



Division of Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance

**Agricultural Food Safety
Improvement Program (AFSIP)
Fiscal Year 2025
(July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025)**

Request for Response (RFR): RFR File: **AGR-AFSIP-FY25**

**For the implementation of practices that help reduce or prevent
food safety risks while increasing market access for produce and aquaculture operations.**

Application Deadline: 4:00pm on Friday, May 24, 2024

Applications must be submitted as instructed as
listed on page 10 or they will not be accepted.

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Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202
Lakeville, MA 02347

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GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper, Secretary Grant Announcement RFR ID: RFR-AFSIP-FY25 Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (AFSIP)	
Proposals Sought For:	The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR") seeks applicants to implement eligible practices that help prevent or reduce food safety risks, promote produce farms' transition to compliance with the United States Food & Drug Administration ("FDA") Food Safety Modernization Act ("FSMA"), and meet market demands for on-farm food safety.
Overview & Goals:	To improve on-farm food safety by minimizing microbial hazards while increasing competitive market access by meeting buyer demands for demonstrated practices that work towards protecting public health in the Commonwealth.
Eligible Projects:	Practices that help prevent or reduce on-farm food safety risks for produce or aquaculture operations (See further detail on Eligible Projects in Section 2).
Eligible Applicants:	Produce operations that grow, harvest, pack, or hold produce and aquaculture operations that are engaged in production agriculture (See further detail on Eligible Applicants in Section 1). The property must be in active agricultural use and managed by the applicant for at least the 3 years previous to the date of application.
Application Deadline:	Received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 24, 2024. (See further detail on deadlines and grant program calendar in Section 7).
Funding Availability:	Maximum funding per applicant is 80% of total project costs up to \$50,000. (See further detail on Funding Availability in Section 3A).
Match Requirement:	Minimum of 20% of total project costs including materials and contracted labor. (See further detail on the Match Requirement in Section 3C).
Duration of Contract:	Contract end date is June 30, 2025, with no extensions. (See further detail on anticipated duration of contracts in Section 4C).
Contact Information:	Laura Maul – (857) 507-5972 Laura.Maul@mass.gov 30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202 Lakeville, MA 02547

DEFINITIONS

Applicant:

Individual or organization requesting grant funding.

Food Safety Modernization Act (“FSMA”):

The FSMA was passed in 2011 in response to dramatic changes in the global food system and the understanding of foodborne illness and their consequences, including the realization that preventable foodborne illness is both a significant public health problem and a threat to the economic well-being of the food system. FDA finalized seven major rules to implement FSMA, recognizing that ensuring the safety of the food supply is a shared responsibility among many different points in the global supply chain for both human and animal food. The FSMA rules are designed to make clear the specific actions that must be taken at each of these points to prevent contamination.

Produce Safety Rule (“PSR”):

The PSR is one of seven food safety regulations that that FDA has finalized to implement FSMA. The PSR sets a series of standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of produce grown for human consumption, 21 C.F.R. Part 112 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/11/27/2015-28159/standards-for-the-growing-harvesting-packing-and-holding-of-produce-for-human-consumption>).

Covered Produce:

Covered produce includes any raw fruit or vegetable commonly consumed raw, including, but not limited to, the following: fruits and vegetables such as almonds, apples, apricots, apriums, artichokes-globetype, Asian pears, avocados, babacos, bananas, Belgian endive, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, brazil nuts, broad beans, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, burdock, cabbages, Chinese cabbages (bok choy, mustard, Napa), cantaloupes, carambolas, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chayote fruit, cherries (sweet), chestnuts, chicory (roots and tops), citrus (such as clementine, grapefruits, lemons, limes, mandarin, oranges, tangerines, tangors, and uniq fruit), cowpea beans, cress-garden, cucumbers, curly endive, currants, dandelion leaves, fennel-Florence, garlic, genip, gooseberries, grapes, green beans, guavas, herbs (such as basil, chives, cilantro, oregano and parsley), honeydew, huckleberries, kale, kiwifruit, kohlrabi, kumquats, leek, lettuce, lychees, macadamia nuts, mangos, other melons (such as canary, Crenshaw and Persian), mulberries, mushrooms, mustard greens, nectarines, onions, papayas, parsnips, passion fruit, peaches, pears, peas, peas-pigeon, peppers (such as bell and hot), pine nuts, pineapples, plantains, plums, plumcots, quince, radishes, raspberries, rhubarb, rutabagas, scallions, shallots, snow peas, soursop, spinach, sprouts (such as alfalfa and mung bean), strawberries, summer squash (such as patty pan, yellow and zucchini), sweetsop, Swiss chard, taro, tomatoes, turmeric, turnips (roots and tops), walnuts, watercress, watermelons, and yams (21 C.F.R. § 112.1(b)(1)). *This list a non-exhaustive list and does not include all covered produce.

Grantee:

An individual or organization that has been awarded financial assistance under the Program that will enter into a contract with MDAR in order to receive funding.

Production Agriculture:

Farming as defined by M.G.L. c. 128.1A that focuses on agricultural production that will ultimately be sold in the retail market and not for subsistence purposes.

Rarely Consumed Raw:

The following produce is considered “rarely consumed raw” and is not covered by the Produce Safety Rule: asparagus, beans (black, great Northern, kidney, lima, navy, pinto), beets (garden – roots and tops), beets (sugar), cashews, cherries (sour), chickpeas, cocoa beans, coffee beans, collards, corn (sweet), cranberries, dates, dill (seeds and weed), eggplants, figs, ginger, hazelnuts, horseradish, lentils, okra, peanuts, pecans, peppermint, potatoes, pumpkins, squash (winter), sweet potatoes, and water chestnuts (21 C.F.R. § 112.2(a)(1)). *This list is an exhaustive list – if your commodity is not listed, it is likely to be considered ‘covered produce’.

1. APPLICANTS

1A. Eligible Applicants

Applicant must be an agricultural operation as defined by M.G.L. c. 128, Section 1A that is engaged in the business of production agriculture and the property must be in active agricultural use and managed by the applicant for a minimum of the previous three years to the date of the application.



Operations that grow, harvest, pack, or hold produce as defined by 21 C.F.R. Part 112, that are engaged in the business of production agriculture as defined under M.G.L. c. 128, Section 1A.

Applicants that grow Covered Produce under the Produce Safety Rule (“PSR”) with an average annual value of produce sold over the previous three year period of \$25,000 or more will receive additional points in the review.



Aquaculture farmers as defined by M.G.L. c. 128, Section 1A, currently licensed, who raise a marine or aquatic species intended for human food.

