**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**

**RFA# 202410182**

**Extended Learning Opportunity Expansion 2.0**

**Grant Funding**

**FY 2025 Application**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Lana Sawyer **Title:** Extended Learning Coordinator, Office of Workforce Development and Innovative Pathways**Contact Information:** lana.sawyer@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by email by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** Friday, November 1, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time  |
| **ApplicationSubmission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Office of State Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** Friday, November 15, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Applications must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov  |

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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**  |
| **Applicant**  | Organization or school submitting an application  |
| **Awardee**  | Organization or school awarded a Subaward Agreement (contract)  |
| **Charter School** | A public charter school as defined in [Title 20-A, §2401: Definitions (maine.gov)](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec2401.html). |
| **Community-Based Organization (CBO)**  | A public or private non-profit organization that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and serve local community needs, such as providing educational or supportive services |
| **CTE** | Career and Technical Education Center as defined in [Title 20-A M.R.S. § 8301-A(3)](https://mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8301-A.html) or Region as defined in [Title 20-A M.R.S § 8301-A(6)](https://mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8301-A.html); |
| **Department or Maine DOE** | Maine Department of Education  |
| **Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO)**  | Extended Learning Opportunity means an experience outside of the traditional classroom, with an emphasis on community-based career exploration, which may be credit-bearing. |
| **Grant**  | Subaward Agreement  |
| **Intermediary Agency**  | An Intermediary Agency can be a CTE or CBO willing to be in direct connection with publicly funded educational organizations. An Intermediary Agency works directly with the Maine ELO Program for final registration actions. |
| **MOUs**  | Memorandum of Understanding(s) |
| **Paid Meaningful Work Experience**  | A work-based experiential learning opportunity for youth to address a defined problem or participate in a project that is of value to an employer and provides an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and solutions. Meaningful paid work experience gives youth the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience in a business, non-profit or the government sector and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths. It includes an opportunity to learn foundational skills as well as 21st century skills, such as creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, technology, and decision making.  |
| **RFA** | Request for Applications  |
| **SAU** | School Administrative Unit as defined in [20-A M.R.S.A Section 1, Subsection 26](https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/Statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1.html).  |
| **Schools**  | SAUs, charter schools, and/or CTEs |
| **State**  | State of Maine  |
| **Subaward Agreement**  | Official document commonly known as a contract describing the expectations of both the State and the Awardee.   |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The Maine Department of Education's (DOE) mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. The purpose of this grant funding is to build upon the success of the federally funded 2022 Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) expansion, which provided support for new ELO programs or expansion of existing ELO programs. The **Extended Learning Opportunity 2.0** Request for Applications (RFA) seeks to help build sustainable programming to support Maine youth to gain a better understanding of their career opportunities, acquire valuable foundational and 21st Century skills, and create meaningful connections to employers in Maine. This RFA is intended to assist schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) in establishing and/or expanding Extended Learning Opportunities Programs in Maine.

A critical component of the [Department’s Whole Student framework](https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/II/wholestudent) is increasing student engagement by providing opportunities for students to learn about and participate in opportunities unique to Maine. ELOs with their focus on career exploration with Maine businesses and organizations, partnerships with communities, and other real-world, project-based experiences that spark students’ interest and curiosity, provide robust support for the Whole Student Framework. ELO Programs assist in setting up structured, yet flexible and engagingELOs designed to meet the specific needs of Maine students, publicly funded schools and communities, through hands-on learning and documentation of connected [Maine Learning Standards](https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/content) to award credit toward high school diploma.

The primary goals of this RFA include:

1. Expand the number of high-quality ELOs offered statewide.
2. Increase supports to ensure more high school students, particularly disadvantaged youth, have the opportunity to participate in paid meaningful work experiences.
3. Develop an integrated, sustainable, and effective statewide ELO support system with a focus on career exploration.

Schools are encouraged to collaborate regionally and share an ELO Coordinator that may benefit all students in a region. Likewise, ELO Coordinators at schools are encouraged to collaborate with existing special education and alternative education programs to ensure programming is accessible for students.

