**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

*Office of the Commissioner*



**RFA# 202206098**

**Maine Healthcare Workforce Initiative**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Expansion of Rural Clinical Preceptorships and Rural Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.**Name:** Brittany Hall **Title:** Procurement Administrator**Contact Information:** Brittany.hall@maine.gov |
| **Resource Webinar** | **Date:** July 26, 2022 **Time:** 10:00 a.m., local time**Location:** ZOOM Meeting Link: [Web Link for RFA 202206098](https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/84715684646?pwd=RmY0Zjh1cm8vRnd4dmJiVUhHMm1GZz09) Meeting ID: 847 1568 4646, or by phone at 1-646-876-9923 using the Meeting ID provided |
| **Submitted Questions**  | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:***Date:** September 23, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time and must include **“RFA# 202206098 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:** October 11, 2022, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.*Applications must be submitted electronically to the following address:***Electronic (e-mail) Submission Address:** Proposals@maine.govand must include **“RFA# 202206098 Application Submission”** in the subject line of the e-mail.  |

**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS**

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

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| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **Accredited** | Officially recognized or authorized as conforming with set standards set by the accrediting body. |
| **ARPA** | [American Rescue Plan Act](https://www.whitehouse.gov/american-rescue-plan/) |
| **Clinical**  | Staff and settings delivering and/or instructing learners about health care services.  |
| **Clinical Learners** | Students enrolled in an Accredited healthcare profession educational or training program, including but not limited to nursing (RN, LPN, APRN), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), behavioral health (LCSW, LADC) professionals, Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Physicians, Physician Assistants, Emergency Medical Services, (AEMT, Paramedic), dentistry. |
| **Clinical Preceptor** | An experienced healthcare practitioner who provides supervision of healthcare students during Clinical practice rotations.  |
| **Clinical Preceptorship** | Structured periods of learning for healthcare students in Clinical settings supported by teaching and oversight from experienced Clinical Preceptors to further develop their Clinical practice.  |
| **DEI** | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  |
| **Department** | Department of Health and Human Services |
| **Graduate Medical Education (GME)** | Formal, hospital-sponsored, or hospital-based training programs for individuals who have completed medical school and earned a Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) degree. GME programs include residency, internship, fellowship, specialty, and subspecialty programs. |
| **RFA** | Request for Application |
| **Rural** | As defined by Human Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), [Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer](https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/rural-health).  |
| **Rural Training Track Program** | An [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)](https://www.acgme.org/)-Accredited program in which residents/fellows gain both urban and Rural experience, with more than half of the education and training taking place in a Rural area. |
| **Sponsoring Institution** | Oversees, supports, and administers one or more ACGME-Accredited residency/fellowship programs.  |
| **State** | State of Maine |

**Details and Instructions**

1. **Application Purpose and Background**

The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) is dedicated to promoting health, safety, resiliency, and opportunity to all Maine residents. In March 2021, Congress passed the [American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/american-rescue-plan/) to assist states in recovering from the crushing effects of the COVID pandemic injecting $1.9 trillion into the economy, including $350 billion in state and local fiscal recovery funds. For many, the ARPA’s state and local funds represent the largest positive fiscal jolt to their budgets in decades.

Governor Mills proposed the [Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan (MJRP)](https://www.maine.gov/jobsplan/) which draws upon the recommendations of the [Governor’s Economic Recovery Committee](https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/economy/economic-recovery-committee) and the [State’s 10-Year Economic Development Strategy](https://www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan). As a result, the MJRP incorporates the insight of economic, business and community leaders in Maine, a data-driven understanding of Maine’s economy before and during the pandemic, and the experiences of Maine people whose lives were disrupted by COVID-19. The overarching workforce goals are aligned with the goals of the MJRP, specifically to:

* Increase the labor pool by breaking down employment barriers and attracting talent;
* Increase the number of Maine residents with a credential of value through training and education; and
* Increase average wages by supporting individuals in connecting to and employers in offering high-quality jobs.

Through multiple stakeholder conversations and input from Maine hospitals, health systems, and health professions training programs, multiple challenges have been identified related to the need to host students for Clinical rotations in their healthcare profession training programs, as well as the need to better attract and retain physicians and other healthcare professionals to practice in Rural areas of the State. Stakeholders repeatedly cite challenges with recruiting Clinical Preceptors to host students for Clinical rotations, particularly for nursing and advance practice nursing programs, as well as substantial challenges with finding housing for students, particularly for those doing Rural rotations.

Stakeholder input has supported the utility of providing financial incentives to help expand support for Clinical Preceptorships – i.e., providing direct financial incentives to Clinical Preceptors to support their time with students during Clinical rotations, and to healthcare organizations hosting students to help defray of related costs, such as housing.

