**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**OFFICE OF MEDICAID**

**ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, 11TH FLOOR**

**BOSTON, MA 02108**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**PROVIDER TECHNOLOGY GRANT**

**ISSUE DATE: AUGUST 3, 2023**

**RFA DOCUMENT #: 24PROVIDERTECHRFA**

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# SECTION 1: SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF RFA

The goal of the Provider Technology Grant Program is to enable Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers and contractors to upgrade and modernize their existing Information Technology (IT) hardware and software, as well as implement innovative technologies that will contribute to future sustainability. This grant program was developed to help all HCBS providers advance and achieve their highest potential by removing barriers created by a lack of technology or outdated technology to address some of the key issues identified by providers, vendors, and other stakeholders within their responses to the [Executive Office of Health and Human Services’ (EOHHS) Public Request for Information (RFI)](https://www.mass.gov/doc/summary-of-arpa-request-for-information-proposals-0/download).

EOHHS has received approval from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to issue up to an aggregate amount of $12,000,000 in technology improvement grants to EOHHS providers and contractors. The grants will enable recipients to improve the delivery of HCBS services by allowing for improved interactions with members (e.g., sharing information with members, empowering members to make choices about their health care), more streamlined operations (i.e., by ensuring technologies are up to date and working to improve processes), and better clinical care and care coordination (e.g., by leveraging hardware and software to support the delivery of direct care). This grant draws on funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and intends to strengthen, enhance, and expand Medicaid HCBS.

EOHHS is issuing this Request for Applications (RFA) to solicit applications from Eligible Organizations, as defined below in **Section 3**, to upgrade and modernize their existing IT hardware and software, as well as implement innovative technologies that will contribute to future sustainability.

Specifically, EOHHS seeks to award funds to achieve the following objectives:

1. Support providers of HCBS with much needed hardware and software improvements to improve their service delivery and track quality of compliance with HCBS person-centered planning.
2. Improve interaction with members through enhanced communication and information sharing between providers, patients, and state and local agencies.
3. Streamline operations and allow for the improvement of processes by ensuring technologies are up to date.
4. Improve clinical care and care coordination by leveraging hardware and software to support the delivery of care.
5. Create opportunities for innovation by removing barriers created by a lack of technology or outdated technology.
6. Support providers to focus on advancing health equity and improving outcome of their service delivery.

EOHHS will issue technology improvement grants in denominations of up to $500,000 each to Eligible Organization. Awardees will have until March 30, 2025 to spend any awarded grant funding. This grant funding is a one-time opportunity and excludes any ongoing costs, licenses, and subscriptions past the end of the grant program on March 30, 2025.

# SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

The following terms, when capitalized throughout this RFA and its attachments, have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

**Awardee**: Any Applicant that submits an application in response to this RFA, is selected for a grant award under this RFA, enters into a Contract with EOHHS or its designee, and receives funding as a result of this RFA.

**Applicant**: An entity or individual that submits an application in response to this RFA.

**Budget**: The total funding needed to implement the program. Each application must detail the cost of each program and associated activities.

**Contract**:  An agreement between parties creating mutual obligations that are legally enforceable.

**Direct Program Cost:** Costs that are directly incurred due to the proposed program.

**Diversity:** Variety in people’s lived experiences, perspectives, identities, languages, cultures, and values.

**Eligible Expenses:** Expenses proposed by the Applicant to be expended in furtherance of one or more of the objectives listed in **Section 1**, and which are not determined unreasonable or impermissible by EOHHS.  Eligible Expenses may include, without limitation, those identified in **Section 5**.

**Eligible Organization:** An eligible applicant must be a Massachusetts organization with experience providing home and community-based services. Additional details on Eligible Organizations are detailed in **Section 3.**

**Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)**: The Massachusetts agency responsible for the administration of the MassHealth program, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 118E and Title XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act and other applicable laws and waivers.

**Home and Community Based Services (HCBS):** Defined as medical and non-medical services and supports that provide opportunities for individuals to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings.

**Implementation Plan:** Set of activities that need to be completed for each program, along with timeline and applicable resources/level of effort. The program will have one implementation plan with several activities. Implementation plans should include as much detail as possible.