## 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 the SAU’s Superintendent, charter school’s Head of School, the CTE’s Director, or the community-based organization’s Executive Director to legally bind the Applicant. It 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. In the event that a Applicant believes any information that it submits in response to this RFA is confidential, it must mark that information accordingly, and include citation to legal authority in support of the Applicant’s claim of confidentiality. In the event that the Department receives a FOAA request that includes submissions marked as confidential, the Department shall evaluate the information and any legal authority from the Applicant to determine whether the information is an exception to FOAA’s definition of public record. If the Department determines to release information that an Applicant has marked confidential, it shall provide advance notice to the Applicant to allow for them to seek legal relief.
9. 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.
10. 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 considered for grant funding under this application process, Applicants must be either:

1. an SAU, charter school, or CTE proposing to initiate or expand ELO programming, or
2. a CBO partnering with a school for the same purpose. A letter of intent for CBOs applying in partnership with a school is required and must include the following:
	1. Information regarding the scope of work
	2. Signature from the Superintendent and Executive Director of the CBO
	3. Agreement that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be completed prior to contract approval.

## Awards

## The 2024 State of Maine Legislature allocated $1,500,000 to provide career exploration services targeted to high school students. The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFA process, including partial awards. The minimum award amount is $10,000. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received and available funds. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring application(s) and/or make awards at amounts less than that requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State. All documentation of the award will be signed by the SAU’s Superintendent, charter school’s Head of School, the CTE’s Director, or the community-based organization’s Executive Director.

## The performance period is from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2026.

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**  **REQUIREMENTS AND ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDING**

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1. **Required Activities of Awardees**
	1. Awardees are required to:
		1. Engage and sustain employer engagement in ELO program.
		2. Establish and track metrics in Section D below.
		3. Prepare and submit narrative reports and metrics each semester.
		4. Invoice on a fiscal year quarterly basis plus thirty (30) days via the grant management system Grants4ME is required.
		5. Provide basic information to update the Maine DOE community asset map.
		6. Actively participate in Maine DOE’s grant-related informational webinars, ongoing technical assistance and coaching, and meet quarterly with a learning cohort for awardees to share and learn best practices from one another.
	2. Informational webinar for grant recipients to review expectations and processes.
	3. Ongoing technical assistance and coaching on establishing ELO programming and grant requirements and as requested by grantees throughout the period of the grant.
	4. Establishment of a learning cohort for grant recipients to share and learn best practices from one another. The group will meet quarterly throughout the grant period.
2. **Priority Use of Funds**

**Additional points will be awarded for the programs that do one or more of the following:**

* 1. Develop the engagement and integration of the following students.
* Youth who are economically disadvantaged
* Youth with disabilities
* Youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness
* Youth in foster care
* Multilingual learners
* Youth in rural communities
* Youth who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color)
* Youth who are justice-involved
	1. Establish regional collaboration with other SAUs.
1. **Allowable Use of Funds**

**Funding must be used** to provide career exploration services for youth in grades 9-12 or enrolled in an Adult Education High School Diploma program.

 **Funding may be used for:**

* 1. **Training and partnerships:**
		1. Development and delivery of ELO curriculum, utilizing hybrid, remote and/or in-person formats, in collaboration with CBO’s and businesses.
		2. Recruitment of youth to participate in ELO programming and paid meaningful work experience to the extent possible.
		3. Establishing or expanding direct connections to employers willing and able to hire and/or mentor students and supervise them.
	2. **Generating awareness of ELO by:**
		1. Conducting community surveys to identify potential partners for ELO programs.
		2. Conducting business outreach, marketing, and community engagement activities to raise awareness of and participation in ELO programming and career exploration.
	3. **Delivery of ELO programming by:**
		1. Expanding or creating new internal capacity to support ELO programming such as employment of an ELO Coordinator or instructional staff within the district.
		2. Support for pre-existing ELO programs through expanding scale and/or capacity.
		3. Training new instructors, including ongoing professional development opportunities, to increase the availability of ELO opportunities.
		4. Purchasing of supplies, which include all tangible personal property other than “equipment” with a unit cost of less than $10,000 (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-A/subject-group-ECFR2a6a0087862fd2c/section-200.1) for the definition of Supplies).
	4. **Providing supports to improve equitability and accessibility in ELOs:**
		1. Membership for career exploration virtual platforms.
		2. Design support services to expand opportunities for vulnerable youth to access ELO programs.
	5. **Additional guidance and optional uses of this funding:**

