**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**

*Maine Forest Service*



**RFA#** **202310213**

**Browntail Moth Mitigation Assistance Grant**

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| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Thomas Schmeelk **Title:** Forest Entomologist  **Contact Information:** [ForestHealth@maine.gov](mailto:ForestHealth@maine.gov) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:* **Date:** October 20, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application Submission** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services via email by:* **Submission Deadline:** November 1, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.  *Applications must be submitted electronically to the following address:* **Electronic (e-mail) Submission Address:** [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

**State of Maine - Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**

**RFA#** **202310213**

**Browntail Moth Mitigation Assistance Grant**

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# **PART I: APPLICATION DETAILS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

## Purpose and Background

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Forest Service (Department) is seeking grant applications from government entities or nonprofit organizations, which, if approved, will receive funding from the Browntail Moth Mitigation Assistance Grant Program as defined in this Request for Applications document. This document provides application instructions, the procedure and criteria for reviewing applications and selecting, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the selected awardees.

Pursuant to [12 M.R.S. § 8321](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/12/title12sec8321.html), The Browntail Moth Mitigation Fund was established to provide funding to government entities or nonprofit organizations to assist with reducing impacts from browntail moths. The fund can support activities that use mechanical, cultural, or chemical control methods; education campaigns; and other techniques to reduce browntail moth impacts.

Beginning in 2015, Maine has seen a considerable rise in the population of [browntail moth](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm). A chief concern arising from this is the impact of the caterpillars’ venomous hairs on human health. Sensitive individuals exposed to the hairs may experience a rash, respiratory issues, or other symptoms. Some serious implications of the rise in browntail populations include, but are not limited to, school children being exposed to the toxic hairs on playgrounds and sports fields, lost revenue as travelers begin to avoid vacationing in Maine during peak tourist seasons, and long-lasting tree defoliation and branch dieback in our forests. This fund exists to provide financial support to reduce these impacts.

## Overview of the Grant Opportunity

This grant opportunity is open to government entities and nonprofit organizations engaged in or wishing to engage in activities to reduce the impacts from browntail moth. Government entities and nonprofit organizations in areas of Maine with significant browntail moth populations are eligible to apply for mitigation funds.

Proposed projects are expected to contain a complete and itemized budget that is clear and realistic for the activities that will be undertaken. Each project should also have realistic, clearly stated project goals and deliverables keeping in mind the timeline of the project as well as the lifecycle of browntail moth.

The Department encourages Applicants use a multi-pronged, creative approach that is in keeping with the principles of integrated pest management. This approach may include browntail moth exposure mitigation through appropriate use of physical controls such as web clipping, pesticide treatments (injections, spraying), cultural controls (planting non host trees etc.), education, or a combination of the former.

To reduce browntail moth impacts, it is crucial to get the community engaged in mitigation activities. Proposed projects should foster community engagement in additional browntail moth mitigation. The Department also requires clear identification of the project coordinator and of the qualifications of those who will conduct work where applicable.

The funding appropriated for this RFA will expire in June of 2024. The Department anticipates that most projects will be completed within one (1) year.

## General Provisions

1. From the time the RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator, identified on the cover page of this RFA. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State’s discretion.
2. Issuance of the RFA does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a response to the RFA. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
3. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to the RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the proposal, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating an Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. The proposal must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFA and the awarded Applicant’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFA will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. §§ 401](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to the RFA.
9. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, are included by this reference. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

## Eligibility to Submit Applications

Government entities and nonprofit organizations engaged in or wishing to engage in activities to reduce the impacts from browntail moth in areas of Maine with significant browntail moth populations are eligible to apply for mitigation funds. Towns and nonprofit organizations who previously applied to the Browntail Moth Mitigation Fund grant opportunity and were awarded under RFP# 202303052 are not eligible to apply for this second round of funding.

## Eligible Activities & Geographic Areas

Applications for this grant must outline eligible browntail moth mitigation activities (outlined below) in the geographical areas of Maine with significant populations of browntail moth as identified by the forest health and monitoring division of the Department (please see posting on the [division website](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_info.htm)). Additional geographic areas may be considered at the discretion of the Grant Review Committee upon confirming significant populations upon request by an applicant.

Eligible activities are those that may help reduce the impacts of browntail moth activities that support or implement:

1. Physical controls such as removal and destruction of overwintering webs,
2. Pesticide treatments in accordance with the Maine Board of Pesticides Control regulations,
3. Cultural controls such as taking actions to limit exposure, reduce habitat or attraction, and
4. Education that fosters continued community engagement in browntail moth population reduction and awareness beyond the immediate mitigation measures taken.
5. A combination of activities 1 through 4 above.

