

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Maine Healthy Soils Program

Technical Assistance Capacity Grant



Request for Applications and Application Workbook

RFA#: ARDMHSP2026.TACG Released March 14, 2025

<p>RFA Coordinator</p>	<p>All communication regarding the RFA <u>must</u> be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below.</p> <p>Name: Matthew Boucher Title: Maine State Soil Scientist</p> <p>Program email: matthew.boucher@maine.gov</p>
<p>Written Questions Deadlines and Information Session <i>See section 2.3</i></p>	<p>The RFA Coordinator will offer an information session on 3/21/2025 from 10 – 11 a.m., ET. Please use this link to register for the info session.</p> <p>All written questions must be submitted via this link by 4/18/2025 no later than 5:00 p.m., local time.</p>
<p>Application Submission Deadline <i>See section 2.5</i></p>	<p>DACF <u>must</u> receive applications by:</p> <p>Submission Deadline: 5/16/2025, no later than 5:00 p.m., local time.</p> <p>Applications <u>must</u> be submitted electronically via this link, with additional requested material emailed to: matthew.boucher@maine.gov</p>
<p>Further resources</p>	<p>Additional information and resources can be found on the program website linked here:</p> <p>Website: Maine Healthy Soils Program</p> <p>For timely information about this RFA and related programs, enroll in the Maine DACF “Agricultural Grants and Loans” email listserv here.</p>

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1. Background and Purpose

Soil health is critically important to the viability and resiliency of Maine farms. Improving soil health invigorates the agroecological functioning on farms by building on inherent soil properties through customizable application of **healthy soils best practices**. These practices aim to stabilize and diversify soil by keeping living roots in the ground, increasing biodiversity, and reducing disturbance and soil exposure. In addressing these four principles, healthy soils best practices keep soil in the field, improve its ability to cycle water and key nutrients, and improve the biological redundancies within the soil.

Integrating soil health principles into crop management strategies can be a challenge, requiring proper planning and trialing. **Expanding Maine’s capacity to provide soil health technical assistance to farmers is key to building sustainable and resilient farms now and in the future.**

The Maine Healthy Soils Program (MHSP) was created by the 131st Legislative Assembly (12 M.R.S.A., Chapter 7) to promote and expand the use of healthy soils best practices on Maine’s farms. The Program aims to achieve these objectives in part by expanding the capacity of **agricultural service providers** to develop Maine-specific soil health education and research infrastructure. This Request for Applications (RFA) is for the MHSP Technical Assistance Capacity Grant (TACG). Information about the other technical and financial resources offered through the MHSP can be found on the [Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#).

The Technical Assistance Capacity Grant provides funding for projects that will expand soil health methodologies, education, and training in Maine. Projects may include, but are not limited to: research projects; salaries and wages that directly address gaps in technical service availability; training and demonstration programs; and projects that enhance farmer-to-farmer soil health learning opportunities. Applicants may request up to \$185,000 to implement their proposed project. There is no funding-request minimum, and projects will be scored independently of their total cost. The project term is 3 years, with a possibility for extension.

1.2. Eligibility to Submit Application

Applicants are eligible to apply to the Technical Assistance Capacity Grant if:

- You or your organization is an **Agricultural Service Provider** as defined in Appendix A of this RFA.

For more detail, the eligibility guidelines can be found in the rules governing the [Maine Healthy Soils Program](#). If you have any additional questions about your eligibility, contact the [RFA Coordinator](#).

1.3. Priority Areas

Projects will be partially evaluated on how they fit into the following priority areas. Projects may address more than one priority area but will not be scored higher for meeting more than one. The order of the list below does not indicate a hierarchy, meaning no one priority on this list is of higher importance than another during evaluation. Your project will be evaluated on how well it fits into the priority area(s) you choose, not simply if it meets the priority.

