**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI# 201803028**

**Comprehensive Grant Management System**

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| **RFI Coordinator** | *All communication regarding this RFI must be made through the RFI Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Janette Kirk **Title:** Deputy Director, Office of Learning Systems  **Contact Information:** [Janette.Kirk@maine.gov](mailto:Janette.Kirk@maine.gov) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** April 25, 2018 no later than 5:00 p.m., local time |
| **Response Submission** | **Submission Deadline:** May 18, 2018, no later than 5:00 p.m., local time  **Submit to:** Janette.Kirk@maine.gov |

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# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**RFI# 201803028**

**Comprehensive Grant Management System**

The State of Maine, Department of Education, is seeking information regarding a web-based comprehensive grant management system. The Grant Management system must be able to support state, federal formula and competitive, discretionary/non-competitive grants with the ability to interface with existing Maine Department (Maine DOE) data sources.

A copy of the RFI, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all other related documents to this RFI, can be obtained at the following website: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/venbid/rfp.shtml>

Responses must be submitted to: Janette Kirk, [janette.kirk@maine.gov](mailto:janette.kirk@maine.gov) and be submitted by 5:00 pm, local time, on May 18, 2018.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**RFI DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS**

The following terms and acronyms shall have the meaning indicated below as referenced in this Request for Information:

1. **RFI:** Request for Information
2. **RFP:** Request for Proposal
3. **State:** State of Maine
4. **Department:** Department of Education
5. **FOAA:** Maine Freedom of Access Act
6. **Respondent:** Any individual or organization submitting a response to this RFI.
7. **ESEA:** Elementary and Secondary Education Act
8. **IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
9. **SAU:** School Administrative Unit
10. **USED:** U.S. Department of Education
11. **CSPR:** Consolidated State Performance Report
12. **FFATA:** Federal Funding Accounting and Transparency Act
13. **CTE:** Career & Technical Education

**State of Maine - Department of Education**

**RFI# 201803028**

**Comprehensive Grant Management System**

# **PART I INTRODUCTION**

## A. Purpose and Background

This Request for Information (RFI) is an information gathering and market research tool, not a formal solicitation of a specific requirement (such as in a “Request for Proposals” document). The Department of Education (“Department”) is seeking information regarding a Comprehensive Grant Management System from interested parties as defined in this RFI document. This is an opportunity for interested parties to help the Department better understand a marketplace and/or specific subject matter.

The Department is interested in learning more about comprehensive grant management systems that ideally web-based, would allow unlimited remote access by all Maine School Administrative Units (SAUs) to support state, federal formula and competitive, discretionary/non-competitive grants, have the ability to interface with existing Department data sources and fiscal software, and the ability to upload locally created documentation

## B. Current Conditions

The State of Maine has been using a single web-based platform to provide remote grant management access to its state agencies, School Administrative Units, and Faith-based and community partners. The current system does not interface with Maine’s fiscal programs and requires manual entry of invoicing.

The Department provides grant allocations through either a formula or competitive process to SAUs, faith based and community partners on an annual basis to meet the needs of students within their SAU or community agency. The SAUs and other agencies complete their application regarding the use of funds within the grant management system. Invoicing of funds related to expenditures contained in the narrative provided is conducted within the same system.

Funding for the grant management system comes from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act.

**C. Challenge Statement**

The RFI is intended to explore an overarching question: Can a single grant management system

provide the necessary flexibility to meet the needs and nuances of individual programs while maintaining a level of consistency and provide necessary invoicing capacity to directly interface with Maine’s fiscal software?

## D. General Provisions

1. All contact with the State regarding this RFI must be made through the aforementioned RFI Coordinator. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI.
2. This is a non-binding Request for Information. Therefore, no award shall be made as a result of the RFI process.
3. Issuance of this RFI does not commit the Department to pay any expenses incurred by a Respondent in the preparation of their response to this RFI. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
4. Issuance of this RFI in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP).
5. All responses should adhere to the instructions and format requests outlined in this RFI and all written supplements and amendments, such as the Summary of Questions and Answers, issued by the Department.
6. All submissions in response to this RFI will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.).

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html>

1. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be Proposer’s/Vendor’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

# **PART II INFORMATION SOUGHT**

The Department seeks information regarding a Comprehensive Grant Management System and welcomes responses to this RFI and creative suggestions and feedback to enhance and expedite the grant management process while providing an efficient, reliable and high-quality system. Respondents are not required to submit responses pertaining to every question, but the Department encourages interested parties to respond to any or all relevant aspects of the RFI.

The Department seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Respondent’s experience and familiarity with the subject matter. **As this is not a competitive RFP process,** **Respondents should not provide any specific cost or customized pricing documentation in their response.**

1. **General Information**
2. Provide a brief overview of your organization
   1. Please identify yourself and any organization you represent in this RFI.
      1. Name of respondent
      2. Organization and affiliation
      3. Address (organizational, if responding on behalf of an entity)
      4. Contact information (phone number(s) and email address)
   2. Please identify your experiences in providing grant management systems.
3. **Feedback Requested**
   1. Identify potential challenges and/or impediments related to the development and implementation of a single grant management system and the migration of information from existing systems.

Include challenges related to differing program timelines, availability of funds within funding cycles, and compatibility of systems.

* 1. What are some key components/elements that should be included in a grant management system RFP that would be pertinent and important for bidders to know when drafting a proposal?