## Ineligible Activities

Ineligible activities are those that do not effectively help to reduce the impacts of browntail moth. The following are activities that are not eligible for reimbursement:

1. **Pesticide treatments of caterpillars after the end of May are not recommended and are not eligible for reimbursement by this fund**. Caterpillars in late May and June are large and have already defoliated many of the trees at this time of year. Treatment will not mitigate hair activity as the caterpillar hairs will already be abundant in areas with infestations. Further, caterpillars wander from tree to tree and hitchhike to new areas during this time period, therefore, pesticide treatments after the end of May would not be effective.
2. Pesticide treatment (ovicide/adulticide) of BTM egg masses or adults should not be conducted and will not be reimbursed by this fund.
3. Clipping and destruction of winter webs after the first full week of April is not recommended and will not be reimbursed by this fund. In early April, caterpillars begin re-emerging from their webs, therefore, clipping winter webs after this time may not be removing caterpillars from the environment and may also lead to increased risk of contact with hairs.
4. Light trapping of adults is not recommended and will not be reimbursed by this fund. Adult browntail moths are highly attracted to light sources; although a light trap may kill some adults, it attracts more adults to an area with no guarantee of mortality.

## Contract Term

1. The dates below are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, in order to comply with all procedural requirements associated with this Request for Applications and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract. The term of the anticipated contract resulting from this RFA is defined as follows:

|  |  |  |
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| **Period** | **Start Date** | **End Date** |
| Period of Performance | December 1, 2023 | June 30, 2024 |

1. Grant recipients will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with appropriate Riders as determined by the Department. The complete set of standard State of Maine Service Contract documents, along with other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State, may be found on the Division of Procurement Services’ website at the following link: [Division of Procurement](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms) [Services Forms Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms).
2. **Pre-Award Costs:** The Department is not liable for any cost incurred by the grantee or any subcontractor(s) prior to the effective date of the contract. The Department cannot authorize any payments for work completed prior to the effective date of a fully executed contract.

## Number of Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of the RFA process. An entity may submit applications for more than one project, provided the projects are clearly distinct. Funding for this program was allocated in the state supplemental budget. Up to $35,448 in total funding is available. The number and size of awards will be determined based on the applications received and according to best value to the State. Partial funding of proposals may be offered.

## Chapter 35: Browntail Moth Mitigation Fund

Rules pertaining to this fund are found in [Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Forest Service](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/01/chaps01.htm#669) rules [Chapter 35](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/01/669/669c035.docx).

# **PART II: KEY RFA EVENTS & DETAILS**

## Questions

* 1. **General Instructions:** Applicants and other interested parties have the responsibility to examine the entire RFA and seek clarification, in writing to the RFA Coordinator, identified on the cover page of this RFA, if they do not understand any information or instructions. Failure to comply with these instructions will result in disqualification of an application.
     1. Applicants and other interested parties that have questions should use **Appendix B** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document (.doc or .docx).
     2. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFA Coordinator, identified on the cover page of this RFA, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
     3. Submitted Questions **must include the RFA Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail**. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
  2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date: [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.

## Amendments

All amendments (if any) released in regard to the RFA will also 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.

## Advertisement of RFA

## This RFA will be advertised three (3) consecutive days in the Kennebec Journal starting on October 12, 2023. It will also be advertised via press release, an email advertisement to subscribers of DACF browntail moth and insect and disease conditions updates, and on the Maine Forest Service browntail moth website.

## Application Submission

* 1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received via email no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFA. E-mails containing original proposal submissions, or any additional or revised proposal files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be rejected without exception.
  2. **Delivery Instructions:** Applications must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov).
     1. Only proposal submissions received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
        1. Proposal submission e-mails that are successfully received by the [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.
     2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail proposal submissions 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 e-mail proposal submission: **“RFA# 202310213 Proposal Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”**
  3. **Application Contents**
     1. Applications must submitted in PDF or WORD format only. No other formats will be accepted.
     2. **Applications must include the completed items below**:
        1. Application Cover page (p.12)
        2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form (p.13)
        3. Application Form (p. 14-15)

# **PART III: APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

Evaluation of the submitted applications will be accomplished as follows:

## Evaluation Process - General Information

A Grant Review Committee consistent with Chapter 35 rules will be assembled to review applications for eligibility and score eligible applications based on the scoring criteria (listed below). [Rule Chapters for the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.maine.gov%2Fsos%2Fcec%2Frules%2F01%2Fchaps01.htm%23669&data=05%7C01%7CThomas.Schmeelk%40maine.gov%7C6161fe79362e439facf008db200bb0b0%7C413fa8ab207d4b629bcdea1a8f2f864e%7C0%7C0%7C638139006821694493%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=z4S%2FJX3GaXdJjnfpqpP73kmxmbUYMsq7ehrJSJZbO%2B8%3D&reserved=0)

1. Officials responsible for making decisions on the selection of project applications shall ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that the grant is awarded to the Applicants whose applications best satisfy the criteria of the Request for Applications at a reasonable/competitive cost.
2. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants if needed to obtain clarification of information contained in the Applications received, and the Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Interviews/presentations are not required, and changes to applications by Applicants will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process. Therefore, Applicants should submit applications that present their proposed budget and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.

