**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202111181 - Community Resilience Partnership Service Provider Grant |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Governor’s OfficeOffice of Policy Innovation & the Future |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | January 11, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | December 23, 2021 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | February 15, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m. |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | 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 D, p9 | Is there an application form we should use to apply? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, a [Service Provider Application Form](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) is posted with the RFA document on the Procurement Service website. |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| n/a | Should a community approach a service provider, or vice versa? How a service provider can get listed on the website for communities to connect with? |
| **Answer** |
| Service providers are tasked with recruiting communities to join their proposals to the Service Provider Grants. However, it makes no difference whether the community or the service provider initiates the conversation about developing a proposal. GOPIF provides [a list of organizations](https://www.maine.gov/future/node/173) that have indicated interest in working with communities as service providers. To add your organization to the list, email Brian Ambrette (brian.ambrette@maine.gov) with your organization’s name and address, a point of contact with email and phone, the organization’s website, and the region(s) to be listed under. |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| n/a | Do you have suggestions for how regional organizations with overlapping regions can best coordinate on which communities each organization may work with? |
| **Answer** |
| We encourage relationship-building that shares good practices and transfers knowledge among communities and organizations. GOPIF provides a [list of organizations](https://www.maine.gov/future/node/173) on the Partnership website that have indicated interest in working with communities as service providers. |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | Would the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future consider awarding grants to service providers who provide assistance to a group of up to ten (10) communities? |
| **Answer** |
| No. Service Provider Grants are for providing support to 2-5 communities. |

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | In a collaboration of 2-5 communities, will more communities collaborating (5) score more highly than a collaboration of (2)? |
| **Answer** |
| The number of communities in a proposal will not affect scoring, so long as the number is between two (2) and five (5) and the applicant demonstrates sufficient capacity to support the proposed group size. |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | If there are 2-5 communities that wish to apply together with a service provider, can they have diverse projects or are they expected to collaborate on one project? |
| **Answer** |
| The Service Provider will assist communities with the enrollment requirements, including producing a list of priorities for each individual community as well as list of shared priority activities. The communities will then decide whether to pursue individual Community Action Grants or a collaborative Community Action Grant. Keep in mind that a community may participate in only one Community Action Grant application per round. |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | You state the intention is to select at least one service provider per 5 regions you identify - but are service providers expected to represent communities throughout that region or can we focus within only one county? |
| **Answer** |
| GOPIF intends to award at least one Service Provider Grant in each of five regions. Organizations that are interested in being Service Providers do not need to serve an entire region or they may serve areas in more than one region.  |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | If a community in a region is ready to apply for an individual grant now, but surrounding communities need more time, can a local service provider apply to support the region at the same time as a single community applies for a community grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Service Provider Grants are intended to enable an organization to help communities complete the enrollment activities and apply for a Community Action Grant. A Service Provider Grant would not be awarded to an organization to assist a community that is already enrolled in the Partnership. |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | Can several small towns who have been meeting monthly for a while hold a joint community workshop, or do they have to hold individual town meetings? Any insights for how they can learn from each other? |
| **Answer** |
| Community workshops conducted as part of the enrollment process may be held individually or jointly. The outcomes must include a list of priorities for each individual community and may include joint collaborative priorities. |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | What is the difference between the community engagement that a community has to undertake to enroll in the Partnership, and the community engagement support a Service Provider would undertake within that grant? |
| **Answer** |
| The Service Provider will assist the communities with the workshops that are part of the enrollment requirements.  |

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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p4 | I wonder if Service Providers could support development of additional Service Providers in other regions that are underserved initially, or communities within those regions? |
| **Answer** |
| We hope to offer a venue for service providers and communities to share best practices and lessons learned with their peers. However, it is unlikely that we would make a grant to one service provider for the purpose of providing assistance to another service provider. |

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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p5 | Are service providers restricted to geographies where their business is located or can they service counties outside their area?  |
| **Answer** |
| The Community Resilience Partnership does not restrict Service Providers to certain regions or geographies.  |

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| **13** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p5 | I don't see any language in the RFPs that suggest that working on one grant (RFA) precludes an organization from working on the other grant (RFA). Could you confirm that my organization could propose to work on tasks listed in both grant RFAs? |
| **Answer** |
| An organization may submit one (1) Service Provider Grant application per round and, if applying on behalf of a community, (1) Community Action Grant per round. An organization would be permitted to participate as a subcontractor on multiple Community Action Grants and Service Provider Grants and would be expected to demonstrate capacity to do so effectively. |

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| **14** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p5 | How do you envision service providers working with regional coordinators? Could one organization apply to be both? |
| **Answer** |
| The distinction between Service Providers and Regional Coordinators is that Service Providers assist communities in completing the enrollment requirements, including the priority list of next steps, and applying for their first Community Action Grant, whereas Regional Coordinators assist once a community is enrolled, with a focus on implementation of the community’s priority activities. Yes, an organization could apply for both a Service Provider Grant and the Regional Coordinator Pilot. The applicant should demonstrate that the organization understands that these are two distinct roles with distinct deliverables and demonstrate considerable capacity expansion within the organization. |

