**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

*Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

**RFA# 202212199**

**Health Equity Infrastructure & Capacity Building**
**Grant Funding Opportunity**

**for Community Based Organizations**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.**Name:** Brittany Hall **Title:** Procurement Administrator**Contact Information:** Brittany.hall@maine.gov |
| **Resource Webinar**  | **Date:** January 3, 2023 **Time:** 2:00 p.m., local time**Location:** ZOOM Meeting Link: [Web Meeting Link for RFA 202212199](https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/86421343699?pwd=WTIrVU5FV3h2MmZNREprWHNoUWNVQT09) Meeting ID: 864 2134 3699, or by phone at 1-646-876-9923 using the Meeting ID provided  |
| **Submitted Questions**  | *Questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** January 6, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time and must include **“RFA# 202212199 Question”** in the subject line of the e-mail. |
| **Application Submission Period** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** January 18, 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.govand must include **“RFA# 202212199 Application Submission”** in the subject line of the e-mail.  |

**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFA, shall have the meanings indicated below:

|  |  |
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| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Community-Based Organization (CBO)** | An organization driven by and accountable to the community and/or population that it serves. A CBO has a physical presence in the community it serves and has clear processes to include community perspectives in determining the priority issues it addresses and the solutions pursued. |
| **Department** | Department of Health and Human Services |
| **OPHE**  | Office of Population Health Equity  |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **U.S. CDC** | United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |

**Details and Instructions**

## Application Purpose and Background

The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) is dedicated to promoting health, safety, resiliency, and opportunity to all Maine residents. The Department’s Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) provides leadership, expertise, information, and tools to assure conditions in which all the people of Maine can be healthy. In April 2021, the Department established the Office of Population Health Equity (OPHE) within Maine CDC to identify and address health disparities in communities throughout Maine.

OPHE is launching a series of new initiatives for Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that are addressing racial/ethnic COVID-19 disparities, supported by a one-time [grant](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=332034) from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC). Collectively, these initiatives aim to:

* Deepen the Department’s relationships with community leaders;
* Invest resources directly in communities most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and other serious threats to public health; and
* Build collective capacity to reduce disparities in the future.

The purpose of this RFA is to provide one-time funding to assist CBOs located in Maine, who work to address racial/ethnic COVID-19 disparities through COVID-19 response efforts and/or social determinants of health, and have significant infrastructure development needs to obtain long-term success and sustainability in their efforts. *Note: This RFA is specific to the purpose identified in this paragraph and described throughout the RFA. There are additional initiatives funded by the US CDC “Disparities Grant” outside of this RFA, and this RFA is only intended to meet the purpose and services being described within the RFA.*

CBOs are uniquely positioned to help address racial/ethnic inequities exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic related to social determinants of health, such as access to housing, food, financial supports, transportation, and social support. CBOs continue to mitigate racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and vaccinations through:

* Accountability to the population they serve;
* Providing a flexible response to meeting constantly changing needs; and
* A commitment to addressing the root causes of COVID-19 health disparities.

Targeted investments may include but are not limited to those related to financial/IT improvements, data collection/reporting systems, operational infrastructure, strategic planning, and pilot projects and collective efforts to increase organizational effectiveness and address health disparities in their communities. As a result of these investments, the Department anticipates CBOs will have increase capacity to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in COVID-19 and other health conditions, as well as to continue providing COVID-19 prevention and response activities.