1B. Size of Operation

There is no minimum acreage requirement. Projects that provide the most state benefits per grant dollar are more likely to receive funding.

1C. Leased Property

If the proposed project is on a property not owned by the applicant, a lease agreement must demonstrate the Applicant’s long-term, legal right to use the property. This typically means a lease agreement for not less than three years. The proposed project must also be allowed under the terms of the lease agreement. MDAR may request a copy of the lease agreement as part of its review.

1D. Locator Maps

Proposals should include a map or aerial photo with the property boundaries drawn and the exact location of the project described in the application. An online map or a map from the USDA NRCS or FSA office is acceptable.

1E. Previously Funded Applicants

Proposals from individuals/operations that have been previously funded in other fiscal years by MDAR under AFSIP will be considered a lower priority for funding but are still eligible for consideration under the Program.

1F. Applicants with an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (“APR”)

Before applying to the Program, Agricultural Preservation Restriction (“APR”) landowners should consult with MDAR’s APR Program (or holder of the APR) to determine if there are any requirements that apply to the proposed project under the terms of their APR. APR applicants must obtain, or be in the advanced stages of receiving, all approvals required under their APR and must be in compliance with the terms of the APR or resolve any outstanding compliance or legal issues with MDAR prior to submitting their proposal. Failure to do so will render proposals ineligible. The APR Program is not able to provide technical assistance with the development or drafting of any proposal. To find your APR contact, please call or email Jill Ward at jill.ward@mass.gov or (413) 726-2011.

1G. Environmental Justice Policy

For the purposes of this RFR, “Environmental Justice” is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

For more information, please review the Environmental Justice Policy in Attachment B of this RFR. We also encourage you to complete the Environmental Justice Questions form also contained in Attachment B.

1H. Produce Applicants in the Commonwealth Quality Program (“CQP”)

Produce applicants are not required to be a participant in the Commonwealth Quality Program (“CQP”). However, applicants that have been audited and are active participants in the CQP will receive additional points in the review. Applicants should provide a copy of their CQP certificate with their response.

1I. Food Safety Modernization Act – Produce Safety Rule

Produce applicants are not required to be covered under the Food Safety Modernization Act (“FSMA”) PSR (“PSR”). Applicants that are covered under FSMA and are addressing a concern identified in their inspection will receive additional points in the review.

1J. Produce Farm Registration

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR from Applicants engaged in Production Agriculture are subject to registration under Produce Safety & Market Access 330 CMR 34.03, regardless of whether the farm is a Covered Farm or a Non-Covered Farm as defined in the regulation. Registration will be included as a condition of funding in any contract. More information on MDAR’s Produce Safety Program can be found here:

www.mass.gov/produce-safety-program


1K. Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) – Grower Training Course

The Produce Safety Alliance (“PSA”) Grower Training Course satisfies the FSMA PSR requirement outlined in 21 C.F.R. § 112.24(c) that requires ‘*At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration.*’ Produce applicants are not required to have attended this training for funding, but applicants that have attended the training and provide a copy of their certificate will receive additional points in the review. For more information about upcoming courses, please go to: ag.umass.edu/vegetable/upcoming-events


2. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Example projects are listed below. Projects that still meet AFSIP goals but are not listed below **will** be considered in the review process.

2A. Produce Operations

Sector	Projects
 PRODUCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water systems, delivery, treatment devices, processing, and washing equipment• Portable restrooms and/or hand washing sinks (mobile or stationary)• Harvest & storage equipment (bins, totes, bin storage, racks)• Washing/Packing shed walls, ceilings, lighting fixtures, and upgrades• Drainage systems for coolers and washing & packing areas• Wildlife fencing• Pest deterrent• Refrigeration/Cooling Equipment• Pesticide storage
Maximum Funding Per Applicant \$50,000.00	

2B. Aquaculture Operations

Sector	Projects
 AQUACULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ice machines• Insulated containers• Walk-in refrigeration units• Processing equipment such as tumblers/graders to improve time to temperature control and process efficiency• Facility upgrades necessary to obtain a Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Division of Marine Fisheries Wholesale Dealer Permit• Refrigerated vehicle
Maximum Funding Per Applicant \$50,000.00	

2C. Ineligible Expenditures

- Projects that request funding for feasibility studies, audits, composting toilets, septic systems for bathrooms, sewer connections for bathrooms, single use containers, or non-refrigerated vehicles.
- Refrigerated vehicles for produce operations.
- Projects requesting funding for salaries, trainings, and educational materials relating to agricultural farm food safety practices.
- Non-labor costs (e.g., management) and fees associated with project oversight and administration costs are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Projects requesting funding for used equipment and/or materials.
- Labor costs contributed by the operation towards the proposed project is not eligible for reimbursement.
- All projects involving marijuana and hemp shall not be eligible for funding from MDAR through this RFR.
- Projects requesting funding for work that has already been started or projects that have been completed for which the applicant seeks reimbursement.
- Proposals from applicants whose operation is out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations, including such laws and regulations in effect prior to any award determination.
- Proposals from applicants who are neither aquaculture operations nor produce operations engaged in growing, harvesting, packing, or holding produce.
- Proposal from applicants who are not engaged in production agriculture.
- Proposals for expenses that relate to the production of value-added products (ex. commercial kitchens).
- Proposals for expenses related to establishing a new organization/business.

3. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES, & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES

3A. Maximum Funding

- Each applicant must submit a proposal and budget requesting not more than \$50,000 in AFSIP grant funding. If grant funding is available, MDAR may increase the maximum threshold at its discretion.
- Awards are limited to one per agricultural operation using a unique tax identification number per round of funding.
- MDAR reserves the right to offer an award amount different than the amount requested.

3B. Appropriation

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. MDAR may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, MDAR may terminate the contract.

3C. Budget Guidelines

- Proposals must include an adequate budget for the proposed project. Preliminary budgets are acceptable for the evaluation process, but applicants must receive quotes from vendors or contractors before a contract will be given. Applicants who provide quotes from a vendor or contractor with their response will receive additional points in the review.
- As this is a reimbursement program, applicants who demonstrate having the balance of funding needed to implement the proposed project by providing bank credit reference letters, line of credit reference letters, demonstration of other grant funds for the project, or an executed loan will receive additional points in the review.
- MDAR has the option to negotiate the budget before entering into a contract with the applicant.
- Applicants are required to contribute a minimum cash match (not in-kind) of 20% of the total costs of the project.

