

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Child and Family Services

RFA# 202310219

Improving Access to Early Intervention Services
Grant Funding Opportunity for Community-based Organizations



RFA Coordinator	All communication regarding the RFA <u>must</u> be made through the RFA Coordinator: Name: Brittany Hall Title: Procurement Administrator Contact Information: Brittany.hall@maine.gov
Resource Webinar	Date: November 1, 2023 Time: 2:00 p.m., local time Location: ZOOM Meeting Link: Web Meeting Link for RFA 202310219 Meeting ID: 829 2838 5961 or by phone at 1-646-876-9923 using the Meeting ID provided
Submitted Questions	<i>All questions <u>must</u> be received by the RFA Coordinator, identified above, by:</i> Date: November 3, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time and must include “ RFA# 202310219 Question ” in the subject line of the e-mail.
Application Submission Deadline	<i>Applications <u>must</u> be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:</i> Submission Deadline: November 28, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time. <i>Applications <u>must</u> be submitted electronically to:</i> Proposals@maine.gov and must include “ RFA# 202310219 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:

<u>Term/Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Child Development Services	An intermediate educational unit that provides both early intervention (ages birth through two (2) years) and free appropriate public education (ages three through five (3-5) years) under the supervision of the Maine Department of Education.
Community-based Organization (CBO)	An organization driven by and accountable to the community and/or population it serves. A CBO has a physical presence in the community it serves and has clear processes to include community perspectives in determining the priority issues it addresses and the solutions pursued.
Department	Department of Health and Human Services

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Forty (40) hours per week of services under the contract resulting from this RFA.
<u>Help Me Grow (HMG)</u>	A free information line linking families and professionals to information regarding child development, pregnancy, and community resources for children in Maine up to age eight (8) years. HMG provides parents, physicians, and community partners with resources to make a difference in the lives of Maine families.
RFA	Request for Application
State	State of Maine
Well-child Visit	A health care medical appointment with a health care provider to check the child's growth and development in order to find or prevent health issues. The health care provider records the child's height, weight, and other important information and typically screens hearing, vision, and preforms other screening tests during this visit.
Young Child(ren)	A child(ren) between ages birth and eight (8) years.

Details and Instructions

A. 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. The Department strives to ensure that Maine children grow up in safe, healthy, and supportive environments, allowing them to thrive throughout their lives. The Children's Cabinet, chaired by the Department's Commissioner Lambrew, has a goal of ensuring that all children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

The Department's Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) has implemented Help Me Grow (HMG) to connect immigrant parents of Young Children or who are expecting, to services to support the healthy development of their Young Child(ren). To strengthen OCFS' effort to connect Young Children to needed services, OCFS seeks to provide funding to Community-based Organizations (CBOs) with experience in communities of color and working with immigrant families with Young Children who can serve as trusted cultural brokers and partners for parents and caregivers.

The goal of this funding opportunity is to ensure all Young Children in Maine have access to the services they need to grow, develop, and thrive. The intent of this funding opportunity is to increase rates of developmental screenings and referrals to, and participation in, needed early intervention and health services for Young Children of immigrant families. This funding opportunity will support CBOs that represent and work with immigrant families, in specific regions of the State, to develop and implement effective and robust plans for outreach, care coordination, and referrals to services in a manner that recognizes and respects the unique needs of immigrant parents and caregivers, with a focus on parents who speak English as a second or third language and who have recently moved to Maine. The awarded Applicants will partner with the HMG in the implementation of Improving Access to Early Intervention Services.

B. 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 the "Submission Instructions" section of the RFA's application.
4. 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.

5. 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](#) et seq.).
6. 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.
7. 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.

C. Eligibility to Submit Applications

In order to be considered for funding under this application process, Applicants must:

1. Be a Community-based Organization (CBO) with a minimum of three (3) months experience in the past three (3) years engaging and serving immigrant families with Young Children;
2. Be able to provide language services other than English, not using contracted interpretation or translation services.

D. Awards

The Department anticipates making multiple awards, with at least one (1) in the Greater Portland Region (including Brunswick), one (1) in the Lewiston/Auburn Region, and one (1) in York County with a presence in Biddeford/Saco and/or Sanford, as a result of this the RFA process.

The Department reserves the right to make partial awards, eliminate the lowest scoring application(s), and/or make awards at amounts less than requested, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

The total estimated funds available are \$800,000, with individual awards not exceeding \$200,000 over the twenty-four (24) month contract period.

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](#) and [18-554 Code of Maine Rules 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 fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of notification of conditional contract award.

