**STATE OF MAINE**

**Volunteer Maine***The Commission for Community Service*

****

**RFA# 202207128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

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| **RFA Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Kirsten Brewer **Title:** Climate Corps Coordinator  **Contact Information:** [Kirsten.Brewer@maine.gov](mailto:Kirsten.Brewer@maine.gov) |
| **Information Session** | **Date:** August 26, 2022 **Time:** 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. local time  **Location:** virtual (Zoom) **Registration Link:**  <https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/84052767416> |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFA Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** September 2, 2022 no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application Submission** | *Applications must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline:** September 23, 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.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

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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** |
| **Commission** | Maine Commission for Community Service, also referred to as Volunteer Maine |
| **Contract** | Formal and legal binding agreement |
| **Grantee** | Organization providing services under this agreement |
| **RFA** | Request for Applications |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **MEC** | Minimum Essential Coverage-compliant health insurance is an insurance plan that meets the Affordable Care Act requirement for having health coverage. |
| **Members** | Participants in the Climate Corps are referred to as members -not volunteers, workers, interns, fellows, or another term. |
| **Volunteer Maine** | Public name of the Maine Commission for Community Service |

**INTRODUCTION**

1. **Background**

Volunteer Maine is accepting applications for a pilot Climate Corps program focused on Energy Efficiency and Home Energy Management and Conservation as defined in this Request for Applications (RFA). This document provides instructions for submitting applications, the procedure and criteria by which the award will be selected, and the terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded grantee.

Volunteer Maine, the state service commission, builds capacity and sustainability in Maine's volunteer and service communities by funding programs, developing managers of volunteers, raising awareness of sector issues, and promoting service as a strategy to address community needs.

Volunteer Maine was established in 1994 by Executive Order and under state statute in 1995. The 25 board members of the Volunteer Maine Commission are appointed by the governor to three-year terms and each represents a specific segment of Maine's volunteer sector.

The Maine Climate Council recommended the creation of the Maine Climate Corps in the 2020 Climate Action Plan, [*Maine Won’t Wait*](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf)*,* under Strategy H, Engage with Maine People and Communities. In 2021, at the direction of the Legislature, Volunteer Maine studied the potential for the Climate Corps in Maine and made [recommendations for the structure and priorities](https://www.flipsnack.com/E5BFABCC5A8/maine-climate-corps-inspired-by-history-designed-for-today/full-view.html) of the program. These recommendations directly informed the state statute which officially created the Maine Climate Corps.

Ultimately, the Maine Climate Corps will be a set of programs coordinated by the Volunteer Maine office and each program will be sponsored by agencies with expertise in the relevant focus area. Focus areas that align with *Maine Won’t Wait* include transportation, energy, housing, coastal zone, public health, land and freshwater preservation, community resilience, and climate-related education.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this grant is to implement a pilot Maine Climate Corps program – a community service corps program with the mission of responding to the impacts of climate change. In addition to providing direct service, this grant is an opportunity for community organizations to plan for future Climate Corps funding or AmeriCorps State competitions. The grantee will be a partner of Volunteer Maine to collaboratively develop a new model for service that tackles the challenges of climate change.

This grant will fund Climate Corps programs in the priority areas of Energy Efficiency Education and Outreach and/or Home Energy Conservation and Management[[1]](#footnote-1). Volunteer Maine is prioritizing these areas due to the potential impact on reducing pollution, saving money for Mainers in need, and workforce development opportunities in the Clean Energy sector. Due to the energy crisis and rising costs, there is increased urgency for the Climate Corps to respond to this challenge.

1. **General Provisions**
   1. From the time the RFA is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFA must be made through the RFA Coordinator. No other person/State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFA.
   2. All applications must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFA and all written supplements and amendments, issued by Volunteer Maine. Applications are to respond to all questions and instructions specified below in the “Application Submission Requirements” section of the RFA. Applicants who do not respond as the instructions specify will not be reviewed. The Department reserves the right to ignore minor errors and omissions.
   3. Applicants will take careful note that in evaluating an Application submitted in response to the RFA, Volunteer Maine will consider materials provided in the Application, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Volunteer Maine information of previous grant history with the grantee (if any). Volunteer Maine also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating a grantee’s experience and capabilities.
   4. 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](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html) et seq.).
   5. All applicable laws, whether or not herein contained, are included by this reference. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such laws and to abide by them.
2. **Eligibility to Apply**

Maine public or private non-profits, State/county/local units of government, higher education institutions, faith-based organizations, labor organizations, federally recognized Tribes, and regional organizations that will support members entirely within Maine may apply.

Organizations must have an official IRS employer identification number.

1. **Grant Term**

Volunteer Maine is seeking applications to provide services, as defined in the RFA, for the anticipated grant period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The actual grant start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

1. **Number of Awards**

Volunteer Maine anticipates making one award as a result of the RFA process but retains the right to make multiple awards, or none, whichever is in the best interests of the State, as a result of this RFA process. The number and size of awards will depend on the number of applications received and availability of funds.

