***COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS***

***EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES***

***ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, 11TH FLOOR***

***BOSTON, MA 02108***

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**FOR THE**

**RESPITE INNOVATIONS GRANT PROGRAM**

**RFA DOCUMENT #: 23PMEHSRESPITEGRANTPROG**

**ISSUE DATE: December 6, 2022**

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# SECTION 1: BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE

There are approximately 53 million caregivers in the United States. (Caregiving in the US, AARP, 2020.) Massachusetts estimates that there are 840,000 family caregivers providing over 700 million hours of care. This translates into approximately 12 billion dollars in supportive services. (Mass Live, 2021.) The Family Caregiver Alliance reports that caregivers experience increased depression, anxiety, stress and heart disease, as well as decreased levels of self-care and immune responses. There are also reports of an overall decrease in subjective well-being. Caregivers routinely face competing responsibilities, are taxed psychologically, socially, and physically, often experience financial hardships and require supports to successfully continue to provide care.

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is issuing this Request for Applications (RFA) to solicit proposals from community-based organizations, academic institutions and/or foundations to test innovative Respite models to support families and natural support caregivers.

Through this RFA, EOHHS seeks to award funds intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Develop, and implement new or enhanced innovative models of Respite service delivery;
2. Provide innovative, high quality, person-centered Respite services to provide relief to caregivers while providing a meaningful, safe, enjoyable experience for the care recipient;
3. Provide an inclusive, diverse, equitable plan for the provision of Respite services;
4. Develop strategies that create person-centered Respite opportunities that are gender inclusive and serve culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse Caregivers;
5. Develop sustainable programs and services to offer relief to Caregivers;
6. Recruit and retain Respite workers in innovative ways; and
7. Assess programs and evaluate outcome measures/metrics to determine efficiency and efficacy of pilot Respite program models.

The Applicant’s proposed program will:

1. Develop innovative Respite services that enhance, improve, expand and/or reorganize the way that Respite is currently provided.
2. Pilot new Respite program models to identify promising practices to relieve caregivers of the stress acquired from the exceptional demands of caring for individuals with complex needs, close service gaps, and provide person-centered respite in home and community based settings.

Through the grant program described in this RFA, EOHHS intends to distribute approximately $20,000,000 in funding and intends to draw on federal funds provided to the Commonwealth under Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

**SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS**

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

**Administration for Community Living (ACL):** The ACL is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. It is headed by the Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging who reports to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

**Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs)**: Private non-profit agencies with governing boards that serve and represent 51% of people ages 60 and older. ASAPs were established under Chapter 19A of Massachusetts General Laws and there are 25 ASAPs statewide. ASAPs provide the following direct and protective services: information and referral, interdisciplinary case management, intake and assessment, development, and implementation of service plans, monitoring of service plans, reassessment of needs, and investigations of abuse and neglect of elders.

**Applicant**: An eligible applicant must be a Massachusetts organization with experience providing home and community-based respite services including Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers such as:

* Certified Home Health Agencies, Day Programs, etc.;
* Community organizations such as Independent Living Center (ILC), Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Council on Aging, faith-based organizations, multi-cultural organizations, etc.; and
* Education/training institution or private foundation (Education/training institutions and private foundations with no experience providing HCBS Respite services may apply but must do so in collaboration with an HCBS provider or community organization with experience providing Respite services.)

**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, and receives funding as a result of this RFA.

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

**Capital assets:**

(1) Tangible or intangible assets used in operations having a useful life of more than one year which are capitalized in accordance with GAAP. Capital assets include:

(i) Land, buildings (facilities), equipment, and intellectual property (including software) whether acquired by purchase, construction, manufacture, exchange, or through a lease accounted for as financed purchase under Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) standards or a finance lease under Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) standards; and

 (ii) Additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life (not ordinary repairs and maintenance).

 (2) For the purposes of this grant, capital assets do not include intangible right-to-use assets (per GASB) and right-to-use operating lease assets (per FASB). For example, assets capitalized that recognize a lessee's right to control the use of property and/or equipment for a period of time under a lease contract.

**Capital expenditures**: Expenditures to acquire capital assets or expenditures to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life.

**Caregiver:**  A caregiver is ‘an adult family member or other individual who has a significant relationship with, and who provides a broad range of assistance to, an individual with a chronic or other health condition, disability, or functional limitation” (RAISE Family Caregivers Act Initial report to Congress, Sept, 2021). For the purposes of this grant, Caregivers paid through state-funded or Medicaid programs, including, but not necessarily limited to, providers of personal care paid through the MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs Consumer Direct Care program within the state’s Home Care program, are excluded.

**Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**: CMS is a federal agency within the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that administers the Medicare Program and works in partnership with state governments to administer Medicaid.

