**STATE OF MAINE**

**Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future**



**RFA# 202305100**

**Community Resilience Partnership**

**Community Action Grant**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.  **Name:** Brian Ambrette **Title:** Senior Climate Resilience Coordinator  **Contact Information:** [brian.ambrette@maine.gov](mailto:brian.ambrette@maine.gov) |
| **Informational Webinar** | **Date:** June 1, 2023 **Time:** 3:00 p.m., local time  **Location:** virtual webinar (Zoom)  Please click the link below to join the webinar:  <https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/86418630427?pwd=cG9nSnVpTUV4YlJqUVVCVkxrVC90Zz09> |
| **Submitted Questions** | All questions must be submitted, by e-mail, to the RFA Coordinator no later than **June 9, 2023** at 11:59 pm, local time and must include **“RFA# 202305100 Questions”** in the subject line of the e-mail. |
| **Application Submission Period** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Initial Submission Deadline: July 7, 2023**, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. Applications must be submitted electronically to the Division of Procurement Services at [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) and must include **“RFA# 202305100 Application – [Applicant’s Name]”** in the subject line of the e-mail. |

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

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

| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| **Department** | Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **Service Provider Grant** | Grant to a service provider to provide assistance to a Group of communities in Maine to prepare for and enroll in the Community Resilience Partnership and then to apply for grant funds to implement priority climate and energy projects.  Please see [RFA# 202305099](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) – Service Provider Grant for more information. |
| **Community** | A municipal government, Tribal Government, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Maine. |
| **Group** | Multiple communities submitting a single joint application for grant funding. |
| **Community Action Grant** | Upon enrollment in the Community Resilience Partnership, communities are eligible for Community Action Grants for projects that reduce energy use and costs, transition to clean energy, and make communities in Maine more resilient to climate change. |

**Community Resilience Partnership**

**Community Action Grant**

**RFA# 202207017**

**Details and Instructions**

## Application Purpose and Background

The Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (Department) is seeking applications for Community Action Grants as defined in this Request for Application (RFA) document. This document provides the Application to be used for submittal, instructions for submitting applications, the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicants will be selected.

The Community Resilience Partnership provides grants and assistance to municipalities, Tribal Governments, and unorganized territories for projects that reduce energy use and costs, transition to clean energy, and make communities in Maine more resilient to climate change. Communities – those that have already taken significant climate action as well as those considering their early steps – are eligible for Community Action Grants upon completion of [program enrollment](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/join) requirements.

Communities that would like assistance completing enrollment activities and applying for Community Action Grants are encouraged to partner with [Service Provider Organizations](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/provider). [RFA# 202305099](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) – Service Provider Grant is available to support this assistance to communities.

## 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. 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.
3. 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.).
4. 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.

## Eligibility to Submit Applications

There are two (2) eligible types of applicants for the Community Action Grant:

1. Individual Communities (as defined on page 3) in Maine who are enrolled in the [Community Resilience Partnership](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/). Applicants may submit enrollment materials through the [enrollment portal](https://appengine.egov.com/apps/me/governor/mcrp) simultaneously with submitting their grant application.

(Unorganized territories, townships, and plantations are eligible and are strongly encouraged to work with a Service Provider to complete the enrollment process.)

1. Multiple Communities (as defined on page 3) may apply jointly for projects that address mutual goals and have interrelated scopes of work.
   1. All communities participating in the application must be enrolled in the Partnership at the time the grant application is submitted or submit enrollment materials through the [enrollment portal](https://appengine.egov.com/apps/me/governor/mcrp) simultaneously with the grant application.
   2. Service Providers may apply on behalf of groups of communities only for actions listed in the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2021-12-01_4.xlsx)). Letters of support must be provided from each community in the proposed group.
   3. In a multi-community application, the communities are required to designate a lead applicant. Factors to consider might include which community will receive the grant funds and manage the contracting and grant reporting on behalf of the partner communities. The communities may wish to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that spells out the responsibilities of each community. If an MOU is established, GOPIF may request a copy of the document during the grant contracting phase.

A community may participate in no more than one (1) Community Action Grant application in a round.

Communities that already have an active Community Action Grant from a previous round are eligible to apply in this round but may not apply for new funds to support the same project.

School districts, water and sewer districts, neighborhood associations, and similar entities are not eligible to be primary applicants but are encouraged to partner with a municipality or other eligible entity described above.

## Number of Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of the RFA process.

Funding for this program is provided in the state biennial budget. For this round of Community Action Grant applications, $1,100,000 has been allocated. The Department may award all, part, or none of this allocation at its discretion.

Maximum Award: Individual communities, as defined above, are eligible for a minimum award of $5,000 and a maximum award of $50,000. Groups of communities applying jointly are eligible for awards of up to $125,000.

