**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*



**RFA# 202112198**

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**Grant Funding**

**FY 2022 Application**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RFA Coordinator** | All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.  **Name:** Samantha Dina **Title:** RFA Manager  **Contact Information:** [samantha.dina@maine.gov](mailto:samantha.dina@maine.gov) |
| **Submitted Questions** | All questions must be submitted, by e-mail, to the RFA Coordinator no later than **January 14, 2022** at 11:59 pm and must include **“RFA# 202112198 Question”** in the subject line of the e-mail. |
| **Application Submission Period** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline: February 4, 2022**, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. Applications must be submitted electronically to the Division of Procurement Services at [proposals@maine.gov](mailto:proposals@maine.gov) and must include **“RFA# 202112198 Application Submission”** in the subject line of the e-mail. |

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**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

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

| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| **Peer workforce navigator** | Trained individuals from the communities in which they seek to serve, serving as trusted connection point to several workforce, employment, and other basic need resources |
| **Department/MDOL** | Maine Department of Labor |
| **MOA** | Memorandum of Agreement |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

**Details and Instructions**

## Application Purpose and Background

The Maine Department of Labor (Department) is grounded in the belief that a career is a major building block of prosperity and is vital to helping Mainers chart their economic future. The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly and dramatically impacted many people’s ability to support themselves and their families. The negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were particularly pronounced in low- and moderate-income jobs, which included a substantial portion of the job losses during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly severe for workers of color, workers with dependent care responsibilities, and workers with lower levels of educational attainment.

The Department is releasing this Request for Applications (RFA) to help people obtain family-supporting employment. Successful applicants will help connect people from affected populations with employment or employment-related skills development, as well as basic needs supports including unemployment compensation benefits while they seek employment or employment-related skills development.

Affected populations include:

* Low-income and homeless individuals
* Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed
* Individuals with low literacy
* Individuals with lower levels of educational attainment
* Individuals with disabilities
* Individuals with limited English proficiency
* Immigrants or refugees
* People of color
* Women
* Individuals with dependent care-giving requirements

## 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. The Applicant shall take careful note that in evaluating its application submitted in response to this RFA the Department will consider materials provided in the application and internal Departmental information of previous contract history, if any, with the Applicant. The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant’s experience and capabilities.
3. 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.).
4. 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, Applicants must:

1. Be a community-based organization, worker group, labor union, or other non-profit organization with deep ties to underserved and under-represented communities within the workforce;
2. Have existing peer relationships with underserved populations, including immigrants, individuals with limited English proficiency, inexperienced and untrained individuals, low-income and homeless individuals, individuals who have been out of the workforce for an extended period, individuals with low literacy and individuals with disabilities;
3. Have the capability to carry out the duties and activities for this program, including knowledge of eligibility requirements and application processes related to the unemployment compensation system, reemployment services, education and training services and other resources necessary to help underserved populations increase their economic security;
4. Comply with existing confidentiality standards to ensure the privacy of all information collected from individuals receiving navigator services;
5. Provide services under this section without charge to the individuals receiving those services;
6. Have the ability to deal with programs of this size and capability;
7. Regularly collect, track and share progress metrics related to program performance standards and key performance indicators (KPIs)—including individual demographic information and personally identifiable information (to track longer-term employment outcomes), number of connections, number of successful referrals, and employment outcomes.

The Grant Review Team shall give priority for peer workforce navigator contracts to a qualified entity that demonstrates one or multiple of the following attributes:

* is a **recognized source of support or advocacy for underserved populations**, such as racial and ethnic minorities, persons with low literacy, persons with disabilities and others seeking to improve skills and gain employment.
* Has an **organizational mission that requires them to represent the interest of unemployed or underemployed individuals.**
* Represents a **membership base of workers.**

## Number of Awards

The total grant funding available for this initiative is $995,000: $495,000 in 2022 and $500,000 in 2023. Total funds requested must not exceed $2,000 per individual served. The Department may make multiple awards to perform one or more of the navigator services described in the next section, as a result of this RFA process, including partial awards. 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.

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.

1. **Contract Terms**

Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be conditionally awarded a contract for up to a two (2) year period.  The period of performance is March 2022 – February 2024.

Applicants will initially be awarded funding for one year, with an option to extend for one more year pending progress towards Performance Metrics (**Appendix E**).  Performance will be evaluated each quarter upon submission of a Quarterly Report.  Applicants not making adequate progress towards their Performance Metrics may not have their contracts extended.  Funding decisions may be affected by meeting outlined goals or progress to-date.