- Demonstrating and/or understanding soil health benefits of alley cropping and silvopasture agroforestry practices
- How to use soil health practices to improve production in heavy clay soils
- Non-chemical cover crop termination strategies
- Long-term soil health demonstration and training plots
- How to use soil health practices to relieve compaction
- Deep composting strategies and methods
- Strip tillage strategies and methods
- Methods for trialing and scaling soil health practices

1.4. Collaborators and Letters of Support

If the project includes any collaborations, each collaborator must describe their role in the project in the online application form. Applicants may submit up to three (3) letters of support from farmers who endorse the project. Please review the scoring rubric in Section 3 of this RFA to best understand how letters of support and collaborations will be integrated into application scoring.

1.5. Allowable Costs

Costs are allowable unless they are explicitly unallowable per section 1.6 of this RFA. The following are some examples of allowable costs:

- Supplies, including soil amendments, seeds, lab supplies, field supplies, etc.
- Funds to upgrade, retrofit, purchase, or maintain farming equipment used for soil health research and/or demonstration projects. Funding requests for equipment are not to exceed \$75,000.
- Costs associated with establishing a demonstration and/or research project, including testing services, contractual services, land/equipment rental fees, etc.
- Costs associated with establishing, resting, and/or rehabilitating fields for demonstration and/or research projects.
- Salaries, Labor, fringe benefits, travel, and training expenses
- Indirect costs up for up to 10% of each budget category listed on the budget template, excluding equipment and contractual/subawards.
- Open-access publication fees
- Incentives, stipends, honorariums or other compensation paid to farmers for participating in the project.

1.6. Unallowable Costs

- Synthetic fertilizers
- Pesticides and herbicides
- Sprayer equipment
- Equipment not directly related to the project, including computers, tablets, cell phones, printers, scanners, software, office chairs, desks, etc.

- Non-open access publication fees
- Indirect costs beyond 10% of each funding category listed on the budget template
- Indirect costs on equipment and contractual/subawards.

1.7. Funding and Duration

The Maine Healthy Soils Program will make \$370,000 available for this program.

- No more than two (2) Technical Assistance Capacity Grants will be available in this funding cycle.
- The maximum award you can request is \$185,000.
- The grant term is 3 years.
- The program reserves the right to offer an award amount different than the amount requested.

1.8. Title and Chapter

All general instructions for submitting the applicable application are provided in this document in accordance with:

- [Statute establishing the Maine Healthy Soils Program \(12 MRS Ch. 7 §351 -353\)](#)
- [Rules for Operation of the Maine Healthy Soils Fund \(01-001, Ch. 35\)](#)
- [Rules for Departmental \(DACF\) Grant Awards and Appeals \(01-001, Ch. 8\)](#)

1.9. Appeal of Contract Awards

In accordance with the [Rules for Departmental \(DACF\) Grant Awards and Appeals \(01-001, Ch. 8\)](#) an aggrieved person (hereinafter the “petitioner”) may request an appeal hearing on a grant award decision by submitting a request for appeal to the **Commissioner**, in writing, no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the award decision. The written request for appeal must describe the specific nature of the grievance. The Commissioner shall grant an appeal hearing unless it is determined that: A. The petitioner is not an aggrieved person; or B. The written request for appeal was submitted more than fifteen (15) calendar days after notification of award.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1. Timeline and Key Dates

Date	Item
3/14/2025	Application opens
3/21/2025	Live Q/A session – Register here
4/4/2025	Summary of questions and answers from live session posted on the program website
4/18/2025	Written questions due via online submission
4/25/2025	Questions and answers posted on the program website
5/16/2025	Application Due date. Applications and accompanying documents must be submitted by 5:00 p.m.
6/27/2025	Anticipated completion of application review/scoring
7/14/2025	Anticipated notification date of project and award decisions
Upon signed contract	Period of performance begins. Funds are accessible, and expenses from on or after this date are eligible for reimbursement
Three years post-award	Period of performance ends.

2.2. Solicitation

This RFA and all relevant documents and forms were posted on the release date noted on the cover page and can be found at [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain the Question and Answer Summaries and any amendments to this RFA.