Additionally, there is strong evidence to support the strategy of expanding Rural Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs to attract and retain physicians to practice in Rural areas by increasing their experience in and relationship to Rural communities. However, direct feedback from potential Sponsoring Institutions such as Rural hospitals and provider groups has repeatedly cited the need for considerable upfront investments to support the substantial work needed to develop new or expanded GME programs; the lack of such funding has presented a persistent barrier to development of new Rural programs.

This initiative is focused on building the healthcare workforce capacity in Rural areas through two (2) related strategies, Rural Clinical Preceptorships and Rural GME Programs.

The Department intends to provide support and resources to grant recipients, including but not limited to informational webinar(s) for reviewing expectations and processes and ongoing technical assistance, including information about grant requirements and reporting.

1. **General Provisions**
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.).
5. 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.
6. **Awards**

The Department anticipates making multiple awards as a result of the RFA process, with awards of up to $650,000 for proposals to support Clinical Preceptorships and up to $950,000 for proposals to support expansion or new GME programs. Proposals to support Clinical Preceptorships will be capped at a maximum of $75,000 per Clinical site. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of proposals received, and available funds. The Department will consider all application funding requests on a case-by-case basis. The Department reserves the right to eliminate the lowest scoring application(s), approve or deny any funding requests, and/or make awards at amounts less than 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. **Categories**

Applicants may apply to build their healthcare workforce in Rural areas through Clinical Preceptorships or GME Programming, or both as defined in the tables below. Applicants applying for both strategies and/or separate projects under one strategy must submit a separate application for each strategy/project. Applicants are encouraged to access funding for which they are best positioned to have the most impact.

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| **Rural Clinical Preceptorship** |
| Provide financial incentives for Rural healthcare organizations and Rural providers to serve as preceptors for Clinical Learners who require Clinical hours and oversight as part of their professional education and training program. |

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| **Rural GME Program** |
| Convene relevant partners and develop proposals to either expand an existing GME program or develop new Rural GME programs as a strategy for recruiting and retaining physicians to practice in Rural areas. |

1. **Contract Terms**

The Department anticipates issuing awards for a contract period beginning as early as September 1, 2022 and ending no later than December 31, 2024. Contract periods may vary based on the time each application is received and scored by the Department and the Department’s ability to fully executed each contract. The Department does not anticipate the availability of additional funding after this period.

Awarded Applicants will initially receive funding for one (1) year, with an option to extend for the remainder of the grant period pending progress towards required Performance Metrics as outlined in the applications. Awarded Applicants performance will be evaluated quarterly. If an awarded Applicant is not making adequate progress towards the required Performance Metrics their contract may not be extended, at the discretion of the Department.

**Activities and Requirements**

1. **Allowable Use of Funds**

## All expenses to be paid using ARPA Funds (specific to the Healthcare Workforce Initiative), must be related to the goals the Applicant develops and its implementation with a Rural area of the State. Eligible expenses may include reasonable project management costs, including contracts with partners for specific roles or services. The Department may limit the percentage of grant funds that may be used for administrative or indirect costs but recognizes the need for partnerships to build capacity to achieve broader workforce gains. The need for and reasonableness of all costs must be fully justified and detailed in the budget form and Narrative. Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to:

* 1. Stipends to offset Rural provider’s Clinical time to supervise/teach a learner;
	2. Rural preceptor and/or faculty development costs;
	3. Housing costs for learners at Rural sites;
	4. Resident salary costs for time attributable to Rural site;
	5. Mileage costs associated with driving to Rural Clinical site;
	6. Costs associated with community engagement activities that support Clinical Learners and Clinical Preceptors and further strengthens the connection to the Rural community; and/or
	7. Costs associated with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts.
1. **Non-Allowable Use of Funds**

Expenses that are **not** allowable under this funding opportunity include:

1. Construction costs; or
2. Supplantation, i.e., other grant or ARPA funded program including, but not limited to, training programs.

***No*** ***Supplantation.****No business/organization receiving ARPA Healthcare Workforce Initiative funds shall supplant other funds with ARPA funds that assist with similar services. Awarded Applicants must use ARPA Funds in a way that is complementary to other available resources and supplements, expands, and creates new opportunities vs. supplants existing activities.*

1. **Project Management Requirements (Leadership and Collaboration)**
2. Be responsible for implementing the project goals, coordinating meetings, and performance reporting, including having the capacity to conduct ongoing management and administration to meet performance targets and achieve goals as outlined in the resulting contract.
3. Have a fiscal agent responsible for expense reporting, receipt of funds, and the disbursement of funds to subrecipients with the capacity to manage funds and maintain fiscal records.
4. Partner with organizations who shall make specific commitments and contributions to support the project and implementation of project goals and those with specific diversity, equity, and inclusion expertise including, but not limited to:
	* + - 1. Education/ educational providers;
				2. Employer groups/associations; and
				3. Community-based organizations.
			1. Focus on programs for one (1) or more of the following types of Clinical Learners:
				1. Certified Nursing Assistant, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, and/or Advanced Practice Nurse.
				2. Medical Assistant;
				3. Medical Student;
				4. Resident Physician;
				5. Physician Assistant;
				6. Advanced Emergency Medical Technician and/or Paramedic
				7. Licensed Clinical Social Worker or Master Social Work;
				8. Dentist, Dental Assistant, Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist;
				9. Physical Therapist;
				10. Respiratory Therapist; and/or
				11. Occupational Therapist.