**Indirect Costs:** Costs that are not directly related to the design and administration of the proposed program. Indirect Costs may include the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

**Metrics:** Specific, measurable, and relevant measurements used to evaluate the success of a program, and as defined by EOHHS.

**State Fiscal Year**:The twelve-month period commencing July 1 and ending June 30 and designated by the calendar year in which the fiscal year ends (e.g., State Fiscal Year 2023 ends June 30, 2023).

**Technology Coordinator:** An external entity that assists in the coordination, maintenance, and updates of technology systems and software for the Applicant.

**Total Implementation Funds Requested:** The total cost of the program. This is equal to the total budget.

# SECTION 3: APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

An eligible applicant must be a Massachusetts organization with experience providing home and community-based services (HCBS).

Applicants can be community-based organizations, municipal government agencies, or organizations who collaborate with or are funded by any of the following state agencies to provide home and community-based services:

* Executive Office of Elder Affairs
* Department of Children and Families
* Department of Developmental Services
* Department of Mental Health
* Department of Public Health
* Department of Youth Services
* Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
* MassHealth
* Office of Race Equity and Inclusion
* Office for Refugees and Immigrants
* Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
* Department of Transition Assistance
* Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

# SECTION 4: ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1. **Eligible Expenses**

Qualifying Programs must propose to use grant funds only for Eligible Expenses. An Applicant must propose to use grant funds only for Qualifying Programs, as defined in **Section 5.3**

**All reimbursable efforts must support the provider’s ability to expand, enhance, or innovate home and community-based services at the organizational level.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Description** | **Examples** | **Exclusions** |
| New or Enhanced Electronic Systems | Systems used to record and manage client care and/or bill for care provided. Can be an installed or cloud-based system. | - Electronic medical record system (EMR)  - Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)  - Electronic Health Records (EHR)  - Emergency Notification Systems (ENS)  - Applications to enhance closed-loop referrals  - Enterprise-wide medication management system  - Enterprise-wide innovation enabling technology platforms to support individuals to be involved in the process across the healthcare continuum | License or subscription costs past the end of the grant program |
| Telehealth Systems | Systems used by providers to communicate with or monitor the health of clients | - Teladoc, Kareo, and other similar platforms | License or subscription costs past the end of the grant program |
| Applications or Subscriptions | Systems used by providers to enhance communication and accessibility | - Zoom  - Teleconference software  - Microsoft Office | License or subscription costs past the end of the grant program |
| Devices or Equipment | Electronic devices used by providers or clients to interact with electronic and telehealth systems | - Laptops  - Tablets  - Televisions  - Modems  - Hard drives | Devices or Equipment cannot be permanently given to Individuals served by HCBS organizations |
| Technical Support/Assistance | Assistance with new digital software, hardware, or electronic systems | - Implementation consultants  - Training on new technologies | Hiring of new staff; training not directly related to technology improvements |
| Capital Expenditures | Funds for subcontractor to implement physical changes to an organization’s space to accommodate new or upgraded technology | - Installation of new servers  - Installation of new televisions  - Modifications to circuit breakers | Capital Expenditures not directly related to the implementation, accommodation, or construction of technology improvements |

1. **Ineligible Expenses**

Grant funds may not be used for any of the ineligible activities described below. Applications proposing to use grant funds on such impermissible expenses may be rejected in whole or in part, and under no circumstances will grant funds be approved for such impermissible expenses.

Expenses that occurred before the contract start date or after the contract end date will not be reimbursed. Awardees must expend funds by no later than March 30, 2025, unless otherwise directed by EOHHS. EOHHS may extend the date by which funds may be expended, in its discretion, by providing notice to the Awardees and without requiring an amendment to the Contract.

Grant funds **can** be used to supplement, but **not** supplant, existing Medicaid HCBS or any other state-funded initiatives. These grant funds also must not overlap with any CMS waiver extension proposals.

Additional ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

* Ongoing costs of the grant program after it ends on March 30, 2025
* Loan repayment, retention bonuses, referral bonuses, or recruitment bonuses
* Temporary wage increases
* Audio books
* Internet, hot spot, or utility payments
* Capital expenses not related to technology improvement or implementation
* Any pet related technology fee or fees
* Robotic or electronic comfort pets
* Devices for the permanent use of individuals served by the provider’s organization
* Television streaming services

# SECTION 5: GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**5.1** **Application Requirements**

To apply for a grant award, Applicants must complete and submit the Applicant Form through MassGRANTS, an online Grant Portal established by EOHHS (the “Grant Portal”). Applicants can access the Grant Portal at: [https://maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!jn2XqqMUKPfeFZADQ4SrlmkUyLPr9bOaIyDNDfeZlZSnZxIHaAB3cpSKdKArwGabUBx1D2uxYaLvjEjDVxlbLdS6RRQg9dw$) .