**GRANT OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS**

1. **What This Grant Covers**

This grant awards two types of resources to address the local need: funding for member benefits and funds for program administrator staff. Up to $81,310 is available for program leadership position(s) and $120,000 for Climate Corps members’ benefits.

This grant will partially cover the expense of operating a Climate Corps program and cannot cover general organizational expenses.

Local cash and in-kind resources may be necessary to cover the full implementation of the program, including costs such as materials, supplies, tools, and other resources to execute the service activity.

While we do not formally require additional cost-share, nor documentation on cost-share expenses, we do ask Applicants to demonstrate all expenses of managing the program and the proposed source of funds in the submitted budget. This is a pilot program and lessons learned will inform future iterations of the Climate Corps in Maine.

1. **Climate Corps Program Design**
   1. The Climate Corps program funded by this grant will conduct evidence-based direct service projects developed through community collaboration, including collaboration with indigenous communities. The program will be externally focused on fixing a problem in the community (i.e., the primary outcome should not be on research or exclusively training Corps members). The problem to be addressed and the proposed solutions should be determined by the host community.
   2. The program will:
2. exhibit the traits of high-quality service programs (described in **Appendix D**);
3. contribute directly to the goals of the State of Maine’s Climate Action Plan, *Maine Won’t Wait*;
4. individually focus on responses to climate change that are aligned with the sponsoring organization’s demonstrated area of expertise;
5. implement service activities based on current, generally accepted science;
6. be deliberate in its actions addressing equity, justice, and accessibility;
7. collaborate with organizations and agencies who share the goals of the program but who do not have the capacity to independently operate a Climate Corps program;
8. prioritize assistance to disproportionately affected communities and ensure that individuals in service positions represent the economic and demographic diversity of communities, including persons who are historically marginalized[[2]](#footnote-2);
9. participate in the Climate Corps Network (statewide community of practice for Climate Corps programs).
   1. Corps Member Terms of Service will be specifically determined by the program design to adequately address the problem and implement the solution. For example, the program will specify the length of the service term and the amount of effort (full or part-time). Terms of service should be of sufficient duration and intensity to maximize the amount of impact from the program. Typically, the commitment of Corps members is significantly more than community volunteers engaged in the solution. Corps members serve as a “force multiplier” when leveraging community volunteer engagement (see Appendix E for more details about the concept of Corps Programs as force multipliers).
   2. Training, skill development, and a meaningful credential(s) will be provided to Corps members. The program will ensure the members have the appropriate skills to effectively serve the community and meet a secondary goal to contribute to workforce development in the clean energy sector. Corps members will graduate from the program with one or more credential(s)/certification(s) and/or a portfolio of work documenting their knowledge, skills, and abilities.
10. **Priorities**

Applications should address at least one of the following priorities:

1. Energy Education and Outreach

This includes: face-to-face energy education in communities including demonstrations and connecting with trusted gatekeepers in the community; and/or energy coaching to provide wraparound services to residents including both information, education, and support to help residents and community-based organizations navigate complex programs. Projects within this category would contribute to *Maine Won’t Wait*’s Strategy A: Embrace the Future of Transportation in Maine, B: Modernize Maine’s Buildings, and H: Engage with Maine People and Communities.

1. Home Energy Conservation and Management

This includes: implementation of light or minimally invasive weatherization actions and/or basic home repairs that enable a resident to become eligible for full-weatherization services; and/or demonstrations and teaching of DIY activities enabling residents to implement weatherization activities on their own. Projects within this category would contribute to *Maine Won’t Wait’s* Strategy B: Modernize Maine’s Buildings, and Strategy D: Grow Maine’s Clean-Energy Economy and Protect Our Natural Resources Industries.

All Applications must propose programs that will engage in activities that result in reduced carbon emissions, reduced energy use, saving Maine residents money, increasing Maine residents’ knowledge, skills, or abilities vis a vis energy efficiency, and/or increase the number of workers in the clean energy workforce.

1. **Program Planning and Development**

This pilot phase of the Maine Climate Corps will fund up to one year of service activities. It is expected that at the mid-point of the grant period, the grantee will apply for additional funding to sustain and grow the program, as that funding becomes available.

Volunteer Maine hosted scoping meetings in July and August of 2022 with experts in energy efficiency, low-income heat assistance programs, and weatherization. That feedback directly informed this RFA. Applicants are encouraged to review the full report; an excerpt of the suggested service activities developed in these scoping meetings is in Appendix E.

Many other states have energy service corps programs. In Appendix E, other program models are listed. Applicants are encouraged to learn about other service models to envision what a successful model could look like in Maine.

1. **Grant Requirements**
   1. The program will provide individuals in full-time (30+ hours per week) service positions with stipends, health insurance, liability insurance, and accidental death or dismemberment insurance.

Stipend. Members whose service assignments require full-time service (i.e., 30+ hours or more weekly) receive a living allowance or stipend. The stipend is not a wage but, rather, support that allows the member to give nearly all their time to the program’s service activities and have some funds for rent, heat, food, and transportation.