**Program Design**

* 1. **Rural Clinical Preceptorship Programs:**

Provide financial support for new Rural Clinical Preceptorship programs, and/or develop and implement new Rural Clinical Preceptorship programs for healthcare professionals.

* 1. **Rural Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs:**

Convene relevant partners to expand an existing GME program by developing (or expanding) a Rural Training Track Program through a recognized Sponsoring Institution, or by developing a new Rural GME program.

1. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (DEI)**
2. Increase the number of under-represented individualsparticipating as learners and/or Clinical Preceptors. Specific communities of focus may include, but are not limited to:
	1. People of color;
	2. Women;
	3. Veterans;
	4. Persons who are economically-disadvantaged;
	5. People with disabilities; and/or
	6. Justice-involved individuals.
3. Develop partnerships with an organization(s) with expertise in DEI and/or a specific plan to directly involve individuals from under-represented communities in outreach, program design, and planning efforts. Strategies to advance the DEI goal may include but are not limited to integration into:
	1. Recruitment;
	2. Retention;
	3. Training;
	4. Career development;
	5. Organizational culture; and/or
	6. Research activities.
4. **Performance/Outcome Metrics**
	1. Establish and track performance/outcome metrics.
	2. Ensure quarterly narrative, metrics, and financial reports are prepared and submitted, inclusive of the DEI plan progress (if applicable) to the Department as outlined in the resulting contract.
	3. Provide a minimum of two (2) success stories for publication and promotion by the Department through social media, printed stories, annual report to the legislature, or other forms of publication by end of contract period.
5. **Reports**

Awarded Applicants will be required to adhere to all Department reporting requirements outlined in the contract resulting from this RFA process. Specific reporting requirements will be determined during contract negotiations.

**Key Process Events**

1. **Key-off Resource Webinar**

The Department will host a webinar (i.e., Zoom) for all applicants, following release of this RFA. A recording of the webinar will be posted on the on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) website.

The purpose of this webinar will be to orient applicants with the RFA and submission process, including:

* General introduction to the RFA
* Review of the application components and general requirements
* Review of the scoring process
* Submission process and deadlines
1. **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# 202206098 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.

1. **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 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.

1. **Submitting an Application**
2. **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.

At the Department’s discretion, this RFA may be reopened to fund additional applicants who meet the requirements of the RFA.

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.
	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# 202206098 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]**”.
	6. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file and must include all related documents identified on the application specific to each category. Refer to **Appendix C**.

**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. Only complete applications will be considered for award.

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| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| Part I – Applicant Experience and Collaboration Requirements | 15 |
| Part II – Program Design | 25 |
| Part III – Workplan  | 10 |
| Part IV – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan | 10 |
| Part V – Performance/Outcome Metrics | 10 |
| Part VI – Sustainability | 10 |
| Part VII – Fiscal Capacity, Budget Form and Narrative | 20 |
| **Total Points**  | **100 Points** |

1. **Scoring Process:** The grant review team(s) 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 the assignment of points for each of those sections.
2. **Selection and Award:** Notification of selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, or to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel, or any other costs incurred by the Applicant.

The Department will consider all application funding requests on a case-by-case basis. The Department reserves the right to approve or deny any funding requests including approval of an application at an amount lower than requested by the Applicant. Applications will be funded in descending order by category, highest to lowest score, subject to funding availability.

**APPENDIX A**

**RFA# 202206098**

**Maine Healthcare Workforce Initiative**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Expansion of Rural Clinical Preceptorships and Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs**

**GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION – COVER PAGE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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**

**RFA# 202206098**

**Maine Healthcare Workforce Initiative**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Expansion of Rural Clinical Preceptorships and Rural Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs**

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

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

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 years of submitting the proposal 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.*
4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
5. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal 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**

**RFA# 202206098**

**Maine Healthcare Workforce Initiative**

**Grant Funding Opportunity for Expansion of Rural Clinical Preceptorships and Rural Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Applications may be obtained in a Word (.docx) format by double clicking on the document icon below.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rural Clinical Preceptorship Application** | **Rural GME Program Application** |
|  |  |