## General Provisions

1. From the time this RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding this 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 this RFA. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the application 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, 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. Applications are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified in the “Submission Instructions” section of the RFA’s application.
4. The Applicant shall take careful note that in evaluating its application submitted in response to this RFA the Department will consider materials provided in the application and internal Departmental information of previous contract history, if any, with the Applicant. The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. 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.).
6. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in applications received in response to the RFA.
7. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, shall be included by this reference. It shall be the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.
8. **Eligibility**

Given the purpose of this RFA to invest in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that have significant infrastructure development needs, only organizations that meet ALL THREE of the following eligibility requirements will be considered for this opportunity:

1. The organization meets definition of a “Community-Based Organization” (CBO) per this RFA’s RFA Terms/Acronyms with Definitions.
2. The organization has annual expenditures of less than five million dollars ($5,000,000).
	1. For organizations that use a fiscal sponsor, this cap applies to the individual organization applying, not the fiscal sponsor.
3. The organization did not receive an individual CBO award dated December 22, 2022, under RFA 202204066 Health Equity Infrastructure & Capacity Building Grant Funding Opportunity for Community Based Organizations.

## Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFA process. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring application(s), approve or deny any funding requests, and/or make awards at amounts less than requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from the RFA may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in [5 M.R.S.A. § 1825-E](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/5/title5sec1825-E.html) and [18-554 Code of Maine Rules](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120) 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 conditional contract award.

1. **Applicant Categories and Award Amounts**

Eligible CBOs may apply for the maximum funding identified in Tiers A - E and in alignment with the organization’s most recently completed fiscal year expenditures:

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| **Community-Based Organization (CBO)** **Application Allowances and Requirements** |
| * + - * + One (1) CBO representing itself; or
				+ One (1) CBO represented by a fiscal sponsor *(if the fiscal sponsor will be managing funds for multiple CBOs, each CBO must submit an individual application through the fiscal sponsor for consideration).*
 |
| **Tier** | **Maximum Funding Amount** | **Organization’s Total Annual Expenditures** |
| Tier A | $80,000 per organization | Less than $200,000 |
| Tier B | $160,000 per organization | Between $200,000 - $499,000 |
| Tier C | $240,000 per organization | Between $500,000 - $999,000 |
| Tier D | $320,000 per organization | Between $1,000,00 - $1,999,999 |
| Tier E | $400,000 per organization | Between $2,000,000 - $5,000,000 |

Applicants may request exception to the maximum amount of funding, not to exceed a total of $400,000 per applicant. Applicants who request exception must provide a detailed justification, including:

1. The full amount of funding being requested;
2. Reasonable projection of increased total expenditures in the following twelve (12) months that would place an organization in a different tier than their historical budget indicates

The Department will consider all application funding requests on a case-by-case basis. The Department reserves the right to approve or deny any funding requests including approval of an application at an amount lower than requested by the Applicant.

1. **Contract Terms**

The Department anticipates issuing awards for a contract period beginning as early as February 2023 and ending no later than May 2024. Contract periods may vary based on the time each application is received and scored by the Department and the Department’s ability to fully execute each contract. The Department does not anticipate the availability of additional funding after this period.

**Activities and Requirements**

1. **Allowable/ Non-Allowable Use of Funds for Capacity Building Activities**
	1. Allowable use of funds may include but are not limited to:
2. Staffing and/or consultant costs (including benefits, supplies, and other related costs) associated with the proposed project, including but are not limited to:
	1. Financial management (e.g., bookkeepers, finance managers, accountants);
	2. External communication (storytelling, marketing/PR, website, social media, radio);
	3. Translation / interpretation; and/or
	4. Strategic planning.
3. Technology / data system-related costs (e.g., laptops, printers, software, databases).
4. Professional development / trainings for staff, including staff supports to increase wellness and resiliency and reduce burn-out with the COVID-19 response (e.g., consultant supports, training fees)
5. Conferences and meetings related to capacity building and/or reducing COVID-19 disparities (e.g., staff development retreats, community planning sessions, travel costs associated with these activities)
6. Capital expenditure expenses for COVID-19 related activities (e.g., vehicle purchases, long-term leases, facility upgrades that are directly related to reducing COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths).
7. Pilot projects to advance health equity and/or social determinants of health within the organization or community.