The minimum budgeted stipend for full-time members should be the equivalent of a livable wage (currently $15/hour). If the project sponsor is able to raise additional funds, there is no maximum limit for the stipend. Note that under Maine statute, a living allowance for service is not a wage; Corps members are not employees.

Health Insurance. The grantee must provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to those members serving a full-time term for at least 6 months who are not otherwise covered by a healthcare policy at the time the member begins his/her term of service. The grantee must also provide, or make available, healthcare insurance to members who lose coverage during their term of service as a result of service or through no deliberate act of their own. The grantee does not have to provide their employer sponsored plan to the Corps members.

Any of the following health insurance options will satisfy the requirement for Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC)-compliant health insurance for full-time members: staying on parents’ or spouse plan; insurance obtained through the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace of at least the Bronze level plan; insurance obtained through private insurance broker that is MEC compliant; Medicaid, Medicare or military benefits; or a plan available through the Corps Network.

If coverage is being provided via the Healthcare Marketplace, and thus third-party payment is not an option, programs must develop a process to reimburse members for monthly premiums. Reimbursements for health insurance premiums are considered taxable income for the member, and programs must have a way to document such reimbursements.

Insurance The program will provide accident and injury insurance coverage for full-time members (30+ hours a week) either through a Workers Compensation or a separate policy or rider.

Post-service Awards. The program may provide a post-service award that is either financial or educational (scholarship or reduced tuition for future education, provided the project sponsor secures this benefit with a partner organization).

Other benefits. Members may receive other benefits such as in-kind housing or a housing allowance, transportation benefits, Employee Assistance Program access, or wellness programs.

* 1. Member Eligibility. An eligible member is an individual who:
* has authorization to work in the United States
* is at least 14 years of age and in compliance with Maine Child Labor Laws.

The program selects its members at the local level and the selection criteria may vary according to the program service roles and work to be performed. In all cases, however, selection must be conducted in a fair and non-discriminatory manner that complies with Federal and Maine law.

Programs must establish minimum qualifications (skills, knowledge, abilities, age, education, criminal history, etc.) for service positions and base the qualifications on the service activities. These qualifications along with responsibilities or duties and essential as well as desired functions must be stated in a member role description (similar to a standard volunteer role description). Successful completion of an orientation period is a mandatory qualification for members. The Commission encourages programs to select members who possess leadership potential as well as a commitment to the goals of the program, regardless of educational level, work experience, or economic background.

* 1. The project sponsor will have adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees, members, and community volunteers, including coverage of members engaged in on- and off-site project activities.
  2. The program will withhold Federal personal income taxes from member living allowances, requiring each member to complete a W-4 form at the beginning of the term of service and providing a W-2 form at the close of the tax year. The grantee must comply with any applicable state or local tax requirements.
  3. The program will pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance (unless exempted by the IRS). Participation in FICA helps members earn quarters in the system and is particularly beneficial to individuals who may be older or have spent considerable time out of the workforce.
  4. To ensure that materials generated with Climate Corps funding are available to the public and readily accessible to grantees and non-grantees, the Commission reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to obtain, use, modify, reproduce, publish, or disseminate publications and materials produced under the award, including data, and to authorize others to do so.
  5. Programs and activities must be accessible. You must provide reasonable accommodation to known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation.
  6. The program must develop policies and a system for collecting, organizing, and analyzing data on an ongoing basis. The categories of data include member records, service activities and impact, identities of partners, as well as financial (in-kind and cash) data when applicable. Typical reporting requirements are fiscal reports, quarterly progress reports, and final reports.

All grantees will be expected to have data collection and data management policies and practices that provide reasonable assurance that they are providing the Commission with high quality programmatic and financial data. At a minimum, grantees should have policies and practices which address the following five aspects of data quality:

* The data collected measures what it intends to measure;
* The grantee collects data in a consistent manner;
* The grantee takes steps to correct data errors;
* The grantee ensures that the data reported is complete; and
* The grantee actively reviews data prior to submission.

In addition, the program must cooperate with state or national program evaluation studies the funders may undertake.

**KEY RFA EVENTS**

1. **Information Session**

Volunteer Maine will sponsor an information session concerning the RFA on the date shown on the RFA cover page. The purpose of the information session is to answer and/or field questions, clarify for potential applicants any aspect of the RFA requirements that may be necessary and provide supplemental information to assist potential applicants in submitting responses to the RFA. Although attendance at the information session is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested applicants attend. A recording of the session will be posted on the Division of Procurement Services grant page upon its completion: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>.

1. **Questions**

Questions about this RFA must be submitted by email to [Service.Commission@maine.gov](mailto:Service.Commission@maine.gov) ***with the subject line***: “Maine Climate Corps RFA# 202208128 Questions.” The deadline for written questions is September 2, 2022 and responses to all substantive and relevant questions will be posted on the same page as the RFA <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants> and at https://volunteermaine.gov/grants/funding-proposals-request

1. **Amendments**

Any amendments to the RFA will also be posted on the following website: [Division of Procurement Services RFA Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments.

