**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202308185, Climate Education Professional Development Grant |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Education |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | October 6, 2023 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | October 11, 2023 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | November 3, 2023 |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFA Definitions/Acronyms, page. 3 | Is a tax-exempt Soil and Water Conservation District an eligible community partner for this grant program? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. As a tax-exempt organization that provides an educational service to the community, a Soil & Water Conservation District does qualify for this grant program. |

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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFA Definitions/Acronyms, page. 3 | How does subsistence homesteading and ecological literacy fit into climate change education? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, there is a fit. The intention of this grant program is to be inclusive with in climate education from an interdisciplinary and age-appropriate perspective. Ecological literacy is a critical and necessary building block in climate education. Homesteading is a possible path to achieving ecological literacy.  |

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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Assurance of Intent to Partner with Community Partners, page. 20 | Is there a limit to the number of applications a non-profit organization can be partnered with? |
| **Answer** |
| No, there is no specified limit to the number of applications and local education providers that a non-profit can partnered with for this grant program. Community Partners must sign the Assurance of Intent for each partnership and therefore must ensure their ability to adequately serve each partnership.  |

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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details and Instructions, page. 6 | Can the application be switched to allow non-profit, community organization to be eligible applicants in order to accommodate professional development programs with teachers from multiple school districts? |
| **Answer** |
| No, this RFA will not be switched to allow community organizations to apply. The intention of this grant is to help serve teachers and schools first and foremost with a particular emphasis on underserved communities. The DOE has determined that having the schools be the applicants allows for greater transparency and control of the latter and ensures the highest level of school buy in to programs. Multiple school and/or districts may apply together with a specified lead local education provider.  |

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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, page. 7 | Is the RFA coordinator able to help make referrals for community organizations? |
| **Answer** |
| No, unfortunately inside of the application window the RFA Coordinator cannot help any applicant or partner. Local Education Providers that meet Priority 1 and/or 2 can apply without a partner and if awarded the RFA Coordinator will help facilitate a partnership. |

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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details and Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | Can you please clarify the ongoing funding structure for the program? Will the program be refunded yearly, or will it lapse after this grant period/until the next state budget is passed? |
| **Answer** |
| The RFA has been amended to allocate $600,000. The total $1,800,000 is non-lapsing funding that will be allocated over the duration of the program with multiple RFAs.  |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Application Purpose, page. 5 | What qualifies as professional development--could the partner organization teach the teachers while delivering programming to students or must it be a more formal/didactic "training" curriculum that occurs outside the school day? |
| **Answer** |
| L.D. 1902 lays out the professional development is intended for educators and the support of preparation of courses on interdisciplinary climate education (curriculum development). The grant program is not intended to have partner organizations deliver any content or curriculum directly to students. However, it does not have to be constrained to formal out of school professional development. |

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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details and Instructions, Application Purpose, page. 5 | Is the purpose of this grant application to provide me and my school with professional development to teach climate education or am I creating a professional development plan to teach climate education? If the former, who's plan is being implemented?  |
| **Answer** |
| The purpose of this grant is to provide you and your school with professional development on climate education. The professional development is provided by a community organization partner. |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Program Requirements, page. 7 | Include a partnership with at least one non-profit, community-based organization. Does that mean I need to find a local non-profit such as George's River Land Trust to help him implement the climate education plan? |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants must partner with a non-profit community organization. The organization will provide the climate education professional development for the local education provider. |

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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Priorities, page. 7 | I have an Outdoor Club which has NOT received any funding.  Even though I have a club but I did not receive funding am I still eligible to apply for this grant?  |
| **Answer** |
| Applicants do not have to fit any of the priorities to be eligible to apply for this grant program.  |

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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | What day is the start of the award period? |
| **Answer** |
| The notifications of awards will be sent out 2-3 weeks after November 3rd. There will then be an appeal window on 15 days until contracts will be finalized. This timeline and process is deliberately flexible to account for complications. However, there is a high degree of confidence of a January 1st start date. |