*The Department will consider other allowable capacity building activities. Approval of all proposed activities will be at the discretion of the Department. Applicants who intend to apply for activities not listed above, may submit questions to the Department through the RFA Q&A process outlined in this RFA.*

1. Request for and allocation of funding **shall not** include:
2. Duplicating or supplanting funding received from other federal or State resources.
3. Debt restructuring and/or bad debt;
4. Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, and claims;
5. Donations and contributions;
6. Entertainment;
7. Alcoholic beverages;
8. Fines and penalties;
9. Goods or services for personal use;
10. Interest expenses;
11. Lobbying; and/or
12. Patent costs.

*Awarded Applicants will be required to adhere to all Department reporting requirements outlined in the contract resulting from this RFA process. Reporting requirements will be determined during contract negotiations.*

**Key Process Events**

1. **Key-off Resource Webinar**

The Department will host one (1) webinar (i.e., Zoom) for all applicants, following release of this RFA. The webinar information will be publicly posted on the [Office of Population Health Equity’s (OPHE’s) webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/equity/). A recording of these webinars will be posted on the on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website.

The purpose of these webinars will be to orient applicants with the RFA and submission process, including:

* General introduction to the RFA
* Review of the application components and general requirements
* Review of the scoring process
* Submission process and deadlines

## Submitting Questions about the Request for Application

Any questions 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. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: “RFA# 202212199 Questions”. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

**Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. 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.

***The Department anticipate publication of all questions and answers at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the application submission deadline.***

## Amendments to the Request for Application

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Application will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website. 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.

## Submitting the Application

* 1. **Applications Due:** Applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFA. E-mails containing original application submissions, or any additional or revised application files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be rejected without exception.

At the Department’s discretion, this RFA may be reopened to fund additional applicants who meet the requirements of the RFA.

1. **Submission Instructions:** Applications are to be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement services, via e-mail, to proposals@maine.gov.
	1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
	2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail applications 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 organizations Information Technology team to ensure your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
	4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files 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 submission: “**RFA# 202212199 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
	6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, Word and Excel file, as applicable and must include all related documents identified on the application specific to each category, refer to **Appendix C**.

**Application Evaluation and Selection**

1. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria. Only complete applications will be considered for awards.

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| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Part I - Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Part II - Proposed Activities | 65 |
| Part III - Capacity Building Plan | 10 |
| Part IV – Budget Form and Narrative | 25 |
| **Total** | **100 points** |

1. **Scoring Process:** The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections. Applicants receiving a total score of eighty-four (84) points or higher will be considered for either full or partial funding.

Failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFA may result in the application being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFA specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal.

The Grant Review Team will utilize ascoring rubric to score the Applicant’s Experience/Proposed Activities and Capacity Building Plan based on the specific category identified in the tables below.

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| **Points Summary** |
| **Narrative Response** | **Maximum Points Allowed** |
| Part II - Activities | 65 points |
| * Community of Focus and Leadership
* Heath Equity Activities
* Capacity Building Vision
 | * 32 points
* 24 points
* 9 points
 |
| Part III - Capacity Building Plan | 10 Points |
| **Total** | **75 Points** |

