**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Education**

*Office of Innovation*



**RFA# 202412219**

**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:** Theodore (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:** February 7, 2025 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application Submission Deadline** | *Applications must be received by the Office of State Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline:** March 21, 2025 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.  *Applications must be submitted electronically to:* [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto: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** | Local Education Provider |
| **Community-Based Organization, community partner, or 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. |
| **Climate Education** | Instruction around content and/or pedagogy centered on climate (specifically pertaining to historical, current, and future climate change) and/or the environment. |
| **CTE** | 1. Career and Technical Education Regions, [20-A M.R.S. Chapter 313, Subchapter 4](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8451.html) 2. Career and Technical Education Center, [20-A M.R.S. Chapter 313, Subchapter 3](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8401.html) |
| **Department** | Maine Department of Education |
| **EUT** | Education in Unorganized Territory, [20-A M.R.S.A Chapter 119](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Ach119sec0.html); |
| **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. |
| **Local Education Provider** | A school administrative unit (SAU), a school in the unorganized territory under Chapter 119 (EUT), a school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education, a CTE Region, or a CTE Center. |
| **SAU** | School Administrative Unit, [20-A M.R.S.A §1, 26](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1.html); |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **Project-based** | Project-based learning is a method of teaching where students engage in 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. |

**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

Office of Innovation

**RFA# 202412219**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

**PART I INTRODUCTION**

1. **Purpose and Background**

The Maine Department of Education (Department) is seeking 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.

1. **General Provisions**

1. From the time the RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator.  No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFA.  Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding 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 and software or system demonstrations, 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 below in the “Proposal Submission Requirements” section of the RFA.
4. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to the RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the proposal, 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 an Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
5. Application must be signed by the SAU’s Superintendent, 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.). State contracts and information related to contracts, including bid submissions, are generally public records per FOAA.
8. In the event that an 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, are included by this reference.  It is the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.

1. **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. Chapter 313, Subchapter 4;](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8451.html)
4. A CTE center established under [20-A M.R.S. Chapter 313, Subchapter 3;](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec8401.html) or
5. A school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

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

1. **Awards**

The Department plans to make multiple awards of varying amounts. Applicants may apply for $30,000 or less for Program Type 1 (details below) OR $100,000 or less for Program Type 2 (details below). $650,000 has been allocated for this RFA with $350,000 allocated for Program Type 1 and $300,000 for Program Type 2. The Department may award all, part, none, or modify of this allocation at its discretion. First-time Applicants (Applicants not previously funded under RFA #202308185 or RFA #202402049) 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 or RFA #202402049) 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 Tuesday, June 30th, 2026.  Final invoices are due by Friday, August 31st, 2026. 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 and complete Appendix A. 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, 2026. The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of this RFA process.

1. **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.

**PART II SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED**

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. Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into programming;
5. Focus on climate education content and/or pedagogy;
6. Include a partnership with at least one non-profit, community-based organization;

*Including but not limited to:*

* Environmental Education Organization
* Professional Learning/Curriculum Development Organization
* Scientific Research Center
* Indigenous Knowledge Sharers
* Land Trust
* Soil and Water District

1. Prioritize increased access by serving students from communities historically underserved by climate education.

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

* + - Students receiving special education services
    - Multilingual Learners
    - Tribal nations, including tribal schools
    - Students from the black, indigenous, persons of color (BiPoC) community
    - Students in alternative learning education environments
    - Rural and remote schools (as defined by [20 USC CHAPTER 70, SUBCHAPTER V, Part B: Rural Education Initiative](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-2023-title20-chapter70-subchapter5-partB&edition=2023))
    - Schools with high populations of students with free or reduced-price meals, >40%
    - Migrant students

1. **Program Type**

The Department will evaluate two distinct program models with noted application and budget differences. Applicants may only select one program type per application.

1. School or SAU Professional Learning

* A program that is restricted to educators and staff within the local education provider.
* Programs will be limited to budgets between $5,000 and $30,000.

1. Professional Learning Summit

* A program where the community partner and local education provider host a convening of educators from the applying local education provider and are open to educators in a broader region (up to statewide).
* Programs will be limited to budgets between $5,000 and $100,000.

1. **Priority**
2. For Program Type 1 Only: The Department will give priority to local education providers that do not currently provide environmental, outdoor or climate education instruction, partnerships, or field opportunities.