E. Contract Terms

Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be conditionally awarded a contract for up to a two (2) year period. The Department anticipates issuing awards for a contract period beginning as early as January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2025. Contract periods may vary based on the time each application is received and scored by the Department and the Department's ability to fully execute each contract.

Activities and Requirements

A. Activities

1. Employ, at minimum, one (1) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), who is a member of the proposed community and who will serve as a cultural broker for immigrants, expecting parents, and parents with children up to age eight (8).
 - a. The FTE may be one full-time position or shared across multiple positions, whichever best supports the engagement of families in the community.
2. Ensure the FTE position(s):
 - a. Conducts on-going outreach and education to immigrant families with Young Children to educate parents/caregivers and expectant parents, in their own cultural context, the importance of developmental screenings and developmental milestones with the goal of supporting the Young Child(ren)'s healthy development and ensuring they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten;
 - b. Assists parents/caregivers in accessing and understanding what to expect during Well-child Visits and other medically necessary services with primary healthcare providers and when needed, Child Development Services; and
 - c. Connects Young Children to preventative health and early intervention services.
3. Participate in Department activities outline in Table 1 as scheduled by the Department.
4. Participate in trainings regarding child-development, child-development screenings, developmental milestones, early intervention services, and making referrals to programs and services for Young Children.
5. Participate in monthly meetings with the Department to provide feedback to OCFS regarding:
 - a. Barriers to services;
 - b. Service delivery challenges;
 - c. Best-practices regarding referral processes; and
 - d. Recommendations to improve communications with immigrant parents regarding child developmental milestones, screenings, early intervention services, and Well-child Visits.

Table 1 - Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) Resources

OCFS will provide resources to the awarded Applicants, including but not limited to:

- ☐ Informational webinar(s) to review expectations and processes;
- ☐ Establishment of a learning cohort to meet monthly, to share and learn best practices from one another;
- ☐ Technical assistance and training to support meeting the requirements of the resulting contract including delivering education and services to parents related to developmental screenings and child development; and
- ☐ Direct connection to Help Me Grow (HMG) through a dedicated resource specialist who will be responsible for working directly with the awarded Applicants and their clients.

B. Allowable Use of Funds for Capacity Building Activities

1. Allowable use of funds may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Staffing costs (including benefits, supplies, and other related costs) associated with the proposed project, including, but is not limited to:

- i. Costs for outreach staff; and
 - ii. Translators or translation costs.
- b. Technology and/or data system-related costs (e.g., laptops, printers, software, databases).
- c. Professional development and/or trainings for staff, including staff supports to increase understanding of child development.

C. Non-Allowable Use of Funds

1. Request for and allocation of funding shall not include:
 - a. Duplicating or supplanting funding received from other federal or State resources;
 - b. Use of gift cards as incentives;
 - c. Debt restructuring and/or bad debt;
 - d. Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, and claims;
 - e. Donations and contributions;
 - f. Entertainment;
 - g. Alcoholic beverages;
 - h. Fines and penalties;
 - i. Goods or services for personal use;
 - j. Interest expenses;
 - k. Lobbying; and/or
 - l. Patent costs.

D. Reporting Requirements

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

Key Process Events

A. Kick-off Resource Webinar

The Department will host one (1) webinar (i.e., Zoom) for all applicants, following release of this RFA. A recording of this webinar will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](#) 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; and
- Submission process and deadlines.

B. Submitting Questions about the Request for Application

Applicants and other interested parties should use **Appendix D** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. 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 emails must include the subject line: "RFA# 202310219 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 State's Division of Procurement Services [Grant RFPs and RFAs](#) 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.

C. Amendments to the Request for Application

All amendments released in regard to this RFA 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.

D. Submitting the 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.
 - a. 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.
2. **Submission Instructions:** Applications are to be submitted electronically to the State's Division of Procurement services at proposals@maine.gov.
 - a. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
 - i. Application submission e-mails that are successfully received by the proposals@maine.gov inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.

- b. 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 requested files attached will be accepted.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail submission: **"RFA# 202310219 Application Submission – [Applicant's Name]"**.
- f. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF file, and must include all related documents identified on **Appendix C** (Application Form). Applicants are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFA for the purpose of extending their response. Materials not requested will not be considered part of the application and will not be evaluated.

Application Evaluation and Selection

- A. 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 reviewed and considered for award.

Scoring Criteria	Points Available
Part I – Eligibility	Pass/Fail
Part II – Experience and Community Focus	45
Part III – Proposed Activities	22
Part IV – Staffing and Training	8
Part V – Budget Forms and Narrative	25
Total Points	100 points

- B. Scoring Process:** The Application 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.

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.

The Application Review Team will utilize a scoring rubric to score the Applicant's Experience and Community Focus, Proposed Activities, Staffing and Training, and Budget Forms and Narrative based on the specific category identified in the tables below.

