

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
 Maine Healthy Soils Program
 Soil Health Implementation Grant



Request for Applications and Application Workbook

RFA#: ARDMHSP2025.SHIG1 Released February 14, 2025

<p>RFA Coordinator</p>	<p>All communication regarding the RFA <u>must</u> be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.</p> <p>Name: Matthew Boucher Title: Maine State Soil Scientist</p> <p>Program email: matthew.boucher@maine.gov</p>
<p>Written Questions Deadlines and Information Session <i>See section 2.3</i></p>	<p>The RFA Coordinator will offer an information session on 2/21/2025 from 1 – 3 p.m., ET. Please use this link to register for the info session.</p> <p>All written questions must be submitted via this link by 3/14/2025 no later than 5:00 p.m., local time.</p>
<p>Application Submission Deadline <i>See section 2.5</i></p>	<p>DACF <u>must</u> receive applications by:</p> <p>Submission Deadline: 4/4/2025, no later than 5:00 p.m., local time.</p> <p>Applications <u>must</u> be submitted electronically via this link, with additional requested material emailed to: matthew.boucher@maine.gov</p>
<p>Further resources</p>	<p>Additional information and resources can be found on the program website linked here:</p> <p>Website: Maine Healthy Soils Program</p> <p>For timely information about this RFA and related programs, enroll in the Maine DACF “Agricultural Grants and Loans” email listserv here.</p>

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1. Background and Purpose

Soil health is critically important to the viability and resiliency of Maine farms. Improving soil health invigorates the agroecological functioning of your farm by building on the inherent properties of your soil through customizable application of **healthy soils best practices**. Healthy soils best practices aim to stabilize and diversify your soil by keeping living roots in the ground, increasing biodiversity, and reducing disturbance and soil exposure. In addressing these four principles, healthy soils best practices keep your soil in the field, improve its ability to cycle water and key nutrients, and improve the biological redundancies within the soil.

Integrating soil health principles into your crop management strategy can be challenging, and requires proper planning and trialing to fit your farm's unique circumstances and physical characteristics. The changes you make may require more labor, specialized equipment, or increased seed and input costs, to name a few. **A key step towards improving soil health on your farm is identifying and addressing barriers to best practice adoption.**

The Maine Healthy Soils Program (MHSP) was created by the 131st Legislative Assembly (12 M.R.S.A., Chapter 7) to promote and expand the use of healthy soils best practices on Maine's farms to improve the health, yield, diversity, and greenhouse gas drawdown capacity of those soils. The Maine Healthy Soils Program offers diverse support mechanisms, including 1:1 soil health coaching, on-farm soils and soil health evaluations, soil health testing, and several grant/incentive programs. This is a request for applications for the MHSP Soil Health Implementation Grant (SHIG). Information about the other technical and financial resources offered through the MHSP can be found on the [Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#).

The Soil Health Implementation Grant provides funding for projects that address on-farm barriers to soil health. Barriers that can be addressed through this grant include but are not limited to costs for amendments, cover cropping, increased crop rotation, fencing, soil monitoring equipment, soil testing, labor and training, scaling practice adoption, resting/rehabilitating poorly performing or fallow fields, and equipment purchases. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (Department) is seeking applications for the Soil Health Implementation Grant. Applicants may request up to \$100,000 to implement a project that addresses barriers to improving soil health on the farm. There is no funding-request minimum, and projects will be scored independently of their total cost.

1.2. Eligibility to Submit Application

Applicants are eligible to apply to the Soil Health Implementation Grant if:

- Are a **farm operation** located in Maine.
- In at least one of the last three years, you produced **agricultural products** with a gross annual value of at least \$2,000 to be sold commercially or that are intended to be sold commercially OR you are a **farm operation** through which **agricultural products** with a gross annual value of at least \$2,000 are produced to support community access to **agricultural products**.
- You have access to at least one (1) acre of farmable land. This land does NOT need to be contiguous, and you do NOT need to have one full acre of production (the land may be rested, forest, generally out of production, etc.).

- You have enrolled in the Maine Healthy Soils Program by having previously met with MHSP staff (virtual consultations, field visits, etc.). You can enroll in the MHSP concurrently with applying to this grant by scheduling a soil health test sampling date using [this link](#).
- You have a current **soil health management plan** that includes a soil health test three (3) or fewer years old, OR you commit to working with MHSP staff to complete soil health testing and management planning in your application.
- You have NOT received a Soil Health Implementation Grant in any of the last three (3) **funding cycles**.

For more detail, the eligibility guidelines can be found in the rules governing the [Maine Healthy Soils Program](#). If you have any additional questions about your eligibility, contact the [RFA Coordinator](#).

