**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFA AMENDMENT # 1 AND**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY #2**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202211187 First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program Pilot Sites Grant Funding Opportunity |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS ROUND #2 DUE DATE:** | March 27, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **AMENDMENT AND QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ROUND #2 ISSUED:** | March 31, 2023 |
| **APPLICATION DUE DATE:** | April 10, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **APPLICATIONS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |
| **Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFA remain unchanged.** | |
| DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFA:   1. Part I, E. Contract Terms is revised. 2. First 4 ME Program Overview is revised. 3. First 4 ME Program Goals is revised | |
| REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFA:   1. *Part I, E. Contract Terms – the term of the anticipated contracts is replaced with:*   The Department anticipates issuing awards for a contract period beginning as early as July 2023 and ending December 2024, with the possibility of a one (1) year renewal, if approved by the Department. Contract periods may vary based on the time each application is received and scored by the Department and the Department’s ability to fully execute each contract.   1. *First 4 ME Program Overview document is replaced in entirety:*      1. *First 4 ME Program Goals document is replaced in entirety:* | |

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

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| N/A | Can program incentives be related to the following:   1. Classroom/site repairs and/or maintenance (improve health & safety of location)? 2. Enhance quality programming (curriculum, supplies)? 3. Pay for further education / training of staff? |
| **Answer** | |
| 1. Program funds may not be utilized for the purchase or improvement of land, or for the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or facility. However, funds may be utilized for minor remodeling and for upgrading child care facilities to ensure that providers meet State and local child care standards, including applicable health and safety requirements, as approved by the Department. 2. Funds may be used to enhance quality programming embedded into daily activities and programming including curriculum and supplies. 3. Program funds may be used for further education / training of staff including school aged (i.e., shared professional development with School Administrative Unit’s early childhood educators). | |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Will answers be given as they are asked, or do we have to wait until the Round #2 closes to get our answer? |
| **Answer** | |
| Round #1 questions are available at the Division for Procurement Services, [Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) under RFA 202211187 [Q&A Summary #1 Revised](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/sites/maine.gov.dafs.bbm.procurementservices/files/inline-files/RFA%20202211187%20QA%20Summary%20Round%201-%20Revised.docx). Round #2 questions will be responded to collectively and posted at the Division of Procurement Services, Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the applications due date. | |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Would this RFA consider a regional approach? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, organizations under a parent umbrella must submit an individual application and budget as the Community Contractor within their unique community. Each application will be scored independently as outlined in the RFA. | |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Our city has a new cooperative designation for a newly licensed, culturally sensitive, child care program and would like to be part of First4ME. This child care program is made up of three (3) separately licensed providers under one "roof.” Are these licensed providers considered three (3) Community Providers? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, so long as the three (3) Child Care Providers have entered into a contract with the Community Contractor to provide services as part of the Project. The Community Contractor must submit Letters of Interest from each Community Provider they intend to have participate in the Project. | |

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can child care programs currently working on getting licensed be considered in our planning for Year 2? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, child care programs currently working on getting licensed will be considered in year two (Y2) and/or three (Y3). The three (3) year budget and action plan must reflect the additional proposed providers in Y2 and/or Y3) if applicable to the catchment area. Child Care Providers must be licensed in order to participate in the Project. | |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Should the Budget for Year 1 just go from May-December 2022? |
| **Answer** | |
| No, Applicants must submit a budget for a thirty-six (36) months period. The Budget Form allows for Applicants to provide a budget breakdown for each year (12 month period). | |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | 1. Will the state be paying for the Teaching Strategy Gold training and portfolios? 2. If so, will it be on-line? 3. How many hours will it be? |
| **Answer** | |
| 1. Yes. 2. Yes. 3. Training will be specific to the tool. The Department will work with the awarded Applicant on timeline, expectations, and training schedule for required tools. | |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | 1. Will the Department be providing ASQ training on-line? 2. If so, how many hours will it be? |
| **Answer** | |
| 1. Yes. 2. Training will be specific to the tool. The Department will work with the awarded Applicant on timeline, expectations, and training schedule for required tools. | |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Will the Department be developing “climate surveys” for families and providers, or do those need to be developed by the Pilot Site? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department will collaborate with its evaluation partners for climate survey development and creation and consult with Project sites for survey delivery. | |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Objective 2B on the first Program Goals page, does not match Objective 2B on page 3. Is the one on page 3 the one we should use? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please use Objective 2B listed on page 3: “Provide intensive support to child care providers as a vital presence in the community and raise quality across the mixed delivery system of care to increase family choice.” | |