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

**Activities and Requirements**

# 

1. **Peer Workforce Navigator Activities**

Selected organizations will operate a pilot program for a period of 2 years by implementing the following activities:

1. Target underserved populations as described in subsection C, b) above to expand opportunities for employment through reemployment services, education or training opportunities, apprenticeships and other models that result in skill development and family-supporting careers.
2. Provide appropriate training to ensure the quality and accuracy of navigator services, including training on how to most effectively assist communities that are underrepresented in receiving reemployment services and unemployment compensation benefits.
3. Connect individuals with services and job training programs provided by career centers operated by the department or its workforce partners, including adult education, the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System.
4. Conduct outreach to raise awareness of re-employment services and unemployment benefits (via public education initiatives or other public relations activities) and provide individual assistance and education to individuals applying for and making ongoing claims for unemployment compensation benefits, including partial unemployment benefits and assistance for dislocated or marginalized workers.
5. Assist individuals with meeting basic needs to help them persist in education and work.
6. Identify systemic issues creating barriers to successful reemployment for individuals seeking jobs, including improvements to the unemployment compensation system to reduce those barriers—and presentation of these challenges to the Department.
7. Regularly collect and share key performance indicators to demonstrate successful connection to necessary workforce and employment resources, leading to employment outcomes (as specified in “Reports” below).

All navigator services must be performed in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the population served, including individuals with limited English proficiency, persons with low literacy and persons with disabilities, recognizing the varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology among individuals in need of services.

1. **Collaboration Requirements**
2. Collaborate with community resources by:
   1. Identifying community partners to assist in identifying & developing peer workforce navigators from within priority communities.
   2. Partnering with, via sub-contracting or other means, with the identified community partners, as needed, to build necessary internal capacity to support peer workforce navigation recruitment, training, and referral efforts.
3. Maintain collaboration with identified partners through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA must include, at a minimum:
   1. Specific level of support provided by primary grantee and sub-contractors.
   2. Clear expectations of sub-contractors to build pipeline of individuals for referrals to peer workforce navigators.
   3. Clear identification of responsibility for program ongoing maintenance and reporting by primary grantee.
4. Collaborate with local CareerCenter counselors to address needs of individuals working with peer workforce navigator and connect to additional services by:
   1. Attending regularly held integrated resource team or other ongoing support meetings with local area service providers to ensure individuals are connected to resources .
5. Collaborate with the Department to ensure individuals and peer workforce navigators have the most updated information and resources regarding unemployment compensation and employment resources.
6. Ensure peer workforce navigation services are coordinated with and supplement, not supplant, services provided by the Maine Department of Labor.
7. **Staffing Requirements**

All navigator services must be performed in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the population served, including individuals with limited English proficiency, persons with low literacy and persons with disabilities, recognizing the varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology among individuals in need of services.

To achieve this goal, grantees will be required to recruit, hire, and train peer workforce navigators who have direct lived experience or experience supporting underserved and under-represented communities within the workforce.

Additionally, grantees will be required to have clear program management support infrastructure to provide necessary training, support and oversight of peer workforce navigators and to have clear accountability structures for program maintenance, monitoring and reporting.

# **Reports**

* 1. Track and record all data/information necessary to complete the required reports listed in **Table 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1 – Required Reports** | | |
| **Name of Report** | | **Description** |
| **a.** | Bi-Annual Performance Standards Data Report | KPI data to include number of individuals connected with from priority communities (including demographic info and personally identifiable information (PII) to connect to longer-term employment outcomes), retention/or number of connection points with each customer, referrals made to partners and service providers, successful connection to needed resource (via referral or directly), employment outcomes (to include: job placement, relevant training or education attainment, wage distribution) |
| **b.** | Quarterly Narrative Report | KPI data (above) and narrative on impact, reach, operations, success, and barriers. |
| **c.** | Quarterly Financial Report | Includes information on expenditures, as detailed in the grant application. |
| **d.** | Contract Closeout Report | Includes information on performance metrics met and total expenditures. |

# Submit all the required reports to the Department in accordance with the timelines established in **Table 2**:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2 – Required Reports Timelines** | | | |
| **Name of Report** | | **Period Captured by Report** | **Due Date** |
| **a.** | Bi-Annual Performance Data Report | Mid-year report: 7/1-12/31Annual report: 7/1-6/30 | Mid-year: January 15thAnnual: July 15th |
| **b.** | Quarterly Narrative Report | Each quarter | Fifteen (15) days after each quarter |
| **c.** | Quarterly Financial Report | Each quarter | Thirty (30) days after each quarter |
| **d.** | Contract Closeout Report | Entire contract period | Sixty (60) days following the close of the contract period. |