1.3 Allowable Costs

Costs are allowable unless they are explicitly unallowable per section 1.4 of this RFA. In your application, you must describe how the costs will improve your farm's soil health. The following are some examples of allowable costs:

- Amendments such as compost, biochar, lime, mulch, etc. that have a known positive impact on soil health
- Costs associated with adopting healthy soils best practices, including, but not limited to, cover crops, rotational grazing, reduced tillage, permanent beds, crop rotation, silvopasture, alley cropping, etc.
- Costs associated with establishing, resting, and/or rehabilitating fields
- Costs associated with scaling practice adoption
- Equipment (new or used) that may be used to improve soil health
- Labor and training expenses

1.4 Unallowable Costs

- Synthetic fertilizers
- Pesticides and herbicides
- Sprayer equipment
- Wages for farm owners/operators

1.5 Funding and Duration

The Maine Healthy Soils Program will make \$500,000 available for this program.

- No more than 50 Soil Health Implementation Grants will be available in this funding cycle.
- The maximum award you can request is \$100,000.
- The grant term is 3 years.
- The program reserves the right to offer an award amount different than the amount requested.

1.6. Title and Chapter

All general instructions for submitting the applicable application are provided in this document in accordance with:

- [Statute establishing the Maine Healthy Soils Program \(12 MRS Ch. 7 §351 -353\)](#)
- [Rules for Operation of the Maine Healthy Soils Fund \(01-001, Ch. 35\)](#)
- [Rules for Departmental \(DACF\) Grant Awards and Appeals \(01-001, Ch. 8\)](#)

1.7. Appeal of Contract Awards

In accordance with the [Rules for Departmental \(DACF\) Grant Awards and Appeals \(01-001, Ch. 8\)](#) an aggrieved person (hereinafter the “petitioner”) may request an appeal hearing on a grant award decision by submitting a request for appeal to the **Commissioner**, in writing, no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the award decision. The written request for appeal must describe the specific nature of the grievance. The Commissioner shall grant an appeal hearing unless it is determined that: A. The petitioner is not an aggrieved person; or B. The written request for appeal was submitted more than fifteen (15) calendar days after notification of award.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1. Timeline and Key Dates

Date	Item
2/14/2025	Application opens
2/21/2025	Live Q/A session
2/28/2025	Summary of questions and answers from live session posted on the program website
3/14/2025	Written questions due via online submission
3/21/2025	Questions and answers posted on the program website
4/4/2025	Application Due date. Applications and accompanying documents must be submitted by 5:00 p.m.
5/1/2025	Anticipated completion of application review/scoring
5/15/2025	Anticipated notification date of project and award decisions
Upon signed contract	Period of performance begins. Funds are accessible, and expenses from on or after this date are eligible for reimbursement
Three years post-award	Period of performance ends.

2.2. Solicitation

This RFA and all relevant documents and forms were posted on the release date noted on the cover page and can be found at [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain the Question and Answer Summaries and any amendments to this RFA.

2.3. Submission of Questions and Amendments

It is the responsibility of all applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and seek clarification in writing if they have specific questions. All written questions must be submitted via [this online form](#). For technical questions concerning application submission, online form issues, supplemental file submission, or compatibility problems, please email matthew.boucher@maine.gov.

2.3.1 Question/Answer Process

We will offer a live question-and-answer session on the date listed on the cover sheet. This session will be recorded, and we will post a written summary of the questions 7 – 10 business days after the live Q/A. Applicants and other interested parties may additionally submit any questions via [this online form](#) by 5:00 p.m. on the written questions due date listed on the cover sheet of this RFA. Responses to all written questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#) 7 – 10 business days after the written questions due date. All interested parties are responsible for going 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. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate, complete, and on-time submission and receipt.

2.4. Amendments to the Request for Applications

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this RFA will be posted on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. For timely information about this RFA and related MHSP programs, an email listserv sign-up can be found on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#).

Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

DACF reserves the right to revise, suspend, or terminate this RFA at its sole discretion. In such an event, DACF will inform all applicants as soon as reasonably possible. DACF also reserves the right to extend the deadline for submission of proposals or to seek additional proposals under this RFA.

2.5. Application Submission Instructions

Applications Due - Applications must be received by the due date listed on the cover page of this RFA by 5:00 p.m. local time. Applications must be submitted via [this link](#), and all supplemental files must be emailed to matthew.boucher@maine.gov. Any emails containing application materials or any additional or revised application files received after the 5:00 p.m. deadline may be rejected. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on-time email/online form transmission and receipt.

