



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

December 4, 2023

Tricia Matthews
Preble Street
55 Portland Street
Portland, ME 04101
Via Email

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award under RFA# 202308182, Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub

Dear Ms. Matthews:

This letter is regarding the subject Request for Applications (RFA), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry for Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub. The Department has evaluated the applications received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFA, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract award to the following applicant:

- Preble Street

The applicant listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned applicant soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFA, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFA, following the announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFA are 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.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

Craig Lapine

CRAIG LAPINE, BUREAU DIRECTOR
AGRICULTURE, FOOD & RURAL RESOURCES
90 BLOSSOM LANE, DEERING BUILDING



PHONE: (207) 287-3491
FAX: (207) 287-7548
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).

Award Justification Statement
RFP# 202308182 – Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub

I. Summary

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry sought proposals to create a food security hub addressing the nutritional needs of homeless, sheltered, or food insecure persons. The RFA stated that the successful Applicant must be able to complete the construction or renovation of a facility certifiable as a commercial kitchen and capable of preparing, packing, and storing 2,000-10,000 meals per day. The successful Applicant must also have a demonstrated plan for distributing prepared meals statewide. Food purchases should prioritize Maine-grown food whenever possible.

II. Evaluation Process

Once applications closed, RFA coordinator Craig Lapine distributed copies of the sole application to evaluation team members. Evaluation team members read applications separately, and then met via Teams on November 20 and 21. All three team members—Gus Nelson, Michelle Webb, and Craig Lapine—have oversight responsibility for the Department's federal partnership in the Emergency Food Access Program (TEFAP) and are also involved with other low-income food distribution programs, including CFSP, LFPA, and Hunters for the Hungry. As such, the members are the Bureau's experts on the State's emergency food distribution system and programs.

III. Qualifications & Experience

- Applicant has overseen minimum three successful capital projects aimed at increasing capacity to provide prepared meals to food insecure populations.
- Applicant is currently distributing upwards of 2,000 prepared meals daily.
- Applicant has cultivated the necessary supply-side and distribution relationships to ensure program goals are met, specifically 1) prioritizing Maine-grown food and 2) distributing meals to communities statewide.

IV. Proposed Services

- Renovate 75 Darling Ave., South Portland to create the capacity to prepare, store, and distribute as many as 10,000 meals per day. Renovation to include upgrades to kitchen, storage, refrigeration, and loading dock facilities.
- Implement programmatic plans to prepare those meals with an emphasis on Maine-grown and Maine-caught ingredients.
- Distribute those meals to charitable feeding facilities and organizations statewide.

V. Budget Proposal

Applicant provided a detailed breakdown of \$6.272 million project budget and identifies the additional funding sources that—combined with the State’s award of \$2 million—will complete funding for the project.

VI. Conclusion

Preble Street was the sole applicant for this \$2 million. Preble Street has prepared a thorough and persuasive proposal for how they are creating a statewide food security hub that meets the intent behind this funding.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

SUMMARY PAGE

Department Name: Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Name of RFP Coordinator: Craig Lapine
Names of Evaluators: Craig Lapine, Michelle Webb, Gus Nelson

<u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u>	<u>Pass</u>	<u>Fail</u>
Section I. Preliminary Information (Eligibility)		
• Non-profit status	X	
• Portland-based as defined in the RFA	X	
<u>Scoring Sections</u> (Edit sections below to match evaluation criteria within RFP)	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section II: Qualifications and Experience	25	N/A
Section III: Proposed Services	25	N/A
Section IV: Assurances on Procurement and Distribution	20	N/A
Section V: Reporting Requirements	5	N/A
Section VI: Budget	25	N/A
<u>Total Points</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>N/A</u>

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

**OVERVIEW OF SECTION I
Preliminary Information**

Section I. Preliminary Information

Evaluation Team Comments:

Applicant was sole bidder so the application was not assigned numeric scores. Reviewers noted that, while documentary evidence of the applicant meeting eligibility requirements is available in the public record, the applicant provided neither proof of non-profit status nor a deed, lease, or other legal instrument demonstrating the food security hub will be in an eligible community.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

**EVALUATION OF SECTION II
Organization Qualifications and Experience**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section II. Organization Qualifications and Experience	25	NA

Evaluation Team Comments:

The services requested in the RFA have both infrastructure and programmatic components. The infrastructure requirements are as follows:

- Complete the construction or renovation of a facility certifiable as a commercial kitchen and capable of preparing, packing, and storing 2,000-10,000 meals per day.