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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | Can multiple schools apply together? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, local education providers can collaborate on a program. Each local education provider must submit an application and identify the lead applicant.  |

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| **13** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Eligibility to Submit Applications, page. 5 | Can the community organization administer the funds? |
| **Answer** |
| No, only eligible local education providers may apply and administer funds. |

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| **14** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Program Requirements, page. 7 | Can the community organization administer the program delivery? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, local education providers must partner with a community organization. The community organization partner(s) is intended to administer the professional development program. |

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| **15** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can applicants hire a consultant for focus group work focusing on curriculum development? |
| **Answer** |
| The applicant must work with a community organization to deliver professional development. The professional development can include curriculum development. Applicants may not hire consultants outside a community organization. |

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| **16** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Eligibility to Submit Applications, page. 5 | Can a global non-profit apply for this grant? |
| **Answer** |
| No, non-profits cannot apply and must be a community-based organization in Maine to partner with an applicant. |

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| **17** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | Are we correct that the RFA indicates that two schools/districts could partner with the same community-based organization if a shared program works for both districts? In a collaborative application, are we correct that there would be one application submitted by the led applicant but two different budgets, one for each school/district? Or should there be a single budget that incorporates all costs for both districts and the community-based organization? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, two or more schools could partner on the same program. Each local education provider must submit an application with their budget and priorities (if they differ). If their programs are identical, they must indicate the lead in their program description. |

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| **18** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| RFA Definitions/Acronyms, page. 3 | Can the definition of 'Climate Education' be expanded to include instruction on the implementation of local climate solutions?  |
| **Answer** |
| No, the definition will not change for this RFA. Local climate solutions are captured in ‘future’ as well as project and place-based models. |

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| **19** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | Is there a minimum or maximum award amount? |
| **Answer** |
| No, there is no minimum, and the maximum is the total award amount ($600,000). |

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| **20** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can 'classroom supplies for implementation of lessons/curriculum' be added to the list of allowable uses? |
| **Answer** |
| No, this is not the intention of this grant program.  |

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| **21** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Reporting Requirements, page. 8 | Would you want reporting on anticipated results in August 2024 (how many students we expect to reach), or an additional report after the 2024/2025 school year? |
| **Answer** |
| Given the restricted window of this grant program, the report can anticipate students reached by the program if needed. |

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| **22** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can the grant pay for: food, lodging, and/or travel? |
| **Answer** |
| The grant can cover travel and lodging if necessary. The grant cannot be used for food costs. |

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| **23** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can the grant include a "licensing fee” paid to a teacher for the distribution of a curriculum they developed with us? |
| **Answer** |
| No, this is not allowed under this grant. |

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| **24** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can the grant include funding for student feedback on the curriculum? Can students receive stipends? |
| **Answer** |
| No, students cannot receive any funds directly. The local education provider can receive feedback on the curriculum. |

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| **25** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Must contracted services name specific providers or is a content area such as "water quality expert" permissible? |
| **Answer** |
| The anticipated contracted staff is the community organization which does need to be specified and sign the Assurance of Intent at the bottom of the application. |

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| **26** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Details & Instructions, Awards, page. 6 | Is this a reimbursement grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |

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| **27** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | If stipends are paid to teachers, can they be paid directly to individuals or must it be paid to the school? Can other schools/educators receive stipends for participating in professional development? Can stipends be granted to cover both: teachers participating in AND teachers leading the professional development? |
| **Answer** |
| Each Local Education Providers that is awarded and participates in grant programs will disperse stipends as needed to teachers directly.  |

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| **28** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Is there any room in the budget to offset costs of student supervision while teachers are participating in professional development? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, this grant can cover substitute teacher costs. |

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| **29** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | Can any of this grant cover student programming? |
| **Answer** |
| No, this grant does not cover student programming. |

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| **30** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Activities and Requirements, Allowable Uses, page. 8 | If an organization were to work with the teachers to co-teach and model programs & applicable skills in the field, could the program costs be offset by this grant? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |