**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Labor**

*Commissioner’s Office*

**RFA#** **202508115**

**Women in Commercial Driver’s License Training**

**Grant Funding FY2025 Application**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | **NAME:** | Daniel Estes  |
| **TITLE:** | Infrastructure Workforce Policy Lead |
| **EMAIL:** | daniel.estes@maine.gov  |
| *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator.* |

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| **Submitted Questions Due Date** | September 12, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator by the date and time listed above.*  |

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| **Application Submission Deadline** | **DATE:** | September 26, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. |
| **TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |
| *Applications must be received electronically by the Office of State Procurement Services by the date and time listed above.* |

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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** |
| **CDL** | A commercial driver’s license (CDL), specifically a Class B license with a tanker endorsement. |
| **CBO** | A public or private non-profit community-based organization (CBO) that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and serve local community needs, such as providing educational or supportive services. |
| **CSSP** | Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) is a state of Maine program that provides eligible Mainers with postsecondary education; training for degrees and industry-recognized credentials including those gained through Registered Apprenticeships; and other essential supports that support participants’ entry into high-wage, in-demand jobs in Maine.  |
| **Executive Order 7: An Order Regarding Women in Construction** | In May 2024, Governor Mills [signed an executive order](https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents/executive-orders/2024-05-executive-order-7-order-regarding-women-construction) to increase the representation of women in construction careers.The executive order outlined action items including collecting baseline data, consulting with industry about opportunities and barriers to hiring women, strengthening the connection between workforce program participants and construction employers, gathering workforce data from contractors, and pursuing grant opportunities. |
| **MaineDOT** | Maine Department of Transportation |
| **MDOL** | Maine Department of Labor |
| **Public Workforce System** | Public entities administering federal (i.e. WIOA) and state funding to support training, employment, and access to wraparound supports including local workforce boards, adult education centers, career and technical education centers, the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System, Job Corps, YouthBuild programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other partners. |
| **WIOA** | The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law on July 22, 2014 and designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. |
| **WIOA Title 1B** | Formula funds granted to States by USDOL on an annual basis to support workforce development activities for unemployed or underemployed youth, adults, and dislocated workers. |

**PART I OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

## Purpose and Background

The Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), in partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), is seeking applications from public workforce system partners to provide Commercial Driver’s License training to at least 40 women 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). Through this RFA, MDOL seeks to:

1. **Build the pipeline of CDL holders** with Class B, tanker endorsements to meet critical hiring needs in Maine’s transportation and construction sector.
2. **Advance Governor Mills’ Executive Order 7:** **An Order Regarding Women in Construction** by prioritizing the recruitment of women into these CDL training programs and related careers. Women represent only 15% of workers in Maine’s construction sector today. Increasing women’s participation in the trades will strengthen Maine’s workforce and economy.
3. **Create stronger pathways between CDL programs and** **lifelong careers at MaineDOT** and other employers by investing in training providers near MaineDOT offices with CDL hiring needs as well as in regions with higher demand for CDL drivers.

The intent of this grant funding is to serve **at least 40 women**, though that does not prevent cohorts from including other populations. The **cost per participant should not exceed $6,000**. Applicants are highly encouraged to leverage and braid other funding sources to increase the scale and impact of funding awarded through this grant by serving additional participants beyond the required 40 women. Priority will be given to training providers in Washington, Hancock, and Penobscot Counties.

## 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. 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. If awarded a contract resulting from this RFA, Applicants shall be required to disclose, in writing and in accordance with applicable Maine law, any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Such disclosure must include any financial, professional, or personal relationships. Failure to disclose a known conflict may result in disqualification, contract termination, or other remedies as provided by law
11. 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 application process, lead applicants must:

1. Be part of Maine’s public workforce system, as defined above; and
2. Be or partner with an existing provider of CDL training, with a demonstrated track record of participants successfully obtaining licensure and securing employment following completion of the training.

Lead applicants may consider partnering with other organizations (e.g., CBOs) to apply for this funding if the partnership will enhance the applicant’s ability to deliver required activities and meet desired outcomes.

## Awards

The total grant funds available are $300,000, with awards ranging from $100,000 to $300,000. MDOL anticipates making one (1) to three (3) awards as a result of this RFA process.

The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received, ability to meet the program objectives described in PART I, A, 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.

Applicants must demonstrate fiscal capacity, including ability to manage large grants, and/or partner with an organization to assist in managing grant funding. If partnering with an organization to assist with financial management, applicants must provide a letter of support from the financial management organization outlining their qualifications.

## Contract Term

The dates of the contract period for the contract(s) resulting from this RFA are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, in order 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.

The period of performance will be 12 months, beginning within three months of contract award.

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. **Required Activities**
	1. Participate in MDOL grant orientation activities.
	2. Provide CDL training in-house or collaborate and establish formal partnership agreements with the public workforce system to ensure at least 40 female participants secure Class B licensure with a tanker endorsement.
	3. Partner with a community-based organization with trusted networks/relationships and demonstrated capacity in supporting the recruitment of underserved populations into CDL training, particularly women, and/or identify a plan to engage with such an organization.
	4. Partner with MaineDOT to provide hiring opportunities for participants by coordinating with MaineDOT’s human resources staff to engage participants prior to their completion of the program.
	5. Directly or through partnerships, provide access to wraparound supports to address other needs (e.g., transportation, childcare, etc.) by making referrals and/or funding supports.
	6. Partner with MDOL to track participant employment outcomes by ensuring all participants provide personal identifying information, either through enrolling in Maine JobLink, MDOL’s case management system, and/or providing social security or individual taxpayer identification numbers.
	7. Letters of support from proposed partner organizations are encouraged. If partnering with an organization to support financial management of the grant or sub-granting to a partner organization, letters of support are required.
2. **Allowable Use of Funds**

Allowable activities can include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Delivery of CDL training, including:
		1. Instructor time.
		2. Instructor certification to provide CDL training.
		3. Program staff capacity needed to coordinate trainings, leverage CBO partnership(s) to support recruitment, connect participants to wraparound supports, and support outcomes tracking.
		4. Purchase of supplies, which include all tangible personal property other than “equipment” with a unit cost of less than $5,000 (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of Supplies).
	2. Training and partnership development, including:
		1. Conduct outreach and engagement with CBOs to raise awareness of and recruit female participants into the CDL program. Funding for recruitment activities may not exceed 15 percent of the total funding level.
		2. Facilitate connections to employment opportunities at the MaineDOT and other employers by providing career counseling services, bringing employers into the classroom, hosting mini career fairs, etc.
		3. Formalization of an existing CDL training as a [certified pre-apprenticeship program](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/26/title26sec3213.html), in partnership with the Maine Apprenticeship Program, to build a talent pipeline for registered apprenticeship opportunities at the MaineDOT and other employers.
	3. Provide supports to improve equitability and accessibility:
		1. Conducting participant assessments to determine skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, interests, competencies, existing barriers, and social service needs**.**
		2. Provide supportive services to participants. This includes, but is not limited to, transportation, childcare, stipends, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in training activities funded through the grant. Funding for supportive services may not exceed 10 percent of the total funding level, and applicants are highly encouraged to leverage other funding sources (e.g. WIOA 1B or CSSP) to provide supportive services.
		3. Provide English language learning to participants, as needed, with an emphasis on providing contextual language instruction specific to the transportation and/or construction sectors.
1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**
2. Purchase of equipment, defined as an item with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one (1) year (see [2 CFR 200.1](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200) for the definition of Equipment).
3. Construction costs.
4. **Reporting Requirements**
	1. Applicants will be expected to:
		1. Collect participant-level information and partner with MDOL to report on:
			1. The number and demographics (including gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, justice-involvement, and age) of participants in funded CDL courses.
			2. The number and demographics of participants successfully completing the program and attaining a CDL.
			3. The number and demographics of participants that are subsequently connected to employment in Maine.
			4. The starting (before program) and ending (after program) median wages of program participants.
			5. The number of program participants retained in employment in Maine after 180 days.
			6. Additional qualitative information, including participant success stories, programmatic challenges, and lessons learned.
		2. Provide, at minimum, two (2) success stories for publication and promotion by MDOL through social media, printed stories, annual report to the legislature, or other forms of publication.
		3. Participate in quarterly grantee meetings to share best practices and voice challenges.
		4. Prepare and submit:
			1. Quarterly narrative reports, including information on performance metrics, operations, successes, and barriers, due 30 days after the end of each quarter.
			2. Quarterly financial reports, including information on expenditures, as detailed in the grant application, due 30 days after the end of each quarter.
			3. A contract closeout report, including information on performance metrics met and total expenditures, due 60 days following the close of the performance period.
5. **Resources**
6. MaineDOT willprovide recruitment materials and promotional materials to encourage employment with MaineDOT. Additionally, MaineDOT will work with industry partners to promote and encourage employment opportunities among CDL training participants within Maine-based companies.
7. The Maine Department of Labor will provide technical assistance on enrolling participants to track employment outcomes and establishing existing CDL programs as certified pre-apprenticeships.

**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 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# 202508115 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. If you are partnering with another entity, please include letters of commitment from them detailing the nature of their role in delivering the programming and any matching or leveraged funds.
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.

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| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Qualifications and Experience | 25 |
| Proposed Project and Participant Projections | 50 |
| Budget and Budget Narrative | 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.
	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 that the document embedded below will not be accessible if viewing the RFA in a web browser – download the RFA and view it in a desktop application to access any 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.

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| **Organization Name:** |  |

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