4. PROJECT TERMS

4A. Terms

If awarded, all projects will be required to execute and abide by the standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions. In addition, all final contracts are subject to successful negotiation of a Final Scope of Services. No project may commence until a contract has been executed by all parties.

4B. Review Process

MDAR cannot assist in the preparation of grant applications. In order to maintain integrity of the competitive grant process, MDAR is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process.

There will be two steps of review following the grant application period.

Step I: An initial review to evaluate eligibility and completeness to determine if all required information is provided. The application will then be reviewed, and a point score will be given based on the criteria listed in Evaluation Criteria, Section 6E.

Step II: All projects which are favorably reviewed in Phase I may require a field visit prior to final award determinations being made. A favorable initial evaluation and field visit DOES NOT guarantee funding for a proposed project. The purposes of the field visit are as follows:

- Verify that the operation is engaged in commercial agriculture and assess the proposal request;
- Determine the appropriateness of the practice proposed for the farm;
- Confirm the ability to implement and maintain the practice;
- To explore other items deemed necessary, and
- Develop a basis for future 'before and after' comparisons.
- MDAR staff may modify the scope of the proposed project to more effectively achieve program goals.

Additionally, all projects must meet applicable federal, state, and local public health orders, regulations, ordinances, or other guidance in effect throughout the duration of the Project.

4C. Duration of Contracts

All projects must be completed by June 30, 2025 with no options for extensions.

5. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE

5A. Installation Standards & Permits

- The funded contractual activity will be evaluated prior to full reimbursement. Work will be evaluated for satisfactory completion and compliance with standards. Spot inspections may be conducted at MDAR's discretion on all work for the life of the project. Only work that satisfies the terms and conditions for this RFR, contract, and any other instructions by MDAR shall be eligible for reimbursement.
- Proposals which are favorably reviewed and awarded a contract must apply for and receive all required permits, licenses, and any other federal, state, or local approvals necessary for the project prior to any reimbursement from MDAR.

5B. Reporting

- There are no written reporting requirements; however, MDAR will periodically check on the progress of awarded projects to ensure they will meet completion deadlines.

5C. Invoicing

- Disbursement of funds under this RFR will be done on a reimbursement basis and will require that acceptable documentation be submitted to MDAR prior to any payment. **Only expenses incurred during the period of the contract are eligible for reimbursement. Any incurred project costs that occur prior to an executed contract are NOT eligible for reimbursement from MDAR.**
- Satisfactory documentation for eligible costs and payments associated with approved projects must be submitted to MDAR and approved prior to reimbursement. Applicant must clearly provide invoices for items purchased and labor hired, as well as proof of payment in the form of cancelled checks, credit card receipts, and/or bank checks.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

6A. Application Submission Instructions

An application form must be completed in its entirety. The application must be submitted by one of the methods listed below by the response deadline.

Applications must be received by MDAR by 4:00 PM on Friday, May 24, 2024

- Email to: MDARGrants@mass.gov
- Hard Copy sent by Mail or Hand Delivered to:

**Laura J. Maul
Department of Agricultural Resources
30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202
Lakeville, MA 02347**

This RFR allows for the submission of hard copy or email proposals. All applicants are advised to allow adequate time for submission of their proposal by considering potential mail or shipping company delays online impediments like Internet traffic, internet connection speed, file size, and file volume.

MDAR is not responsible for delays encountered by applicants, mail or package delivery issues, or for an applicant's local hardware failures, such as computers or related networks, associated with application compilation or submission. An application submitted via email will be deemed received by the time indicated by MDAR's OUTLOOK system clock which is considered the official time of record, and which may be different than the time sent by the applicant. All email submissions will receive an email confirmation of submission.

Special Note:

All State agencies are subject to 815 CMR 2.00, State Grants, Federal Grants Awards, Federal Sub-grants and Subsidies as well as the [Office of the Comptroller's policy on State Grants, Federal Sub-Grants, and Subsidies](#). Departments must use COMMBUYS to publicly post the availability of a discretionary Grant or Grant Program and publish the results of the grantee selections. Use of COMMBUYS to receive electronic quotes for grant opportunities is optional; however, state agencies are encouraged to require grantees to register and submit quotes (applications) through COMMBUYS, which provides a central repository for receipt of electronic applications. As more grantees use COMMBUYS to identify grant opportunities, they will have a single location to apply for grants from multiple state agencies, resulting in efficiencies for both the grantees and the state agencies.

- For more information regarding the benefits of registering in COMMBUYS, you may go to [COMMBUYS](#) support pages.

6B. Additional Application Documentation

Where applicable, an applicant should include the following additional documentation:

- Produce applicants that have are active CQP participants should include a copy of their certificate (see Section 1H).
- Produce applicants that have completed a PSA grower training course should include a copy of their certificate (see Section 1K).
- Aquaculture applicants should provide a copy of their HACCP certification where available.
- Applicants should provide a map of their farm property boundaries (see Section 1D).
- Applicants should provide quotes from vendors and/or contractors when available (see Section 3C).
- Applicants should include balance of funding documents. This can be bank credit reference letters, a line of credit reference letter, demonstration of other grant funds for the project, or an executed loan (see Section 3C).

6C. Additional Contract Documentation

If selected, the applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete the contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form & Commonwealth Terms and Conditions
- Commonwealth W-9 tax information form
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form; and
- Completed Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Form.

These forms do not need to be completed as part of the Response. Assistance to complete these forms will be provided to applicants selected to participate in the Program. These forms are available for review at www.mass.gov/osd or by request.

6D. Evaluation Criteria

All Applicants:

- Project application is in compliance with the submission requirements and format presentation for this RFR.
- Project is for a produce or aquaculture operation engaged in production agriculture and primary source of income is derived from their operation.
- Team make-up and past experience demonstrate the capacity and ability to administer projects of the scope and value described by the responsive proposal to this RFR.
- Adequate identification of any on-going operation and maintenance and/or periodic replacement needs and how they will be accomplished to ensure project longevity.
- Project has adequate supporting documentation in the form of quotes and maps.
- Applicant has adequately identified any contingencies and permit needs as well as provided an adequate implementation schedule to show how the project will be completed by the June 30, 2025 deadline.
- Applicant has demonstrated adequate project economics including demonstrating having the balance of funding needed to implement the proposed project. This can be by bank credit reference letters, line of credit reference letter, demonstration of other grant funds for the project, or an executed loan.
- Project demonstrates an increase to competitive market access by meeting buyer demands.
- Project directly addresses a food safety concern and demonstrates an immediate potential to minimize the risk of contamination by the implementation of the proposed project.