2.3. Submission of Questions and Amendments

It is the responsibility of all applicants and other interested parties to examine the entire RFA and seek clarification in writing if they have specific questions. All written questions must be submitted via [this online form](#). For technical questions concerning application submission, online form issues, supplemental file submission, or compatibility problems, please email matthew.boucher@maine.gov.

2.3.1 Question/Answer Process

We will offer a live question-and-answer session on the date listed on the cover sheet. This session will be recorded, and we will post a written summary of the questions 7 – 10 business days after the live Q/A. Applicants and other interested parties may additionally submit any questions via [this online form](#) by 5:00 p.m. on the written questions due date listed on the cover sheet of this RFA. Responses to all written questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#) 7 – 10 business days after the written questions due date. All interested parties are responsible for going 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. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate, complete, and on-time submission and receipt.

2.4. Amendments to the Request for Applications

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this RFA will be posted on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. For timely information about this RFA and related MHSP programs, an email listserv sign-up can be found on the [DACF Maine Healthy Soils Program website](#).

Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

DACF reserves the right to revise, suspend, or terminate this RFA at its sole discretion. In such an event, DACF will inform all applicants as soon as reasonably possible. DACF also reserves the right to extend the deadline for submission of proposals or to seek additional proposals under this RFA.

2.5. Application Submission Instructions

Applications Due - Applications must be received by the due date listed on the cover page of this RFA by 5:00 p.m. local time. Applications must be submitted via [this link](#), and all supplemental files must be emailed to matthew.boucher@maine.gov. Any emails containing application materials or any additional or revised application files received after the 5:00 p.m. deadline may be rejected. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on-time email/online form transmission and receipt.

Applications that do not comply with the instructions specified in this RFA, or failure to submit all required documents, may result in the proposal being disqualified or receiving a reduced score at the sole discretion of the Department. Applicants may not provide additional supplemental files beyond those specified in the RFA. Additional materials provided by that applicant not requested by the RFA will not be evaluated. Applicants may not submit more than one application. Submission of multiple applications may result in both applications being disqualified from consideration for an award.

Submission Instructions

All activities described in the instructions below must occur **BEFORE** 5:00 p.m. on the application due date listed on the cover page of this RFA.

1. Fill out and submit the online application form found at [this link](#).
2. Download and complete the budget template found on the [program website](#). Submit your completed budget as a supplemental file to matthew.boucher@maine.gov.
3. IF you are including letters of support (maximum of 3), submit them as a single PDF as a supplemental file to matthew.boucher@maine.gov.
4. IF you are requesting funds for equipment, **then you must email a vendor quote for each piece of equipment to matthew.boucher@maine.gov**. Quotes must be submitted in PDF format, and all quotes must be combined into a single file. If the equipment you request exceeds the \$75,000 limit, you must also include some form of proof that you have access to funds to cover

the difference. Proof may be a pre-qualification or pre-approval letter from a financial institution if you intend to use loan funds, a demonstration of other grant funds that may be used to cover the difference, etc.

- a. Quotes may be in the form of a written sales estimate, a catalog or online vendor pricing sheet, or a binding quote provided by a commercial vendor
- b. All costs necessary and reasonable for equipment delivery and installation must be included in the vendor quote.
- c. Vendor quotes must minimally include: 1) the date the quote was generated; 2) the vendor name; 3) the equipment name; 4) an itemized breakdown of all expenses included (shipping, handling, delivery, implements, attachments, etc.); 5) total price of each item.

For submission of required supplemental files:

- E-mails containing links to file-sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions.
- Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions.
- Supplemental documents must be saved and submitted as PDF (.pdf) or Word (.doc or .docx) file(s).
- File size limits are 25 MB per email. Applicants may submit files separately across multiple emails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All emails and files must be received in accordance with all the instructions above.
- Use the following naming convention in your supplemental files email: **ARDMHSP2026.TACG – Supplemental Files – [PROJECT LEAD’S NAME]**

2.6. Evaluation and Selection Process

A review panel will evaluate and score project applications based on the program requirements and selection criteria found in the rubric below. Applications will **NOT** be scored question by question but instead based on how the application as a whole addresses the rubric criteria. Applications will be scored for completeness. Applications will **NOT** be scored for writing quality, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation, provided that the writing quality does not obscure the meaning of the content of the application. Members of the review panel will first score applications individually. The review panel will then meet to arrive at a consensus score. Applications that are ineligible, late, incomplete, or incorrectly formatted may be disqualified from panel review.

