**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Labor**

**Bureau of Rehabilitation Services**

**Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired**



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI# 202102014**

 **Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFI Coordinator** | *All communication regarding this RFI must be made through the RFI Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Annette Stevens **Title:** Rehabilitation Consultant**Contact Information:** Annette.M.Stevens@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** March 9th, 2021 no later than 4:00 p.m., local time |
| **Response Submission** | **Submission Deadline:** March 19, 2021, no later than 4:00 p.m., local time**Submit to:** Annette.M.Stevens@maine.gov  |

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# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

**Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

**RFI# 202102014**

**Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**

The State of Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) is responsible to provide itinerant teacher services to blind or visually impaired persons according to [Title 26 MRSA §1418-D](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/26/title26sec1418.html). These services are provided statewide to children from birth until the 22nd birthday.

DBVI is seeking pertinent information to develop a request for proposal (RFP) for comprehensive blindness-specific, high-quality educational services for blind or visually impaired children.

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/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfis

Responses must be submitted to Annette Stevens at Annette.M.Stevens@Maine.gov and be

submitted by 4:00 pm, local time, on March 19, 2021

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

**RFI DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **RFI** | Request for Information |
| **RFP** | Request for Proposal |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **Department** | Department of Labor |
| **FOAA** | Maine Freedom of Access Act |
| **Respondent** | Any individual or organization submitting a response to this RFI. |
| **BRS** | Bureau of Rehabilitation Services |
| **TVI**  | Teachers of the Visually Impaired |
| **DBVI** | Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| **CVI** | Cortical Visual Impairment  |

**State of Maine - Department of Labor**

**Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**

# **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 Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) is seeking information pertaining to the provision of statewide educational services for blind or visually impaired children as provided by itinerant teachers for blind and visually impaired children from interested providers/ families/caregivers as described in this RFI document. This is an opportunity for interested parties to help the DBVI better understand a marketplace and/or specific subject matter.

# DBVI is responsible for providing itinerant teacher services to blind or visually impaired persons according to [Title 26 MRSA §1418-D](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/26/title26sec1418.html). These services are provided from birth until the 22nd birthday. DBVI provides comprehensive blindness-specific services to children who are blind or visually impaired. Direct services usually begin in the education for blind children, where a range of services are geared toward providing children with the blindness-specific services they need to: develop physically and emotionally, access the core educational curriculum, prepare for employment, independent living, and/or post-secondary education when they finish high school.

# DBVI uses a team of specialty trained blindness professionals, which includes the Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI), to provide instruction and/or support this instruction in order to expand the traditional core academic curriculum of the educational system. This blindness-specific curriculum, often called the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC), is provided based upon the needs of the individual child/student and focuses on the following nine areas:

* Compensatory and functional academic skills
* Orientation and mobility
* Social interaction skills
* Career education
* Recreation and leisure skills
* Assistive technology
* Sensory visual efficiency skills
* Self-determination and
* Independent living skills

Services will be listed on the child/student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Service Plan (ISP)/504 Plan in accordance with all state and federal special education regulations. The role of the TVIs is to provide the specialized instruction to the students and consultation to the classroom teachers and parents/guardians based on the ECC. TVIs provide training to educators and parents, as appropriate per the IEP/IFSP/ISP/504 plan. TVIs also assist in planning for and providing instruction in the operation of special equipment as needed and identified in the respective plan (i.e. Braille, assistive technology including prescribed low vision devices).

**B. Challenge Statement**

The RFI is intended to explore this overarching question: How can DBVI improve the delivery of the nine Expanded Core Curriculum components described in the above Part I A. in providing comprehensive, high-quality educational services to blind or visually impaired children in Maine?

##

## C. 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.
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. 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.
5. 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.): [State of Maine Freedom of Access Act](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html)
6. 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 the provision of Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children and welcomes responses to this RFI, including creative suggestions and feedback to enhance and expedite all future services while providing efficient, reliable and high-quality outcomes. The Department encourages interested parties to respond to any or all relevant aspects of the RFI, though a response to every aspect is not required.

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

1. **General Information**

Provide a brief overview of yourself and your organization, if applicable.

* 1. Please identify yourself and any organization you may represent in this RFI.
		1. Name of respondent
		2. Organization and affiliation, if applicable
		3. Address (organizational, if responding on behalf of an entity)
		4. Contact information (phone number(s) and email address)
1. **Feedback Requested**
	1. Please provide as much detail as you would like to impart on the service delivery for Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children. Whether you are responding as a parent/caregiver or as an interested service provider/stakeholder, please provide any information that you feel would be beneficial for the Department to include in a future Request for Proposal (RFP) for these services. Information sought includes suggestions/feedback associated with how the 9 ECC components (listed in Part I of this RFI) can be expanded and/or improved in any of the following areas:
* Remote Learning Environments
* Understanding/advancement of blindness technologies
* Motivational strategies for students and families
* Engagement strategies for student and families
* Promotion of Career Pathways
* Continuity of Instruction including post-secondary engagement
* Content of Instruction
* Collaboration with school systems and/or community rehabilitation service providers
* Increasing access to educational content and materials
* Educational needs associated with different visual modalities/conditions including CVI
* Leveraging educational resources

**PART III KEY RFI EVENTS AND PROCESSES**

1. **Questions**
	1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all interested parties to examine the entire RFI and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
		1. Bidders and other interested parties must use **Appendix E** – Submitted Questions Form – for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
		2. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFI Coordinator, identified on the cover page of the RFP, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFP cover page.
		3. 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/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfis. 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 on the cover page of this RFI document.

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.

# **PART IV REVIEW OF RESPONSES RECEIVED**

# **General Information**

1. The Department will review responses received for the purpose of gathering information and market research only.
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 and/or additional information to enhance information gathering efforts.

**APPENDIX A**

**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Labor**

RESPONSE COVER PAGE

**RFI# 202102014**

**Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**

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

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFI# 202102014**

**Education Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Children**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 rows, if necessary.*