Produce Applicants:

- Applicants that grow Covered Produce (see Definitions) under the PSR with an average annual value of produce sold over the previous three year period of \$25,000.
- Project is to upgrade a practice that directly contacts fresh produce.
- Applicant has been audited/inspected under the CQP. Include copy of active certificate.
- Project will directly address fixing a concern identified by Produce Safety Staff during an inspection of the applicant's premises.
- Operation demonstrates that an active supervisor or responsible party has completed a PSA grower training course. Include copy of certificate.

Aquaculture Applicants:

- Applicant is in compliance as a licensed and permitted aquaculture farm in Massachusetts.
- Project will improve food safety and/or market competitiveness by facilitating rapid temperature reduction, reducing time/temperature exposure, or improving traceability by shortening distribution chain.
- Applicants who have been certified in Seafood Hazard Analysis/Critical Control Point (HACCP) through an AFDO authorized training program will be considered more favorably. Include a copy of the certificate.

All proposals being considered for funding may require a site visit. Information gathered during the site visit can be used as additional evaluation criteria for funding. MDAR reserves the right to fund only proposals that received an initial favorable review and a satisfactory site visit verifying proposal details.

7. DEADLINES & PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

Release of RFR	Wednesday, March 27, 2024
Application Due Date	4:00pm on Friday, May 24, 2024
Estimated Award Date	September, 2024
Estimated Contract Start Date	September 2024. Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form..

8. MISCELLANEOUS

Type of Procurement	Grant
Use of This Procurement by Single or Multiple Departments	This RFR is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized by MDAR.
Request for Single or Multiple Contractors	Multiple
RFR Distribution Method	<p>This RFR has been distributed by MDAR's Farm and Market Newsletter, posted to the program's website at www.mass.gov/agr, and by a distribution list of requested applicants.</p> <p>This RFR has been distributed electronically via COMMBUYS. It is the responsibility of every applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to applicants who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent RFR files.</p> <p>Respondents may not alter RFR language or any RFR component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections that prompt a Respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.</p>
List of Attachments	<p>A. Application Form</p> <p>B. Environmental Justice Policy & Questions</p> <p>C. RFR Required Specifications</p>

AGRICULTURAL FOOD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM (FY 2025)

1. Agricultural Operation Information

Applicant Name: First Name Last Name

Operation Name:

Legal Structure: ☐ Sole Proprietor ☐ Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ LLC ☐ Other _____

Mailing Address:

City, State, Zip:

County:

Home Phone: **Mobile Phone:**

E-Mail:

Website:

☐ Site Address is same as above

Site Address

Site City, State, Zip

I am a farmer as identified in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 128. Sec. 1A: ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many years has the applicant been farming on this property?

Is the majority of the farms total gross income from the sales of the farms agricultural products?: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this property leased? ☐ Yes ☐ No Do you have the lease in writing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What year does the lease end?

Who is the owner of the property?

2. Agricultural Operation Details: Complete the appropriate section



Produce Operations

Check all commodities your operation grows:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apples | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet cherries | <input type="checkbox"/> Melon | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspberries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apricots | <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnuts | <input type="checkbox"/> Mulberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhubarb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apriums | <input type="checkbox"/> Chicory | <input type="checkbox"/> Microgreens | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosemary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artichoke | <input type="checkbox"/> Chives | <input type="checkbox"/> Mung beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Rutabaga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basil | <input type="checkbox"/> Cilantro | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Turnips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumber | <input type="checkbox"/> Mustard greens | <input type="checkbox"/> Sage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blueberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Berry currant | <input type="checkbox"/> Nectarine | <input type="checkbox"/> Scallions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bok Choy | <input type="checkbox"/> Endive | <input type="checkbox"/> Onions | <input type="checkbox"/> Shallot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boysenberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Dandelion | <input type="checkbox"/> Oregano | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fava Beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring salad mix | <input type="checkbox"/> Parsley | <input type="checkbox"/> Sprouts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli | <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic | <input type="checkbox"/> Parsnips | <input type="checkbox"/> Strawberries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brussels Sprouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Gooseberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Peas/snow peas | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer squash |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burdock | <input type="checkbox"/> Grapes | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss chard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese Cabbage | <input type="checkbox"/> Green beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Pears | <input type="checkbox"/> Thyme |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbages | <input type="checkbox"/> Honeydew | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet peppers | <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantaloupes | <input type="checkbox"/> Huckleberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot peppers | <input type="checkbox"/> Turnip greens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots | <input type="checkbox"/> Kale | <input type="checkbox"/> Plums | <input type="checkbox"/> Walnuts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower | <input type="checkbox"/> Leek | <input type="checkbox"/> Quince | <input type="checkbox"/> Watercress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celeriac | <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce | <input type="checkbox"/> Radicchio | <input type="checkbox"/> Watermelon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celery | <input type="checkbox"/> Marjoram | <input type="checkbox"/> Radish | |

Acreage: Owned Leased In Production

Activity Type(s): ☐ Growing ☐ Harvesting ☐ Packing ☐ Holding ☐ Processing

Irrigation type: ☐ Overhead ☐ Drip ☐ N/A

Irrigation water source: ☐ Surface ☐ Well ☐ Municipal ☐ N/A

Post-harvest water source: ☐ Surface ☐ Well ☐ Municipal ☐ N/A

Pump type: ☐ Portable ☐ Permanent/Fixed ☐ N/A

Type of soil amendments used: ☐ Ag Tea ☐ Animal Based Compost ☐ Biosolids ☐ Raw manure ☐ N/A

Have you participated in a Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) training course? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what was the date of the course: Please include a copy of your certificate

My operation has received an audit/inspection from the Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what was the date: Please include a copy of your certificate

Is this proposed project the result of a concern identified by Produce Safety Staff? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you in production year-round? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a greenhouse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Season start date:

Season end date:



Aquaculture Operations

Acreage Leased?

When does the lease end?

HACCP Certified?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you been farming less than five years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Wholesale Dealer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Species Grown:

License Number

3. Marketing

Farm Purpose:

☐ Primary Enterprise

☐ Secondary Enterprise

Annual sales averaged over the previous 3 years:

☐ \$0 - \$24,999

☐ \$25,000 - \$249,999

☐ \$250,000 - \$499,999

☐ \$500,000 +

Annual total food sales averaged over the previous 3 years?

☐ < \$500,000

☐ \$500,000 +

Do you buy product from another operation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How is your produce marketed?