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

**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)**: Home & Community Based Services are 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 (e.g., home care, electronic monitoring, home delivered meals, day habilitation services, adult day health and transportation)

**Independent Living Centers (ILCs)**: ILCs are private, nonprofit, consumer-controlled organizations providing services and advocacy by and for people with all types of disabilities.

**Implementation Plan:** A set of activities that needs to be completed for each program along with a 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.

**Innovative Program**: New programs or services that are provided in a creative and/ or experimental way to address an unmet need.

**Intermittent**: Ongoing, regular respite that can be planned (for example, adult day services).

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

**No Wrong Door (NWD):** NWD is a collaborative effort of ACL and CMS and the Veterans Health Administration that support state efforts to streamline access to Long Term Services and Supports for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

**Older Adult Caregiver:** A caregiver age 65 or older.

**Person Centered Planning (PCP):**  A PCP describes the services and supports an individual will need to achieve their goals and are driven by the person’s life goals. PCP is a comprehensive strategy for putting necessary services and supports in place to help people achieve their goal. It is driven by the individual but works best when it includes other people who can contribute valuable information to the process. (EHS-LTC, 2008.)

**Respite:** “Planned or emergency support to provide family/primary caregivers with a short break from the exceptional demands of caring for individuals with complex needs across the lifespan.” (MLRC Lifespan Respite Project, 2019.)

**Veterans Health Administration (VA)**: The VA is America’s largest integrated health care system, providing care at 1,298 health care facilities and serving 9 million enrolled veterans each year.

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

# SECTION 3: APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

An eligible Applicant must be a Massachusetts organization with experience providing home and community-based Respite services including:

* Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) providers such as Certified Home Health Agencies, Day Programs, etc.;
* Community organizations such as Independent Living Center (ILC), Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Council on Aging, faith-based organization, multi-cultural organization, etc.; and
* Education/training institution or private foundation.\*

\*Education/training institutions and private foundations with no experience providing HCBS respite services may apply but must do so in collaboration with an HCBS provider or community organization with experience providing respite services.

Coalitions of regional community organizations and HCBS providers are encouraged to apply.

# SECTION 4: QUALIFYING PROGRAMS

1. Minimum Qualifications. The proposed program must be designed to meet at least one of the following activities:
2. Provide a new or enhanced model for delivery of Respite services.
3. Reform or reorganize an existing service model to improve service delivery, access, and inclusivity.

1. Prioritized Proposal Criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority Areas | Examples |
| Provides supports to those with intensive care needs in the community. | * Provision of Respite services to caregivers after the care recipient transitions to home from a hospital or nursing facility stay as a result of an acute episode * Provision of Respite services to caregivers meeting the needs of more than one individual in the household. * Caregiver support programs |
| Develops respite options for individuals with complex medical, cognitive and/ or behavioral needs. | * Develop weekend and/or week-long Respite services focused on a dual needs population, children with autism or other complex conditions. * Provision of Respite services to caregivers after care recipient transitions from the special education system to the adult service system |
| Builds or enhances parent to parent or caregiver to caregiver models. | * Peer to Peer supports connecting families with other families who have experienced similar challenges |
| Develops options to address the workforce needs of HBCS Respite providers | * Campaign to educate the communities and promote jobs related to Respite services industry |
| Provides culturally responsive, person-centered Respite opportunities that serve culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse and gender inclusive family caregivers | * Work with multi-cultural community centers to develop a Respite program including a campaign to promote jobs related to respite services |
| Develops options to provide Respite services to older adult caregivers | * Provision of educational programs (e.g., managing diabetes, computer skills) for older caregivers as part of the Respite service plan * Respite services for grandparents or kinship family members taking care of grandchildren |

# SECTION 5: ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

An Applicant must propose to use grant funds only for Qualifying Programs, as defined in Section 4. Grant funds can be used to supplement, but not supplant, existing Respite services or any other state-funded initiatives or develop new initiatives to meet the growing needs of the populations served.

As defined in Section 2, Direct Costs are costs that are directly incurred due to the proposed programs. Programs funded with ARPA dollars are subject to the cost principles of 2 CFR 200. Subrecipients and recipients should consider:

1. *Reasonableness:* Direct costs must be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the program. A cost is considered reasonable if it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the similar circumstances. For goods and services, costs are considered reasonable if they are comparable to market prices for similar goods and services.
2. *Salaries:* Administrative and clerical salaries are typically considered indirect costs. In order to claim administrative or clerical salaries as direct costs, the individual must be integral to the program or activity; the salary must be included in the budget; the subrecipient must have prior written approval; and the costs are not also recovered in indirect costs.
3. *Allocable:* Program costs must also be allocable to the program which means a recipient or subrecipient incurred the costs in the performance of the award.

