**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**

*Office of Innovation*



**RFA# 202402049**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

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| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Teddy Lyman **Title:** Climate Education Specialist  **Contact Information:** [theodore.lyman@maine.gov](mailto:theodore.lyman@maine.gov) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** March 29, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application Submission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline:** May 3, 2024 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.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**RFA# 202402049**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

The State of Maine is seeking applications to provide funding to local education providers for professional development of interdisciplinary climate education paired with non-profit organization partners to address the need for increased climate education across ages throughout the state of Maine.

A copy of the RFA, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all amendments related to the RFA, can be obtained at: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>.

Applications must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via e-mail, at: [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov). Application submissions must be received no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, on May 3, 2024. Applications not submitted to the Division of Procurement Services’ aforementioned e-mail address by the aforementioned deadline will not be considered for award.

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Community-Based Organization or community partner** | A public or private nonprofit organization that:   1. Is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and 2. Provides educational or related services to individuals in the community. |
| **Department** | Department of Education |
| **Climate Education** | Instruction around content and/or pedagogy centered on climate (specifically pertaining to historical, current, and future climate change) and/or the environment |
| **Local Education Provider** | A school administrative unit, a school in the unorganized territory under Chapter 119, a school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education, a CTE Region |
| **Applicant** | Local Education Provider |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **Project-based** | Project-based learning is a method of teaching where students engage is projects that span the learning journey and that are personally meaningful. |
| **Place-based** | Place-based learning is a method of teaching that connects students to their place in a meaningful way. |
| **Interdisciplinary** | Interdisciplinary instruction is the braiding of knowledge and methods from multiple content areas, which utilizes a combination of approaches to examine an authentic/real-world theme, issue, question, or topic. |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The Department of Education (Department) is seeking intends to provide funding to local education providers for the delivery of climate education professional development in the [H.P. 1409 L.D. 1902 Chapter 178](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1409&item=7&snum=130), including priority for historical underserved communities by climate education, as defined in this Request for Applications (RFA) document. This document provides instructions for submitting applications, the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded Applicant(s).

The source of funding for these awards is State funding.

## 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 Part III of the RFA.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. The application must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFA and the awarded Applicant’s proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. 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.).
8. 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.
9. 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

To be eligible to submit an application, the applicant must be a local education provider. For the purpose of this RFA, a local education provider is defined as follows:

1. A school administrative unit as described in [20-A M.R.S.A §1, 26](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1.html);
2. A school in an unorganized territory under [20-A M.R.S.A Chapter 119](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Ach119sec0.html);
3. A CTE Region school/program established under [20-A M.R.S.A. Chapter 313, Subchapter 4](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8451.html) (Applied Technology Education); or
4. A school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be reviewed.

## Awards

The Department plans to make multiple awards of varying amounts. $750,000 has been allocated for this RFA. The Department may award all, part, or none of this allocation at its discretion. First-time Applicants (Applicants not previously funded under RFA# 202308185) will be given priority, with the potential for all funds allocated for this RFA to be awarded to first-time Applicants. Local Education Providers that have previously received funds from the Climate Education Professional Development Grant Pilot Program (RFA #202308185) will also be reviewed and may be awarded under this RFA, depending on number and size of the awards made to first-time Applicants.

The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring application(s) and/or make awards for amounts less than requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

Programming must be completed by **Monday, June 30th, 2025**. Final invoices are due by **Friday, August 29th, 2025**. Invoice submittal directions and expectations will be provided in the award contracts.

Local Education Providers can submit a collaborative application for consideration. In that case, a program should submit one application from the lead fiscal Local Education Provider. Additional Local Education Providers in the collaborative program must be listed as partners in the application. Programs are encouraged to recruit from neighboring providers when necessary to maximize program reach.

A Local Education Provider may submit multiple applications as long as the programs on each application are separate and distinct.

The award term cannot go beyond June 30th, 2025.

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [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 contract award.

**PART II ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

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1. **Program Requirements**

Successful applications will:

* 1. Provide high-quality professional development to pre-K-12 teachers;
  2. Demonstrate increased student access to climate education;
  3. Emphasize interdisciplinary, place-based learning, and/or project based work;
  4. Focus on climate education content and/or pedagogy; and
  5. Include a partnership with at least one non-profit, community-based organization;
     1. If Local Education Provider meets Priority 1 and/or 2 (listed below) and they are unable to find or connect with a non-profit, community-based organization, they must include an explanation for the omission and details of needs from partnership in application. The RFA Coordinator will work the Local Education Provider, if awarded, to find a community partner.

1. **Priority**

The Department will give priority to applications that demonstrate increased student access by serving communities historically underserved by climate education, meaning local education providers that *have not* been able to provide current environmental or climate education instruction, partnerships, or field opportunities at the local education provider.

These schools and communities may include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Students receiving special education services
  2. Multilingual Learners
  3. Students from the black, indigenous, persons of color (BiPoC) community
  4. Students in alternative learning education environments
  5. Remote schools
  6. Rural schools (“rural” from Title V status)
  7. Schools with high populations of students with free or reduced-price meals, >40%
  8. Migrant students
  9. Tribal nations, including tribal schools

1. **Allowable Use of Funds**

Funding which is ultimately awarded may be used for the following purposes:

* 1. Hiring or contracting for program staff;
  2. Providing stipends or other incentives to teachers and staff;
     1. Stipends require written justification during the contract negotiation phase, if awarded.
     2. Stipends may only be used to pay for staff time beyond their compensated time.
  3. Developing curricula, instructional materials, and purchasing related supplies;
  4. Purchasing non-instructional supplies;
  5. Covering costs associated with renting physical space for programming; and
  6. Paying administrative expenses.