## 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 proposal meets the following criteria. Only applications from eligible entities that clearly address mitigation of impacts in eligible areas will be considered.

|  |  |
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| **Scoring Criteria** | **Maximum Points Available** |
| Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| A complete and itemized budget that is clear and realistic. | 25 points |
| Realistic, clearly stated project goals, objectives timeline, and deliverables (quantifiable when possible). | 20 points |
| Evidence that the proposed project will provide an impact regarding browntail moth exposure mitigation through **appropriate** use of physical controls, pesticide treatments, cultural controls, education, or a combination of the former. | 15 points |
| Demonstration that the project will foster additional community engagement in browntail moth mitigation. | 15 points |
| Adherence to the [principles of integrated pest management](https://www.northeastipm.org/ipm-in-action/what-is-ipm/). | 15 points |
| Clear identification of who will coordinate the work, their qualifications, and the qualifications of those who will conduct work where applicable. | 10 points |
| **Total Points** | **100 points** |

1. **Scoring Process:** The Grant Review Committee will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the committee team will not score these sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus regarding assignment of points for each of those sections.
2. Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the Grant Review Committee 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 and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, and whether the project is likely to foster continued community engagement in browntail moth beyond the immediate mitigation measures taken.

## Selection and Award

1. The Grant Review Committee will provide recommendations of award(s) to the State Procurement Review Committee for final approval.
2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
3. Issuance of the RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFA, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.
4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to make multiple awards.

## Negotiations: The Department reserves the right to negotiate with the awarded Applicants to finalize a contract. Such negotiations may not significantly vary the content, nature or requirements of the application or the Department’s Request for Application to an extent that may affect the price of goods or services requested. The Department reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with an awarded Applicant who submits a proposed contract significantly different from the proposal they submitted in response to the advertised RFA. In the event that an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the Applicant, the Department may withdraw its award. Alternatively, the Department may cancel the RFA, at its sole discretion.

## Contract Administration: Grant recipients will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with appropriate Riders as determined by the Department.

The complete set of standard State of Maine Service Contract documents, along with other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State, may be found on the Division of Procurement Services’ website at the following link: [Division of Procurement Service Forms Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms).

The actual contract effective date depends upon the date of formal award notification, length of contract preparation, and approval by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. **The Department is not liable for any cost incurred by the grantee or any subcontractor(s) prior to the effective date of the contract and cannot authorize any payments for work completed prior to the effective date of a fully executed contract.**

## 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.

**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

**Handwritten Applications Will Not Be Accepted**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| **Name of Application:** | | 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. | |
| ***Provide information requested below if different from above*** | | | |
| **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.
* The application is signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
* 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.

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| **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. |

## DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE AND NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION

|  |  |
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| **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.**

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| **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. |

## APPLICATION FORM

The Grant Review Committee will be looking for projects that will **provide a reduction in browntail moth exposure through appropriate use of physical controls, pesticide treatments in accordance to Maine laws, cultural controls, education or a combination of these approaches** **with realistic and clear goals, timelines, and deliverables that will foster additional community engagement in mitigation**.

Adherence to principles of integrated pest management, clear identification of who will work on the project and a complete and realistic budget are expected.

Use additional space as needed.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Title** *This should match the title in your application cover page.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Overview of Project***Provide a brief overview of the project.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Eligibility Requirements** *Include a copy of business license/proof of non-profit status etc.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Geographic Area of the Project***Must include area eligible for application.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Project Goals***Clearly state the goals for this proposal*. | | |
|  | | |
| **Activities***Clearly state what activities will be undertaken.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Project Timeline***Provide target dates for deliverables.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Expected Outcomes**  *Provide clear, measurable outcomes.* | | |
|  | | |
| **Project Team***Include all members involved in the project, as well as contractors, if applicable.* | | |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Role** |
|  |  |  |

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| **Project Budget** *Break out budget by category: Personnel (salary and fringe), Supplies, Travel, Contract, Other (specify). Add rows as necessary.* |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget Category** | **Amount Requested** | **Explanation of Expense** |
| **Materials** |  |  |
| **Labor** |  |  |
| **Travel** |  |  |
| **Contract** |  |  |
| **Other** |  |  |
| **Total Request:** |  |  |

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| **Budget Narrative** Provide a more detailed narrative of anticipated supported expenses detailed above. |
|  |

# **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization Name:** |  |

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| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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*\* If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, state “N/A” under “RFA Section & Page Number”.*

*\*\* Add additional rows, if necessary.*