Applications that do not comply with the instructions specified in this RFA, or failure to submit all required documents, may result in the proposal being disqualified or receiving a reduced score at the sole discretion of the Department. Applicants may not provide additional supplemental files beyond those specified in the RFA. Additional materials not requested will not be evaluated. Applicants may not submit more than one application. Submission of multiple applications may result in both applications being disqualified from consideration for an award.

Submission Instructions

All activities described in the instructions below must occur **BEFORE** 5:00 p.m. on the application due date listed on the cover page of this RFA.

1. Fill out and submit the online application form found at [this link](#).
2. Email a map that outlines the farm to matthew.boucher@maine.gov. This can be a Google Map, Web Soil Survey map, or other map, so long as it shows the layout of the farm. Use the following as your email subject line when submitting supplemental files:
 - o ARDMHSP2025.SHIG1 – Supplemental Files – [YOUR FARM'S NAME]
3. IF in your online application you indicated that you have a soil health test that is 3 or fewer years old and/or a soil health management plan, then **include these documents in your supplemental files email**.

4. IF you are requesting funds for equipment, **then you must include a vendor quote for each piece of equipment in your supplemental files email.** Quotes must be submitted in PDF format, and all quotes must be combined into a single file. If the equipment you request exceeds the \$100,000 limit on this grant, you must also include a pre-qualification or pre-approval letter from a financial institution if you intend to use loan funds to fund the difference between the purchase cost and the grant award.
 - a. Quotes may be in the form of a written sales estimate, a catalog or online vendor pricing sheet, or a binding quote provided by a commercial vendor
 - b. All costs necessary and reasonable for equipment delivery must be included in the vendor quote.
 - c. Vendor quotes must minimally include: 1) the date the quote was generated; 2) the vendor name; 3) the equipment name; 4) an itemized breakdown of all expenses included (shipping, handling, delivery, implements, attachments, etc.); 5) total price of each item.

For submission of required supplemental files:

- E-mails containing links to file-sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions.
- Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions.
- Supplemental documents must be saved and submitted as PDF (.pdf) or Word (.doc or .docx) file(s).
- File size limits are 25 MB per email. Applicants may submit files separately across multiple emails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All emails and files must be received in accordance with all the instructions above.

2.6. Evaluation and Selection Process

A review panel will evaluate and score project applications based on the program requirements and selection criteria found in the rubric below. Applications will **NOT** be scored question by question but instead based on how the application as a whole addresses the rubric criteria. Applications will be scored for completeness. Applications will **NOT** be scored for writing quality, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation, provided that the writing quality does not obscure the meaning of the content of the application. Members of the review panel will first score applications individually. The review panel will then meet to arrive at a consensus score. Applications that are ineligible, late, incomplete, or incorrectly formatted may be disqualified from panel review.

Based on the review panel's scoring and evaluation, the RFA Coordinator will make recommendations to the Commissioner. Final decision-making authority for awarding grants rests with the Commissioner, based upon the program requirements and selection criteria found in the rubric below. All applicants shall be notified in writing following the Review Panel's decision.

3. RUBRIC

3.1. Point Ranges for Scoring Criteria

Identification of Soil Health Constraints = 40 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The applicant demonstrates a high understanding of and interest in their soil and/or a high willingness to learn how to improve their soils. The barriers and issues identified in this section are clearly connected to the intended use of funds. The use of funds is highly likely to directly address the barriers and issues identified.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a commitment to improving soil health on the farm and attentiveness to improving soil health in the past. If no past efforts to improve soil health have been made, the applicant addresses why.</p> <p>The applicant adheres to the word count minimums and maximums.</p>	31 – 40
<p>The applicant demonstrates a basic understanding of and interest in their soil and/or a willingness to learn how to improve their soils. The barriers and issues identified in this section are clear, but the connection to the intended use of funds is not. The use of funds will indirectly address the stated barriers.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates an interest in improving soil health on the farm, but has not yet taken steps to address soil health and does not address why those efforts have not been undertaken</p> <p>The applicant adheres or mostly adheres to the word count minimums and maximums. Some answers may be longer or shorter than the limits, but not significantly so.</p>	21 – 30
<p>The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding or interest in their soils, nor do they demonstrate a willingness to learn how to improve their soils. Responses are unclear and indirect. The barriers and issues identified are unclear. Several farm-related actions must occur before the intended use of funds is able to address the barriers and issues identified in this section.</p> <p>The applicant has not previously addressed soil health on the farm and does not explain why.</p> <p>The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, which negatively impacts the application assessment.</p>	11 – 20
<p>The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding or interest in their soils, nor do they demonstrate a willingness to learn how to improve their soils. Responses do not provide assessable answers to the questions. The barriers and issues identified are not articulated and the intended use of funds is completely disconnected from the identified barriers and issues.</p>	0 – 10