1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**

Funding which is ultimately awarded may not be used for the following purposes:

* 1. Direct instruction by program staff and/or partner organization in the classroom;
  2. Construction or infrastructure expenses of any kind;
  3. Stipends and substitution costs for concurrent work and programming (see H.2 above); or
  4. Food and beverage unless it is reasonable and necessary for program operation, such as overnight programming.

1. **Reporting Requirements**

Each awarded applicant will be required to provide the following reports:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1 – Required Reports** | | |
| **Name of Report** | | **Description** |
| **a.** | Award Report | Includes the following:   1. How many teachers and other staff participated in the climate education professional development program; 2. What adjustments were made to the climate education professional development plan and why those adjustments were necessary; 3. How grants were used by the community partner and a summary of other resources used; 4. How was student access to climate change education increased through this program? Please include metrics; how many students were or will be reached, including demographic information, content areas, type of curriculum? How were priorities 1 and 2 in section G met, if applicable? 5. Will this climate education program or the results from it continue as a program in the local education provider, either way, please provide further details as to why or why not. 6. What performance metrics were met? 7. What were the successes and barriers throughout the planning and implementation of this program? 8. What were the total expenditures and any necessary details on expenses? |
| **b.** | Deliverable (only one required) | 1. Narrative of the program with photos. Consisting of 3-5 single spaced pages and PD and/or student photos; 2. Video of program narrative, possibly including interviews, shots of the program in action; 3. Instructional materials or artifacts as a direct result of the professional development program; or 4. Participation from both the community partner and participating member(s) of the local education provider in panel discussion/workshop at climate education summit or Educator Summit in Summer 2025. |

Note: A form will be provided upon contract finalization to program awardees for the completion of this report.

Submit all the required reports to the Department in accordance with the timelines established in **Table 2**:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2 – Required Reports Timelines** | | | |
| **Name of Report** | | **Period Captured by Report** | **Due Date** |
| **a.** | Award Report | Entire award period | Sixty (60) days following the close of the award period (last possible date August 29th, 2025) |
| **b.** | Deliverables | Entire award period | Sixty (60) days following the close of the award period (last possible date August 29th, 2025) |

**PART III KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

## Submission of Questions

* 1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
     1. Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix A** (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 RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFA as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page.
     3. Submitted Questions must include the RFA 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 State’s 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

All amendments released in regard to this RFA 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.
     1. Any 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.

1. **Delivery Instructions:** Applications are to be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at [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.

Application submission e-mails that are successfully received by the [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.

* 1. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail application submissions that have the requested files attached will be accepted.
  2. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to check with its organization’s information technology team to ensure that security settings will not encrypt its application submission.
  3. 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 as described above.
  4. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202402049 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.

1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed
   * + 1. **Application Form** (found in Part V of the RFA) and all required information and attachments as stated in the form.
       2. **Appendix B** (List of Community Partners): one must be submitted for each community partner.
       3. **Appendix C** (Assurance of Intent to Partner with Community Provider(s)): one must be submitted for each community partner.
3. The Application Form must be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file.
4. Applicants are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFA or Application Form for the purpose of extending their response. Materials not requested will not be considered part of the application and will not be evaluated.

**PART IV APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. **Evaluation Process – General Information**
   1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.
   2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that all contracts are awarded to the Applicants that provide the best value to the State of Maine.
   3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the applications received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to applications, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Applicants must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.
   4. 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.
2. **Scoring Process:** The evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed below. 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.
3. **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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Proposed Program | 45 |
| Prioritization Points | 30 |
| Budget | 25 |
| **Total Points** | **100 points** |

1. **Selection and Award**
   1. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
   2. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFA, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.
   3. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
2. **Contract Administration and Conditions**
   1. The awarded Applicants will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with the appropriate riders as determined by the issuing Department.
   2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110)). This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.
   3. Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Applicants in the finalization of the contract.

**PART V APPLICATION FORM**

**Applicants must use the Application Form embedded below to submit their application in response to this RFA.**

The Application Form may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.



**APPENDIX A SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

This form should be used by Applicants when submitting written questions to the RFA Coordinator.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFA, enter “N/A” under the RFA Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary. Submit this document in WORD format, not PDF.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organization Name:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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**APPENDIX B LIST OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**State of Maine - Department of Education**

**RFA# 202402049**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

The following are the identified participating community provider(s):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Identified Partner** | | | |
| **Community Provider Name:** | |  | |
| **Community Provider Contact:** | |  | |
| **Tel:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Provider Street Address:** | |  | |
| **Provider City/State/Zip:** | |  | |
| **Type of Program:** | |  | |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications:** | | | |
|  | | | |

**APPENDIX C ASSURANCE OF INTENT TO PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDER(S)**

**State of Maine - Department of Education**

**RFA# 202402049**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Provider Name:** | |  | |
| **Community Provider Contact:** | |  | |
| **Tel:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Provider Street Address:** | |  | |
| **Provider City/State/Zip:** | |  | |
| **Type of Program:** | |  | |

It is our interest and intent to engage in a climate education professional development partnership with **(insert local education provider’s name)**. We have coordinated with that provider and are in the process of establishing a partnership to support students.  If **(insert local education provider’s name)** is successful in its award application, we will work toward development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support this partnership.

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