☐ Wholesale

☐ Direct Market

☐ Both

Are more than 50% of sales either (1) Direct to Consumer or (2) Retail or Restaurant?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are most of the sales within Massachusetts?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Involvement with Other Programs

My operation has an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR):

☐ Yes ☐ No

APR Contact Person:

This project will be implemented on APR Restricted Land:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I have contacted the APR Program to determine if this proposal needs a Certificate of Approval:

☐ Yes ☐ No

This project needs an approval from the APR Program:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Year the APR was recorded:

Name on APR:

I have applied to the Food Security Infrastructure Grant for costs associated with this proposal?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Project Details

Project:
What are you applying for under
this grant program?

5A. Overview of Business:

Provide a basic description of your business, including a brief history, products, ownership and management, and markets sold to.

5B. Proposed Project Description:

Describe the proposed investment (project) for which you are seeking funding and how the project will improve on-farm food safety for your operation. If the project is associated with a recommendation identified during an audit or an inspection, describe how this project will comply with the issue raised.

5C. Proposed Project Outcomes:

Explain how the proposed investment will allow you to improve your market access and maintain or create jobs. Include information on projected financial returns to your business and how this investment will help your business to retain markets and become more profitable.

5D. Contingencies & Permits:

Provide a list of any other applications upon which your project is contingent (i.e. other grants or bank loans). List any state, local, or federal permits or approvals that will be necessary for you to implement this project and their status.

5E. Timeline:

Provide a project schedule. Assuming successful funding, when do you expect to complete this project?

5F. Warranties, Ongoing Operations & Maintenance:

Provide a list of all project warranties and guarantees. Identify any on-going operation & maintenance and/or periodic replacement needs and how they will be accomplished to ensure project longevity.

5G. Team Members:

List team members and their capacity to achieve the goals of the proposed project.

6. Budget:

AFSIP may reimburse Applicants up to 80% of total project costs up to \$50,000. A minimum contribution of 20% towards the total project costs must come from the Applicant.

Materials				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
4				
Contractual Costs/Labor (expenses for services performed by someone other than the applicant)				
	Description	Rate	Hours	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
Equipment (Equipment to be purchased under the AFSIP grant)				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
Equipment Rental (Rented equipment required to complete the project)				
	Description	Rate	Hours	Total Costs
1				
2				
Other Costs				
	Description	Amount	Qty	Total Costs
1				
2				
3				
4				
Total Project Costs:				\$
Applicant Amount (20% minimum):				\$
Eligible Project Costs (80% of Total Project Costs up to \$50,000)				\$

7. Amount Requested:

State your requested AFSIP funding request. MDAR has the option to negotiate the requested amount before entering into a contract with the applicant. Any project costs incurred prior to an executed contract with MDAR are not eligible for reimbursement .

Total Requested for Funding Through AFSIP Grant:

\$

8. Attestation:

By signing this application, you attest all statements herein are accurate and true. By signing this application, you give permission to have a site visit by MDAR staff which may be necessary before a funding decision is made. All site visits will be arranged with you in advance.

Signature

Date

Print Name

ATTACHMENT B

Environmental Justice Policy

For the purposes of this RFR, “Environmental Justice” is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

While encouraged, the following questions are voluntary and will not impact eligibility. Answers to these questions help MDAR track progress towards the goals set forth in the [2021 Environmental Justice Policy](#), and the [2022 Environmental Justice Strategy](#), which require MDAR to a) report the amount of public funds used in Environmental Justice Communities, and b) track the number of new applicants for grant programs from Environmental Justice Communities and BIPOC Farmers. More information can be found in below. MDAR encourages stakeholders to provide feedback on the Environmental Justice Policy and Strategy, by visiting mass.gov/environmental-justice.

Environmental Justice Questions *Answers to the following questions are optional. This information will not in any way affect your eligibility for MDAR programs and is used for statistical purposes only.*

Has the applicant applied for MDAR funding programs before this current application?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Has the applicant received funding from any MDAR funding programs?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

Questions for Farmer or Individual Applicants:

A. Select one or more of the racial categories below:

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native/Indigenous ☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander ☐ White
☐ Asian/South Asian ☐ Middle Eastern or North African ☐ Other: _____ Please state with the understanding that the races above may not be reflective of everyone.

B. Select one or more of the ethnic categories below:

☐ Not Hispanic or Latino ☐ Hispanic or Latino ☐ Other: _____ Please state with the understanding that the races above may not be reflective of everyone.

C. Are any applicants a Historically Underserved Farmer? Please check any of the following categories that apply based on these USDA definitions:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>

☐ Limited Resource Farmer (With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years. A Self-Determination Tool is available to the public and may be completed on-line at: <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>)
☐ Socially Disadvantaged Farmer (Individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.)
☐ N/A
☐ Beginning Farmer (Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years)
☐ Veteran Farmer (Served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof; was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable; and has not operated a farm or ranch, or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years; or Who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period.)

Question for Organization/Collective-Applicants *For organizations, regardless of formal legal status, or other collective applicants – does the majority of your board membership, majority owner (or owners), majority of your leadership team, fall into one or more of these groups? MDAR has adapted USDA's definition of Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers to allow organizations or entities representing multiple applicants to respond.*

☐ Limited Resource Farmer, Low-Income Individuals, or Individuals with Lived Experience Relevant to the Organization's Mission
☐ Beginning Farmers
☐ Veteran Farmers
☐ N/A
☐ Socially Disadvantaged Groups (American Indian/Alaska Native/Indigenous, Asian/South Asian, Black or African American, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islands, Hispanic or Latino) **Other:** _____ Please state with understanding that the races and ethnicities above may not be reflective of everyone

If you feel that this application did not allow you to fully explain the diversity of the applicant for this grant (whether you are applying as an individual or on behalf of an entity), please explain here:

If you have any input on this form, please complete [this feedback form](#). The review team will not see this information, and responses will not affect eligibility

ATTACHMENT B

RFR - Further Information on MDAR's Environmental Justice Goals

Revision Date: February 23, 2024

MDAR strives to promote and integrate EJ considerations across their programs, policies, and activities to ensure the equal access and meaningful involvement of all people residing in the Commonwealth with respect to agricultural economic and environmental sustainability and the equitable development, implementation, and accessibility to information and resources.

Among the priorities and goals outlined in the [2021 Environmental Justice Policy](#), and the [2022 Environmental Justice Strategy](#), EEA agencies are tasked with ensuring that Environmental Justice neighborhoods benefit from positive impacts of environmental programs, grants and investments.

A. Environmental Justice Populations

EJ populations are those segments of the population that EEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable.

