**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA BIDDERS CONFERENCE and**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202204059 - ARP State Fiscal Recovery Funds –  CTE Infrastructure  |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Education |
| **BIDDERS CONFERENCE LOCATION:** | Zoom Meeting |
| **BIDDERS CONFERENCE DATE/TIME:** | June 24, 2022. 8:30 a.m. local time. |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | By July 6, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. local time.  |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | July 19, 2022 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | By September 22, 2022 at 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** |
| There are a log of Maine laws and requirements, such as when we need to go out to referendum for approval. Will DOE provide assistance and guidance with these requirements? |
| **Answer** |
| All applications will require a letter of opinion from their legal counsel on how to address a referendum, as it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all State and local processes are followed. (***See Amendment #2 of the RFA***) It is the responsibility of all schools and districts to ensure they follow applicable state and federal guidelines. |

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| **2** | **Question** |
| If awarded the money will costs such as the engineering study be allowable? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, there is a budget line in the RFA for those costs. |

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| **3** | **Question** |
| Page 9 – priority given to projects aligned with planning documents… How much detail is needed? Do we need to become experts on all aspects in order to fill out the RFA application?  |
| **Answer** |
| Planning documents provided are to ensure you are aware of the requirements of the State for infrastructure projects when filling out your application. More detailed information on infrastructure will be asked for during the contract process. The larger the project, the more information regarding the planning documents should be presented. |

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| **4** | **Question** |
| What is the monetary threshold? Is there a cap? |
| **Answer** |
| No there is not a cap is in the RFA, however it does state that DOE is allowed to award partial RFA requests.  |

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| **5** | **Question** |
| Is there a time limit when the funds must be expended and project completed? We don’t always have control over timeline and supply. |
| **Answer** |
| Currently the obligation date is September 2024 and liquidation date is December 2024. |

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| **6** | **Question** |
| Would buying a property and a current building fall under this grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Schools may submit an application with these costs and determination on alignment to the requirements of the RFA will be determined on a case by case basis as it is not specifically listed in the allowable uses. The costs would be considered if the request meets the priorities of the RFA and increases opportunities for students to learn skills aligned with workforce needs. |

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| **7** | **Question** |
| Can you submit more than one application for different activities? |
| **Answer** |
| No. You can have more than one major activity within your RFA, but submission of only one RFA is allowed per school. |

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| **8** | **Question** |
| Do we need to go out to referendum before RFA is submitted or after award is given? |
| **Answer** |
| The RFA indicates award funds are pending referendum approval. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all State and Local referendum processes are followed. All schools/districts who believe their project does not require a referendum will be required to share, as part of their application, a letter of opinion from their legal counsel stating that the referendum is not needed, and why. (***See Amendment #2 of the RFA***)  |

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| **9** | **Question** |
| Will there be another Q&A after the July submission? |
| **Answer** |
| An amendment has been posted, and another Q&A has been added. (***See Amendment #1 of the RFA***)  |

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| **10** | **Question** |
| What is the total amount of the RFA? |
| **Answer** |
| As noted on page 3 of the RFA the amount to be dispersed is $15,140,000. |

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| **11** | **Question** |
| Are we allowed to ask anything outside of the Q&A process? |
| **Answer** |
| You are allowed to ask RFA process questions, but not questions relating to the content of your RFA application. |

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| **12** | **Question** |
| If we have already had engineer and work done and committed funds to a project can we request additional funds through this RFA? |
| **Answer** |
| These funds cannot supplant funding already committed to an infrastructure project. These funds would be allowed for an expansion of the project. |

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| **13** | **Question** |
| What is the required referendum process? |
| **Answer** |
| All applications will require a letter of opinion from their legal counsel on how to address a referendum, as it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all State and local processes are followed. (***See Amendment #2 of the RFA***)  |