1. **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. 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. **Delivery Instructions:** E-mail application submissions are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov).
      1. Only Application submissions received by e-mail will be considered. Volunteer Maine 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 application submissions 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 organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your Application submission.
      4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files separately 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, and according to the subject and file labeling instructions listed below.
      5. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail Application submission: **“RFA# 202208128 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”**
      6. Applicant’s application submissions are to be broken down into multiple files, with each file named as it is titled in bold below, and include:

* **File 1 [Applicant’s Name] – Preliminary Information:**

*PDF format preferred*

* **Appendix A** Application Cover Page
* Audit ***PLUS*** Management Letters and all findings
* Articles of Incorporation
* Organization’s most recently filed Form 990
* **Organizational Chart** showing the relationship of the program staff and members to the rest of the organization
* **Appendix B** (Debarment and Performance Certification)
* **Appendix C** (Narrative Form)
* **File 2 [Applicant’s Name] – Excel Budget Form:**
* **Completed Excel Budget Form**

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

This section contains instructions for Applicants to use in preparing their Applications. Volunteer Maine seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Applicant’s program design as described throughout the RFA.

The Applicant’s Application must follow the outline used below, including the numbering, section, and sub-section headings. Failure to use the outline specified, or 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. Volunteer Maine, 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 an Application. Rephrasing of the content provided in the RFA will, at best, be considered minimally responsive.

**Application Format and Contents**

**Section I File #1**

* 1. **Application Cover Page**

Applicants must complete **Appendix A** (Application Cover Page). The Application Cover Page must be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Applicant. Electronic signature is acceptable if there is an audit trail (such as is provided by DocuSign or Adobe Sign).

* 1. **Debarment and Performance Certification**

Applicants must complete **Appendix B** (Debarment and Performance Form). The Form must be dated and signed by a person authorized to submit grant applications.

* 1. **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants must provide Audit ***PLUS*** Management Letters and all findings,

articles of incorporation and the organization’s most recently filed Form 990.

* 1. **Organizational Chart**

Applicants must provide an organizational chart that shows the relationship of the program staff and Corps members to the rest of the organization.

* 1. **Project Narrative**

Applicants must complete the project narrative using **Appendix C** (Narrative Form). The narrative should be no longer than 10 pages, double-spaced and must address the items listed below:

* + 1. **Organizational Background and Staffing**
* Demonstrate the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to implement the proposed program.
* Identify the person who developed this Application and their role in the applicant organization.
* Discuss whether the organization has experience in engaging volunteers in its mission-related services or has a plan to do so.
* Discuss the organization’s experience in the priority focus areas of energy efficiency or home energy conservation.
* Describe the current organizational capacity (strengths, opportunities, challenges) and the status of its planning or development activities.
* Identify the program director by name, qualifications, and percent (FTE) of time the person will devote to leading the program. If the Corps members’ supervisor is not the program director, identify the supervisor, qualifications, and percent (FTE) of time the person will devote to supporting members. If specific individuals have not been selected, describe the qualification criteria that will be applied to selecting the program leadership.
* Describe how the Climate Corps program fits into the applicant organization’s mission and strategic goals. Describe the extent to which the program would support the organization in achieving its targets/goals/strategies.
* Describe the internal capacity building the applicant organization needs to undertake to sustain and support the program. Describe what preparation has been done with agency leadership, board, staff, partners, and stakeholders to gain support for capacity building.
* Describe how the organization plans to continue and/or grow program model at the completion of the pilot period
* Describe the organization’s plan for outreach and marketing to ensure recognition and awareness of the Climate Corps program.
  + 1. **Funding Priority**
* Describe how the applicant’s proposed program fits within Climate Corps priorities for this competition, detailed in section C. Priorities on page 7.
* Describe how the proposed program meets all of the program requirements detailed in section E. Grant Requirements on page 8.
  + 1. **Need**
* Include a problem statement detailing the community need(s) to be addressed by Climate Corps service.
  + 1. **Service Activity & Model**
* Describe the core activities that define the program model that members will implement or deliver including:
  + The program structure model (residential, crew-based, individual placement, etc).
  + Number of members proposed for program (not FTEs).
  + Minimum qualifications and requirements for Corps members (minimum and/or maximum age, education required, skills required).
  + The duration of the service term (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months).
  + The intensity of the activity (how often, how much for how long; e.g., hours per session, # of sessions).
  + The target population for the intervention (who will participate or benefit; e.g., disconnected youth, low-income seniors).
* Describe how the proposed intervention aligns with the identified community need(s).
* Describe the proposed roles and activities of Climate Corps members
* Describe roles of key partners, for example if they will provide training, supervision, or expertise in any aspect of service delivery.
* Describe the qualifications needed by members to ensure successful service delivery.

**e. Service Area**

* Describe the rural, suburban, or urban characteristics of service area.
* Describe the geographic area where activities will occur.
* Describe the ability to successfully deliver services and provide a positive member experience due to critical mass of beneficiaries, training opportunities, partners, and other resources needed for a successful program
* Describe the demographics of the beneficiaries of service.