"Environmental Justice Population" is defined by the Environmental Justice Policy, issued by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in 2017, and updated in June, 2021, as

- A. a neighborhood that meets 1 or more of the following criteria:
 - i) the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income;
 - ii) minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population;
 - iii) 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
 - iv) minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; or
- B. a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.

B. MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer

The [MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#) was designed to map Environmental Justice populations as census block groups in Massachusetts.

Please note - The data submitted in your application will be used to determine whether your project falls within an Environmental Justice block group, and will be used to design a map, available on the MDAR website, to show the positive impact of its grant awards, demonstrating the reach of its programs in EJ communities.

For more information on MDAR's Environmental Justice Program, or to provide feedback, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mdars-environmental-justice-program>.

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OPERATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

Revision Date: July 13, 2023

In general, most of the required contractual stipulations are referenced in the *Standard Contract Form and Instructions* and the *Commonwealth Terms and Conditions*. However, the following RFR provisions must appear in all Commonwealth competitive procurements conducted under 801 CMR 21.00.

The terms of 801 CMR 21.00: *Procurement of Commodities and Services* are incorporated by reference into this RFR. Words used in this RFR shall have the meanings defined in 801 CMR 21.00. Additional definitions also may be identified in this RFR. Other terms not defined elsewhere in this document may be defined in OSD's [Glossary of Terms](#). Unless otherwise specified in this RFR, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English, all measurements must be provided in feet, inches, and pounds and all cost proposals or figures in U.S. currency. All responses must be submitted in accordance with the specific terms of this RFR.

1. COMMBUYS Market Center. COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this Bid and is publicly accessible at no charge at www.commbuys.com. Information contained in this document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments, and information contained in the related Bid Questions and Answers (Q&A), are components of the Bid, as referenced in COMMBUYS, and are incorporated into the Bid and any resulting contract.

Bidders are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this Bid via COMMBUYS. Bid Q&A supports Bidder submission of written questions associated with a Bid and publication of official answers.

It is each Bidder's responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

- Any amendments, addenda, or modifications to this Bid, and
- Any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

2. COMMBUYS Registration. Bidders may elect to register for a free COMMBUYS Seller account which provides value-added features, including automated email notification associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records. However, to respond to a Bid, Bidders must register and maintain an active COMMBUYS Seller account.

All Bidders submitting a Quote (previously referred to as Response) in response to this Bid (previously referred to as Solicitation) agree that, if awarded a contract: 1) they will maintain an active seller account in COMMBUYS; 2) they will, when directed to do so by the procuring entity, activate and maintain a COMMBUYS-enabled catalog using Commonwealth Commodity Codes; 3) they will comply with all requests by the procuring entity to utilize COMMBUYS for the purposes of conducting all aspects of purchasing and invoicing with the Commonwealth, as added functionality for the COMMBUYS system is activated; and 4) in the event the Commonwealth adopts an alternate e-procurement platform, successful Bidders will be required to utilize such system, as directed by the procuring entity. Commonwealth Commodity Codes are based on the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC).

COMMBUYS uses terminology with which bidders must be familiar to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about COMMBUYS, please visit the [Learn about COMMBUYS Resources](#) page on mass.gov.

3. Multiple Quotes. Bidders may not submit Multiple Quotes in response to a Bid unless the RFR authorizes them to do so. If a Bidder submits multiple quotes in response to an RFR that does not authorize multiple responses, only the latest dated quote submitted prior to the bid opening date will be evaluated.

4. Quote Content. Bid specifications for delivery, shipping, billing, and payment will prevail over any proposed Bidder terms entered as part of the Quote, unless otherwise specified in the Bid.

5. Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) Programs. Pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#), the Commonwealth supports the use of diverse and small businesses through the Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) and the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). Based on the estimated value of the procurement, one of the above-mentioned programs shall be applicable to this RFR. For more information on the program that applies to this solicitation, see the body of this RFR.

6. Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP)

Program Background. The Massachusetts [Small Business Purchasing Program](#) (SBPP) was established pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#) to increase state contracting opportunities with small businesses having their principal place of business within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Pursuant to the SBPP, it is the intention of the issuing department to award this Small Procurement to one or more SBPP participating business(es) as described below.

Sensitivity level - low

ATTACHMENT C

RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

SBPP Award Preference. While all businesses, no matter the size or principal place of business, may submit responses to this solicitation, should an SBPP participant respond and meet the best value criteria described in this solicitation, the SBPP participant shall be awarded the contract. The Strategic Sourcing Services Team (SST) will not evaluate submissions from non-SBPP participants unless no SBPP Bidder meets the SST's best value evaluation criteria.

SBPP Participation Eligibility. To be eligible to participate in this procurement as an SBPP participant, an entity must meet the following criteria, and be marked as an SBPP-registered business in [COMMBUYS](#):

1. Have its principal place of business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
2. Been in business for at least one year;
3. Employ a combined total of 50 or fewer full-time equivalent employees in all locations, or employees work less than a combined total of 26,000 hours per quarter; and
4. Have gross revenues, as reported on appropriate tax forms, of \$15 million or less, based on a three-year average.

Non-profit firms also must be registered as a non-profit or charitable organization with the MA Attorney General's Office and be up to date with all filings required by that office and be tax exempt under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

SBPP Compliance Requirements. It is the responsibility of the Bidder to ensure that their SBPP status is current at the time of submitting a response and throughout the life of any resulting contract. Misrepresentation of SBPP status will result in disqualification from consideration, and may result in debarment, contract termination, and other actions. To learn more about the SBPP, including how to apply, visit the SBPP webpage, <http://www.mass.gov/sbpp>.

Program Resources and Assistance. Bidders and Contractors seeking assistance regarding SBPP may visit the [SBPP Webpage](#), or contact the SBPP Help Desk at sbpp@mass.gov.

7. Supplier Diversity Program (SDP)

Program Background. Pursuant to [Executive Order 599](#), the Commonwealth's [Supplier Diversity Program](#) (SDP) promotes business-to-business relationships between awarded Contractors and diverse businesses and non-profit organizations ("SDP Partners") certified or recognized (see below for more information) by the [Supplier Diversity Office \(SDO\)](#).

All Bidders and Contractors are strongly encouraged to create a profile on the SDO's Supplier Diversity Hub to access the Commonwealth's supplier diversity resources and tools.

Financial Commitment Requirements. All Bidders responding to this solicitation are required to make a significant financial commitment ("SDP Commitment") to partnering with one or more SDO-certified or recognized diverse business enterprise(s) or non-profit organization(s). This SDP Commitment must be expressed as a percentage of contract sales resulting from this solicitation that would be spent with the SDP Partner(s).