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| **PART II** |
| **Scoring Rubric for Community of Focus and Leadership***32 points total (eligible for up to 8 points for each sup-topic)* |
| **Topic** | **Zero (0) Points** | **Up to eight (8) points** |
| Community Served | Communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) will not be served | Primarily serves BIPOC communities |
| Leadership Composition | No key leaders within the CBO are members of the community being served  | Board and staff leadership (i.e., board chair and executive director or equivalent) reflect the community served |
| Staff/Board Composition | CBO’s board and staff do not include members of the community served | Greater than fifty percent (>50%) of CBO’s board and staff reflect the community served |
| Community Engagement | Few or no attempts to seek community input will be made | Demonstrate multiple, clear ways to regularly seek and respond to community input and demonstrates a history of putting community voices first in planning strategies and activities |
| **Scoring Rubric for Health Equity Activities***24 points total (eligible for up to 8 points for each sup-topic)* |
| **Topic** | **Zero (0) Points** | **Up to eight (8) points** |
| Root Cause Definition | Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of racial/ethnic COVID-19 health disparities | Clearly understand the root causes of racial/ethnic COVID-19 health disparities |
| Impact | Proposed programs are not likely to address root causes of racial/ethnic disparities as defined by applicant | Proposed programs are very likely to address root causes of racial/ethnic COVID-19 disparities as defined by applicant |
| Organizational Mission | Does not address racial/ethnic health inequities as part of core mission | Addressing racial/ethnic health inequities is a core part of CBO’s mission and strategy |
| **Scoring Rubric for Capacity Building Vision**  |
| **Topic** | **Zero (0) Points** | **Up to nine (9) points** |
| Vision | Provides no clear or realistic strategic vision for CBO’s future direction | Demonstrates clear, achievable goals and a vision for more effectively advancing health equity as a result of the funding  |
| **PART III** |
| **Scoring Rubric for Capacity Building Plan** |
| **Score** | **Proposed tasks are:** |
| 10 | * + Measurable (i.e., clear how intended outcomes can be assessed)
	+ Realistic (i.e., seem feasible in given timeframe and budget)
	+ Strategic (i.e., a clear link is visible to applicant’s vision for addressing COVID-19 disparities)
 |
| 7 | Tasks are measurable and realistic but not strategic |
| 4 | Tasks are measurable but not realistic or strategic |
| 0 | Did not populate or tasks do not seem measurable, realistic, or strategic |

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| **PART IV** |
| **Scoring Rubric for Budget Form and Narrative** |
| **Score** | **Budget Form and Narrative are:** |
| 25 | Budget form and narrative provided and costs described are:* + Accurate (i.e., the total budgeted amount adds up to the total requested funding amount)
	+ Aligned (i.e., align with the ranges listed in the application instructions, or there is a requested exception with justification)
	+ Connected (i.e., clearly connect to the goals stated in the capacity building plan)
	+ Realistic (i.e., reasonable given the goals stated in the capacity building plan)
 |
| 15 | Budget form and narrative provided, but costs proposed in the budget form and narrative are not accurate, aligned, connected, or realistic based on the Capacity Building Plan. |
| 0 |  Budget form and narrative not provided.  |

1. **Selection and Award:** Notification of selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, or to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.

The Department will consider all application funding requests, including exceptions to the maximum funding amount, on a case-by-case basis. The Department reserves the right to approve or deny any funding requests including approval of an application at an amount lower than requested by the Applicant.

Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be required to submit, prior to the contract execution, a valid certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the awarded Applicant’s general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with the services provided as a result of this RFA.

**APPENDIX A**

**RFA# 202212199**

**Health Equity Infrastructure & Capacity Building**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Community Based Organizations**

**GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION – COVER PAGE**

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| --- | --- |
| **Applicant Entity Name:** |  |
| **Chief Executive - Name/Title:** |  |
| **Tel:** |  | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** |  |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** |  |
| ***(Provide information requested below if different from above)*** |
| **Lead Point of Contact for Application - Name/Title:** |  |
| **Tel:** |  | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** |  |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** |  |

* This Application and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days from the date and time of the bid opening.
* 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.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an Application.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting contract with the Department should they be awarded the 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):** | **Title:** |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** |

**APPENDIX B**

**RFA# 202212199**

**Health Equity Infrastructure & Capacity Building**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Community Based Organizations**

**DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION**

*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 will result in the disqualification of the Applicant’s Application.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name (Print): | Title: |
| Authorized Signature: | Date: |

**APPENDIX C**

**RFA# 202212199**

**Health Equity Infrastructure & Capacity Building**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Community Based Organizations**

## APPLICATION FORM

**The application may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by clicking on the icon below.**



**The budget form is included in the Application in an Excel (.xlsx) format.**