**f. Theory of Change and Evidence of Effectiveness**

* Describe the output that Members will deliver (e.g., how many audits completed, how many adults served) and how much permanent change or improvement (outcomes) the intervention will achieve by the end of the grant period. (Please see **Appendix F** for sample suggestions of performance measures).
* Describe alignment between performance measures and the goals of *Maine Won’t Wait*, the State’s Climate Action Plan.
* Describe how the applicant’s Climate Corps members add significantly to any existing community efforts to address the stated problem.
* Describe if/how the service activity incorporates community volunteerism to build the community’s long-term capacity to sustain the effort.
* Describe the plan for data collection.

**g. Member Training & Workforce Development Goals**

* Describe how Climate Corps members will receive high quality training to provide effective service. The training will cover service-related skills/abilities and knowledge essential to understanding the community as well as the need.
* Describe how the skills, abilities, knowledge, and experience Climate Corps members gain will be valued by future employers and can be used to obtain employment after service.
* Describe how Climate Corps members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, program requirements.
* Describe how Climate Corps members will be prepared for a logical green job career pathway upon completion of service.

**h. Member Experience**

* Describe how Climate Corps members will have access to meaningful service experiences outside their assignment.
* Describe how Climate Corps members will have opportunities for reflection that uses the service experience as the opportunity to learn.
* Describe how the program will intentionally recruit Climate Corps members to ensure members reflect the demographics of the community that they are serving.
* Describe how the Climate Corps members will engage the community and/or volunteers.
* Describe how your program will provide needed support to Corps members to ensure equitable participation, such as multilingual or other outreach, wrap-around services, or affinity group programming.

**i. Equity, Justice, and Accessibility**

* Describehow your project addresses equity, justice, and accessibility for members, beneficiaries, and community partners.
* Describehow youth will be engaged in the program.
* Describehow partnerships or a coalition of groups will participate in program implementation
* Describehow community members participated in designing the proposed program and how the community will be involved in program implementation.
* Describehow the program will collaborate with indigenous communities.

**Section II Budget Proposal** (File #2)

* 1. **General Instructions**

Applicants must submit a budget that covers the period starting January 1, 2023 and ending no later than December 31, 2023.

* 1. **Budget Form Instructions**

Applicants must fill out **Appendix D** (Budget Form)following the instructions detailed here. Failure to provide the requested may result in the exclusion of the Application from consideration, at the discretion of Volunteer Maine.

Complete the four sections of the excel spreadsheet template

* + 1. Member Budget

Describe the position type (It is acceptable to propose multiple positions with different term lengths/effort. (E.g., 2 team leads with 1 year full-time terms, and 4 Corps members with 1 year part-time terms). It is acceptable to offer a higher living allowance to more experienced members or team leaders.

Indicate the total number of members for that position type

Indicate the total stipend budgeted for that position type for the entire term of service. Members will not receive an hourly wage, but the stipend should be the equivalent of a minimum of $15 an hour.

Describe member benefits (e.g., health insurance or end of service stipend). Please be sure to include required benefits listed above. Indicate number of members estimated to receive that benefit. List the cost of the benefit (per person amount).

* + 1. Supervisor Budget

Please list the position/title and description of the staff person’s role vis a vis the Climate Corps. You may list multiple staff members who are dedicated full or part-time to the Climate Corps.

Indicate the number of staff members in that role.

Indicate the total annual salary for that person.

Indicate the percent of time dedicated to the Climate Corps and for which you are requesting funding.

Describe the associated benefits and/or other expenses for the staff roles. Include in your description a calculation. The excel form will not calculate and auto-populate your expenses. Please complete the total amount for that line item.

* + 1. Total Budget Requested

This section will auto-populate with totals from the member and supervisor budgets. Your total grant request will be the sum of these expenses or $201,310.00, whichever is smaller.

* + 1. Grantee Cost-Share

There is no formal cost-share required for this grant, however, to successfully run a service program you will likely have additional expenses that the grant does not cover. Please enter an amount for each expense, a source of funds, and whether the funds are proposed or committed. Add extra lines as needed to describe costs not indicated. If a line-item is not indicated, please write “0” in the amount box.

**APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

Evaluation of the submitted Applications will be accomplished as follows:

1. **Evaluation Process - General Information**
   1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the Applications received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA.
   2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the Applications.
   3. Volunteer Maine reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the Applications received. Volunteer Maine may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations.
2. **Scoring Weights and Process**
   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.

**Section I. Preliminary Information (No Points – Eligibility Requirements)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Section I – 1, 2 & 3.

**Organization Qualifications and Experience (15 points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Section I – 4 & 5a.