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| **15** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p5 | RFP# 202111180 for the Regional Coordinators Pilot funding states In Part I.C ("Eligibility to Submit Applications") that "Partnerships between regional entities and other service providers that create new capacities or increase knowledge exchange are welcome."  By contrast, RFA# 202111181 for Service Provider Grant funding does not include similar language.  Recognizing the value of intermunicipal consultation, coordination, cooperation and investment in priority climate resilience and energy projects:Does GOPIF favor Service Provider applications that demonstrate intermunicipal consultation, coordination, cooperation and investment beyond the geographic boundaries of the Service Provider's two (2) to five (5) Group communities? If "yes," what method(s) does GOPIF plan to use to evaluate such intermunicipal engagement?Does GOPIF favor partnerships between and among Service Providers? If "yes", what method(s) does GOPIF plan to use -- during the application process and before it awards Service Provider grants -- to enable potential Applicants to create partnerships with one or more potential Applicants? |
| **Answer** |
| GOPIF currently has no additional opinion or guidance beyond what is stated in the RFA and this document. |

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| **16** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p5 | Can a 501(c4) organization apply for the grant, and would the funds awarded be considered 501(c3) or 501(c4) funds?  |
| **Answer** |
| Since this Grant is fully funded by the State of Maine’s General Fund, and further, since there appear to be no general restrictions in statute or State Rulemaking on 501(c)(4) eligibility for State funding, a 501 (c)(4) organization may apply for the grant.  |

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| **17** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section D, p5 | Can a service provider apply for multiple grants to assist different groups of communities or individual communities within the same round? Are they subject to the same grant limit?  |
| **Answer** |
| Service Providers may apply only once per grant round. However, they are welcome to submit an application to both of the grant rounds each year. |

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| **18** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A-3, p7 | Please elaborate on the sentence “Contracts will be up to twelve (12) months. Is this the 12-month period described in Section A.3 of Activities and Requirements? Does the GOPIF anticipate awarding service provider contracts of less than twelve (12) months? What circumstances would lead to a service provider contract of less than twelve (12) months? |
| **Answer** |
| Service Provider Grants contracts will be for up to twelve (12) months. Contracts may be for less than twelve (12) months if the applicant proposes a shorter timeline for completing the required deliverables.  |

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| **19** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A-4, p7 | Please clarify Section A.4 [*sic* A.6] of “Activities and Requirements.”  Does “up to twelve (12) months” in this subsection refer to the service provider contract period or to the expected duration of “funding for priority climate and energy projects?” If "yes", does the phrase “funding for priority climate change and energy projects” refer solely to funding from a Community Action Grant from the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future -- or does the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future expect the service provider to "provid[e] support to Group Communities to identify and apply for funding for priority climate and energy projects" from additional sources of funding? |
| **Answer** |
| Within twelve (12) months of the grant award, the Service Provider must complete the required deliverables: assisting the 2-5 communities with the Partnership enrollment activities; assisting the 2-5 communities with applying for a Community Action Grant, either individually or jointly; and grant reporting requirements.In most cases the Service Provider will assist communities in applying for Community Action Grants. However, there may be cases where the community will want to consider other funding programs (for example, Efficiency Maine rebates or DEP’s Stream Crossing Grants) to address a certain priority project. |

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| **20** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section E, p6 | Within the “up to twelve (12) months” starting once funds are awarded to the service provider, is the service provider expected to both (a) submit the Group communities for enrollment in the Program and (b) accomplish the three tasks described in section A.5 of “Activities and Requirements” that are to “assist Municipalities and Tribal Governments to become eligible for the Community Action Grant?”Within the “up to twelve (12) months” starting once funds are awarded to the service provider, is the service provider expected to accomplish the tasks in section A.4 [*sic* A.6] of “Activities and Requirements,” i.e., “providing support to Group communities to identify and apply for funding for priority climate and energy projects for up to twelve (12) months?” |
| **Answer** |
| Within twelve (12) months of the grant award, the Service Provider must complete the required deliverables: assisting the 2-5 communities with the Partnership enrollment activities; assisting the 2-5 communities with applying for a Community Action Grant, either individually or jointly; and grant reporting requirements. |

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| **21** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p7 | If the Group communities’ application for a Community Action Grant is successful, is the service provider expected to provide technical assistance to the Group communities during the time in which the Group communities administer the grant, implement the funded project and account for the expenditure of the grant funds? If “yes”, will the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation extend the service provider’s contract? If “yes”, under what terms and conditions will the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future extend the service provider’s contract? |
| **Answer** |
| The Service Provider is not expected to support a community(ies) in implementing a Community Action Grant. However, the community(ies) may choose to include the Service Provider as a subcontractor on the Community Action Grant application if the Service Provider’s expertise is relevant to the project. |