First-time Applicants: The Department intends to prioritize awards to those applicants who have not previously received funding under this grant program. Awards will be made starting with first-time applicants that score highest and awards being made to subsequent applicants in order of the scores received. In order to be considered for prioritization, the first-time application must receive a minimum score of 75 total points (this minimum is not a guarantee of an award). If funds remain available after awarding first-time application awards, the Department will issue awards to applicants who have previously received funding from Community Action Grants, starting with the highest scores awarded.

1. **Contract Terms**

Contract terms will be up to two (2) years, as specified by the applicant’s proposal.

The expected start of the grant performance period is on or around September 15, 2023.

1. **Future Grant Rounds and Application Submittals**

Pending availability of funding, the Department anticipates future grant rounds to occur at approximately 8-10 month intervals. A potential schedule of future rounds would be:

Round 4: Winter-Spring 2024

Round 5: Fall-Winter 2024

Applicants may apply only once per grant round but may apply to subsequent grant rounds as desired.

**Community Resilience Partnership**

**Community Action Grant**

**RFA# 202305100**

**Activities and Requirements**

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1. **Grants**
   1. **Eligible activities.** There are two types of Community Action Grants:

1. No-match grants to support implementation of one or more activities in the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2021-12-01_4.xlsx)) that are aligned with the state’s climate action plan, [Maine Won’t Wait](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf).
2. Grants to support other community-defined climate and energy implementation priorities. A cost-share (match) will apply, as described in the table below.

The source of funding for these grants is the state budget, therefore applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize Community Action Grants as match to leverage federal grant funds. Community Action Grants may also be used to close project funding gaps for other state funding programs, in accordance with (i) or (ii) above. It is the applicant’s responsibility to consult the rules for the federal or state funding programs if the Community Action Grant will be designated as cost-share or match.

Certain eligible activities from the List of Community Actions carry special instructions or limitations. **It is the applicants’ responsibility to review the list and ensure that the proposed activities meet all eligibility requirements.** For example,

* Purchase of electric vehicles (Action A1): A maximum of $7,500 of a Community Action Grant may be applied to the purchase of an electric vehicle for municipal or tribal fleets. Eligible vehicles include light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty on-road electric vehicles as well as electric riding mowers and electric outboard engines that are part of a municipal fleet, all subject to the maximum award amount. Where applicable, Efficiency Maine’s electric vehicle rebate must be included in the applicant’s project budget.
* Energy efficiency projects (Actions B1-B5): Energy efficiency projects such as heat pumps, VRF systems, LED lighting upgrades, water heaters, etc. must be eligible for Efficiency Maine’s incentives. The applicant’s project budget must include applicable Efficiency Maine rebates or incentives.
* Bulk purchasing (Action H7): Grant funds may not be used to purchase or subsidize equipment or services for residential or commercial properties.
  1. **Cost-share (or match).** There is no local cost share for Community Action Grants that implement activities from the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2021-12-01_4.xlsx)).

A cost share *will* apply for Community Action Grants that implement community climate and energy priorities other than those listed in the List of Community Actions. The cost-share is structured in a tiered approach. In-kind match is permitted. Communities that have a cost-share requirement are encouraged to leverage funds from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) or other state and federal sources.

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| **Tier** | **Description** | **Cost-share for activities not listed in the List of Community Actions** |
| Tier 1 | Communities with populations less than 4,000 | 10% |
| Tier 2 | Communities with EITHER populations between 4,000 and 10,000 OR tax assessment less than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data). | 10% |
| Tier 3 | Communities with populations greater than 10,000 AND tax assessment greater than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data) | 20% |

All funded projects will be required to provide quarterly updates until the project is completed, as well as project deliverables and a brief project case study that communicates lessons learned.

## Application Components

A complete and scoreable application for funding will include the following components. Specific descriptions of each component are included in the required application form (see page 14).

1. **General Information, Eligibility, and Application Information**

Applicants must complete the following documents as part of their application:

* Application Cover Page & General Assurances
* Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification
* Eligibility and Applicant Information (see Section C above)

1. **Previous Community Action Grant status**

If applicable, applicants must provide information on previously received Community Action Grants including current status and whether the project is meeting the proposed timeline and outcomes. Applicants who are not meeting the requirements of their current grant agreement are not eligible for an additional grant.

1. **Community Characteristics**

Additional application scoring points are available for communities with small- and medium-sized populations and communities with high and medium social vulnerability.

Applicants should refer to the following sources to complete the Community Characteristics section of the application form:

* Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) [categorization information](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/SVI%20Communities%20Map%20and%20List_2021-12-01_1.pdf)
* Community Resilience Partnership regions:

Region 1: York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and southern Oxford Counties (including Brownfield, Denmark, Fryeburg, Hiram, Lovell, Porter, Stoneham, Stow, Sweden).