After contract award (if any), the Total SDP Commitment shall become a contractual requirement to be met annually on a Massachusetts fiscal year basis (July 1 – June 30) for the duration of the contract. The minimum acceptable Total SDP Commitment in response to this solicitation shall be 1%. Bidders shall be awarded additional evaluation points for higher SDP Commitments.

No contract shall be awarded to a Bidder without an SDP Commitment that meets the requirements stated herein. This requirement extends to **all** Bidders regardless of their own supplier diversity certification.

Eligible SDP Partner Certification Categories

SDP Partners must be business enterprises and/or non-profit organizations certified or recognized by the SDO in one or more of the following certification categories:

- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Minority Non-Profit Organization (M/NPO)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Women Non-Profit Organization (W/NPO)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VBE)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise (LBGTBE)

Eligible Types of Business-to-Business Relationships. Bidders and Contractors may engage SDP Partners as follows:

- **Subcontracting**, defined as a partnership in which the SDP partner is involved in the provision of products and/or services to the Commonwealth.
- **Ancillary Products and Services**, defined as a business relationship in which the SDP partner provides products or services that are not directly related to the Contractor's contract with the Commonwealth but may be related to the Contractor's own operational needs.

Other types of business-to-business relationships are not acceptable under this contract. All provisions of this RFR applicable to subcontracting shall apply equally to the engagement of SDP Partners as subcontractors.

ATTACHMENT C

RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

Program Flexibility. The SDP encompasses the following provisions to support Bidders in establishing and maintaining sustainable business-to-business relationships meeting their needs:

- SDP Partners are **not** required to be subcontractors.
- SDP Partners are **not** required to be Massachusetts-based businesses.
- SDP Partners **may be changed or added** during the term of the contract, provided the Contractor continues to meet its SDP Commitment.

SDP Plan Form Requirements. All Bidders must complete the SDP Plan Form included in this solicitation and attach it to their bid response. In addition to proposing an SDP Commitment, each Bidder must propose one or more SDP Partner(s) to utilize to meet its SDP Commitment. Certified diverse Bidders may not list their own companies, their subsidiaries, or affiliates as SDP Partners and may not meet their SDP Commitment by spending funds internally or with their own subsidiaries or affiliates.

Bidders may propose SDP Partners that are:

- **Certified or recognized by the SDO:** Such partners appear in the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in the [SBA Veteran Small Business Certification \(VetCert\)](#) directory. After contract award (if any), spending with such partners will contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment.
- **Not yet certified or recognized by the SDO:** Such partners must be certified in eligible categories by a third-party certification body, such as another city or state supplier diversity certification office, the [National Minority Supplier Development Council](#), the [Women Business Enterprise National Council](#), [Disability: IN](#), or the [National LGBT Chamber of Commerce \(NGLCC\)](#), but are not listed in the above-mentioned directories. Self-certification is not acceptable. While Bidders may list such proposed SDP Partners on their SDP Plans, spending with such partners will not contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment unless they apply for and are granted SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition. If proposed SDP Partners do not receive SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition, the Contractor must find alternative SDP Partners to meet the SDP Commitment.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that their proposed SDP Partners obtain such certification or recognition by the SDO after contract award (if any). The issuing department and the SDO will not conduct outreach to proposed SDP Partners to ensure their certification. Furthermore, no guarantee may be made that a proposed SDP Partner will be certified, or regarding the time it may take to process a proposed SDP Partner certification. Contractors may direct partners to the SDO's homepage, www.mass.gov/sdo and the [Certification Self-Assessment Tool](#) for guidance on applying for certification.

It is **desirable** for Bidders to provide an SDP Focus Statement that describe the bidder's overall approach to increasing the participation of diverse businesses in the provision of products and services under this proposal/contract (subcontracting) and in the Bidder's general business operations (ancillary products and services). Such a description may include but not be limited to:

- A clearly stated purpose or goal.
- Specific types of diverse and small businesses targeted.
- Which departments/units within the business are responsible for implementing supplier diversity.
- Types of opportunities for which diverse and small businesses are considered.
- Specific measures/methods of engagement of diverse and small businesses.
- An existing internal supplier diversity policy.
- Public availability of the Bidder's supplier diversity policy.

It also is **desirable** for Bidders to use the SDP Plan Form to describe additional creative initiatives (if any) related to engaging, buying from, and/or collaborating with diverse businesses. Such initiatives may include but not be limited to:

- Serving as a mentor in a mentor-protégé relationship.
- Technical and financial assistance provided to diverse businesses.
- Participation in joint ventures between nondiverse and diverse businesses.
- Voluntary assistance programs by which nondiverse business employees are loaned to diverse businesses or by which diverse business employees are taken into viable business ventures to acquire training and experience in managing business affairs.

Evaluation of SDP Forms. To encourage Bidders to develop substantial supplier diversity initiatives and commitments as measures valuable to the Commonwealth, at least 25% of the total available evaluation points for this bid solicitation shall be allocated to the evaluation of the SDP Plan submissions. Because the purpose of the SDP is to promote business-to-business partnerships, the Bidders' workforce diversity initiatives will not be considered in the evaluation.

SDP Spending Reports. After contract award, Contractors must submit reports at least annually to demonstrate compliance with the agreed-upon SDP Commitment. To submit SDP spending reports using the Hub, Contractors must create a profile in the Hub. Contractors must follow report submission instructions from the issuing department and the SDO.

SDP Spending Compliance. Only spending with SDP Partners that appear in the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in the [SBA Veteran Small Business Certification \(VetCert\)](#) directory shall be counted toward a Contractor's compliance with their SDP Commitment. Spending with SDP Partners that do not appear in the directories above shall not be counted toward meeting a Contractor's SDP Commitment. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure they meet their SDP Commitment, and the SDO and the issuing department assume no responsibility for any Contractor's failure to meet its SDP Commitment.

ATTACHMENT C

RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

SDP Spending Verification. The SDO and the contracting department reserve the right to contact SDP Partners at any time to request that they attest to the amounts reported to have been paid to them by the Contractor.

Program Resources and Assistance. Contractors seeking assistance in the development of their SDP Plans or identification of potential SDP Partners may visit the SDP webpage, www.mass.gov/sdp, or contact the SDP Help Desk at sdp@mass.gov.