Part II Scoring Rubric for Applicant Experience and Community Focus <i>45 points total (eligible for up to 9 points for each sub-topic)</i>			
Sub-Topic		Zero (0) Points	Up to nine (9) points
1.	Community Served	No experience serving immigrant parents and families.	Primarily serve immigrant communities, with a focus on families with children.
2.	Staff & Leadership Composition	No key leaders within the CBO are members of the community being served.	Greater than fifty percent (50%) of staff and staff leadership (i.e., board chair and executive director or equivalent) reflect the community served.
3.	Community Engagement	Few or no attempts to seek community input will be made.	Demonstrate clear ways to regularly seek and respond to community and parent input and demonstrates a

			history of putting community voices first in planning strategies and activities.
4.	Experience connecting Families to Services	No experience with connecting immigrant families to services.	Demonstrate several years of experience with connecting families to services, particularly health care providers.
5.	Familiarity with subject area	Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of developmental needs of Young Children, developmental screenings and services for Young Children and their families.	Demonstrate that organization staff have an understanding of developmental needs of Young Children and familiarity with developmental screenings and services for Young Children and their families.

Part III
Scoring Rubric for Proposed Activities
22 points total (eligible for up to 11 points for each sub-topic)

Sub-Topic		Zero (0) Points	Up to eleven (11) points
1.	Proposed Activities	Does not clearly describe steps that will be taken to outreach and engage with families with Young Children to meet the goals of the proposed activities.	Proposed activities are clear and will successfully engage and support parents with Young Children to participate in education, screenings and needed services.
2.	Community Partners	Few or no partnerships with services providers in the region, including health care providers.	Demonstrate existing partnerships with service providers, including health providers, other immigrant services organizations, and organizations working with parents and Young Children. Demonstrate how these partnerships will support the proposed activities.

Part IV
Scoring Rubric for Staffing and Training
8 points total

Sub-Topic		Zero (0) Points	Up to eight (8) points
1.	Proposed Activities	Does not clearly describe steps that will be taken to outreach and engage with families with Young Children to meet the goals of the proposed activities.	Proposed activities are clear and will successfully engage and support parents with Young Children to participate in education, screenings and needed services.

Part V
Scoring Rubric for Budget Forms and Narrative
25 points total

Score	Budget Forms and Narrative are:
25	☐ Accurate (i.e., add up to the total proposed budget) ☐ Aligned (i.e., align with the activities and requirements, including proposed activities) ☐ Connected (i.e., clearly connect to the activities and requirements, including proposed activities)

	☐ Realistic (i.e., reasonable given the activities and requirements, including proposed activities)
20	Accurate, aligned, and connected, but not realistic
10	Accurate and aligned, but not connected or realistic
0	Not accurately calculated, within the application instructions, aligned with the capacity building plan, nor realistic.

C. 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 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.

The Department will consider all application funding requests, including exceptions to the maximum funding amount, on a case-by-case basis. The Department reserves the right to approve or deny any funding requests, including approval of any application at an amount lower than requested by the Applicant.

Applicants awarded through this RFA process will be required to submit, prior to the contract execution, a valid certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the awarded Applicant's general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with the services provided as a result of this RFA.

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GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION – COVER PAGE

Area to be Served: (only choose one area per application)
☐ Greater Portland Region (including Brunswick) ☐ Lewiston/Auburn Region ☐ York County with a presence in ☐ Biddeford/Saco or ☐ Sanford

Applicant's Organization Name:			
Vendor Customer Code: (for current State of Maine vendors)	VC		
Chief Executive - Name/Title:			
Tel:		E-mail:	
Headquarters Street Address:			
Headquarters City/State/Zip:			
<i>(Provide information requested below if different from above)</i>			
Lead Point of Contact for Application - Name/Title:			
Tel:		E-mail:	
Street Address:			
City/State/Zip:			

- This Application and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of 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.

APPENDIX A (continued)

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

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DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE, and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION

Vendor's Organization Name:	
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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 named in this application:

- a. 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.*
- b. Have not within three years of submitting the application for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
 - i. Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state, or local government transaction or contract.*
 - ii. Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.*
- c. 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.*
- d. Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this application had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default.*
- e. 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 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.*

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

APPENDIX C

RFA# 202310219 – Improving Access to Early Intervention Services - Grant Funding Opportunity for Community-based Organizations
DHHS Rev. 9/2023

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Grant Funding Opportunity for Community-based Organizations

APPLICATION FORM

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



Application
Form.docx

APPENDIX D

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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.

Organization Name:	
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RFP Section & Page Number	Question