Region 2: Waldo, Hancock, and Washington Counties.

Region 3: Androscoggin, Oxford, Kennebec, Franklin, and Somerset Counties.

Region 4: Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Penobscot Counties.

1. **Maine Won’t Wait Strategy and Action(s)**

For no-match grants from the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2021-12-01_4.xlsx)), the Applicant must identify the [Maine Won’t Wait](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf) strategy and action(s) that the project will implement.

For grants to support other community-defined climate priorities, Applicants must describe the project and how it meets the goals of [Maine Won’t Wait](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf), and must complete the cost-share table in the budget worksheet.

1. **Scope of Work**

* Project Description - Describe the proposed project, including the tasks and deliverables, project timeline, roles and responsibilities of project managers and partners, and the expected outcomes.
* Project Timeline - Describe the timeline for completing each task or deliverable and the expected completion of the grant-funded project.
* Need for the Project - Describe the need for the project. Why is this project a community priority?
* Approach to community engagement and equity considerations - Maine’s climate response must ensure shared benefits across diverse populations of Maine people. Applicants should include robust community engagement in their action grant proposals, for example inclusive planning processes so that diverse community voices are able to participate. Climate change impacts will create the greatest hardships for already marginalized communities, and Maine must identify and promote solutions to help the people most vulnerable to climate impacts. Applicants should consider the potential benefits of their proposed climate action projects and, if applicable, describe how the project distributes those benefits equitably.

1. **Budget Proposal**

Applicants must provide a Budget Narrative and Budget Worksheet detailing the cost of the grant and where specific funds will be allocated.

Eligible expenses are limited to those incurred during the grant period of performance. Expenses incurred prior to or after the period of performance are not eligible. Expenses incurred prior to the grant period of performance are not eligible to be included in the budget nor as match.

For grants to support other community-defined climate priorities not listed in the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2021-12-01_4.xlsx)), applicants must complete the cost-share table in the budget worksheet. In-kind match is permitted. In-kind match is the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to the grant that would have been eligible costs. In-kind match is counted only for the period of the grant award.

**IMPORTANT**: The applicant’s budget narrative and budget worksheet must include any applicable incentives or rebates (for example, from Efficiency Maine) at the time of application, including for electric vehicles and charging equipment, heat pumps and VRF systems, LED lighting, and water heaters.

**Community Resilience Partnership**

**Community Action Grant**

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**Key Process Events**

## Informational Meetings

The Department will host an Informational Meeting concerning the RFA via Zoom. Time and a web link to the meeting are provided on the cover page of this RFA.

The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to provide information about the grant program, answer and/or field questions, clarify for potential Applicants any aspect of the RFA requirements that may be necessary and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in submitting responses to the RFA. Although attendance at the Informational Meeting is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

## Submitting Questions about the Request for Applications

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# 202305100 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.

## Amendments to the Request for Applications

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Applications 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.

## Application Submission

* 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.

If the need arises, the Department may reopen this 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](mailto: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# 202305100 Application – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
   6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or Word file and contain the completed application form (found on p. 14) and all relevant attachments.

**Community Resilience Partnership**

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**Application Evaluation and Selection**

## Scoring Weights and Process

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| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| **Criteria 1: General Information and Eligibility** | Pass/Fail |
| **Criteria 2: Previous Community Action Grant status** | Pass/Fail |
| **Criteria 3: Community Characteristics**   * 5 points for a small (population less than 4,000) community or high social vulnerability. * 3 points for a medium-size (population between 4,000 and 10,000) community or medium social vulnerability. * In a multi-community application, one qualifying community may earn points for the whole application | Up to 5 points |
| **Criteria 4: Maine Won’t Wait Strategy and Action(s)** | 15 points |
| **Criteria 5: Scope of Work**   * Project Description * Need for the Project * Approach to Community Engagement and Consideration of Equity | 60 points |
| **Criteria 6: Budget Proposal** | 20 points |
| **Total Points** | **100 points** |

An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the applications received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.  
  
For applications that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Criteria 1, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score the remaining Criteria sections shown above. Members of the evaluation team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.

1. **Selection and Award**
   1. The final decision regarding the award of the contract will be made by representatives of the Department subject to approval by the State Procurement Review Committee.
   2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
   3. Issuance of the RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFP, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Bidder.
   4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
2. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

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 Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/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.

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**Application Form**

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Applicants must use the embedded application document to complete their application. The application document can be accessed by double clicking on the icon above.

Applicants must also provide a certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the Bidder’s general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with the proposed services.