All applications must be submitted through [MassGRANTS](https://maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage) on or September 8, 2023 before 5 p.m. EOHHS expects to award all the allocated funds during the first round of applications.

Questions must be submitted to  [MAHCBSGRANTS@pcgus.com](mailto:MAHCBSGRANTS@pcgus.com) by August 11, 2023. In accordance with procurement rules, answers to all questions will be posted on COMMBUYS or before August 18, 2023.

Each Applicant must include, at the minimum, how they will upgrade and modernize their existing IT hardware and software, as well as implement innovative technologies that will contribute to future sustainability.

Additionally, Applicants must provide the following information provided in the form, format, and manner requested through the Application Form on the Grant Portal:

* Name and contact information for a primary and secondary contact at the organization applying for the grant
* The MMARS vendor code
* Applicants can be community-based organizations, municipal government agencies, or organizations who contract with or are funded by any of the following state agencies to provide home and community-based services:
  + - Executive Office of Elder Affairs
    - Department of Children and Families
    - Department of Developmental Services
    - Department of Mental Health
    - Department of Public Health
    - Department of Youth Services
    - Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
    - MassHealth
    - Office of Race Equity and Inclusion
    - Office for Refugees and Immigrants
    - Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
    - Department of Transitional Assistance
    - Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
  + Details on the technology access and support currently provided by the organization
  + A detailed project plan describing how the organization will utilize the funding to meet the grant goals
* A project budget
* A project narrative
* An implementation plan

**5.2 Evaluation of Provider Technology Funding**

EOHHS will require grant Awardees to report on a set of baseline metrics for the purposes of evaluating impact of the grant funds and progress towards reaching the defined goals. The first priority for metrics and reporting is accurate data. Awardees will not be penalized or required to return funding if the data reflects that the program did not produce the expected results.  EOHHS will work with Awardees to provide support if there are concerns with feasibility in reporting on the required metrics.

Awardees will be permitted to use grant funds to support the collection and analysis of program data. Applications will not be excluded if Applicants are unable to meet the reporting metrics completely. The application will include space to list any metrics or reporting requirements that Applicants are unable to meet.

1. **Overview of Requirements**

Awardees will be required to provide interim and final reports across an established set of metrics. These criteria include:

Quantitative

* Number of employees at organization
* Demographics of employees at organization
* Number of physical locations of organization
* Do you provide mobile services - Y/N
* Number of people served by organization
* Demographics of population served
  + Age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status
* Number of people impacted by this technology improvement (best estimate)
* Where organization is located regionally according to county
* List of counties served by organization

*Interim report:* An interim report will be required covering the first six months of the funding period. The report will need to be submitted 30 days after EOHHS shares reporting questions.

*Final report:* A final report will be required *at the end of the grant period by March 30, 2025.*

Per the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, grant recipients are required to retain program documents and records for six years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

**5.3 Prioritized Proposal Criteria**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority Areas** | **Examples** |
| Applicants who are providing services to people experiencing homelessness or who were formerly homeless | Need for Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) software upgrades and enhancements to be able to automatically upload data to the statewide HMIS data warehouse. |
| Applicants who have deferred maintenance of their technology needs due to barriers in purchasing or updating | Need for new computers and hard drives to run newer versions of software. |
| Technologies that support the improved service delivery of culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse and gender inclusive care | Smartphone or laptop to support front line worker’s ability to communicate with the organization and people served.  Support hybrid services like zoom, translation, interpretation, or ASL services. |
| Technologies that will elevate the organization’s ability to deliver higher quality services | Comprehensive documentation and information management system that creates efficiencies, streamlines processes, securely connects people, exchanges information, and integrates all aspects of service delivery. |

# SECTION 6: GRANT PROGRAM INFORAMTION

**6.1** **Grant Program Process and Authority**

This RFA is issued under the provisions of regulations at 815 CMR 2.00. Various terms found in the state procurement regulations at 801 CMR 21.00 are also incorporated by reference in this RFA. Words used but not specifically defined in this RFA shall have the meanings defined in 815 CMR 2.00 or 801 CMR 21.00. Unless otherwise specified in this RFA, all communications, applications, and documentation must be in English, using English customary weights and measures (feet, pounds, quarts, etc.) and U.S. dollars. All applications must be submitted in accordance with the terms specified in **Section 8**.