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

**Key Process Events**

## Submitting Questions about the Request for Applications

Any questions must be submitted by e-mail and received by the RFA Coordinator identified on the cover page of this RFA, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFA cover page. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: “**RFA# 202112198 Questions**”. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

**Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the 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 to the Request for Applications

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Applications will be posted on the 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 amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

## Submitting an Application

* 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. 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. **Submission Instructions:** Applications are to be submitted electronically to the State of Maine Division of Procurement services, via e-mail, to [proposals@maine.gov](mailto: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.
   2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail applications that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
   3. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your organizations Information Technology team to ensure your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
   4. 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 listed above.
   5. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: “**RFA# 202112198 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
   6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or WORD file and must include:
2. Application Cover Page (**Appendix A**);
3. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification (**Appendix B**);
4. Grant Application (**Appendix C**); and
5. Valid certificate of insurance on a standard Acord form (or the equivalent) evidencing the Applicant’s general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies.

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

**Application Evaluation and Selection**

1. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Part 1 – Eligibility | Pass/Fail |
| Part 2 – Applicant Experience | 25 |
| Part 3 – Program Design | 25 |
| Part 4 – Equity | 10 |
| Part 5 – Intended outputs & outcomes | 10 |
| Part 6 – Project Sustainability | 10 |
| Part 7 – Budget & Narrative | 20 |
| **Total Points** | **100 points** |

1. **Scoring Process:** The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. 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.

**APPENDIX A**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*

**GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION – COVER PAGE**

**RFA# 202112198**

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** | |  | | |
| **Chief Executive - Name/Title:** | |  | | |
| **Tel:** |  | | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** | |  | | |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** | |  | | |
| ***(Provide information requested below if different from above)*** | | | | |
| **Lead Point of Contact for Application - Name/Title:** | | |  | |
| **Tel:** |  | | **E-mail:** |  |
| **Headquarters Street Address:** | |  | | |
| **Headquarters City/State/Zip:** | |  | | |

* This Application and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days from the date and time of the bid opening.
* No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Applicant’s Application.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an Application.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting contract with the Department should they be awarded the contract.
* The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

*To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed application, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** | **Title:** |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** |

**APPENDIX B**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*

**DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION**

**RFA# 202112198**

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

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*By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals, and any subcontractors and/or consultants named in this application:*

1. *Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
2. *Have not within three (3) years of submitting the application for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
   1. *Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state or local government transaction or contract.*
   2. *Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;*
3. *Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and*
4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this application had one (1) or more federal, state or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
5. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, contract, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this application is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

**Failure to provide this certification will result in the disqualification of the Applicant’s Application.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name (Print): | Title: |
| Authorized Signature: | Date: |

**APPENDIX C**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*

**APPLICATION FORM**

**RFA# 202112198**

**Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot**

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

## The Application may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.



**APPENDIX D**

**State of Maine**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*

**FUNDING GUIDELINES**

**RFA# 202112198**

## Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

Funding for the peer workforce navigator pilot is based on the total number of individuals from priority communities served through the grant opportunity. Total funding requested may not exceed $2,000 per individual served with peer navigation services.

Maximum award is $500,000 annually, serving at least 250 individuals per year.

Funding for this grant opportunity must be expended by February 28, 2024.

## APPENDIX E

**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Labor**

*Bureau of Employment Services*

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

**RFA# 202112198**

## Peer Workforce Navigator Pilot

**FY 2022 Grant Funding**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Activity** | **3/1/22 – 2/28/23** | **3/1/23 – 2/28/24** | **Totals** |
| Number of individuals reached in outreach activities |  |  |  |
| Number of peer workforce navigators hired and trained |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals connected to unemployment resources |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals connected to education and training offerings |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals connected to jobs |  |  |  |
| Retention among individuals served (# of repeat visitors or referrals to other community members) |  |  |  |
| Number of referrals made and individuals connected to wraparound supports |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals connected to first government program or benefit thru peer navigation connection |  |  |  |
| Number of immigrants served |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals with limited English proficiency served |  |  |  |
| Number of people with disabilities served |  |  |  |
| Number of people of color served |  |  |  |
| Number of unemployed workers served |  |  |  |
| Number of low-income individuals served |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals with low literacy served |  |  |  |
| Number of individuals experiencing homelessness served |  |  |  |
| Education/training completion (credential attainment) among individuals served |  |  |  |
| Earnings growth for individuals served |  |  |  |