**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA SUBMITTED 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 |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | No later than February 11, 2022  at 11:59 p.m. |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | February 15, 2022 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | February 23, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | What are allowable indirect expenses on this budget? |
| **Answer** | |
| A de minimis rate of up to 10% will be allowed without a federally approved indirect cost plan. All administrative costs, including indirect, may not exceed 15%. | |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 8 | Are salaries/fringe for instructors and coordinators allowable expenses? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes- see page 11 of the RFA for requirements for funding to support the employment of staff. | |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | Are video systems for connection of campuses allowable expenses if broken into elements less than $5K? |
| **Answer** | |
| If the acquisition cost of any single piece of equipment or equipment system exceeds the $5,000 cap, it is not allowable. (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of acquisition cost of equipment).    As stated on page 10 of the RFA, activities that are **not** allowable under this grant include:   1. Purchase of equipment, defined as an item with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of Equipment). 2. Construction costs 3. Paying wages for Apprentices and/or pre-Apprentices | |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9 | Is funding primarily the pre-internship curricula and build out allowable as long as it has established MOUs with a (yet to exist) apprentice program? Or should we submit in conjunction with a group that is developing that apprenticeship as part of the same RFA? |
| **Answer** | |
| Grant funds may be used to support pre-apprentice training provided the pre-apprentices are connected by a formal MOU to an employer offering an existing or registered apprenticeship program under development. A letter of support (in place of formal MOU) from an organization agreeing to develop a registered apprenticeship program will suffice at the time of application. | |

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | Is classroom improvement/renovation an allowable expense? |
| **Answer** | |
| Construction costs are not allowable. If the acquisition cost of any single piece of equipment or equipment system exceeds the $5,000 cap, it is not allowable. (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of acquisition cost of equipment).  As stated on page 10 of the RFA, activities that are **not** allowable under this grant include:   * Purchase of equipment, defined as an item with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of Equipment). * Construction costs * Paying wages for Apprentices and/or pre-Apprentices | |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | We only have the capacity to train 6 Apprentices in the 3-year grant period. Does that disqualify us from funding? I believe I saw a minimum or 40? |
| **Answer** | |
| Registering 6 individuals as apprentices during the grant period would not meet the minimum grant requirement of serving 40 new pre-apprentices and/or apprentices over the grant period. We encourage collaboration in order to meet this threshold. | |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | We run 4-6 workshops a year often in collaboration with others. Usually we have 6-16 people in attendance. Is it possible that this program might put us in the 40 people category to apply for funding? And could we use this money to further expand that program? |
| **Answer** | |
| As stated, the minimum number of new pre-apprentices and/or apprentices served over the grant period is 40 individuals. Grant funds may be used to support the training of pre-apprentices provided the pre-apprentices are connected by a formal MOU to an employer offering them an opportunity to enter a registered apprenticeship program. | |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6 | We are wondering if childcare would meet the definition of “education” in the apprenticeship grants. |
| **Answer** | |
| The education sector includes early childhood education and childcare. | |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6 | Are these grants something that an industry association would be eligible for? |
| **Answer** | |
| Per the RFA, applicants must be a Maine-based business committed to developing or expanding registered Apprenticeship programming or an education provider, union, industry association, or community-based organization (CBO) willing to act as an Apprenticeship intermediary. | |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6 | Is electrical one of the focus areas? |
| **Answer** | |
| Per the RFA, priority sectors include:   1. Clean energy, 2. Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, 3. Healthcare and social assistance, 4. Infrastructure (construction, **trades**, broadband, logistics) - including electrical 5. Leisure and hospitality, 6. Manufacturing, 7. Education 8. Retail | |

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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6 | Our program requires an employee to have 1 year of tenure. Some apprentices may fall into the highlighted sections, but most will not. Do they need to fall into one of these categories to be eligible to receive funds?   1. Unemployed or underemployed adults, or low-wage workers, particularly those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic 2. In-school youth ages 16-24 3. Out-of-school youth ages 16-24 4. Adults ages 55 and older 5. People without a college degree 6. Women 7. People of color 8. Justice involved individuals 9. People with disabilities 10. Rural communities (residents of Aroostook, Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset, and/or Washington counties) 11. People in recovery |
| **Answer** | |
| Applicants will need to meet eligibility criteria described 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.  All applicants must provide answers to the questions in the application. We expect all applicants to have a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan (even if not exclusively serving these priority communities) to help us advance the goal of increasing representation within apprenticeship among priority communities. | |

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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6 | I’ve read through this and what’s not clear to me is if funds are available for existing programs? Is this just for new programs? |
| **Answer** | |
| The grant will support growth. It can support new pre-apprentices or apprentices within your existing program, but it will not support current pre-apprentices or apprentices. Existing programs can certainly apply to expand their programming, extend their reach, and serve new individuals. | |

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| **13** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | In Appendix D, it states that the minimum grant must serve at least 40 new Apprentices. For a small employer that is an approved Sponsor of a registered Apprentice Program, is there any chance that the minimum grant will be revised to match a smaller program? |
| **Answer** | |
| The minimum award for this grant opportunity is $250,000, serving at least 40 new apprentices and/or pre-apprentices during the entire grant period. In order to build an integrated statewide apprenticeship system, we are encouraging organizations to collaborate in order to expand their reach to serve at least 40 new individuals over the course of the grant period. If additional funding opportunities become available in the future, they will be posted on the [procurement website](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). | |

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| **14** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | 40 new apprenticeships. Is that the first year or over the three-year period? |
| **Answer** | |
| Organizations must serve a minimum of 40 new apprentices and/or pre-apprentices over the entire grant period. | |

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| **15** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 8-9 | If the lead agency is a school, like our high school, and part of our proposed workplan is to hire an Apprenticeship Navigator (AN) and we also have a community partner that has already been doing well-established and significant coordination and support role for college & career access and readiness and that would continue to be a major partner in this new grant effort and the thought would be to allocate funding for the hours of both the AN and the community partner. However, the AN would be a school employee and the community partner is an independent non-profit....so is it permissible to cover hours of a grant personnel who is NOT a school employee? And how does that happen? In the budget, I see both "personnel" and "supportive services". |
| **Answer** | |
| The grantee is permitted to use grant funds to support grant efforts carried out by primary recipients and sub-recipients. Personnel refers to staff funded by the grant - see page 11 of the RFA for requirements for funding to support the employment of staff. Supportive services refers to needs-related funding for pre-apprentices and/or apprentices – see page 10 of the RFA for funding requirements for supportive services. | |

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| **16** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | RFA: is it $3 million for 500 per year, or 500 over 3-years? |
| **Answer** | |
| For the maximum award amount of $3,000,000, a minimum of 500 total new apprentices and/or pre-apprentices must be served over the **entire** grant period. | |

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| **17** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 4 | Appendix C, Part 3, Q-4  “Please describe the Training Schedule...”;  Question: Are you asking for the “project schedule” or the “participant’s individual schedule?”  Program Schedule: begins 3/1/2022 and ends 12/31/2024  Individual Schedule: 120-hour pre-apprentice training, 2000-hour OJT Apprenticeship, and 80- additional hours of specialized trade training. |
| **Answer** | |
| The training schedule should include the proposed start and end date of each apprentice or pre-apprentice training cycle and the frequency/ timing of the training. | |

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| **18** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 5 | Appendix C, Part 4, Q-3 describes that up to 10% of total funding may be allocated toward supportive services to apprentices - and each apprentice may receive a maximum of $1,200.  Question: Is it the intent to give support to less than half of the population? |
| **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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| **19** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Recruiting from outside Maine: In an effort to attract under-represented workers such as people of color, this provider would like to recruit from institutions/schools/training facilities/providers outside of Maine. Can a piece of the overall funding pay for recruitment and pre-training workshops to attract non-Mainers (particularly under-represented people) to Maine for entry into our Maine business’s apprenticeship program? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, a piece of the overall funding may pay for recruitment and pre-training workshops to recruit individuals for entry into a Maine-registered apprenticeship program | |

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| **20** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 10 | Are multiple apprenticeship sponsors able to partner together for this grant? If so, how does this impact the student numbers? Would the organization completing the application get "credit" toward the 40 students served? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, multiple businesses and organizations can partner together for this grant. In order to build an integrated statewide apprenticeship system, we are encouraging organizations to collaborate in order to expand their reach to serve at least new 40 apprentices or pre-apprentices over the course of the grant period. It is not required that all pre-apprentices or apprentices be connected to the same employer or the same industry. | |

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| **21** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | If a secondary education provider became an intermediary sponsor, could a portion of this funding go toward paying partners? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, it is permitted to sub-grant funds to partner organizations. Please include letters of support from organizations with whom you intend to sub-grant. | |

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| **22** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 10 | Do you have a template of a Letter of Support from a business that we could use? |
| **Answer** | |
| We do not have templates available for Letters of Support. | |

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| **23** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, pg. 9 | Is it possible to schedule an informational meeting with a person from MDOL to discuss apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, absolutely. Maine Apprenticeship Program staff will be available for technical assistance, including informational meetings, ***after*** the grant application deadline passes and contracts have been awarded. | |

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| **24** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 10 | To be considered we just have to fill out the application form showing how the funds would be spent and if I am correct the funds CANNOT be used to pay the apprentice? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, apprentice or pre-apprentice wages are not an allowable expense. However, MDOL will provide supports to defray start-up costs of developing new apprenticeship programs such as incentives for registering new occupations, starting new programs and classroom offsets for apprentices.  As stated on pg. 10, activities that are **not** allowable under this grant include:   1. Purchase of equipment, defined as an item with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of Equipment). 2. Construction costs 3. Paying wages for Apprentices and/or pre-Apprentices | |

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| **25** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Is it allowable to use funds from this competition to work with 7-10th graders on career exploration activities designed to put students on a pathway to pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in high demand, high wage industries? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, youth pre-apprenticeship programs can serve individuals ages 16-24. | |

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| **26** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can a portion or percentage of apprenticeship grant funds support training and/or workshops that occur out of state due to expertise currently not provided within state? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, pre-apprentices and/or apprentices may need to receive training that is not yet accessible within Maine. Funding for these out-of-state training programs is permissible provided the program is directly connected to a registered apprenticeship program in Maine. Additionally, grant funding may be used to expand training capacity within Maine. | |

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| **27** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | Is there a recommended indirect labor cost(s) we may include that reflects staff and administrative costs associated with the project? |
| **Answer** | |
| A de minimis rate of up to 10% will be allowed without a federally approved indirect cost plan. All administrative costs, including indirect, may not exceed 15%. | |

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| **28** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 9-10 | Can supportive services include credential evaluations? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **29** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Do participants in pre-apprenticeships need to have work authorization? |
| **Answer** | |
| Assuming the pre-apprenticeship program does not include employment, participants in pre-apprenticeship programs do not need to have current work authorization. However, participants do need work authorization prior to being registered as an apprentice. | |

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| **30** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6-7 | How will the scoring take into consideration if a pre apprenticeship or registered apprenticeship program is for a job, such as medical assistant, which is not on the CWRI High Wage in Demand Jobs, but is in the eligible sectors - healthcare - and is focused on people who fall into one or more of the targeted communities? |
| **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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| **31** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6-7 | Can an organization be involved in more than one application - submitting their own and as a partner in another application? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **32** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | I see clearly that wages for pre-apprentices are not allowable and that supportive services and “needs-related payments necessary to enable an individual to participate in education and training activities funded through the grant” are allowable. Are stipends allowable apprenticeship grant activities as long as they are under 10% of the total funding level? |
| **Answer** | |
| A needs-related payment or stipend to help address an individual’s basic needs in order to enable their participation in the education and training activities is permissible and may not exceed 10% of the total grant funding or $1200 per individual. | |

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| **33** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, pg. 6-7 | If an entity could both be a sponsoring employer proposing an apprenticeship program and also a provider proposing a pre-apprenticeship program should there be two distinct proposals or one proposal that incorporates both? Is there a preference? |
| **Answer** | |
| If the programs are connected and have shared goals, priority communities, strategies, and partners, one proposal describing both programs will suffice. However, if the programs are quite different in their goals, strategies, or partners, separate proposals are encouraged. | |

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| **34** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 7-8 | Is the line-item budget and budget narrative in addition to the 20-page limit or is it included in the 20-page limit? |
| **Answer** | |
| The budget and budget narrative are included in the application 20-page limit. | |

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| **35** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, pg. 9 | Maine Department of Labor Resources incentive funding (page 9),is that expected to be included in the proposed budget? Or are these incentives above the proposed budgeted amount? |
| **Answer** | |
| The incentive funding described on page 9 of the RFA will be provided by the Maine Department of Labor and does not need to be included in the proposed budget. | |

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| **36** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | Understanding that Apprentice and/or pre-Apprentices wages cannot be supported with these funds, can living stipends, stipends and/or incentives be paid for with these funds for pre-apprenticeship programs? |
| **Answer** | |
| A needs-related payment or stipend to help address an individual’s basic needs in order to enable their participation in the education and training activities is permissible and may not exceed 10% of the total grant funding or $1200 per individual. | |

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| **37** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix C, pg. 1 | Page 1 of grant application “What is intended geographic scope of program?” option “Region” can this be a self-defined region or is it anticipated to be an already defined region such as Local Workforce Board Region or another system defined Region (MDOL BRS region, etc.)? |
| **Answer** | |
| Applicants can specify the region or area they would like to focus on. | |

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| **38** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, pg. 18 | Can grants be awarded for less than $250,000 as long as they meet the 40 minimum # of pre-apprentices? |
| **Answer** | |
| The minimum award for this grant opportunity is $250,000. If additional funding opportunities become available in the future, they will be posted on the [procurement website](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). | |

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| **39** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B, pg. 9-10 | While apprentice wages cannot be paid with this money, can the money be used in pre-apprenticeships for living allowances, stipends or incentives? |
| **Answer** | |
| A needs-related payment or stipend to help address an individual’s basic needs in order to enable their participation in the education and training activities is permissible and may not exceed 10% of the total grant funding or $1200 per individual. | |