**Program Design (70 total points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Section I – 5b through 5h.

**a. Funding Priority** (1 points)

**b. Need** (4 points)

**c. Service Activity & Model** (15 points)

**d. Service Area** (10 points)

* + 1. **Theory of Change and Evidence of Effectiveness** (10 points)
    2. **Member Training & Workforce Development Goals** (10 points)

**g. Member Experience** (5 points)

**h. Equity, Justice, and Accessibility** (10 points)

**Section II. Budget (15 points)**

Includes all elements addressed above in Section II.

* Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions and is correctly calculated.
* Living allowance for full-time members reflects minimum required.
* Health insurance, and other required insurance is reflected in budget.
* The Grantee cost-share tab indicates the non-Climate Corps funding and resources are sufficient to support the program described.

1. **Selection and Award**
   1. **State Review by Volunteer Maine, the state service commission**. The Commission uses selection criteria and a process that incorporates criteria as determined in state statute creating the Climate Corps, Commission policies on funding and performance, and the requirements of state contract selection rules.

All Applications are assessed by the Commission’s Grant Selection and Performance Task Force using a multi-step review process.

* External Peer Review of application narrative, budget, and performance measure components using system.
* Task Force assessment of applicant’s financial plan; fiscal capacity; alignment of proposed target need(s) with funding priorities, as well as proposed performance measures; program model including implementation readiness; and past performance in other grant programs, including those funded by foundations or other government agencies (if applicable). The assessment includes a review of documents, publicly available information, and interview of applicant representatives (as needed).
  1. **Peer Review**. Reviewers are community service practitioners, administrators, and specialists in the areas of environment, energy, housing, other human needs who evaluate the quality of the Applications.

Peer Reviewers express their consensus recommendations to the Commissions’ Grant Selection and Performance Task Force by assigning each Application to one of the following categories:

* Strongly Recommend for Further Review (A comprehensive and thorough Application of exceptional merit with numerous strengths; total score between 90 and 100)
* Recommend for Further Review (An Application that demonstrates overall competence and is worthy of support; it has some weaknesses. Total score between 80 and 89)
* Recommend for Further Review with Hesitation (An Application with approximately equal strengths and weaknesses. Total score between 60 and 79.)
* Do Not Recommend for Further Review (A Application with serious shortcomings. There are numerous weaknesses and few strengths. Total score 59 or below)

Applications not recommended for further review will not be submitted to the Task Force for consideration.

* 1. **Task Force Review.** Applications recommended for some level of review will undergo further assessment by the Grants Selection and Performance Task Force. The Task Force will include in its review documents submitted as part of this competition, applicant organization’s most recent IRS Form 990 as found on the central internet registry as well as data on other public registries such as the Excluded Parties List (debarment) and other publicly available materials. Members of the task force will also interview applicant representatives (as needed) to assess elements of implementation readiness, program model and past performance, and to clarify information presented in documents submitted.

Task Force assessment of applicant’s financial plan, fiscal capacity, alignment of proposed target need with funding priorities as well as proposed performance measures, program model including implementation readiness, and past performance in other grant programs including those funded by foundations or other government agencies (if applicable). While we do not formally require additional cost-share, nor documentation on cost-share expenses, we do ask you to demonstrate in your budget all expenses of managing the program and your proposed source of funds. In addition to informing future iterations of the Climate Corps in Maine, your proposed source of additional resources will demonstrate your organization’s capacity to successfully implement the project.

The Task Force will use the following weighting and selection criteria during this phase: 15 points Financial Plan, 25 points Fiscal Systems, 20 points Program Alignment and Model, 20 points Past Performance (in other grant programs) and Grant Readiness for a possible total of 100 points.

Upon completion of the Task Force review, the Peer Reviewer and Task Force Reviewer scores are then combined to produce a single review score.

The Grant Selection and Performance Task Force will then make its final recommendations for funding to the full Maine Commission. The Task Force is not obligated to recommend submission of any Applications.

* 1. **Commission Vote On Applications.** The Commission will vote on funding recommendations at the regular October 2022 business meeting.
  2. **Application Contents Available to the Public**. Once the selection process at the Commission level is complete, all submissions in response to this RFP will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.).

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

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.

**CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS**

1. **Contract Document**
   1. Any awarded Applicant will be required to execute a State of Maine Service Contract with appropriate riders as determined by Volunteer Maine.

The complete set of standard State of Maine Service Contract documents, along with other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State, may be found on the Division of Procurement Services’ website at the following link: [Division of Procurement Services Forms Page](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms)

* 1. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFA which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Applicants. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3(B)(i)](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110).)

This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.

* 1. The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFA process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. Any appeals to Volunteer Maine’s award decision(s) may further postpone the actual contract effective date, depending upon the outcome. The contract effective date listed in the RFA may need to be adjusted, if necessary, to comply with mandated requirements.
  2. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Applicant must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

1. **Standard State Contract Provisions**
   1. Contract Administration

Following the award, a Contract Administrator from Volunteer Maine will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Volunteer Maine staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Applicant in the finalization of the contract.