***Submitted Written Questions and the Department’s Answers***

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

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | 1. Will the DOE be giving schools guidance on how to complete the steps required for the referendum process? |
| **Answer** |
| Per the Application, the DOE has provided materials guiding schools to relevant information. Individual schools should work with their school boards or other guiding coalitions to determine if and when, a referendum is needed. The DOE understands that this process differs based on region and SAU. All applications will require a letter of opinion from their legal counsel on how to address a referendum, as it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all State and local processes are followed. (***See Amendment #2 of the RFA***)  |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | According to Maine statute, the referendum process requires at least 30 days.  Will there be enough time after grant award notifications to complete this process before the November elections? |
| **Answer** |
| The DOE recommends that schools prepare their requests for referendum if they deem it necessary to do so. The DOE team will be seeking to have awards sent out by early October.All applications will require a letter of opinion from their legal counsel on how to address a referendum, as it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all State and local processes are followed. (***See Amendment #2 of the RFA***)  |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Will the DOE permit schools to have a June 2023 referendum? |
| **Answer** |
| Although this may be possible, the DOE reminds schools that this would delay your ability to begin any projects and that all monies must be spent by September of 2024. |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | The application states on page 16 that projects greater than $50,000 require a referendum.  What law is being referenced with that statement? |
| **Answer** |
| \*\*Page nine of the RFA points folks to Statute 15901\* All schools/districts who believe their project does not require a referendum will be required to share, as part of their application, a letter of opinion from their legal counsel stating that the referendum is not needed, and why.  |

***Q&A Summary continues next page***

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | We have a CTE building renovation project all planned out by an architect and the project has already gone out to bid.  Bids are due July 13 and a contractor will be chosen at that time. Hopefully, work will begin on the project by late summer.  The project includes interior insulating, sheetrocking, construction of interior classroom walls, as well as exterior, new doors and windows and new siding.  It includes plumbing, heating, ventilation, and wiring.  It will provide space for our Commercial Drivers License program, our Health Occupations, and Criminal Justice, as well as classrooms intended for future expansion.   The total project is about a $3,000,000 project, which when planning was begun about a year ago, it was about a third of that amount.  The school district, MSAD #37,  will have to borrow money in order to complete the project.1. What is the best way for us to apply for use of this infrastructure money to help out with that project?
2. Should we submit the whole project in the grant, knowing that only a portion would be funded?
3. Should we take a portion of the project, say, the three areas that will immediately be used by our programs, and submit that as a plan?
4. Or should we use a portion of the project costs, say the heating, plumbing, and electrical and submit that?"
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. When filling out your budget, indicate which pieces will be funded by the grant application, and which pieces by outside funding and what that funding will be.
2. This is possible, but we wish to remind schools and districts that if you have already secured funding for some of the project, you cannot supplant existing funding with this grant award.
3. If these areas meet the requirements and recommendations above, this is one way to submit as a plan.
4. If these areas meet the requirements and recommendations above, this is one way to submit as a plan.

**\*\* any part of the project that is being considered for these federal funds, must meet all federal requirements, such as Davis-Bacon wages. Please refer to pg. 9 of the RFA.** |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | On Page 7 – What is the “Name of Application”? |
| **Answer** |
| The name of your project. Ie: “\_\_\_\_ technical center’s welding class renovation” |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | If we do not make the deadline for the November Election – Is it possible to take this to referendum next June? Not sure the timing of notification will allow time to prepare for multiple towns – and piggy backing on a scheduled vote will save money for sure |
| **Answer** |
| Although this may be possible, the DOE reminds schools that this would delay your ability to begin any projects and that all monies must be spent by September of 2024.\* All schools/districts who believe their project does not require a referendum will be required to share, as part of their application, a letter of opinion from their legal counsel stating that the referendum is not needed, and why. |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Would the addition of a bay/shop area for maintenance on our heavy equipment – skidders-bucket loader-backhoe etc. be an acceptable project for these funds? |
| **Answer** |
| If the project meets all the qualifications and standards listed in the application, this project would be considered. |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can a storage facility be built using these funds? |
| **Answer** |
| If the project meets all the qualifications and standards listed in the application, this project would be considered. |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Is the $50,000 a mistake? I thought I read the 600 sq. feet was still correct but that the $50,000 was taken out – So if someone’s project is say 575 sq. feet but costs $72,000 to complete – this would NOT have to go out to referendum – True? False? |
| **Answer** |
| This statute, as far as we can determine, still exists under statute. However All schools/districts who believe their project does not require a referendum will be required to share, as part of their application, a letter of opinion from their legal counsel stating that the referendum is not needed, and why. |