Based on the review panel’s scoring and evaluation, the RFA Coordinator will make recommendations to the Commissioner. Final decision-making authority for awarding grants rests with the Commissioner, based upon the program requirements and selection criteria found in the rubric below. All applicants shall be notified in writing following the Review Panel's decision.

3. RUBRIC

3.1. Point Ranges for Scoring Criteria

Project Impact = 40 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The project has a high likelihood of success and will increase the availability of soil health technical assistance to Maine farmers within the life of the grant period. It is highly likely that the resources, data, etc. developed from this project will maintain a higher level of access to soil health technical assistance beyond the life of the grant. The estimate of farms that will be positively impacted by this project is reasonable and fits within the scope of the project. The method by which the applicant arrived at the estimated number of affected farms is appropriate and does not seem inflated. The project has realistic expectations of what will make this project successful and clearly states how they would measure the success of the project.</p> <p>Letters of support included in the application demonstrate a need or strong desire for this project from farmers, and farmers see a clear benefit from this project. The applicant adheres to the word count minimums and maximums.</p>	31 – 40
<p>The project is likely to increase soil health technical assistance and resources available to Maine farmers, but the project deliverables are unlikely to increase technical assistance availability within the grant period. The estimate of farms that will be positively impacted by this project seems slightly unrealistic, and the method by which the applicant arrived at the estimated number needs more detail. The project has slightly unrealistic expectations of success and more detail is needed to understand what the project team considers a success.</p> <p>Letters of support are not provided, or they are provided but do not demonstrate a strong endorsement by farmers. The applicant adheres or mostly adheres to the word count minimums and maximums. Some answers may be longer or shorter than the limits, but not significantly so.</p>	16 - 30
<p>The project is somewhat or unlikely to increase access to soil health technical assistance. Project deliverables are disconnected from the scope of the project, or the timeline on which the project team expects to see farmer-ready deliverables is too long to assess whether the project will be successful. The estimate of affected farms is not realistic and/or the reasoning is not adequately described. Descriptions of project success and measurability are unrealistic, or not described well enough to make an assessment.</p> <p>Letters of support are either not present or do not address whether farmers endorse this project. The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, which negatively impacts the application assessment.</p> <p>Broadly, not enough clear information was provided to properly assess project impact.</p>	0 - 15

Priority Areas = 15 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The project is highly aligned with the selected priority area and is highly likely to advance technical assistance availability within the priority area during the grant term. The project directly addresses the priority area. The applicant adheres to the word count minimums and maximums.</p> <p>If the applicant selected more than one priority area, the application meets the standards described above for ALL selected priority areas.</p>	11 - 15
<p>The project is not fully aligned with the selected priority area and it is difficult to understand whether the project will advance technical assistance availability specific to the selected priority area. The project's impacts are indirectly related to the priority area. The applicant adheres or mostly adheres to the word count minimums and maximums. Some answers may be longer or shorter than the limits, but not significantly so.</p> <p>If the applicant selected more than one priority area, the application meets the standards described above for SOME of the selected priority areas.</p>	6 - 10
<p>The project is not aligned with the selected priority area(s) and/or the applicant does not adequately describe how the project fits the priority area(s). The project's impacts/outcomes are not related to the priority area. The applicant does not adhere to the word count minimums and maximums. Answers are longer or shorter than the limits, which negatively impacts the application assessment.</p>	0 - 5

Project Management = 25 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The project is realistic and can be accomplished within the 3-year grant timeline. Description of the project is thorough, has clear objectives and deliverables, and directly addresses challenges associated with providing soil health technical assistance to farmers. Project collaborators add significant depth to the project and their contributions are specific and clearly outlined. Any descriptions of data management or creating accessibility to learning/engagement materials is clear and realistic.</p> <p>The organization and project lead are well-suited to undertake this project and to improve access to soil health technical assistance. The project includes direct collaboration with farmers or a clear</p>	21 - 25

plan to engage farmers throughout the grant period. The project establishes, builds on, or promotes farmer-to-farmer engagement and learning.	
<p>The project is realistic but might face challenges in effectively reaching or directly engaging farmers. The project description is clear enough to understand the goals and directly or indirectly addresses challenges associated with providing soil health technical assistance to farmers. Project collaborators bring depth to the project, but the benefit of collaborator activity may not be clear. Data management/accessibility plans are clear but may not be realistic.</p> <p>The organization and project lead are well-suited to undertake the proposed project, but might face some challenges in the project implementation. The project references collaborating with farmers but does not adequately outline how that collaboration will occur. Farmer-to-farmer engagement opportunities may be unrealistic.</p>	11 - 20
<p>The project is unrealistic, the project lead and their organization are not well-suited to take on the project. It is unclear how the project will increase access to soil health technical assistance. There are significant concerns about how the project fits the scope of the grant.</p> <p>Broadly, not enough clear information was provided to properly assess project management.</p>	0 - 10

Budget = 20 points

Description	Point Range
<p>The budget is submitted on-time and is complete, has no unallowable costs, and does not exceed \$185,000. All funds requested will advance project goals/objectives/deliverables.</p> <p>If funds for hourly wages are requested, the applicant offers a livable wage. Farmers involved in the project are equitably compensated for their time, labor, land, etc.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, the applicant includes a vendor quote for each piece of requested equipment. If the cost of the equipment exceeds the grant maximum, the applicant provides supporting information that demonstrates access to funds for the difference. Requests for equipment do not exceed \$75,000.</p> <p>Budget narrative descriptions are informative and give a sense of how requested items will be used to improve soil health technical assistance.</p>	16 - 20
<p>The budget is incomplete but it does not impact the ability to assess the application OR there are unallowable costs but they could be removed from the budget and the project could reasonably continue without them. The budget was submitted on time.</p> <p>The budget does not exceed \$185,000.</p> <p>If funds for hourly wages are requested, the applicant offers a livable wage. Farmers involved in the project are equitably compensated for their time, labor, land, etc.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, the applicant includes a vendor quote for each piece of requested equipment. The applicant does not provide supporting documentation that demonstrates access to funds to cover the difference between the grant maximum and the</p>	11 - 15

<p>equipment costs and/or does not provide a vendor quote for 1 or more items. Requests for equipment do not exceed \$75,000.</p> <p>Budget narrative descriptions are unclear or vague. You can broadly understand how the budget items will be used to improve soil health technical assistance, but more information is needed to fully understand.</p>	
<p>The budget is incomplete and it is difficult to assess the application because of that OR the unallowable costs included in the budget cannot be removed from the project without significant reworking of the project.</p> <p>The budget exceeds \$185,000.</p> <p>If funds for hourly wages are requested, the wage offered is not adequate. Funds to compensate farmers for the involvement in the project are not requested.</p> <p>If equipment funds are requested, multiple vendor quotes or other documentation are missing. Total equipment request exceeds \$75,000.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe how budget items will improve soil health technical assistance. Too much detail is lacking to make an assessment.</p>	<p>0 - 10</p>

3.2. Example Scoresheet for reviewers

Threshold Criteria

Criteria	Yes/No
Applicant is eligible.	
Application was formatted correctly, complete, and on time.	
All supplemental files were formatted correctly, completed, and submitted by the application due date.	