<p>The applicant has not addressed soil health on the farm, does not explain why, and does not provide enough relevant information to assess their commitment to improving soil health on the farm.</p> <p>The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, negatively impacting application assessment.</p>	
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Implementation Plan = 40 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The applicant has relevant farming experience and training to implement the use of funds according to their stated goals. The intended use of funds has a high likelihood to immediately improve or streamline the operation’s soil health efforts. It is likely that the intended use of funds will allow the farm to continue investing in soil health beyond the 3-year grant term.</p> <p>The intended use of funds addresses the farm’s means and/or capacity to improve soil health. Alternatively, the intended use of funds is innovative and aims to trial approaches to soil management to further refine management strategies specific to the farm.</p> <p>The applicant adheres to the word count minimums and maximums.</p>	31 –40
<p>The applicant has relevant farming experience or demonstrates a commitment to receiving the necessary training to implement use of funds according to their stated goals. The intended use of funds is likely to improve or streamline the operation’s soil health efforts, but they might face some optimization challenges. The intended use of funds may allow the farm to continue investing in soil health beyond the 3-year grant term, but it is unclear.</p> <p>The intended use of funds indirectly addresses the farm’s means and/or capacity to improve soil health. The intended use of funds is innovative but risky, and may not lead to long-term improvements in or maintenance of soil management.</p> <p>The applicant adheres or mostly adheres to the word count minimums and maximums. Some answers may be longer or shorter than the limits, but not significantly so.</p>	21-30
<p>The applicant does not have the relevant experience or training to implement the use of funds according to their stated goals but demonstrates a commitment receiving the necessary training. The intended use of funds is either disconnected from the operation’s soil health efforts or the applicant faces significant challenges in improving soil health through the intended use of funds. It is unlikely that the farm will be able to continue investing in soil health beyond the 3-year grant period.</p> <p>The intended use of funds does not address the farm’s means and/or capacity to improve soil health. The intended use of funds is risky and unlikely to lead to long-term improvements in or maintenance of soil management.</p>	11-20

<p>The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, which negatively impacts the application assessment.</p>	
<p>The applicant has no farming experience or training and the use of funds is not clearly related to soil health in any meaningful way.</p> <p>The intended use of funds does not address any articulated barriers, or descriptions are too vague to make an assessment.</p> <p>The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, negatively impacting application assessment.</p>	<p>0-10</p>

Budget = 20 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The budget is complete, has no unallowable costs, and does not exceed \$100,000.</p> <p>If funds for labor are requested, the applicant offers a livable wage.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, the applicant includes a vendor quote for each piece of requested equipment. If the cost of the equipment exceeds the grant maximum, the applicant provides supporting information that demonstrates access to funds for the difference.</p> <p>If materials funds are requested, the number of units being requested aligns with the size of the farm.</p> <p>The applicant describes how each requested budget item will be used to improve soil health. These descriptions are adequate and clear.</p>	<p>16-20</p>
<p>The budget is incomplete but it does not impact the ability to assess the application OR there are unallowable costs but they could be removed from the budget and the project could reasonably continue without them.</p> <p>The budget does not exceed \$100,000.</p> <p>If funds for labor are requested, the applicant offers a livable wage.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, the applicant includes a vendor quote for each piece of requested equipment. The applicant does not provide supporting documentation that demonstrates access to funds to cover the difference between the grant maximum and the equipment costs and/or does not provide a vendor quote for 1 or more items.</p> <p>If materials funds are requested, the number of units being requested aligns with the size of the farm.</p>	<p>11-15</p>

<p>The applicant describes how each requested budget item will be used to improve soil health. These descriptions are unclear or vague.</p>	
<p>The budget is incomplete and it is difficult to assess the application because of that OR the unallowable costs included in the budget cannot be removed from the project without significant reworking of the project.</p> <p>The budget exceeds \$100,000.</p> <p>If funds for labor are requested, the wage offered is not adequate for a seasonal worker.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, multiple vendor quotes or other documentation are missing.</p> <p>If materials funds are requested, the number of units being requested does not align with the size of the farm.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe how budget items will improve soil health.</p>	<p>5-10</p>
<p>There are numerous issues with the budget and supporting documentation was not submitted. The application cannot be appropriately assessed given the number of errors and/or issues.</p>	<p>0-5</p>