Payments under this RFA, including payments under any Contract extensions, are subject to legislative appropriation and authorization, availability of state and federal funds, and EOHHS’s determination of satisfactory performance and advancement of the public interest and the objectives of EOHHS.

EOHHS reserves the right to amend this RFA at any time prior to contract execution. Any such amendment will be posted on COMMBUYS. Potential Applicants are advised to check this site regularly, as this will be the sole guaranteed method used for notification of changes.

EOHHS makes no guarantee that a Contract, or any obligation to provide funding, will result from this RFA.

This RFA is distributed electronically using the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ eProcurement system known as COMMBUYS at [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com/) (see **Section 11.1** for more information about COMMBUYS).

**6.2** **Duration of Contract**

Contracts resulting from this RFA shall be in effect upon execution and shall terminate on March 30, 2025, provided however, that EOHHS may extend an Awardee’s Contract for up to four years in its discretion, in increments to be determined by EOHHS.

**6.3** **Anticipated Grant Awards**

This grant is designed to provide funding in the form of time-limited grants to enable HCBS providers and contractors to upgrade and modernize their existing IT hardware and software, as well as implement innovative technologies that will contribute to future sustainability. This grant program was developed to help HCBS providers advance and achieve their highest potential by removing barriers created by a lack of technology or outdated technology.

Allowable expenses include the purchase of software to support communications, enhancements to software systems such as an Electronic Medical Record, Homeless Management Information Systems, or Electronic Health Record (EHR) (see **Section 4** for more information on eligible expenses).

Using ARPA funds, EOHHS plans to make $12,000,000 in technology improvement grants available to HCBS providers. EOHHS will issue technology improvement grants in denominations of up to $500,000 each to EOHHS HCBS providers. Providers have until March 30, 2025, to spend the funds.

Grant funds will be awarded through a competitive application process according to this RFA. Applications will be evaluated in accordance with **Section 9**. Awards under this RFA shall be for a fixed amount, which amount shall be determined and announced to the Awardee in accordance with **Section 9** and shall be paid out in a single payment to each Awardee upon execution of the Contract. Awardees are required to retain program documents and records for six years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

If additional funds become available during the Contract period, EOHHS reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all of the Contracts executed as a result of this RFA or to execute Contracts with organizations not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory Contract performance, and service or commodity need.

# SECTION 7: CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Under any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Awardee will be responsible for the implementation of its proposed Qualified Program, submission of required reporting, conducting required evaluation activities, and any other requirements outlined in the Awardee’s application, this RFA, the grant award notification letter, and the Contract negotiated between EOHHS and the Awardee. Awardees are also required to meet the requirements described in this **Section 8**. See also **Attachment D, Additional Contract Terms**, for certain model contract terms.

**7.1** **Participation in Contract Activities**

Awardees are responsible for:

1) Participating in periodic conferences and meetings with EOHHS staff and other Awardees to provide updates, share lessons learned, and receive feedback, as EOHHS deems appropriate; and

2) Participating in such activities that EOHHS deems necessary to monitor Qualifying Program status during the term of the Contract and support EOHHS objectives.

**7.2** **Continuing Obligation to Disclose Conflicts of Interest**

In submitting applications and through the term of the Contract, Applicants are obligated to disclose any of their own interests, including interests of any vendor identified in an Applicant’s application as expected to perform specific work in the proposed Qualifying Program or experience specific benefits from the proposed Qualifying Program, that may conflict with the performance of services required under any Contract resulting from this RFA, or that may be otherwise anti-competitive, as determined by EOHHS. EOHHS may require the Applicant to submit any additional relevant information regarding its financial, legal, contractual, or other business interests, including those of any vendors identified in an Applicant’s application as expected to perform specific work in the proposed Qualifying Program or experience specific benefits from the proposed Qualifying Program. If EOHHS in its sole judgment determines that an Applicant, including any vendor identified in an Applicant’s application as expected to perform specific work in the proposed Qualifying Program or experience specific benefits from the proposed Qualifying Program, possesses a conflicting interest, EOHHS may propose or consider any proposal of the Applicant for any measures that would eliminate or mitigate such conflicting interest to EOHHS’s satisfaction.