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| **22** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-1, p7 | Will GOPIF provide standard forms for debarments, performance and non-collusion certifications to potential applicants? |
| **Answer** |
| See the [Service Provider Application Form](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) (link provided in the RFA document). |

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| **23** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-3, p8 | Applicants are required to demonstrate how they will “achieve outcomes including, new enrollments in the program….”  Does “new enrollments'' refer to municipalities and tribal governments in addition to the two to five municipalities and tribal governments that the applicant has “recruited” prior to submitting an application? |
| **Answer** |
| The “new enrollments” is intended for the two (2) to five (5) communities in the Service Provider’s recruited group. |

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| **24** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-4, p8 | Will the GOPIF provide a standardized budget template to potential applicants? |
| **Answer** |
| See the [Service Provider Application Form](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) (link provided in the RFA document). |

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| **25** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-4, p8 | Applicants are required to detail “where specific funds will be allocated.”  Will GOPIF reimburse the service provider for itemized expenses -- or will GOPIF award the service provider payment(s) that the service provider is expected to disburse for itemized expenses? |
| **Answer** |
| The grant funds will be awarded to selected applicants upon selection. |

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| **26** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-4, p8 | Can you tell us more about the (15%) cost-share match (eligible match funds and activities)? |
| **Answer** |
| A 15% cost share by the applicant is required. In-kind match is the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to the grant that would have been eligible costs. In-kind match is counted only for the period of the grant award. |

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| **27** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-4, p8 | In fulfilling the “15% cost share [that] is required of the Applicant," "an in-kind match is permitted.”  Will GOPIF provide examples of in-kind matches that it would find especially beneficial to the Community Resilience Partnership program?  Conversely, what in-kind matches would GOPIF disfavor.Regarding the 15% in-kind match, can this match come from town staff and local volunteer time assisting with public meetings? |
| **Answer** |
| In-kind match is the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to the grant that would have been eligible costs. In-kind match is counted only for the period of the grant award.  |

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| **28** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section B-4, p8 | If an organization that is applying to become a service provider assists a community with applying for a community action grant before applying for a service provider grant - can that apply towards a local match requirement before the service provider grant is approved?  |
| **Answer** |
| No. The match requirement must be satisfied by the service provider during the Service Provider Grant award period. Costs incurred or in-kind activities conducted before or after the award period are not eligible to be used as match. |

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| **29** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section A, p9 | Following the Informational Meeting via Zoom on December 14, 2021, will the questions asked verbally or in Zoom's chat or Q&A function plus the verbal responses by GOPIF be put in writing on the Division of Procurement Services Grants RFA's and RFA's website, thereby becoming "binding" on interested parties under the provisions of “Section B. Submitting Questions about the Request for Applications?” |
| **Answer** |
| Responses to questions received during the informational meeting will be compiled in writing and posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFAs 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. |

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| **30** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Section C, p9 | Recognizing that “it is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to [the Division of Procurement Services Grants RFA's and RFA's] website to obtain [any] amendments” to RFA# 202111181, what is the final date on which GOPIF will post any and all amendments to that website, i.e., what is the date on which interested parties can know that they have in hand any and all amendments? |
| **Answer** |
| Maine Division of Procurement Services/DAFS guidelines state that amendments must be issued a minimum of seven (7) calendar days prior to the Proposal Due Date. |

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| **31** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| p11 | After the service provider has “provid[ed] support to Group communities to identify and apply for funding for priority climate and energy projects," how soon does the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future anticipate notifying the Group communities that they have succeeded or not succeeded in applying for a Community Action Grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Once the Application due date has passed, the Evaluation Team will review and score all Applications. Award notification is anticipated within several weeks of the deadline. All applicants will be notified on the same day. |

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| **32** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| p11 | Will service provider grant award winners be notified before the March 22 Community Action Project Applications are due?  |
| **Answer** |
| Once the Application due date has passed, the Evaluation Team will review and score all Applications. Award notification is anticipated within several weeks of the deadline. All applicants will be notified on the same day. |

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| **33** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| n/a | Are there opportunities/approaches you envision for selected service providers to convene and learn from one another? |
| **Answer** |
| One of the Service Providers’ deliverables is a written summary or case study of their work with the group of communities, which will help communicate successful and unsuccessful practices. GOPIF anticipates holding recognition and peer learning events or webinars in the future. The network of regional coordinators will also facilitate the sharing of information. |

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| **34** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| n/a | Will your office be providing training for service providers to assure consistency? |
| **Answer** |
| A component of the Regional Coordinators RFA is to provide training and peer learning for both communities and service providers.  |