**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Economic and Community Development**

*Housing Opportunity Program*

**RFA# 202410187**

**Housing Opportunity Program Service Provider Grants**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.**Name:** Hilary Gove **Title:** Housing Opportunity Program Coordinator**Contact Information:** hilary.gove@maine.gov  |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** December 3, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **ApplicationSubmission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:***Submission Deadline:** January 14, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Applications must be submitted electronically to:* Proposals@maine.gov |

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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**State of Maine**

**Department of Economic and Community Development**

**RFA# 202410187**

**Housing Opportunity Program Service Provider Grants**

The State of Maine is seeking applications from service providers to support municipalities with community housing planning and implementation services.

A copy of the RFA and all related documents can be obtained at: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>

Applications must be submitted to the State of Maine Office of State Procurement Services, via e-mail, at: Proposals@maine.gov. Application submissions must be received no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, on January 14, 2025. Applications will be opened the following business day.

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

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

|  |  |
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| **Term/Acronym**  | **Definition**  |
| **Department**  | Department of Economic and Community Development  |
| **Municipal Grants**  | Grants to municipalities to support municipal ordinance development, technical assistance, and community housing planning services to increase housing opportunities   |
| **Municipality**  | A city or a town, excluding all unorganized and deorganized townships, plantations, townships, and towns that have delegated administration of land use controls to the Maine Land Use Planning Commission pursuant to [12 M.R.S. § 682(1)](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/12/title12sec682.html)  |
| **RFA**  | Request for Application  |
| **Service Provider**  | Regional planning organizations (councils of governments, regional planning commissions) and regional economic development organizations as referenced in [Title 30-A, Chapter 119](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/30-A/title30-Ach119sec0.html), county governments, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and cooperative extension programs, and for-profit enterprises. Municipalities are also eligible to apply as a service provider    |
| **Service Provider Grants**  | Grants to service providers to provide support to municipalities with municipal ordinance development and technical assistance to increase housing opportunities  |
| **State**  | State of Maine  |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The State of Maine, Department of Economic and Community Development (Department) is seeking applications for Service Provider Grants as defined in this Request for Application (RFA). Service Provider Grants are grants to service providers to provide community housing planning and implementation services to municipalities and regions to increase housing opportunities.

This document provides instructions for submitting applications, the procedure, and criteria by which the awarded Applicant(s) will be selected.

The Housing Opportunity Program, as described in [5 M.R.S. § 13056-J](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/5/title5sec13056-J.html), provides grants and assistance to municipalities to encourage and support the development of additional housing units in the state, including housing units that are affordable for low-income and moderate-income individuals, and targeted to community workforce housing needs.

## 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

In order to be considered for grant funding under this process, Applicants must be a Service Provider. Service Providers include:

* + 1. Regional planning organizations (councils of governments, regional planning commissions);
		2. Regional economic development organizations as referenced in [Title 30-A, Chapter 119](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/30-A/title30-Ach119sec0.html);
		3. County governments;
		4. Non-profit organizations;
		5. Academic institutions;
		6. Cooperative extension programs;
		7. For-profit enterprises; and
		8. Municipalities.

A Service Provider that applied for a Housing Opportunity Program Service Provider Grant and received an award in Fiscal Year 2024 is eligible to apply for this round of grant funding, if the proposed activities in this grant round are different than the previous grant round.

An Eligible Service Provider may only submit one application. However, a Service Provider may request funding for multiple projects within its one application. A Service Provider may request up to $150,000 for one or multiple projects within its one application.

## Awards

## The Department anticipates making multiple awards to the Applicants receiving the highest scores as a result of this RFA process. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received, the quality of the proposals, and available funds. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring applications and/or make awards at amounts less than that requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

A Service Provider, as defined above on page 3, is eligible for an award up to $150,000 for one or multiple projects within in its one application.

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.

1. **Applicable Legislation**

The Housing Opportunity Program Service Provider Grants are governed by [5 M.R.S. § 31056-J](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/5/title5sec13056-J.html) and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development’s rules, [19-100 C.M.R. Ch. 4](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/19/chaps19.htm), Rules Regarding Housing Opportunity Program Grants.

**PART II**  **ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

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1. **Eligible Activities**

The Department intends the Service Provider Grants to provide municipalities and/or regions with the following activities to remove barriers to housing and increase housing opportunities.

The Department encourages Applicants to propose projects that primarily support regions, sub-regions, or groups of municipalities. A Service Provider may request funding for one or multiple projects within its one application.

1. Community Education:
	* Lead community engagement and educational programming for municipalities, developers, and community members to facilitate discussions about affordable housing development in communities and regions;
	* Create and distribute housing guidance material to assist municipalities and regions with land use planning, data collection and analysis, and affordable housing development;
2. Data Collection and Housing Production Goal Setting:
	* Establish housing data collection procedures for municipalities and regions, including demolition, building permit, and certificate of occupancy data;
	* Establish housing production goals for municipalities and sub-regions in alignment with the [Statewide and Regional Housing Production Goals](https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov.decd/files/inline-files/Housing%20Goals%20Report%20September%202024.pdf);
3. Municipal Planning and Policy:
	* Update municipal comprehensive plans to identify housing and land use priorities;
	* Create municipal or regional housing needs assessments;
	* Provide municipal mapping or other spatial analysis tools to visualize zoning ordinances or housing needs by regions or municipalities;
	* Develop pre-approved designs for different housing types for municipalities and regions;
	* Create municipal or regional accessory dwelling unit programs to increase ADU production;
	* Review municipal land use ordinances to identify barriers to housing production and to make recommendations for changes to increase housing;
	* Support the development of form-based codes in municipalities and regions to increase housing opportunities;
	* Develop or update housing and community development master plans;
4. Pre-Development:
	* Assess feasibility of potential affordable housing sites; and
	* Assess infrastructure upgrades.