# SECTION 8: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**8.1** **Application Submission Requirements**

Applicants must submit an electronic application on the Grant Portal, found here: [https://maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!jn2XqqMUKPfeFZADQ4SrlmkUyLPr9bOaIyDNDfeZlZSnZxIHaAB3cpSKdKArwGabUBx1D2uxYaLvjEjDVxlbLdS6RRQg9dw$). The application must be submitted by the deadline date for applications specified in **Section 5**.

Any technical questions regarding the Grant Portal, including regarding access issues or functionality issues, should be directed to the Grant Portal support team at [MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com](mailto:MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com).

**8.2** **Application Contents**

Applicants must follow the RFA’s submission instructions carefully. Information wrongly placed or placed out of sequence may be ignored or treated as missing.

The application must be submitted through the Grant Portal. An Applicant Form Preview, attached to the RFA as **Attachment A**, shows in screenshots the information that Applicants will be required to submit through the portal. Applicants must provide all required information requested in the Applicant Form and must indicate when a question or request is not applicable to its proposal.

The Applicant must also upload to the Grant Portal any required additional forms or attachments described in this RFA under **Sections 8.4** and **8.5**.

The Applicant’s application is effective through the date that the Applicant executes a Contract with EOHHS pursuant to this RFA.

**8.3** **Applicant Form Electronic Signature**

Applications submitted via the Grant Portal must be signed electronically by the Applicant or the Applicant’s Agent. By checking the attestation that the submitter is an authorized signatory for the Applicant organization, the application will be deemed to be signed electronically by the Applicant.

**8.4** **Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification (Mass. Substitute W-9 Form)**

Applicants must submit a complete and accurate Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification Number (Mass. Substitute W-9 Form) as part of a completed Application as described in **Section 8.2**. An original W-9 form is not required; an electronically signed or scan of wet-ink signed form is acceptable. If the Applicant’s name, address, or Tax ID Number have not changed since the Applicant last submitted and executed a Mass. Substitute W-9 Form, a new Mass. Substitute W-9 Form is not required.

**The Mass. Substitute W-9 Form is available at this** [**link**](https://www.macomptroller.org/wp-content/uploads/form_w-9.pdf) **and also on COMMBUYS.**

The information on this form will be used to record the Applicant’s legal address and where payments under a State Contract will be sent. The company’s correct legal name and legal address must appear on this form and must be identical to the legal name and legal address on the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. Please do not use the U.S Treasury’s version of the W-9 Form.

**8.5** **Awardee Authorized Signatory Listing**

Applicants must complete the Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing available on COMMBUYS or at this [https://maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/maanfgrants.force.com/s/loginpage__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!jn2XqqMUKPfeFZADQ4SrlmkUyLPr9bOaIyDNDfeZlZSnZxIHaAB3cpSKdKArwGabUBx1D2uxYaLvjEjDVxlbLdS6RRQg9dw$), in accordance with Comptroller requirements, as part of a complete Application as described in **Section 8.2**.

Further information on how to correctly complete the Authorized Signatory Form is provided below.

In the table entitled “Authorized Signatory Name” and “Title,” type the names and titles of those individuals authorized to execute loan agreements, contracts, and other legally binding documents on behalf of the Applicant. Applicants are advised to keep this list as small as possible, as Awardees will be required to notify EOHHS of any changes. If the person signing in the signature block at the bottom of the first page of this form also will serve as an “Authorized Signatory,” that person’s name must be included in the typed table.

In the next paragraph, which begins “I certify that I am the President, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Fiscal Officer, Corporate Clerk, or Legal Counsel for the Awardee…,” if your organization does not have these titles, cross them out and handwrite the appropriate title(s) above the paragraph.

The second page of the form (entitled “Proof of Authentication of Signature”) states that the page is optional. However, EOHHS requires the completion of separate second pages for each signatory listed on the first page (e.g., if three names are listed on the first page, three separate second pages, one for each signatory, must be completed).