* 1. Payments and Other Provisions

The State anticipates paying the Contractor on the basis of quarterly reimbursements, upon the receipt of an accurate and acceptable invoice. An invoice will be considered accurate and acceptable if it contains a reference to the State of Maine contract number, and provides any required supporting documents, as applicable, and any other specific and agreed-upon requirements listed within the contract that results from the RFA.

**LIST OF RFA APPENDICES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

**Appendix A** – Application Cover Page

**Appendix B** – Debarment, Performance & Non-Collusion Certification

**Appendix C** – Narrative Form

**Appendix D** – Budget Form

**Appendix E** – Attributes of High-Quality Service Corps

**Appendix F** – Report from Scoping Meetings

**Appendix G –** List of Included Weblinks

**APPENDIX A**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

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

* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting contract with Volunteer Maine if they are 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**

**Volunteer Maine**

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

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** |  |

*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.*

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

**APPENDIX C**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**NARRATIVE FORM**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant’s Organization Name:** |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary** |
| Applicants must use this form to provide their project narrative, addressing all items listed in Section I – 5 under Application Submission Requirements. *Please submit no more than 10 pages, double-spaced.* |
|  |

**APPENDIX D**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**BUDGET FORM**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

****

Applicants must complete the budget form embedded above by following all instructions detailed in Section II – Budget Proposal under Application Submission Requirements on page 16 of the RFA.

The budget form may be accessed by double clicking on the icon above.

**APPENDIX E**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**ATTRIBUTES OF HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE CORPS PROGRAMS**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

* The problem to be addressed and the proven solution to be implemented are proposed by the community that is impacted
* A community organization works with like-minded local groups and uses its technical knowledge, community relationships, and human resource management expertise to design a program that implements the solution
* The program mission is externally focused on improving a problematic situation affecting community life –
  + - the tactic used to fulfill the mission is to engage both Corps members and community residents as volunteers in the service activities;
    - the program recruits and selects Corps members in an inclusive manner that results in the Corps being representative of the community’s diversity even if some members do not reside locally;
    - an advisory group of community stakeholders and residents provides feedback and guidance throughout implementation.
* Corps members commit to a term of service that fits both their availability and the program design needs --
  + - terms of service require participants to commit time that, at a minimum, is 10 times greater than the average community volunteer (10-40 hours/week for Corps member; 1-4 hours/week average for community volunteer);
    - Corps members receive benefits aligned with intensity of service so they are able to fulfill their commitment. Benefits may include a stipend, childcare, health insurance, housing, and post-service financial awards.
* Program staff conduct or facilitate Corps member development through training, certifications, and professional networking in order to:
  + - prepare Corps members to carry out effective service tasks;
    - develop positive team environment where differences are appreciated, opportunities to both lead and support the team occur, and soft-skills valuable for personal and work relationships are honed;
    - add to technical skills, knowledge and abilities in ways that enhance post-service job prospects;
    - foster civic engagement so they are prepared to be active citizens post-service;
    - support post-service transitions into jobs, post-secondary education, military, or other national service.
* Often have a goal of building the community’s capacity to sustain the effort and, therefore, be capable of meeting its own needs.

**APPENDIX F**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**REPORT FROM SCOPING MEETINGS**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

Scoping meetings were held on June 28 and July 12, 2022 to explore gaps and barriers in existing energy efficiency education and outreach programs and home energy conservation and management programs. Attributes of service program design were discussed to address the gaps and barriers.

Multiple problems were identified and multiple, intersecting, activities were proposed. Four core activities are emerging that could be stand-alone Corps projects. **These interventions are not mutually exclusive; consider this a menu of activities that could be developed into a cohesive program model.**

Day-to-day activities

1. **Energy Educator**: Plan community education events. Research and learn about existing programs. Meet with community leaders to build trust and understand their needs. Share information, demonstrate products, provide supplies, sign-up participants in programs. Engage youth in K-12 schools to share information about career opportunities. Recruit for window insert programs. Recruit participants for energy programs. Engage with local media to get messages out in community. *Note: These activities are different than general outreach/marketing of the program. Any program model may have an outreach component (for example, a crew speaking at a town hall to describe weatherization efforts for general awareness of the program); the Energy Educator is focused on increasing awareness and changing behavior of the beneficiaries.*
2. **Energy Coach**: Matches with resident in need via social service agency. Meets with resident to assess needs (may or may not include home repair, accessibility, other health concerns). Member provides information on programs, teaches about behavior change, signs resident up for further programs, completes energy plan. Member continues to follow-up, case worker model to see-through on execution of plan. Resource for small businesses seeking certification to be in WAP.
3. **Weatherization Crew**: Crew completes home repair in preparation for weatherization. Crew completes light weatherization. Crew shadows and supports professionals conducting full weatherization (observational training). Crew recruits and engages volunteers in light weatherization and/or window builds. Crew leads window builds, measuring, builds, and install.
4. **DIY Training Crews**: Crew demos and trains on DIY weatherization in households. Offers community-based workshops/trainings via known community centers (adult ed, local hardware store, senior center, etc). Corps completes weatherization and provides open house/demo for broader community.