All proposed projects must prioritize the above eligible activities but may have additional goals such as supporting climate resiliency, transportation planning, diversity, and broadband access.

1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**
	1. Service Providers may not use awarded grants funds for acquisition of real property or equipment.
	2. Service Providers may not use awarded grants funds to provide direct services to municipalities that are not in compliance with [P.L. 2021, ch. 672](https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1489&item=9&snum=130) and [P.L. 2023, ch. 192](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1095&item=5&snum=131).

If an Applicant is proposing an activity to support a named municipality, then the Applicant must provide the Department with a letter from that named municipality indicating that the municipality is in compliance with [P.L. 2021, ch. 672](https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1489&item=9&snum=130) and [P.L. 2023, ch. 192](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1095&item=5&snum=131). Municipal letters are not required if a proposed activity serves a region, without targeting named municipalities.

1. **Grant Requirements**
	1. All funded Service Providers will be required to provide quarterly progress updates.

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| **Required Reports** |
| **Name of Report** | **Description**  | **Period Captured by Report** | **Due Date** |
| **a.** | Quarter 1 Narrative Report | Narrative describing updates on activities, timeline, budget, and discussion of successes and barriers. | Quarter 1 | Ten (10) days after each quarter |
| **b.** | Quarter 2 Narrative Report | Narrative describing updates on activities, timeline, budget, and discussion of successes and barriers. | Quarter 2 | Ten (10) days after each quarter |
| **c.** | Quarter 3 Narrative Report | Narrative describing updates on activities, timeline, budget, and discussion of successes and barriers. | Quarter 3 | Ten (10) days after each quarter |
| **d.** | Quarter 4 Narrative Report | Narrative describing updates on activities, timeline, budget, and discussion of successes and barriers. | Quarter 4 | Ten (10) days after each quarter |
| **e.** | Quarter 5 Narrative Report | Narrative describing updates on activities, timeline, budget, and discussion of successes and barriers. | Quarter 5 | Ten (10) days after each quarter |
| **f.** | Contract Closeout Report | Includes information on completed activities and total expenditures.  | Entire contract period | Sixty (60) days following the close of the contract period. |

* 1. All funded Service Providers will be required to have at least one representative attend two workshops to discuss funded activities with other grant award recipients. The exact date, time, and location of the following workshops will be established following notification of grant awards.

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| **Required Workshops** |
| **Workshops** | **Description**  | **Anticipated Workshop Timeframe** |
| **a.** | Opening Workshop | This opening workshop will provide an opportunity for service provider representatives to meet, discuss project ideas, and address potential areas of concern. | Quarter 1 |
| **b.** | Closing Workshop | This closing workshop will provide an opportunity for service provider representatives to discuss finalization of activities, successes, and thoughts for future projects and needs. | Quarter 6 |

1. **Timeline**

Projects will have a period of performance of 18 months, with the potential option to extend. Please note that the dates provided below are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, to comply with all procedural requirements associated with the RFA and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

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| Anticipated Period of Performance (dates) | Anticipated Period of Performance (months) |
| May 2025– October 2026 | 18 |

**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 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 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 Division of 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# 202410187 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
1. **Submission Contents**
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed **Application 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. Application submissions must include:
	* + 1. A budget spreadsheet, as described in Criteria 4 of the application form.
			2. A municipal letter, indicating compliance with P.L. 2021, ch. 672 and P.L. 2023, ch. 192, if the Applicant is proposing an activity to support a named municipality. This is described in further detail in Criteria 5 of the application form.
5. 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.

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| **Scoring Criteria**  | **Maximum Points Available**  |
| **Criteria 1:** Eligibility  | Pass/Fail  |
| **Criteria 2:** Organization Qualifications and Experience  | 30 points  |
| **Criteria 3:** Scope of Work |   |
| Describe the proposed activity or activities. | 15 points |
| Does the proposed scope of work primarily support a region, sub-region or group of municipalities? | 5 points |
| Why is there a need for the activity or activities?  | 5 points |
| What is the anticipated timeline for completing the scope of work? | 5 points |
| What are the deliverables for the scope of work? | 5 points |
| How do you intend to engage with members of the community/communities? | 5 points |
| What long-term effects will your proposal have? What outcomes do you expect to achieve?  | 5 points |
| **Criteria 4:** Budget  | 25 points  |
| **Criteria 5:** Municipal Letters | Pass/Fail  |
| **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.
	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.



**APPENDIX A**

 **State of Maine**

 **Department of Economic and Community Development**

 **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

 **RFP# 202410187**

**Housing Opportunity Program Service Provider Grants**

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.

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| **Organization Name:** |  |

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| **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
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