**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA BIDDERS CONFERENCE**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202111177 - Maine Apprenticeship Program,Grant Funding, FY 2022 Application |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services |
| **BIDDERS CONFERENCE LOCATION:** | Zoom ([access Zoom recording here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD-43JRKT3c)) |
| **BIDDERS CONFERENCE DATE/TIME:** | February 7, 2022 at 1:00pm ET, local time. |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | No later than February 11, 2022  at 11:59 pm. |
| **BIDDERS CONFERENCE** **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | February 14, 2022 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | February 23, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Provided below are questions asked and the responses given at the Bidders Conference.**

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| **1** | **Question** |
| Who will be reviewing the applications? |
| **Answer** |
| Staff at the Maine Department of Labor, some who are directly involved in the apprenticeship program and others with financial or other related expertise. |

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| **2** | **Question** |
| Hello – Just a couple quick questions on pre-apprenticeship after reviewing info. Pre-apprenticeship program criteria/approval is developed in partnership with ME DOL? The pre-apprenticeship may not always be the same model/length of apprenticeship or yes? |
| **Answer** |
| Not every program will be the same. Pre-apprenticeship is a flexible training model designed to meet the needs of employers looking to hire apprentices. Programs will not all be the same length. |

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| **3** | **Question** |
| Are indirects allowable and at what rate? |
| **Answer** |
| They are allowable—*we will provide more information on allowable indirect rate in the formal Q&A written summary to be posted next week* |

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| **4** | **Question** |
| Can grants be awarded for less than $250,000 as long as they meet the 40 minimum # of pre-apprentices? |
| **Answer** |
| *We will provide more information on this in the formal Q&A written summary to be posted by EOB Tuesday, February 15th.* |

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| **5** | **Question** |
| Do you need to submit a formal partnership agreement from employers with the grant submission? |
| **Answer** |
| No, you do not need a formal partnership agreement but letters of support from proposed partner organizations are encouraged. If partnering with an organization to support financial management of the grant or sub-granting to a partner organization, letters of support are required. |

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| **6** | **Question** |
| Are letters of support from partners included in the 20 page maximum? |
| **Answer** |
| No, these are not included in the maximum. |

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| **7** | **Question** |
| If an organization is interested in partnering with an applicant... is there an existing forum in which an interested organization can state this interest? |
| **Answer** |
| Not that we are aware of, but feel free to use this Bidders’ Conference to describe what you’re looking for and make connections. |

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| **8** | **Question** |
| If a school district applies to be an intermediary sponsor, can the school district also be an employer? For example, if a school district is partnering with a college to provide training for early childcare professionals, can the school district then be the employer for the early childcare employees? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes |

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| **9** | **Question** |
| As an employer, are we able to partner with private graduate institutions or Maine public institutions only? |
| **Answer** |
| There is no prohibition on partnering with private education institutions. |

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| **10** | **Question** |
| While apprentice wages cannot be paid with this money, can the money be used in pre-apprenticeships for living allowances, stipends or incentives? |
| **Answer** |
| *We will provide more information on this in the formal Q&A written summary to be posted by EOB Tuesday, February 15th.* |

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| **11** | **Question** |
| You had indicated a list of areas or occupations that would be preferenced in this program, but then there’s an “or” certain audiences. So how are those two things going to be considered by reviewers? Are they of equal weight? Is the sector much more important than the audience in this review process? |
| **Answer** |
| Both are very important. Applicants will need to meet eligibility criteria describe on page 6 of the RFA. All applicants, regardless of industry sector, should focus on one or more of the priority communities listed on page 6. If the applicant is not in one of the listed industry sectors, the applicant will need to ***exclusively*** serve individuals from priority communities. Additionally, proposals that fall within priority industry sectors and lead to an occupation on the Maine Department of Labor’s [Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) High Wage In Demand](https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/data/oes/hwid.html) list will be given priority consideration for funding. |

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| **12** | **Question** |
| CDL is a huge need in the state. We are looking to offer a pre-apprentice program here and work with sponsors that would work the apprentice end of the programming. What are the requirements? Employers want to know specifically, “What do I have to do to make sure I uphold my half of the requirements?” There is talk of a job shadowing component, to grant the people an interview, but I also heard you mention being able to hire the people, set up a mentoring program, on-the-job training. I’m a little confused and could use some help. |
| **Answer** |
| Pre-apprenticeship includes classroom training and would need an opportunity for an individual to become a registered apprentice with an employer. Being a registered apprentice means you are receiving at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning in a mentored situation, following an approved Schedule of Work. This means it has been submitted to and approved by the Maine Apprenticeship Council and MDOL to be a registered apprenticeship program. The employer sponsor has a responsibility for mentoring, paying, supervising, and keeping track of the on-the-job learning and that is detailed within the RFA (Appendix F)—this document provides specifics of what is expected of each of the parties in the agreement. |