Please identify key needs and wants within a grant management system including the capacity to invoice, submit documentation, make revisions to applications, allocate funds to specific budget categories or cost centers,

* 1. Can grant management system providers include guidance and 24/7 technical support to registered users?

Please identify established parameters for support, associated costs and whether all technical assistance and training is provided remotely via webinar or within face to face onsite sessions.

* 1. Can the development and revision of system elements be tailored to meet varying program needs while maintaining a consistent look all the while being a collaborate process initiated and driven by respective program managers?

Please identify how a grant management system vendor receives necessary feedback and revisions for program elements, redesigning specific program parameters while maintaining a streamlined view of the system. Include the timeline for such revisions, the process and mechanisms for collaboration.

* 1. What potential infrastructure can be leveraged to augment existing programs and software?

Please identify any existing migration between fiscal related software programs and grant management systems. Include both positive and negative implications. What additional information may be needed in a formal proposal to achieve the stated goal?

* 1. What are some possible mechanism for integrating a secure public electronic communication interface system that tracks and archives all users’ electronic communications displaying date, time and content of communication?

Please identify existing mechanisms, their integration with migrating systems, and the availability of communication to be conducted in real-time.

* 1. Can grant management systems provide a real-time interface between the systems and migrating fiscal systems to expedite revisions to individualized programs within the grant management system?

Please identify how real-time updates and revisions to application components within the grant management system can be achieved, what systems are necessary to be in place, and how migrating systems are seamlessly integrated to ensure all facets of the system will be updated during a singular encounter.

1. **Financial Implications**

Please respond to the following questions related to financing and anticipated competitiveness on cost:

1. Can you provide, in round figures, the total investment necessary for other projects you have provided services for of similar scope?

Any estimates would help reviewers understand fixed baseline costs associated with such a system.

1. What are contributing factors that would influence the cost of such as system?

Any estimates would help reviewers understand fixed baseline costs associated with such a system and the varying additional costs associated with enhancements and upgrades.

1. What is the impact of a provision for an in-direct cost rate component be included within a grant reimbursement system?

Please include rationale and process for incorporating the in-direct cost rate into the system and subsequent applications, and the ability for this to be self-selected and not a mandated element.

1. **Infrastructure**

* 1. What information would you need to know about Maine’s existing fiscal software programs such as InforME, AdvantageME and PurchasingME when determining migration needs?

Please identify any existing grant management systems that integrate well with existing state fiscal programs, and any grant management systems that require minimal revision to enhance integration and possible barriers.

* 1. What current gaps may need to be assessed with regard to a grant management system interfacing with existing infrastructure and programs?

Please identify any known or perceived gaps for evaluation when examining the integration of a new grant management system with existing software and programs. Include necessary migration issues, timeline for resolving said issues and any elements that at present may be unresolvable.

* 1. What mechanisms can be used to ensure validation and verification of integrated data to identify online errors in order to inform users of the required resolution of such errors prior to accepting submission of the grant application or report?

Please identify any known and developed mechanisms that align and interface with current Maine data and fiscal systems.

* 1. What mechanisms are in place to ensure a granular level of user authority for a high volume of concurrent users across internet browsing platforms and devices while maintaining federal and state security requirements?

Please identify how log in credentials, a tiered system of approvals and the availability of a high volume of users can be achieved when maintaining real time updates to the system and applications contained therein.

* 1. What are the available hosting options, including but not limited to cloud hosted and on-premises?

Please identify the options and discuss the pros and cons.

# **PART III KEY RFI PROCESSES AND EVENTS**

## Questions

**1. General Instructions**

1. It is the responsibility of each interested party to examine the entire RFI and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
2. Interested parties should use **Appendix B** – Submitted Questions Form – for submission of questions.
3. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted by e-mail and received by the RFI Coordinator, identified on the cover page of this RFI, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFI cover page.
4. Submitted Questions must include the RFI 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: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/venbid/rfp.shtml>. 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.

## Submitting the Response

1. **Responses Due**

Responses must be received no later than the date and time listed in the timeline above.

1. **Delivery Instructions**

Responses must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator, via e-mail, listed on the cover page of this RFI document.

1. **Response Format**

Responses to this RFI may be developed in a manner that suits the respondent. A list of key questions is included within the RFI and all submissions, regardless of format will be reviewed. Respondents are asked to be brief and to respond to as many questions as possible within the RFI. Number each response to correspond to the relevant question or instruction of the RFI to allow comparison and clarity.

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# **PART IV REVIEW OF RESPONSES RECEIVED**

# **General Information**

1. The Department will review responses received for the purpose of gathering information and market research. The Department will not score or rate responses received.
2. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Respondents, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the responses received.

# **PART V LIST OF RFI APPENDICES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

1. Appendix A – Response Cover Page
2. Appendix B – Submitted Questions Form

**APPENDIX A**

**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**

## RESPONSE COVER PAGE

**RFI# 201803028**

**Comprehensive Grant Management System**

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| **Lead Point of Contact - Name/Title:** | | |  | | |
| **Organization Name (if applicable):** | | |  | | |
| **Tel:** |  | | **Fax:** |  | |
| **E-Mail:** |  | | **Website (if applicable):** | |  |
| **Street Address:** | |  | | | |
| **City/State/Zip:** | |  | | | |

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFI# 201803028**

**Comprehensive Grant Management System**

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| **Organization/Responder’s Name:** |  |

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

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