Scoring Rubric and Weights

Criteria	Max Points	Score
Project Impact “Will this project significantly improve access to soil health technical assistance for Maine farmers?”	/40	
Priority Areas “Does this project align with any of the priority areas defined in Section 1.3 of this RFA?”	/15	
Project Management: “Does the project team have a strong plan for managing this project and achieving the goals/objectives/deliverables?”	/25	
Budget: “Do the budget items advance project goals, address all requirements described in the funding announcement, and not exceed the maximum allowable request?”	/20	

Questions, Strengths and Weaknesses:

APPENDIX A: RFA TERMS and DEFINITIONS

Agricultural Products: Plants and animals useful to humans, including but not limited to, forages and sod crops, grains and food crops, dairy products, poultry and poultry products, bees, livestock and livestock products, fiber, fruits, berries, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, Christmas trees, annual and perennial ornamental plants, ornamental trees, and other similar products.

Applicant: An agricultural service provider (see [Eligibility](#)) that is applying for the Technical Assistance Capacity Grant.

Agricultural Service Provider: Organizations, including but not limited to colleges and universities, agricultural non-profit organizations, crop advisors, and soil and water conservation districts, that provide technical and/or financial assistance to farm operations to address barriers, constraints, and other such issues commonly faced.

Commissioner: The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

DACF/Department: The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Farmland: Any tract or tracts of land used to produce agricultural products for a farm operation that consists of at least one (1) acre and has produced agricultural products with a gross annual value of at least \$2,000 in one (1) of the last three (3) years.

Farm Operation: An entity that uses farmland to produce agricultural products with the intent that they be sold commercially to generate income or otherwise creates access to farmland for historically underserved farmers.

Funding Cycle: The dates during which a funding initiative is active and accepting applications.

FY2026: Fiscal year 2026, beginning July 1st, 2025- June 30, 2026.

Healthy soils best practices: Agricultural and land management practices that:

- A. Enhance the continuing capacity of soils to function as a vital, living biological system, increase soil organic matter, improve soil structure, strengthen water holding and nutrient holding capacity, improve nutrient cycling and result in net long-term greenhouse gas drawdown;
- B. Continuously improve the capacity of soils to host a diversity of beneficial organisms, grow vigorous crops, enhance agricultural resilience, including, but not limited to, the ability of crops and livestock to tolerate and recover from drought, temperature extremes, pests and other stressors, and help regulate the global climate by converting organic residue into stable soil organic matter and retaining nutrients, including, but not limited to, nitrogen and phosphorus;
- C. Continuously improve the health of soils by considering all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, depth of topsoil horizons, water infiltration rate, water holding capacity, organic

carbon content, biologically accessible nutrient content, bulk density, biological activity and biological and microbiological diversity; and

- D. Follow the principles of minimizing soil disturbance and external inputs: keeping soil covered, maximizing biodiversity, maximizing the presence of living roots and integrating animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects and keystone species, such as earthworms.

Maine Healthy Soils Program Technical Assistance Capacity Grant: A grant program that provides funding to agricultural service providers to improve access to soil health technical assistance in Maine.

Review Panel: A panel that shall review grant proposals and make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner. The review panel shall consist of three (3) people appointed by the Commissioner with knowledge of soil health and sustainable agriculture that do not have a conflict of interest with the applicant(s). At least one panel member must be Department staff.

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Soil amendments: Amendments including but not limited to biochar and compost that are developed from plant and animal residues. Amendments may also include agricultural lime. Soil amendments in this chapter must be used with the intent of improving the physical, biological, and chemical properties of the soil, including but not limited to increasing soil organic matter, soil carbon sequestration, soil aggregate stability, and/or soil organism habitats.

Soil health test: A test that measures the physical, biological, and chemical properties of a soil sample to identify soil health constraints. Measurements included in the soil health test must adhere to the latest research standards and may change as new data are published.

State: State of Maine

APPENDIX 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.
- 4) Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an application submitted in response to this RFA, the Department will consider materials provided in the application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Applicant (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating the Applicant's experience and capabilities.
- 5) The application must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Applicant and must contain a statement that the application and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the RFA deadline.
- 6) The RFA and the awarded Applicant's application, including all appendices, attachments, or updated documents requested by the Department or the USDA will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
- 7) Following the 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.).
- 8) 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.
- 9) 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.