**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFP #202306123, Housing Opportunity Service Provider Grants |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Department of Economic and Community Development |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | July 17, 2023 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | July 20, 2023 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | August 15, 2023 (as amended) |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov  |

**The recording of the Informational Session held on July 10, 2023 is linked below.**

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/rec/play/KEafLLP6saSiSWG9fUvzC1PcT612RMThH8v_R2OYSYJTLa-EeHhnBj-exmeAKI2x26OGc9LhICLIwxjW.GVA06iBMwmPfCBfX?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&continueMode=true&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fmainestate.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2FWbQRbfXZZwerkM7-O4WupoRQZ3WN5kt9tNxLzf9EfprtxPir6ULGLF5LCQ48ygOy.oKt0J9bRUDatikJP>

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

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section A, Page 7 | Our Town is interested in developing a spatial based buildout scenario to assess impacts, infrastructure needs, and so on. Under this service provider grant, would it be permissible for us, The Town, to seek a service provider to apply to conduct this project for us? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. A town may ask a service provider to apply for this grant to develop a spatial based buildout scenario to assess impacts and infrastructure needs, as along as the service provider has the capacity and experience to provide this service, which is determined upon evaluation according to the criteria defined in the RFA.  |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section E, Page 6 | What is the grant timeline for expending these funds? It might be helpful to have language complete/nearing completion when developing a build out scenario. |
| **Answer** |
| Section E of the RFP, under Application Details and Instructions, provides that “[a]pplicants awarded through this RFA process will be awarded a contract for up to a 3-year period. Applicants will initially be awarded funding for twelve (12) months, with an option to extend for the remainder of the period.” Additional detail about the contract terms will be determined during the contracting process, following notification of grant award.  |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section C, Page 8 | Can in-kind be provided by municipal staff time if working with service provider? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section C, Page 8 | If a town is not included in our application, but later asks for assistance with housing, can we use these funds to aid them? Will every single community need to provide a letter of support? Can we define a scope of work for few towns but have the opportunity to help other municipalities in the future should they need it? |
| **Answer** |
| If a town is not included in the grant application, a service provider may not use grants funds to support that town with housing needs. A service provider must include a letter of support from each municipality interested in receiving services with its application.  |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section A, Page 7 | If a service provider is interested in providing three separate projects to different towns, should it send in three separate applications, or just one?  |
| **Answer** |
| A service provider must request funding for multiple projects in one application.  |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section A, Page 7 | Activities and Requirements – Section A. Desired Outcomes lists several items. Are service providers expected to provide ALL of these services to each community they work with? |
| **Answer** |
| No. Service providers are not required to provide all of the listed desired outcomes to each municipality they work with.  |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | Is the maximum award still $75,000, regardless of how many communities the service provider intends to work with? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. The maximum award is $75,000 regardless of how many communities the service provider intends to work with.  |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | Is there a minimum grant amount? |
| **Answer** |
| No.  |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | Is there a minimum or maximum number of communities service providers are expected to work with to receive the $75,000 award? |
| **Answer** |
| No. There is not a minimum or maximum number of communities a service provider must work with to receive an award.  |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | What is the overall funding amount that is available for distribution through this opportunity? |
| **Answer** |
| The Department allocated approximately one million dollars for this grant.  |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | How many awards does the agency anticipate making? |
| **Answer** |
| The Department anticipates making multiple awards. The number of awards granted to service providers depends on the number of applications received and available funds.  |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section B, Page 7; Amendment #1 | Based on the amendment B.2.- regarding Prohibition on Funds, detailed during the July 10th informational session, is it correct that Regional Planning Organizations, such as Councils of Government cannot apply for grant funding to assist any municipality with ordinance development if that municipality has zoning districts? Does this include mandatory Shoreland Zoning districts, or does it just apply to zoning above and beyond mandatory Shoreland Zoning? |
| **Answer** |
| This amendment prohibits the use of awarded funds to provide PL 2021, Ch. 672 (LD 2003) ordinance development services to a municipality if that municipality is eligible to receive or has received a municipal payment from the Department pursuant to the [Department’s Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule](https://www.maine.gov/decd/housingopportunityprogram) for PL 2021, ch. 672. A service provider may not use awarded grant funds to provide LD 2003 ordinance development services to a municipality that has zoning because they are eligible to receive funds from the Department’s Municipal Payments Distribution Schedule. Municipalities that have **only** shoreland zoning, and not townwide zoning, may ask a service provider to use awarded grant funds to provide LD 2003 ordinance development services.  |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Sections A and B Page 7; Amendment #1 | If this prohibition applies to communities that have mandatory Shoreland Zoning districts, can a Regional Planning Organization, such as Councils of Government, apply for grant funding to provide assistance to these municipalities for expenses that are not associated with municipal ordinance development? For example, mapping, comprehensive plan review, master planning, identifying housing and land use priorities, assessing infrastructure upgrades, assessing future housing needs, assessing feasibility of potential sites, and facilitating regional housing needs assessments. |