Corps members serve as a “force multiplier” when leveraging community volunteer engagement. As described in Appendix D, High-quality service corps programs develop strategies for long-term implementation of the solution in the community, by building capacity to succeed the service corps member upon the potential close out of the program. Increasing community volunteer engagement by building new programs; recruiting, training, or managing volunteers; or enhancing existing volunteer systems, is one strategy to create sustainability.

Additionally, Service Corps programs provide additional human resources to apply to a solution, but other resources must be in place for the service to be successful. Service Corps members need additional resources to meet their goals, whether that is tools and materials or connections to and collaboration with individuals and institutions in the community.

There are many **other service programs** nationally that address energy efficiency. Some of these include:

[Minnesota AMPACT Climate Impact Corps Home Energy Initiative](https://www.ampact.us/home-energy)

[Hawaii Energy Wayfinders](https://energy.hawaii.gov/get-engaged/clean-energy-wayfinders/)

[Green Iowa AmeriCorps Energy and Community Track](https://www.greeniowaamericorps.org/_files/ugd/f950f7_c86341715d1e4004b58e10e8f8a0c8ea.pdf)

[Mile-High Corps Denver](https://www.milehighyouthcorps.org/)

[Get Your GreenBack Tompkins-Energy Advising](https://www.getyourgreenbacktompkins.org/energy-advising)

**Sample Outcomes and Outputs**

Based on the scoping meeting, these are potential outputs and outcomes that may be incorporated into program design. Chosen outcomes and outputs should be logically related (e.g., Number of residents receiving weatherization services leads to amount of money saved by beneficiaries).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outputs** are deliverables from service activities (number of meals served, trees planted, presentations delivered).  You are welcome to propose your own performance measures; they should align with *Maine Won’t Wait.* | □ Number of residents receiving education  □ Number of organizations receiving education  □ Number of residents creating energy plans or completing energy checklists  □ Number of residents newly enrolled in weatherization and/or rebate programs  □ Number of residents newly receiving energy audits  □ Number of residents receiving home repair services  □ Number of residents receiving weatherization services  □ Number of energy audits completed  □ Number of volunteers recruited to support weatherization activities  □ Number of volunteer service days hosted  □ Number of residents trained in DIY weatherization skills  □ Other:\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Outcomes** are changes in the world due to the service activity (students’ knowledge increased, carbon sequestered, etc).  You are welcome to propose your own performance measures; they should align with *Maine Won’t Wait.* | □ Number of residents reporting increase in knowledge of energy efficiency and related programs  □ Amount of energy reduced  □ Amount of money saved by beneficiaries  □ Amount of emissions reduced  □ Number of Corps members continuing on to green jobs or related higher education  □ Other:\_\_\_\_\_ |

**APPENDIX G**

**State of Maine**

**Volunteer Maine**

**LIST OF INCLUDED WEBLINKS**

**RFA# 202208128**

**Maine Climate Corps**

Weblinks referenced in document include:

*Maine Won’t Wait* Climate Action Report <https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf>

Justice40 Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5

Climate Corps Report

<https://www.flipsnack.com/E5BFABCC5A8/maine-climate-corps-inspired-by-history-designed-for-today/full-view.html>

[Minnesota AMPACT Climate Impact Corps Home Energy Initiative](https://www.ampact.us/home-energy)

<https://www.ampact.us/home-energy>

[Hawaii Energy Wayfinders](https://energy.hawaii.gov/get-engaged/clean-energy-wayfinders/)

<https://energy.hawaii.gov/get-engaged/clean-energy-wayfinders/>

[Green Iowa AmeriCorps Energy and Community Track](https://www.greeniowaamericorps.org/_files/ugd/f950f7_c86341715d1e4004b58e10e8f8a0c8ea.pdf)

<https://www.greeniowaamericorps.org/_files/ugd/f950f7_c86341715d1e4004b58e10e8f8a0c8ea.pdf>

[Mile-High Corps Denver](https://www.milehighyouthcorps.org/)

<https://www.milehighyouthcorps.org/>

[Get Your GreenBack Tompkins-Energy Advising](https://www.getyourgreenbacktompkins.org/energy-advising)

https://www.getyourgreenbacktompkins.org/energy-advising

Division of Procurement Services Webpage

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/forms>

Regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-110>

Rules regarding appeals of grant decisions

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/5/title5sec1825-E.html>

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120>

RFA postings and amendments

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>

https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps <https://volunteermaine.gov/grants/funding-proposals-request>

Freedom of Access Act

http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1sec401.html

1. See full [Climate Corps Report](https://www.flipsnack.com/E5BFABCC5A8/maine-climate-corps-inspired-by-history-designed-for-today/full-view.html) with descriptions of priority areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The White House’s Justice40 Initiative and [mapping tool](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5) provides resources for identifying “disproportionately affected communities” in Maine. Persons who are historically marginalized include those from communities with concentrated poverty, rural communities, tribal communities, and underrepresented and underserved individuals, including but not limited to communities of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with arrest and/or conviction records, and religious minorities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)