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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | When will the pilot sites be chosen? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department anticipates notification of conditional awards to be issued early to mid-May 2023. | |

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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | If a good candidate for the Community Coach applies who does not have a bachelor’s degree, but has some college in ECE and Human Services and lots of relevant experience, can they be considered? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **13** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Will there be standard partnership agreements provided as reference in Appendix C, Year 1, Number 2? |
| **Answer** | |
| The Department will provide onboarding resource documents to awarded Applicants. | |

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| **14** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Will there be a required statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) Tool to be implemented by grant recipient? |
| **Answer** | |
| There will be a universal tool used across all Project sites for kindergarten entry as part of this pilot. Training will be provided by the Department. | |

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| **15** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can local coalitions add additional eligibility requirements for student participants based on community need? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. However, the pilot shall prioritize children and families having experienced or experiencing hardship (At Risk). Inclusive practices are highly encouraged. | |

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| **16** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Can SAUs who are licensed as child care providers for before and after care participate as child care programs in the First 4 ME pilot program? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. However, the eligible Participants in the before and after school program must include any child ages birth to five (5) not yet enrolled in kindergarten. | |

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| **17** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | 1. Is CLASS required of all child care program participants? 2. Are family childcare programs expected to participate in CLASS? 3. If so, how? (Our understanding is that it is not designed for family child care settings.) |
| **Answer** | |
| 1. Yes. 2. Yes. 3. The Department will work with the awarded Applicants on how to utilize CLASS based on the specific child care programming. | |

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| **18** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Is Teaching Strategies Gold required of all child care program participants? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. | |

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| **19** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Is there a specific KEA required of participants? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. The KEA tool will be conducted through teaching strategies. Training will be provided by the Department to Project sites. Applicants do not need to include funding for KEA training in the Project budget. | |

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| **20** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | 1. Is the state providing the KEA? 2. Will technical assistance be included? 3. What will the KEA implementation requirements for pilot sites include, staffing, etc.? |
| **Answer** | |
| 1. Yes. 2. Yes. 3. Kindergarten Entry Assessment training will be provided. Funding does not need to be included in the site budgets. Kindergarten Entry will be conducted for First4ME participants at the end of care with child care providers. Collaboration with local SAU’s is necessary for comparison. | |

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| **21** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | Is there a specific developmental screening tool required of participants? |
| **Answer** | |
| The screening tool that will be used in the pilot Project is the Ages & Stages, third edition (ASQ-3) and Ages & Stages Social Emotional, second edition (ASQ SE-2). Training will be provided for ASQ-online. | |

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| **22** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | What defines "intentional transition activities"? |
| **Answer** | |
| Intentional transition activities include any system adjustments or activities directly related to the transition of children into the school setting up to twelve (12) months prior to the transition and three (3) month post transition. Intentional transition activities may include but are not limited to: field trips or visitations by future or previous teachers, family nights, portfolio construction and review, child planning meetings, communication pathways, enrollment systems, family education and outreach, open houses or special events. Considerations shall be given to scheduled transitions such as Pre-K or K enrollment, as well as unscheduled transitions such as families that move into the area, transition, homeless, or specific placement for system readiness. | |

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| **23** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
|  | What defines "transition plan"? |
| **Answer** | |
| Transition plans are documented plans that address system adjustments or activities directly related to the intentional transition of children into the school setting up to twelve (12) months prior to the transition and three (3) month post transition. The goal of the transition team is to identify current practice, enhance communication and intentional transitions for children and families for scheduled transitions such as Pre-K or K enrollment, as well as unscheduled transitions such as families that move into the area, transition, homeless or specific placement for system readiness. Considerations shall be made to individual child transitions and broader systemic transition plans and activities. | |