**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Environmental Protection**

*Division of Materials Management*



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**RFI# 202503050**

 **Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFI Coordinator** | *All communication regarding this RFI must be made through the RFI Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Kayla Michaud **Title:** Environmental Specialist **Contact Information:** MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov  |
| **Informational Meeting** | **Date:** May 22nd, 2025 **Time:** 10-11am**Location:** [Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program RFI Informational Meeting](https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/d3084491-ff92-4939-aec5-eebf1118660c%40413fa8ab-207d-4b62-9bcd-ea1a8f2f864e) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** **May 16th, 2025** |
| **Response Submission** | **Submission Deadline:** May 30th, 2025**Submit to:** MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov  |

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# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Environmental Protection**

**RFI# 202503050**

**Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program**

The State of Maine (the State), Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Materials Management is seeking information regarding the services the stewardship organization (SO) must provide to operate the packaging stewardship program (Program).

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.

 An Informational Meeting, during which the Department of Environmental Protection (Department) will be available to answer questions about this RFI, will be held virtually on **May 22nd from 10 am – 11 am**. To register for the informational meeting, use the following link: [Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program RFI Informational Meeting](https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/d3084491-ff92-4939-aec5-eebf1118660c%40413fa8ab-207d-4b62-9bcd-ea1a8f2f864e)

Responses must be submitted to: MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov and be submitted by **May 30th, 2025**

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

**RFI DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Department** | Department of Environmental Protection  |
| **FOAA** | Maine Freedom of Access Act |
| **Program** | Stewardship Program for Packaging |
| **Respondent** | Any individual or organization submitting a response to this RFI. |
| **RFI** | Request for Information |
| **RFP** | Request for Proposal |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **SO** | Stewardship Organization |

**State of Maine - Department of Environmental Protection**

**RFI# 202503050**

**Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program**

# **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 is seeking information from interested parties regarding the services the SO must provide to operate the Program, as defined in this RFI document. This is an opportunity for interested parties to help the Department better understand the marketplace and/or specific subject matter.

In July 2021, the Maine Legislature passed a law establishing a [stewardship program for packaging material](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/38/title38sec2146.html) (Program) with the goals of reducing the burden to municipalities of managing packaging material and improving the design and management of packaging material. Producers – generally the brand owners – make payments based on the amount and the recyclability of the packaging material used to contain, protect, deliver, present or distribute their products in or into the State. Producer payments are used to reimburse participating municipalities for recycling and waste management costs, invest in infrastructure to improve the management of packaging material, educate Maine residents on what and how to recycle, and fund SO operations and Department oversight. Municipalities retain responsibility for managing packaging material, the SO operates the Program, and the Department provides oversight and enforcement.

The services the SO must provide to operate the Program include:

* Conducting a statewide recycling needs assessment;
* Establishing and managing the Packaging Stewardship Fund;
* Establishing and managing a data management system, including a portal for Program reporting;
* Auditing recycling operations and packaging streams;
* Providing Program outreach and reporting assistance to producers and municipalities;
* Assessing and collecting payments from producers and auditing producer reporting;
* Issuing reimbursements to participating municipalities;
* Proposing and issuing investments in education and infrastructure; and
* Annual reporting to the Department.

## B. Current Conditions

On December 25, 2024, the Maine Board of Environmental Protection adopted 06-096 C.M.R. ch. 428, *Stewardship Program for Packaging*, the [rules for the Program](https://www.maine.gov/sos/sites/maine.gov.sos/files/content/assets/096c428.docx). The Program rules allow the Department to implement, administer, and enforce the Program. The SO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Program while the Department provides oversight.

This Program is not yet operational so there are no services currently being provided at this time.

The Department plans to issue an RFP for the SO in the fall of 2025. In the spring of 2026, following a competitive bidding process, the Department anticipates selecting and entering into a contract with the awarded SO. The Department will contract with the selected SO for a 10-year period.

**C. Challenge Statement**

The RFI is intended to explore an overarching question: What information should be considered when evaluating proposals from respondents seeking to provide the services to operate the Program?

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## 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.): [State of Maine Freedom of Access Act](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html)
7. 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 services the SO must provide to operate the Program, and welcomes responses to this RFI, including creative suggestions and feedback to enhance and expedite all future processes while providing efficient, reliable and high-quality outcomes**.**

**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/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 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 any experience you have in providing any of the services required to operate the Program.
1. **Feedback Requested**

The Department is looking for information on the following:

1. What information would you need to evaluate the capability of an organization to provide any of the services required to operate the Program?
2. What gaps in knowledge or gaps in the market might inhibit an organization from providing any of the services required to operate the Program?
3. What tools and mechanisms would: enable an organization to provide any of the services required to operate the Program, be employed to provide oversight to the Program, and/or ensure consistent operation of the Program in the event of an SO transition?
4. What influences can be expected to affect the costs of any of the services required to operate the Program?
5. What successes and challenges have you encountered when: establishing and managing an operational fund similar to what the Packaging Stewardship Fund will be and/or establishing and managing a data management system and/or conducting a needs assessment?
6. Is there any other information that may be valuable to consider when evaluating the capability of an organization to provide any of the services required to operate the Program?

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

1. **Informational Meeting**

The Department will sponsor an Informational Meeting concerning this RFI beginning at the date, time and location shown on the RFI cover page. The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to provide interested parties with additional information related to this RFI, field questions, and clarify any questions as to this RFI request.

## 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/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 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.

# **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. 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 and/or additional information to enhance marketing research efforts.

**APPENDIX A**

**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Environmental Protection**

## RESPONSE COVER PAGE

**RFI# 202503050**

**Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 Environmental Protection**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFI# 202503050**

**Stewardship Organization for Packaging Stewardship Program**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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.*