1. For Program Type 2 Only: The Department will also give priority to clear demonstration of a recruitment plan that increases access to educators of students from communities historically underserved by climate education.

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.

* Stipends may only be used to pay for staff time beyond their regularly compensated time and contract.

1. Developing curricula, instructional materials, and purchasing related supplies.
2. Teaching alongside community partner personnel curriculum, not to exceed 50% of partner scope of work in program AND awardee educators must be an active partner during instruction.
3. Purchasing non-instructional supplies.
4. Covering costs associated with renting physical space for programming; and
5. 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 exceeding 50% of partner scope of work in program and separate from awardee educator.
2. Construction or infrastructure expenses of any kind.
3. Stipends and substitution costs for concurrent work and programming; or
4. Food and beverage unless it is preapproved during the contract negotiation, 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 to 2 pages):   1. How many teachers and other staff participated in the climate education professional development program? 2. 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 if available. How was the priority met, if applicable. 3. Will this climate education program or the results from it continue as a program or effort at local education provider, either way, please provide further details as to why or why not. 4. Which deliverables were met, which were not and why? 5. What were the successes and barriers throughout the planning and implementation of this program? 6. What adjustments were made to the climate education professional development contract plan or budgetary expenses and why were those adjustments were necessary? |
| **b.** | Deliverable | Case Study of the program with photos. Consisting of one (1) single spaced page outlining the program, successes, and stories to inspire future program applicants and PD and/or student photos, and may include participant quotes. |

Note: A form will be provided upon contract finalization to program awardees for the completion of this report. Due date of the report is August 29th, 2026.

**PART III**  **KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

1. **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.
2. Applicants and other interested parties should use Appendix B (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. If used, the form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
3. 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.
4. 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.

1. Question & Answer Summary: Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date: [Office of State Procurement Services RFA Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps).  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.

1. **Amendments**

All amendments released in regard to the RFA will also be posted on the following website: [Office of State Procurement Services RFA Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps).  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.

1. **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.
2. Any e-mails containing original proposal submissions or any additional or revised proposal files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.

1. Delivery Instructions: Applications must be submitted electronically to the Office of State Procurement Services at [Applications@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov).
2. Only proposal submissions received by e-mail will be considered.  The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
3. Proposal submission e-mails that are successfully received by the [Applications@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.
4. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions.  Only e-mail proposal submissions that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
5. 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.
6. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail.  Applicants may submit files separately 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.
7. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202412219 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.

1. Submission Contents:
2. Application submissions must include the Applicant’s completed:
3. Application Form (found in Part V of the RFA)
4. Appendix A – List of Community Partners & Assurance of Community Organization Intent to Partner with Local Education Provider
5. The Application Form must be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file.
6. 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.

1. **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.
2. **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 | 55 |
| Prioritization Points | 20 |
| Budget | 25 |
| **Total Points** | **100 points** |

1. **Selection and Award**
2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
3. 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.
4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications or to make multiple awards.
5. **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.



**APPENDIX A**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**RFA# 202412219**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

The following are the identified participating partner community organization(s). Please copy and paste or delete blocks as needed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Identified Partner #1** | | | |
| **Community Provider Name:** | |  | |
| **Community Provider Contact:** | |  | |
| **Tel:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Provider Street Address:** | |  | |
| **Provider City/State/Zip:** | |  | |
| **Type of Program:** | |  | |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications:** | | | |
|  | | | |

The following is required from each identified partner as an assurance of intent to partner with the applicant:

*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:* |

**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**RFA# 202412219**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

The following are the identified participating partner community organization(s). Please copy and paste or delete blocks as needed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Identified Partner #2 (if applicable)** | | | |
| **Community Provider Name:** | |  | |
| **Community Provider Contact:** | |  | |
| **Tel:** |  | **Email:** |  |
| **Provider Street Address:** | |  | |
| **Provider City/State/Zip:** | |  | |
| **Type of Program:** | |  | |
| **Partner’s organizational capacity and qualifications:** | | | |
|  | | | |

The following is required from each identified partner as an assurance of intent to partner with the applicant:

*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:* |

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Education**

**SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM**

**RFA# 202412219**

**Climate Education Professional Development Grant**

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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