3.2. Example Scoresheet for reviewers

Threshold Criteria

Criteria	Yes/No
Applicant is eligible.	
Application was formatted correctly, complete, and on time.	
All supplemental files were formatted correctly, completed, and submitted by the application due date.	
No unallowable costs were included (see Section 1.4)	

Scoring Rubric and Weights

Criteria	Max Points	Score
Identification of Soil Health Constraints: “Can you identify key production issues related to your soil and demonstrate a commitment to addressing them?”	/40	
Implementation Plan: “What is your intended use of funds? do you have the relevant experience and approach to properly implement your proposed use of funds?”	/40	
Budget: “Do the budget items advance project goals, address all requirements described in the funding announcement, and not exceed the maximum allowable request?”	/20	

Questions, Strengths and Weaknesses:

APPENDIX A: RFA TERMS and DEFINITIONS

Agricultural Products: Plants and animals useful to humans, including but not limited to, forages and sod crops, grains and food crops, dairy products, poultry and poultry products, bees, livestock and livestock products, fiber, fruits, berries, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, Christmas trees, annual and perennial ornamental plants, ornamental trees, and other similar products.

Applicant: An eligible Farm Owner/Operator (see [Eligibility](#)) that is applying for the Soil Health Implementation Grant.

Commissioner: The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

DACF/Department: The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Farmland: Any tract or tracts of land used to produce agricultural products for a farm operation that consists of at least one (1) acre and has produced agricultural products with a gross annual value of at least \$2,000 in one (1) of the last three (3) years.

Farm Operation: An entity that uses farmland to produce agricultural products with the intent that they be sold commercially to generate income or otherwise creates access to farmland for historically underserved farmers.

Funding Cycle: The dates during which a funding initiative is active and accepting applications.

FY2025: Fiscal year 2025, beginning July 1st, 2024- June 30, 2025.

Healthy soils best practices: Agricultural and land management practices that:

- A. Enhance the continuing capacity of soils to function as a vital, living biological system, increase soil organic matter, improve soil structure, strengthen water holding and nutrient holding capacity, improve nutrient cycling and result in net long-term greenhouse gas drawdown;
- B. Continuously improve the capacity of soils to host a diversity of beneficial organisms, grow vigorous crops, enhance agricultural resilience, including, but not limited to, the ability of crops and livestock to tolerate and recover from drought, temperature extremes, pests and other stressors, and help regulate the global climate by converting organic residue into stable soil organic matter and retaining nutrients, including, but not limited to, nitrogen and phosphorus;
- C. Continuously improve the health of soils by considering all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, depth of topsoil horizons, water infiltration rate, water holding capacity, organic carbon content, biologically accessible nutrient content, bulk density, biological activity and biological and microbiological diversity; and
- D. Follow the principles of minimizing soil disturbance and external inputs: keeping soil covered, maximizing biodiversity, maximizing the presence of living roots and integrating animals into

land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects and keystone species, such as earthworms.

Maine Healthy Soils Program Soil Health Implementation Grant: A grant program that funding to address on-farm barriers to adopting, improving, and/or maintaining soil health.

Review Panel: A panel that shall review grant proposals and make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner. The review panel shall consist of three (3) people appointed by the Commissioner with knowledge of soil health and sustainable agriculture that do not have a conflict of interest with the applicant(s). At least one panel member must be Department staff.

RFA: Request for Applications

Soil amendments: Amendments including but not limited to biochar and compost that are developed from plant and animal residues. Amendments may also include agricultural lime. Soil amendments in this chapter must be used with the intent of improving the physical, biological, and chemical properties of the soil, including but not limited to increasing soil organic matter, soil carbon sequestration, soil aggregate stability, and/or soil organism habitats.

Soil health management plan: A plan that integrates soil health testing results, farmer goals, and farm background/capacity to address, monitor, and improve soil health constraints. The soil health management plan should identify department-determined healthy soils best practices that may be used on the farm, include a tentative implementation schedule, and describe potential barriers plan implementation may face. Alternatives soil health management plans include plans developed collaboratively between a farmer and a technical service provider (e.g. the Natural Resource Conservation Service) external to the Maine Healthy Soils Program, provided that the plan is less than three (3) years old and submitted to the Department for review and approval.

Soil health test: A test that measures the physical, biological, and chemical properties of a soil sample to identify soil health constraints. Measurements included in the soil health test must adhere to the latest research standards and may change as new data are published.

State: State of Maine

APPENDIX B: 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.
- 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 application and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the RFA deadline.
- 6) The RFA and the awarded Applicant's application, including all appendices, attachments, or updated documents requested by the Department or the USDA will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
- 7) Following the 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](#) 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.