8. Agricultural Products Preference (only applicable if this is a procurement for Agricultural Products). Chapter 123 of the Acts of 2006 directs the State Purchasing Agent to grant a preference to products of agriculture grown or produced using locally grown products. Such locally grown or produced products shall be purchased unless the price of the goods exceeds the price of products of agriculture from outside the Commonwealth by more than 10%. For purposes of this preference, products of agriculture are defined to include any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural, or horticultural commodities; the growing and harvesting of forest products; the raising of livestock, including horses; raising of domesticated animals, bees, and/or fur-bearing animals; and any forestry or lumbering operations.

9. Best Value Selection and Negotiation. The Strategic Sourcing Services Team or SSST may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best value overall, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the procurement goals of the department. The SSST and a selected bidder, or a contractor, may negotiate a change in any element of contract performance or cost identified in the original RFR or the selected bidder's or contractor's response which results in lower costs or a more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's or contractor's original response.

10. Bidder Communication. Bidders are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of the procuring department or any member of the SSST regarding this RFR except as specified in this RFR, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFR. Bidders may contact the contact person for this RFR in the event this RFR is incomplete or the bidder is having trouble obtaining any required attachments electronically through COMMBUYS.

11. Contract Expansion. If additional funds become available during the contract duration period, the department reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all contracts executed as a result of this RFR or to execute contracts with contractors not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory contract performance and service or commodity need.

12. Costs. Costs which are not specifically identified in the bidder's response and accepted by a department as part of a contract will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFR. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders responding to this RFR.

13. Electronic Communication/Update of Bidder's/Contractor's Contact Information. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder and awarded contractor to keep current on COMMBUYS the email address of the bidder's contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the SSST, including requests for clarification. The SSST and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective bidder's/awarded contractor's computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective bidder/awarded contractor and the SSST to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

14. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). All bidders responding to this RFR must agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the bidder is able to provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both contractors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe, and reliable payment directly to contractors and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Contractors may track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller's [Vendor Web system](#). A link to the EFT application may be found on the [OSD Forms](#) page (www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms). Additional information about EFT is available on the [VendorWeb](#) site (www.mass.gov/osc). Click on MASSfinance.

Successful bidders, upon notification of contract award, will be required to enroll in EFT as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* to this department for review, approval, and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the bidder already is enrolled in the program, it may so indicate in its response. Because the *Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment Form* contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

The requirement to use EFT may be waived by the SSST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in its response. The SSST will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and communicate the findings to the bidder.

15. Executive Order 509, Establishing Nutrition Standards for Food Purchased and Served by State Agencies. Food purchased and served by state agencies must be in compliance with Executive Order 509, issued in January 2009. Under this Executive Order, all contracts resulting from procurements posted after July 1, 2009, that involve the purchase and provision of food must comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The nutrition guidelines are available at the Department's website: [Tools and Resources for Implementation of Executive Order 509](#).

ATTACHMENT C

RFR - Required Specifications for Commodities and Services

16. HIPAA: Business Associate Contractual Obligations. Bidders are notified that any department meeting the definition of a Covered Entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) will include in the RFR and resulting contract sufficient language establishing the successful bidder's contractual obligations, if any, that the department will require in order for the department to comply with HIPAA and the privacy and security regulations promulgated thereunder (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) (the Privacy and Security Rules). For example, if the department determines that the successful bidder is a business associate performing functions or activities involving protected health information, as such terms are used in the Privacy and Security Rules, then the department will include in the RFR and resulting contract a sufficient description of business associate's contractual obligations regarding the privacy and security of the protected health information, as listed in 45 CFR 164.314 and 164.504 (e), including, but not limited to, the bidder's obligation to: implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably and appropriately protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the protected health information (in whatever form it is maintained or used, including verbal communications); provide individuals access to their records; and strictly limit use and disclosure of the protected health information for only those purposes approved by the department. Further, the department reserves the right to add any requirement during the course of the contract that it determines it must include in the contract in order for the department to comply with the Privacy and Security Rules. Please see other sections of the RFR for any further HIPAA details, if applicable.

17. Minimum Quote (Bid Response) Duration. Bidders Quotes made in response to this Bid must remain in effect for at least 90 days from the date of quote submission.

18. Prompt Payment Discounts (PPD). All bidders responding to this procurement must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth's Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the bidder provides compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. PPD benefits both contractors and the Commonwealth. Contractors benefit by increased, usable cash flow as a result of fast and efficient payments for commodities or services rendered. Participation in the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) initiative further maximizes the benefits with payments directed to designated accounts, thus eliminating the impact of check clearance policies and traditional mail lead time or delays. The Commonwealth benefits because contractors reduce the cost of products and services through the applied discount. Payments that are processed electronically may be tracked and verified through the Comptroller's Vendor Web system. The PPD form may be found as an attachment for this Bid on [COMMBUYS](#).

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount using the PPD form within their proposal, unless otherwise specified by the SSST. The SSST will review, negotiate, or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to use PPD offerings may be waived by the SSST on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the bidder. If a bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in or attached to the PPD form.

19. Public Records. All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L., c. 66, s. 10, and to c. 4, s. 7, ss. 26. Any statements in submitted responses that are inconsistent with these statutes, including marking by bidders of information as confidential during the quote submission process in COMMBUYS, shall be disregarded.

20. Reasonable Accommodation. Bidders with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFR information in an alternative format, must communicate such requests in writing to the contact person. Requests for accommodation will be addressed on a case by case basis. A bidder requesting accommodation must submit a written statement which describes the bidder's disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFR. The SSST reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

21. Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal. Bidders and contractors are not allowed to display the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Seal in their bid package or subsequent marketing materials if they are awarded a contract because use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law.

22. Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the department is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Human and social service subcontractors are also required to meet the same state and federal financial and program reporting requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as contractors.

23. Acceptable Forms of Signature

Effective June 15, 2021, for all 1) CTR forms, including the Standard Contract Form, W-9s, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) forms, ISAs, and other CTR-issued documents and forms, or 2) documents related to state finance and within the statutory area of authority or control of CTR (i.e. contracts, payrolls, and related supporting documentation), CTR will accept signatures executed by an authorized signatory in any of the following ways: 1. Traditional "wet signature" (ink on paper); 2. Electronic signature that is either: a. Hand drawn using a mouse or finger if working from a touch screen device; or Page 2 b. An uploaded picture of the signatory's hand drawn signature 3. Electronic signatures affixed using a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign. If using an electronic signature, the signature must be visible, include the signatory's name and title, and must be accompanied by a signature date. Please be advised that typed text of a name not generated by a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign, even in computer-generated cursive script, or an electronic symbol, are not acceptable forms of electronic signature.