Please note that in two places where the form states “in the presence of a notary,” this should be interpreted to mean “in the virtual presence of a notary or corporate clerk/secretary.” Either a notary or corporate clerk/secretary may authenticate the form; only one is required.

Organizations whose corporate clerks/secretaries authenticate this form are not required to obtain a Corporate Seal to complete this document.

**8.6** **Acceptable Forms of Signature**

Effective June 15, 2021, for all 1) Comptroller (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 b. An uploaded picture of the signatory’s hand drawn signature; or 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.

This section is not applicable to the Applicant’s application, submitted through the Grant Portal. Instead, the Applicant’s attestation will serve as the electronic signature of the application materials, as described in Section 8.3.

**8.7** **Applicant Certifications**

By submitting an application, each Applicant certifies that:

1. All information provided in or as part of the application is accurate;
2. If awarded grant funds, the Applicant will produce receipts or other evidence that funds were used as proposed and approved and will otherwise comply with the terms of this RFA and the Contract; and
3. The Applicant understands that EOHHS may recoup the amount of any funding not used as proposed and approved.

# SECTION 9: APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS

* 1. **Application Review**

1. Applications submitted in response to this RFA shall undergo initial review by a third-party vendor retained by EOHHS, who will determine compliance with the minimum requirements of this RFA. Failure to meet any such requirements may cause an Applicant or proposal to be disqualified from consideration. The third-party vendor will then compile and summarize the key information from the Applicant’s application for EOHHS’s internal Evaluation Committee (the “Committee”) and make initial recommendations.
2. The Committee will then review the materials from the third-party vendor and complete final evaluations and recommendations for awardees and award amounts. In addition to the information provided in an Applicant’s application, the Committee may consider any relevant information about the Applicant known to EOHHS. The third-party vendor may provide the Committee with technical assistance, as the Committee deems necessary, during its review.
3. The Committee will then make recommendations to the Secretary of EOHHS or her designee.
4. Applications that lack adequate detail with respect to the information required under **Section 5**, as determined by the Committee, may be considered incomplete and may cause an Applicant or proposal to be disqualified from consideration. At its option, the Committee may seek clarification from the Applicant pursuant to **Subsection 9.3**, as described below.

All applications will be rated according to uniform criteria, such as comprehensiveness, innovation, clarity, responsiveness to EOHHS’s needs and goals, effectiveness, and timeline, and each application will be rated according to the following scale: “Excellent”, “Good”, “Fair”, “Poor”, or “Not Applicable (N/A)”. Each rating will be accompanied by key points supporting the rating. These ratings will then be used to make recommendations for awardees and award amounts through the following categories: “Strongly Recommend”, “Recommend”, “Recommend if Funding Remains Available”, or “Do Not Recommend”. Higher ratings will correlate with “Strongly Recommend” or “Recommend” categories, while lower ratings will correlate with “Recommend if Funding Remains Available” or “Do Not Recommend” categories.

The Committee may determine that a defect in an Applicant’s application is immaterial and may, at its discretion, consider the application to meet the requirements of this RFA, with or without clarification from the applicant.

**9.2** **Budget and Work Plan Revisions**

EOHHS will notify Applicants of any approved awards. After notification, selected Applicants may be required to develop and submit a revised work plan and budget using the approved award amount as a condition of receipt of award. Work plans and budgets may need to be revised to clarify something in the initial proposals or to accommodate the approved award amount (which may be less than the Applicant requested). Revised work plans and budgets must still satisfy the requirements of this RFA as determined by EOHHS. Additionally, Applicants may be required to submit updated cost proposals, quotes, etc. to support revised work plans, if applicable, on request.

**9.3** **Non-compliance and Clarifications**

1) EOHHS reserves the right to reject an application at any time during the evaluation process if the Applicant:

a) Fails to demonstrate to EOHHS’s satisfaction that it meets all requirements of this RFA or receives a rating of “Poor” in one or more sections of the evaluation;

b) Fails to submit all required information or otherwise satisfy all response requirements in **Sections 6 and 9**;

c) Has any interest that may, in EOHHS’s sole determination, conflict with performance of services for the Commonwealth or be anti-competitive; or

d) Rejects or qualifies its agreement to any of the mandatory provisions of this RFA, the Contract, or the Commonwealth’s Standard Contract Form or Terms and Conditions.

