**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Economic & Community Development**



**RFA# 202304095**

**Rural Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant Program**

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| **Grant Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Ben Sturtevant **Title:** RFA Coordinator**Contact Information:** ben.sturtevant@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** May 8, 2023 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application****Submission** | *Proposals must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** May 17, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Proposals must be submitted electronically to the following address:***Electronic (e-mail) Submission Address:** Proposals@maine.gov |

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFA, shall have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| DECD | Department of Economic and Community Development |
| RFA | Request for Application  |
| State | State of Maine |
| Economic Development Organization (EDO)  | EDOs are entities, typically public and often a unit of government, that are generally established to assist existing and new businesses located in a particular geographic area through a variety of activities including grants, loans, provision of information and expertise, or creation of industrial parks. EDOs may also offer resources for starting a business, relocating your business, obtaining business licenses and permits, and information on job resources and workforce development. |

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**APPLICATION DETAILS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Purpose and Background**

The Rural Workforce Recruitment and Retention Grant Program will provide funding to support the attraction of workforce and talent to four of Maine’s rural counties that have experienced significant population decline or stagnation. Aroostook, Washington, Somerset, and Piscataquis counties represent over 52% of Maine’s land but just 12% of population. These counties have experienced a 13% decline in population over the last 30 years and as populations continue to age out of the workforce and young residents continue to seek opportunity outside these counties, there is significant demand to attract and retain qualified workers to these counties.

The four counties listed above are rich in forests, fertile soil, and abundant fisheries. Each has a proud history contributing to the state’s economy and providing quality jobs to generations of Mainers. This grant program is intended to provide funds in 2023 to Economic Development Organizations that represent the four counties above to engage in workforce attraction activities such as marketing and outreach to strategic partners and local businesses.

1. **Eligibility to Submit Applications**

Applicants must be a certified economic development organization (EDO) that services Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset, or Washington counties. EDOs may collaborate on an application. Grants will be awarded for a maximum of $100,000 per county. More than one EDO may be a Grantee for a county they service, but only if they submit a joint application. Grants may be used over a two-year period starting upon contract date. EDOs will be required to provide 1:1 matching funds (in-kind match eligible).

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

1. **Contract Terms**

Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be conditionally awarded a contract for up to a two (2) year period. The period of performance is anticipated to be June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025. The Department reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with an awarded Bidder who submits a proposed contract significantly different from the proposal they submitted in response to the advertised RFA.

1. **Reporting Requirements**

Semi-annual reports due on January 1 and July 1 are due to the Department. Reports to include:

* Summary of activity
* Summary of expenses
* Budget breakdown
* Changes to original application/intended use of funds
* Update on target metrics

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**KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

1. **Submitting Questions**

Any questions must be submitted by e-mail to the Grant Coordinator identified on the [Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) by May 8, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: “RFA# 202304095 Questions”. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

1. **Question & Answer Summary**

Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). 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.

1. **Amendments to the Request for Applications**

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Applications will be posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

1. **Application Submission**
	1. **Applications Due**: Applications must be received by May 17, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Applications received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be ineligible for award consideration for that annual application enrollment period.
	2. **Submission Instructions**: Applications are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via email, to Proposals@maine.gov.
		1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipts.
		2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail applications that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
		3. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
		4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files separately across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time listed above.
		5. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission: “**RFA# 202304095 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”**
		6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or WORD file and must include pages 9-12 of this RFA document.

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**APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. Scoring Weights and Process
	1. Scoring Weights: The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Part 1 – Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Part 2 – Applicant Experience | 20 |
| Part 3 – Program Design | 30 |
| Part 4 – Intended Outputs & Outcomes | 20 |
| Part 5 – Project Sustainability  | 10 |
| Part 6 – Budget & Narrative | 20 |
| **Total Points**  | **100 points** |

* 1. Scoring Process: The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.
	2. Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the Grant Review Team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks & budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, along with the amount and quality of proposed matching funds or services.

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**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

***Handwritten applications will not be accepted.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant’s Organization Name: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Tel: | Click or tap here to enter text. | E-mail: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Headquarters’ Street Address: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Headquarters’ City/State/Zip | Click or tap here to enter text. |
|  |
| Point of Contact for Application (Name and Title) | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Tel: | Click or tap here to enter text. | E-mail: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Headquarters’ Street Address: | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Headquarters’ City/State/Zip | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Dollar Amount of Application: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

* No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Applicant’s application.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting agreement with the Department should they be awarded a contract.
* The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

*To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed application, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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**DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

*By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals and any subcontractors named in this proposal:*

1. *Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
2. *Have not within three years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
	1. *Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state, or local government transaction or contract.*
	2. *Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.*
3. *Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification.*
4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
5. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the Applicant’s application, at the discretion of the Department.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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**APPLICATION**

The Applicant is asked to be brief and concise in providing written information required in the application.

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| --- |
| **Eligibility**Attach proof of certification as an economic development organization (EDO) that services Aroostook, Piscataquis, Somerset, or Washington counties. |
| **Project Title** Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less. |
|  |
| **Duration of Project**  |
| Start Date:  | End Date:  |
| **Overview of the Program** Describe the general overview of the program, including program design. |
|  |
| **Identification of Need**Describe the needs the project identifies, including intended outputs and outcomes.  |
|  |
| **Project Description** Please provide a summary of the project you are proposing in order to address the identified needs, including project sustainability.  |
|  |
| **Applicant Experience** Please provide information about your organization’s experience with managing grants and any applicable workforce development and attraction background. |
|  |
| **Project Budget** The budget must include your overall projected expenses for the proposed project/program.  |
| Budget Category | Amount Requested | Explanation of expense |
| Personnel (salary and benefits) |  |  |
| Instructional materials and supplies |  |  |
| Non-instructional materials and supplies |  |  |
| Contracted services |  |  |
| Technology access |  |  |
| Transportation |  |  |
| Other (specify) |  |  |
| Other (specify) |  |  |
| TOTAL REQUEST |  |  |
| Budget Narrative (one page maximum)In the space below, please provide a detailed explanation of your anticipated grant-supported expenses in each of the above budget categories.  |