. A list of approved requirements for the endorsement can be found here on [page 24-25.](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/071/071c115-2.docx)

# More information about the requirements for both the Emergency and Conditional certification can be found here in [Section 6.6 and Section 6.7 (page 15-16).](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/071/071c115-1.docx)

# Full or conditional certification for the [029: Early Elementary Teacher](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/071/071c115-2.docx), will also meet the requirements for the lead teacher in the Pre-K classroom. Please note that the 029 is NOT currently listed on the Maine teacher shortage area list.

#

**APPENDIX B** **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

This form should be used by Applicants when submitting written questions to the RFA Coordinator.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, enter “N/A” under the RFA Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary. Submit this document in WORD format, not PDF.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization Name:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**APPENDIX C: Budget table examples**

Attached are examples of full and half day programming budget tables. Please note that these are just examples and do not reflect an actual budget.

**Half Day Programming examples:**

 **** ** **

**Full Day Programming examples:**

 **** ** **