2) The Committee may determine that non-compliance with an RFA requirement is not material. In such cases, the Committee may seek clarification, allow the Applicant to make minor corrections, consider the non-compliance when evaluating the response, or apply a combination of all three remedies.

# SECTION 10: TIMETABLE

*All dates are estimated* **except** *due dates for written inquiries and for receipt of Applicant applications. All times are Eastern.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Provider Technology** |  | |
| **RFA released** | | **August 3, 2023** | |
| **Deadline for receipt of written questions on the RFA** | | **August 11, 2023** | |
| **Bid Opening Date (Deadline for Applications)** | | **September 8, 2023 by 5:00 P.M.** | |
| ***PCG Completes Reviews*** | | **October 13, 2023** | |
| **Awardees and award amounts determined (anticipated)** | | **November 10, 2023** | |
| **Executed Contracts due from Awardees to EOHHS (anticipated)** | | **November 24, 2023** | |
| **Projected Contract start date (anticipated)** | | **December 1, 2023** | |

# SECTION 11: ADDITONAL GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS

**11.1** **COMMBUYS as Official Source of Information**

COMMBUYS is the official source of information for this procurement (known as a Bid in COMMBUYS terminology) and is publicly accessible at no charge at [www.commbuys.com](http://www.commbuys.com/). Information contained in this RFA document and in COMMBUYS, including file attachments, announcements, or modifications, if any, and information contained in the related Frequently Asked Questions document, attached as **Attachment B**, along with any modifications thereto, are all components of the procurement.

Applicants are solely responsible for obtaining all information distributed for this procurement via COMMBUYS.

It is each Applicant’s responsibility to check COMMBUYS for:

* Any amendments, addenda, announcements, or modifications to this RFA; and
* Any Q&A records or updated Frequently Asked Questions document (**Attachment B**) related to this RFA.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility for and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit a Response to this RFA based on out-of-date information or information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

COMMBUYS Registration. Applicants may elect to obtain a free COMMBUYS Seller registration which provides value-added features, including automated email notifications associated with postings and modifications to COMMBUYS records. However, in order to respond to this RFA, Applicants must submit their application through the EOHHS Grant Portal, as described in **Sections 6.1** and **9.1**.

The COMMBUYS system introduces terminology that Applicants should be familiar with in order to conduct business with the Commonwealth. To view this terminology and to learn more about the COMMBUYS system, visit the [COMMBUYS Resource Center.](https://www.mass.gov/learn-about-commbuys-resources" \t "_blank)

Questions specific to COMMBUYS should be made to the COMMBUYS Help Desk at [commbuys@mass.gov](mailto:commbuys@mass.gov).

Questions specific to the Grant Portal should be made to the [MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com](mailto:MassGrantsSupport@mtxb2b.com).

All other questions must be directed to the RFA contact, in accordance with **Section 11.2**, as described below.

**11.2** **Applicant Communications**

Applicants are prohibited from communicating directly with any employee of EOHHS concerning this RFA except as specified below, and no other individual Commonwealth employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFA.

**RFA Contact**: [MAHCBSGrants@pcgus.com](mailto:MAHCBSGrants@pcgus.com)

**Reasonable Accommodation**: Applicants with disabilities or hardships that seek reasonable accommodation, which may include the receipt of RFA information in an alternative format, must submit a written statement describing the Applicant’s disability and the requested accommodation to the contact person for the RFA. EOHHS reserves the right to reject unreasonable requests.

**11.3** **RFA Inquiries**

Applicants may make written inquiries concerning this RFA until no later than the date and time specified in the timetable in **Section 10** of this RFA. Written inquiries must be sent to the RFA contact at the email address listed in **Section 11.2** above. No acknowledgment of receipt will be given. EOHHS will review all questions and, at its discretion, prepare written responses to those it determines to be of general interest and relevant to the preparation of an application in response to the RFA. These responses will be posted on the COMMBUYS website. Only written responses will be binding on EOHHS.

EOHHS reserves the right to accept additional written questions after the date and time specified in the timetable in **Section 10** of this RFA and, at its discretion, prepare written responses to those it determines to be of general interest and relevant to the preparation of an application in response to the RFA. These additional responses will also be posted on the COMMBUYS website. However, EOHHS makes no guarantee that it will answer questions received after the deadline.