Reimbursement for food, beverages, and snacks may be allowable under certain circumstances. Reimbursement must be discussed with the grant administrator prior to the purchase of food, beverages, or snacks. Grant awardees are always expected to use the program funds for purposes that are reasonable, necessary, and prudent. Food and beverage costs may be reimbursed if:

* + 1. the items are critical for the student(s) participation and learning success, and
		2. a detailed budget has been *provided* *to and approved* by the Department. Costs are not to exceed the [State’s current per diem rates](https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-results?action=perdiems_report&fiscal_year=2024&state=ME&city=&zip=).
1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**
	1. Purchase of equipment, defined as an item with an acquisition cost of $10,000 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-A/subject-group-ECFR2a6a0087862fd2c/section-200.1) for the definition of Equipment).
	2. Funding pre-existing positions or programs unless they are expanding in scale and capacity.
	3. Out-of-state field trips
	4. Expenses outside of the subaward period of performance
	5. Gift cards or certificates
	6. Compensation for participants is not allowable. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the funding available from [Manpower until 10/31/2026](https://www.manpowermaine.com/maine-career-exploration-program/).
	7. Vehicle purchases or subsidizing
	8. Indirect costs
2. **Additional Considerations**

The Maine DOE reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating an applicant’s experience and capabilities to successfully implement the proposed program.

1. **Reporting Requirements**
	1. Track and record all data/information necessary to complete the required reports listed below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity**  | **Outcome**  |
| Program Participation  |  Number of students  |
| Student Demographics   | * Youth with one or more disabilities
* Youth who are economically disadvantaged
* Youth in foster care
* Youth in rural communities
* Youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness
* Youth who are multilingual
* Youth who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)
* Youth who are justice-involved
 |
| Program Narrative  | * Description of ELO programming
* Two success stories, at minimum, for publication and promotion through social media, printed stories, annual report to the legislature, or other forms of publication.
 |
| Credits Attained  | Number of core or elective credits  |
| Community/Business Partners  | Total number  Partner names    |

* 1. Performance Periods

|  |
| --- |
| **Required Reports Timelines** |
| **Name of Report**  | **Period Captured by Report** | **Due Date** |
| Semester Narrative Report | Each semester and summer | Thirty (30) days after each semester and summer |
| Contract Closeout Report | Entire contract period | Sixty (60) days following the close of the contract period |

**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. Questions 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 Office of State 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 Office of State 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 must be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Office of State Procurement Services at 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 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# 202410182 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed **Application Form** AND **Budget Form** (found in Part V of the RFA) and all required information and attachments as stated in the form.
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.

All eligible applications will be rated, and rank-ordered according to the rating score in each allocation category. Applications will be funded in descending order, highest to lowest score, subject to funding availability. If any one section receives less than 50% of possible points, or an overall score of less than 60, the Department reserves the right to reject the application from award consideration.

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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Part 1 - Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Part 2 - Program Requirements and Information | Pass/Fail |
| Part 3 - Program Design | 35 |
| Part 4 - Sustainability | 20 |
| Part 5 – Equitable Access and Support | 15 |
| Part 6 - Regional Approach  | 5 |
| Part 7 - Budget and Budget Narrative | 25 |
| **Total Points**  | 100 |

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 RFA 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.
	4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Applicant must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

**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. Please note the embedded documents below will not be accessible when viewing this RFA in a web browser. Download the RFA and view it in a desktop app to access the embedded documents.





**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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