The programmatic requirements include:

- A demonstrated plan for distributing prepared meals statewide.
- A plan for prioritizing purchases of Maine-grown food.

Section II provided ample evidence of qualifications and experience to meet the infrastructure requirements. The three projects recapped were recent capital construction and/or remodeling projects.

This section provided less information on the applicant's qualifications in meeting the programmatic requirements of the RFA. Evaluators noted, however, that this was addressed in subsequent sections, notably "Proposed Services." Indeed, the applicant's experience providing emergency meals is documented throughout the application.

Applicant attested that no litigation against it was pending and did provide relevant organizational charts, certificates of insurance, and an audit as evidence of financial viability. (Reviewers noted that the audit's findings related to staffing transitions and not systemic issues flagged by the auditors.)

Applicant noted that a construction management firm—the key subcontractor for this project—has not yet been selected. Evaluation team proposes that, as a condition of finalizing this award, the applicant must provide information on the chosen subcontractor.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

**EVALUATION OF SECTION III
Proposed Services**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section III. Proposed Services	25	NA

Evaluation Team Comments:

Applicant provided a thorough description of the services to be provided as well as the philosophy behind their service model. Applicant detailed its plan to scale from 2,000 to 10,000 prepared meals daily, how it will ensure the nutritional quality of those meals, and how it will maintain all necessary licenses in order to be able to fulfill its mission.

**EVALUATION OF SECTION IV
Assurances on Procurement and Distribution**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section IV. Assurances on Procurement and Distribution	20	NA

Evaluation Team Comments:

Applicant detailed existing relationships with Maine farms, fishermen, and other food producers. Current relationships with Maine producers intended to be continued with the expanded food security hub include:

- Jordan's Farm
- Liberation Farms and Somali-Bantu Association
- Homestead Farms
- Community Harvest:
- Maine Coast Fisherman's Association
- Pineland Farms
- Maine Grains

The applicant has provided a detailed description of how and to whom meals will be distributed, both on its own and through partnerships, including its statewide distribution partnership with the Good Shepherd Food Bank.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

**EVALUATION OF SECTION V
Reporting Requirements**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section V. Reporting Requirements	5	NA

Evaluation Team Comments:

The State is requiring that the successful contractor provide an annual report that includes:

- Detailed budget report;
- Number of food insecure individuals/households served and in what geographic region;
- Number of farms/food producers included in the work, and relevant details, including but not limited to location, size, production type, and type(s) of products procured;
- Quantities of food procured through the program;
- Analysis of impact of the funded project.

Applicant has provided a description of how it currently tracks this kind of data generally and has provided reasonable assurances on how it will provide the requested information.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202308182
RFA TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub
BIDDER: Preble Street
DATE: November 21, 2023

**EVALUATION OF SECTION VI
Budget**

	<u>Points Available</u>	<u>Points Awarded</u>
Section VI. Budget	25	NA

Evaluation Team Comments:

Applicant identifies this as a \$6.272 million project. The proposal application form accounts for other funding sources which, when factoring in the proposed State award of \$2 million, would bring secured funding to \$6.595 million. However, the expense budget provided in Appendix F

- a. Identifies project costs totaling \$6,735,190.
- b. Contains apparent errors related to costs/sf

As a precondition of award, the evaluation team recommends requiring updated budget documents that

- a. Clarify projected costs
- b. Address projected shortfalls if any.



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Amanda E. Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
RFA #: 202308182
RFP TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub

I, Craig Lapine, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Applications (RFA) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with an applicant who has submitted an application to this RFA.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the applicants whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the applicant's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the applicant; current or former personal contractual relationship with the applicant (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to an applicant's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with, or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFA nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Applications presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.

Signature

November 20, 2023

Date



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Amanda E. Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
RFA #: 202308182
RFP TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub

I, **Michelle Webb** accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Applications (RFA) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with an applicant who has submitted an application to this RFA.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the applicants whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the applicant's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the applicant; current or former personal contractual relationship with the applicant (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to an applicant's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with, or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFA nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Applications presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.

Michelle Webb

11/20/2023

Signature

Date



Janet T. Mills
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

Amanda E. Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
RFA #: 202308182
RFP TITLE: Creating a Statewide Food Security Hub

I, **Gustav Nelson**, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Applications (RFA) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with an applicant who has submitted an application to this RFA.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the applicants whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the applicant's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the applicant; current or former personal contractual relationship with the applicant (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to an applicant's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with, or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFA nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Applications presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.

Signature

11-20-2023

Date