**11.4** **Electronic Communication and Update of Applicant’s Contact Information**

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to keep current the e-mail address of the Applicant’s contact person and prospective Contract manager, if awarded a Contract, and to monitor that e-mail inbox for communications from EOHHS, including requests for clarification. EOHHS and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if an Applicant’s designated e-mail address is not current or if technical problems, including those with the Applicant’s computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP), cause e-mail communications sent to or from the Applicant and EOHHS to be lost or rejected by any means, including e-mail or spam filtering.

**11.5** **Amendment or Withdrawal of RFA**

EOHHS reserves the right to amend the RFA at any time prior to contract execution and to terminate this procurement in whole or in part at any time. If EOHHS decides to amend or clarify any part of this RFA, any amendment will be posted on COMMBUYS. EOHHS recommends that Applicants check the COMMBUYS site regularly for updates, as it is the Applicant’s responsibility to remain aware of clarifications and amendments.

**11.6** **Funding Levels**

Funding levels not specifically identified in an Applicant’s response and accepted by EOHHS as part of a Contract will not be compensated under any Contract awarded pursuant to this RFA. The Commonwealth will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Applicants in responding to this RFA**.**

**11.7** **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**

By responding to this RFA, Applicants agree to participate in the Commonwealth Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program for receiving payments, unless the Applicant can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome. EFT is a benefit to both Awardees and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe, and reliable payment directly to Awardees and saves both parties the cost of processing checks. Awardees can track and verify payments made electronically through the Comptroller’s VendorWeb application. Additional information about EFT and VendorWeb is available on the [VendorWeb](https://massfinance.state.ma.us/VendorWeb/vendor.asp) site. Any successful Applicant must enroll in EFT.

Awardees may submit their Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Agreement, provided by EOHHS, at any time prior to execution of a grant award under this RFA. It is not required as part of the Application submission.

**11.8** **Incorporation of RFA**

This RFA and any documents an Applicant submits in response to it may be incorporated into any Contract awarded to that Applicant.

**11.9** **Public Records**

All applications and related documents submitted in response to this RFA become public records and are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, § 10 and M.G.L. c. 4, § 7 subsection 26. Any statements in submitted applications that are inconsistent with these statutes will be disregarded.

EOHHS will not return to Applicants any applications or materials they submit in response to this RFA**.**

Because the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Agreement 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.

**11.10** **Restriction on the Use of the Commonwealth Seal**

Applicants and Awardees 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 purposesis prohibited by law.

**11.11** **Application Duration**

The Applicant’s Application shall remain in effect until any Contract with the Applicant is executed.

**11.12 Use and Disclosure of Data**

The Applicant and its employees and subcontractors shall comply with all state and federal laws, rules, regulations, and other requirements relating to confidentiality, privacy, and security.

**11.13 EOHHS’s Option to Modify Scope of Work**

If additional funds become available during the Contract period, EOHHS reserves the right to increase the maximum obligation to some or all of the Contracts executed as a result of this RFA or to execute Contracts with organizations not funded in the initial selection process, subject to available funding, satisfactory Contract performance, and service or commodity need.

EOHHS shall have the option at its sole discretion to modify, increase, reduce, or terminate any activity related to this Contract whenever, in the judgment of EOHHS, the objectives of the Project have been modified or altered in a way that necessitates such changes. In particular, EOHHS reserves the right to modify Contract requirements to conform more closely to the specifications of any funding for which the Legislature appropriates funds, and to address the availability of federal financial participation for expenditures under this Contract. EOHHS will provide written notice of such action to the Awardee, and the parties will negotiate the effect of such changes in scope on the schedule and payment terms.

**11.14 No Third-Party Enforcement**

This Contract shall be enforceable only by the parties, or officers or agencies of the Commonwealth authorized to act on behalf of EOHHS or its successors. Nothing in this Contract shall be deemed to confer benefits or rights to any other parties.

**11.15** **Section Headings**

The headings of the sections of this Contract are for convenience only and will not affect the construction hereof.

**11.16 Waiver**

The acceptance of, or payment for, services rendered by the Awardee shall not be construed to waive any requirements of this Contract, or any of EOHHS’s remedies for failure to fulfill such requirements.