

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

**Agricultural Resource Development
RFA**

Information Session April 15, 2026

Community Greenhouse Grant RFA

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All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.

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Agenda

- 1. Welcome and thank you**
- 2. Purpose of the Grant**
- 3. Key Definition: Durable Greenhouse**
- 4. Eligible Applicants**
- 5. Funding Available**
- 6. Funding Priorities**
- 7. Allowable Costs**
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- 9. Application Checklist**
- 10. Key Dates and Activities**
- 11. Scoring Method**
- 12. Questions**

Thank you!!

Thank you for joining the information session and bringing your questions.

Your time is appreciated.

Any initial questions before we get started, anything that doesn't seem to be on agenda?

Purpose of the Grant

DACF intends to fund projects that will deliver the greatest measurable benefit by enhancing food production opportunities through investments in shared, educational-use, durable greenhouses. This RFA provides instructions on how schools, community centers, nonprofit organizations, and other public entities may apply for one-time grant funding for durable greenhouse structures and associated siting and installation costs.

State funding for this grant opportunity was established in the FY 2026-2027 New Initiatives Budget and adopted into Maine Chapter 388 Public Law.

Key Definition: Durable Greenhouse

“Durable greenhouse” means a steel or wooden framed structure, covered with, rigid polycarbonate sheets, or glass in which plants are cultivated in a controlled environment. The end walls can be framed with steel or wood and covered with different sheathing materials: from rigid polycarbonate to plywood. These load rated four-season structures are designed to withstand snow load. Durable greenhouse structures must meet the municipal codes and standards for the intended location and use which may include Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) codes and standards, and may require an engineer stamp. Durable greenhouses often have power and/or a heat source to allow for crop or seedling production in the early spring or late fall or to provide minimal heat for winter growing.

Eligible Applicants

Schools, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, community centers, and public entities located in Maine are eligible to apply.

For the purpose of this RFA, "public entity" means:

- A state agency or authority;
- The University of Maine System, the Maine Maritime Academy, and the Maine Community College System; and
- A county, municipality, or school district.

For the purpose of this RFA, "community center" means: a non-commercial, public, building for community use. Examples: childcare centers, health clinics, libraries, community kitchens, and facilities operated by community-based non-profit organizations, public bodies, or federally recognized tribes.

Funding Available

- DACF anticipates awarding up to \$500,000 through this RFA process.
- Award ranges will be between \$10,000 and \$100,000 per selected recipient.
- Applicants may not request funding for less than \$10,000 or more than \$1000,000.
- DACF may award all or some of the available funding through this RFA process and may make multiple awards.

Funding Priorities

This program prioritizes applications that demonstrate:

Shared community use: applications should demonstrate community need, strong collaborative partnerships, and a high likelihood of long-term sustainable benefit to the community.

Local Food Production: applications should demonstrate how funding will increase food production and likelihood to positively impact the [Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan](#) efforts to strengthen Maine's food system by increasing the amount of food consumed in Maine from producers to 30% by 2030.

Educational use: applications should demonstrate how funding will expand and/or enhance learning opportunities that increase child and/or adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of local foods and/or provide training for growers to equip them for current and future challenges in crop production and/or food safety.

Allowable Costs

The only allowable costs associated with this RFA are those necessary for an eligible entity to purchase and install a durable greenhouse.

Allowable costs include:

- Costs directly associated with the purchase of a durable greenhouse; and
- Costs directly associated with siting and installation (e.g., earthwork, water, and utility connections) of a durable greenhouse.

Unallowable Costs

Expenses not directly associated with the purchase, siting, installation, and operation of a durable greenhouse by an eligible entity are unallowable. Unallowable costs include, but are not limited to:

- Barns, storage sheds, garden sheds,
- Low or caterpillar tunnels, hoophouses, poly-tunnels, coldframes, flexible poly or plastic covered greenhouses, and other growing structures with limited durability and not designed with the capacity to withstand snow-load,
- Greenhouse structures that do not meet applicable codes and standards for the intended location and use,
- Indirect costs and overhead expenses,
- Personnel salaries, benefits, fringe,
- Supplies,
- Loan, lease, and prior debt payments,
- Cannabis production costs/equipment,
- Pesticides and herbicides, and
- Expenses incurred prior to the finalization of a grant award contract.

Application Checklist

Applicants must apply online using the link provided on the program website listed on the cover page of the RFA.

Application Steps

- Download and review the entirety of this RFA (including appendices), and all other posted resources. All materials needed to apply for this grant are available on the program website listed on the cover page of the RFA.
- Attend the online information session and/or submit any written questions to best understand/clarify the application process, funding priorities, eligibility, allowable costs, etc. **It is the responsibility of all applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and seek clarification in writing or at the information session if they have specific questions.** Follow all written question formatting instructions provided in the RFA.
- Secure a vendor quote and save the required supplemental documentation files as instructed in the RFA, follow file type requirements and formatting instructions.
- Consult with a municipal code enforcement officer or otherwise qualified building code representative to confirm that the durable greenhouse selected on the vendor quote and described in this application will conform with applicable codes and standards for the intended location and use, including, municipal codes and standards, and if applicable, the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC).
- Copy and paste the application questions provided in the RFA into your preferred word processing system to be used for your writing and organizational review. **Review the Scoring Rubric in the RFA and compare with your responses before finalizing your application.**
- Fill out and submit the online application form found on the program website listed on the cover page of this RFA by copying and pasting responses from your word processing file into the online application.
- Email all required supplemental documentation files to the RFA Coordinator listed on the cover page of this RFA. **Follow all formatting instructions, including deadline, subject line and file size requirements.**

Key Dates and Activities

Date	Activity
4/8/2026	Application Opens
4/15/2026	Information Session 3:30-4:30 Zoom
Tuesday 4/21/2026	DACF Will Post Information Session Q&A Summary to https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/community-greenhouse.shtml
5/4/2026	Written Questions Due Noon: Email: AGRARD@maine.gov
5/7/2026	DACF Post Written Questions Q&A Summary to https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/grants/community-greenhouse.shtml
5/22/2026	Application Closes
July	DACF Sends Conditional Award Letters, Selected Applicants Must Have Letter/Reference from Municipal Code Enforcement Approving Project Prior to Contract Award

Scoring Method

First Level Review:

- Staff screen for eligibility, allowable costs, and other RFA specific criteria (e.g. vendor quote, authorization to submit, and consultation with municipal code enforcement). This review also assesses an applicant's past grant, contract, and reporting performance and risk assessment.

Second Level Review:

- A team of 3-5 trained evaluators will independently score each application assigned to their team following the instructions provided in the RFA application questions and rubric.

Third Level Review:

- Applications that have achieved at least 65% of total points available from each independent evaluator score will move on to a third level of review.
- The evaluation team will meet to review the average score of each rubric criteria for each application reviewed. The team will review both individual and average scores and will reach a consensus on assigning final points to each application in this level.

Fourth Level Review:

- Based on the team evaluations, the RFA Coordinator will make recommendations to the Commissioner. Final decision-making authority for determining award recipients rests with the Commissioner, based on the program requirements and selection criteria set forth in this RFA and the recommendations of the review committee.
- All applicants shall be notified in writing following the review committee's decision.

Questions?

All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator:

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