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| **13** | **Question** |
| Can pre-apprenticeship be developed though there is no formal apprenticeship yet for this sector (but it is also under development through another organization)? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, it can as long as there is a formal letter of support from a business agreeing to develop a registered apprenticeship program. |

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| **14** | **Question** |
| Does this funding allow for more than one person to be hired? For example, hire an Apprenticeship Navigator, as well as a person to focus on English Language Learners, as long as both employees are subject matter experts in apprenticeship? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes |

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| **15** | **Question** |
| If an employer has a few pre-apprenticeship opportunities leading to apprenticeships would the applicant have to serve 40 new apprentices / pre-apprentices for each area or could they serve 40 new apprentices / pre-apprentices for all of the areas combined? |
| **Answer** |
| The applicant must serve a minimum of 40 new apprentices / pre-apprentices **total** over the course of the grant period (across the different areas/ occupations) |

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| **16** | **Question** |
| Do all apprenticeship occupations need to be on the CWRI high wage, in demand list or is it more important that we are focused on the priority sectors? |
| **Answer** |
| Preference will be given to those applications which are focused on developing occupations on the [CWRI high-wage, in-demand list](https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/data/oes/hwid.html). Others are not excluded, but preference will be given to those that include those occupations. Priority sectors determine eligibility – you need to be serving one of those sectors or exclusively serve one of the priority communities. The CWRI high-wage, in-demand list is used for preference, not eligibility. |

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| **17** | **Question** |
| If a Company is in one of the industries, do they still need provide a plan to specifically target one of the key audiences? |
| **Answer** |
| All applicants must provide answers to the questions in the application. We expect all applicants to have a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan to help us advance the goal of increasing representation within apprenticeship among priority communities.  |

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| **18** | **Question** |
| We have an existing apprenticeship program. Would the grant support the existing population along with supporting growth? |
| **Answer** |
| The grant will support growth. It can support new apprentices within your existing program, but it will not support current apprentices. Existing programs can certainly apply to expand their programming and serve new individuals. |

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| **19** | **Question** |
| How does a staff member demonstrate they are a Subject Matter Expert – in order to have their salary/wages covered by this grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants will attest to the fact that the individual will become a Subject Matter Expert (SME). The Maine Apprenticeship Program will provide technical assistance, coaching, and information to those individuals hired using grant funds to become an SME. |

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| **20** | **Question** |
| 20 page limit, is that correct? I assume that does that not include letters of support or letters of collaboration? |
| **Answer** |
| Correct. Letters of support would be additional. |

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| **21** | **Question** |
| 20 page max, does it include a detailed budget? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the budget and budget narrative is included in the application 20 page limit.  |

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| **22** | **Question** |
| Can you talk about the 10% devoted to support services and the limit of $1,200 per apprentice? When I calculate out 500 apprentices for $3,000,000, all I can get to is a total of $600 going towards those support services. How do you get to $1,200 per apprentice? |
| **Answer** |
| The assumption is that not every apprentice will need support services. You can spend a maximum of $1,200 on one individual, though other apprentices may not need the full extent of support services. There is an ability to provide some support services directly with that cap of up to $1,200, but we also encourage organizations to partner with others to meet some of those wraparound needs. |

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| **23** | **Question** |
| Can a pre-apprenticeship target multiple High-Wage, In-Demand jobs? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. Many pre-apprenticeship programs prepare pre-apprentices for entry into multiple occupations. |

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| **24** | **Question** |
| When will this recording be available? |
| **Answer** |
| We can post this in the coming days, just noting that the Q&A Summary won’t be posted until after the question deadline of February 11, 2022. You will have access to the recording and slides, we just won’t have all the answers to the questions until next week. |

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| **25** | **Question** |
| Do we have to be in any apprenticeship program currently? So the minimum number we can request is 20 people? |
| **Answer** |
| You don’t need to currently be in the apprenticeship community, but the minimum number of people you can serve with grant funds is 40 new people over the whole grant period. |