| **Answer** |
| The prohibition listed in Amendment #1 does not apply to municipalities that **only** have shoreland zoning districts. The Amendment #1 prohibition, however, does apply to municipalities that have townwide zoning. A service provider may use grant funds to assist a municipality that has townwide zoning and/or shoreland zoning with the following services (1) mapping; (2) comprehensive plan review; (3) master planning; (4) identifying housing and land use priorities; (5) assessment of infrastructure; (6) assessment of future housing needs; (7) assessment of potential sites; and (8) facilitation of regional housing needs assessment.  |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section E, Page 6 | The RFA states “Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be awarded a contract for up to a 3-year period. Applicants will initially be awarded funding for twelve (12) months, with an option to extend for the remainder of the grant period.” Should the scope of work and budget reflect this three-year period or only a one-year period? |
| **Answer** |
| The scope of work must reflect the initial twelve-month period. The contract, however, can be extended up to an additional two years beyond the initial period, if needed.  |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section C, Page 8  | If a service provider is looking to provide assistance countywide, is a letter of support from county commissioners sufficient or should a letter from every municipality in the county be submitted? |
| **Answer** |
| A letter of support must be provided from each municipality interested in receiving services under the grant.  |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section B, Page 7; Amendment #1 | Will you please clarify the RFP Amendment 1 language that states: “Awarded grant funds may not be used by a service provider to provide PL 2021, Ch. 672 (LD 2003) ordinance development services to a municipality if that municipality is eligible to receive or has received a municipal payment from the Department pursuant to the Department’s Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule for PL 2021, ch 672”? It was my understanding that part of the original intent of this funding opportunity was to allow service providers to provide capacity to municipalities as they prepare ordinance updates to implement LD2003 requirements. That appears to no longer be allowed as part of this RFA as any municipality eligible to receive funding under the Municipal Payment cannot use a service provider to assist with LD 2003 implementation (regardless of whether or not they receive a payment). |
| **Answer** |
| The amendment regarding prohibition of funds prohibits the use of awarded funds to provide PL 2021, Ch. 672 (LD 2003) ordinance development services to a municipality if that municipality is eligible to receive or has received a municipal payment from the Department pursuant to the [Department’s Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule](https://www.maine.gov/decd/housingopportunityprogram) for PL 2021, ch. 672.The Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule details eligibility requirements for the program. The intent behind this prohibition was to ensure that municipalities were not receiving both financial assistance from the municipal payments and from this grant program to comply with PL 2021, ch. 672. A municipality that receives funding (or is eligible to receive funding) from the Department through the municipal payments received via the Department’s Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule **may not** ask a service provider to use Service Provider Grant funds awarded through this RFA to provide LD 2003 ordinance development services. This grant does not prohibit, however, a municipality from using the funds received from the Department’s Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule to ask a service provider for LD 2003 assistance—however, this transaction must be separate from the Service Provider Grants. Municipalities that **are not** eligible for the Department’s funding pursuant to the Municipal Payment Distribution Schedule (meaning municipalities without zoning) may ask a service provider for assistance with LD 2003 compliance via this grant. |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Sections A and B, Page 7 | If funding cannot be used for LD2003 ordinance development, can the service provider budget funds for LD 2003 education. For example, workshops, meetings with planning boards, etc. to discuss the purpose, intent, and requirements of LD 2003 prior to their own internal ordinance development process? |
| **Answer** |
| For municipalities with or without zoning, a service provider may use grant funds to: (1) host preliminary discussions, workshops, and charrettes on LD 2003; and (2) create general LD 2003 educational materials. For municipalities without zoning, funding provided through this grant may be used to support LD 2003 ordinance development work, beyond preliminary discussions.  |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | Is there a determined date for when applicants will be notified regarding whether funding has or has not been granted to them? |
| **Answer** |
| The Department anticipates notifying applicants of awards in September, though the duration of the evaluation is not pre-determined and may concluded before or after the aforementioned timeframe.  |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Application Details and Instructions, Section D, Page 5 | Is there a determined date for when funds will be allocated? If funding is granted.  |
| **Answer** |
| There is not a determined date for when funds will be allocated. Following notification of awards, the Department will contact the applicant to negotiate a contract.  |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section C, Pages 7-8 | Is there a minimum length or a page limitation for the grant application? |
| **Answer** |
| No. There is not a minimum or maximum length for the grant application.  |

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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Section C, Page 8 | May multiple municipalities/partners sign one letter of support? Or is it required that each municipality/partner sign and submit their own individual letter? |
| **Answer** |
| An applicant must submit a letter of support from each individual municipality.  |