Grant Funds cannot be used for:

1. Respite services for Caregivers paid through state-funded or Medicaid programs, including but not necessarily limited to providers of personal care paid through the MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs Consumer Direct Care program within the state’s Home Care program;
2. Loan repayment, retention bonuses, referral bonuses, or recruitment bonuses;
3. Programs benefiting State employees who currently provide respite services. State Universities may apply;
4. Durable and/or Specialized Medical Equipment providers unless paired with the provision of services;
5. Temporary wage increases; or
6. Capital Expenditures.

Subrecipients should maintain records of all costs incurred in the performance of the program for which they received a Federal award. If a subrecipient serves as a pass-through entity, the subrecipient is responsible for collecting and maintaining such records.

# SECTION 6: GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**6.1 Application Requirements**

To apply for a grant award, Applicants must complete and submit an Application Form through the 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 information requested on the Application Form must be supplied. If any question or request is not applicable to an Applicant’s proposal, the Applicant must indicate that it is not applicable.

Each application must include, at a minimum, the following information provided in the form, format, and manner requested through the Application Form on the Grant Portal:

1. **Application Summary Information**

* Full name of the organization applying for funding and the name of the parent company, if applicable;
* The organization’s MMARS Vendor Code;
* Title and location of the proposed project;
* Total funding requested; and
* Name and contact information for a primary and secondary contact at the primary agency as well as any collaborating agencies.

1. **Partnerships (if applicable)**

* Name of all organizations in that will partner in the implementation of the proposed project;
* Description of the responsibilities of each partner organization; and
* Contact information, if available, for each partner organization.

1. **Project Description**

* Details about the Applicant’s current experience, including whether or not the organization currently provides respite services. If so, identify the state programs under which respite is provided;
* The barriers to meeting the demand for respite services;
* The extent to which the Applicant’s proposal meets the priority criteria in **Section 4.B**.;
* A detailed summary of the proposed project including how it provides an innovative respite solution;
* A description of the proposed outcomes of the project including the number of caregivers to be served;
* A description of how the project will improve the state's ability to serve culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse family caregivers;
* At least two program-specific metrics that will use to measure the effectiveness of the project and a description of how these metrics will be tracked; and
* How the project will address the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified direct care workers.

1. **Budget**

* A detailed budget of direct and indirect costs as well as descriptions of each cost; and
* If applying in partnership, each organization’s budget must be listed separately.

1. **Implementation Plan**

* A detailed implementation timeframe inclusive of communication plans to eligible beneficiaries; and
* Estimated start and end dates and responsible parties for each major activity.

1. **Attachments**

* Attached letters of executive approval/support from all partnering organizations; and
* Any other required information as requested through the application form.

**COMMBUYS will not be used for application submissions for this RFA. Any proposals or applications received through COMMBUYS or other delivery modes may be disregarded or rejected.** However, all materials, including this RFA, the Application Form (Attachment A), and a Frequently Asked Questions document (Attachment B), along with any updates thereto, will be posted on COMMBUYS. In the event there are discrepancies between the materials or instructions on the Grant Portal and the COMMBUYS page for this RFA, the COMMBUYS materials will take precedence.

Additional application content and submission requirements can be found in **Section 9** of this RFA.

**6.2 Evaluation of Respite Innovation Programs**

Each Awardee is required to participate in evaluating its Qualifying Program. The objective of the Qualifying Program’s evaluation is to gather information sufficient to demonstrate the impact of the Qualifying Program.

1. All organizations that are awarded funds through this grant will be required to submit the following demographic metrics in order to establish a baseline and to then monitor success during and post-Program implementation:

The number of caregivers served in the following categories:

* Age 65 and older
* Speaks a primary language other than English
* Receiving respite services for the first time
* Providing care to a recipient with complex health care need:
* Providing care to a recipient ages: 0-22
* Providing care to a recipient ages 23-55
* Providing care to a recipient ages 56-65
* Providing care to a recipient over 65
* Providing care to an individual with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD)
* Providing care to an individual with Developmental Disabilities
* Providing care to an individual with behavioral health needs

1. EOHHS will require grant Awardees to propose, track and report on at least two custom metrics for the purposes of establishing a baseline to monitor and evaluate the impact of the grant funds and progress towards reaching the defined goals. A description of each metric, its significance, and how it is calculated and the instrument used must be included in the application.

Examples of program-specific metrics include, but are not limited to:

* Measuring the quality of life of the care recipient using survey tools such as [Caregiver Strain Index](https://hign.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Try_This_General_Assessment_14.pdf);
* Caregiver Burden (Examples of survey tools include: [TCARE Home](https://www.tcare.ai/));
* Number of new respite providers recruited to the workforce; and
* Retention rate of workforce providers.

1. Awardees will be required to report on the demographic and custom metrics according to the following schedule, or such other appropriate schedule agreed to by EOHHS:

A baseline report covering July 1, 2022, to December 30, 2022, that will be due prior to receipt of funds;

An initial report 6 months after receiving funds; and

A final report at the conclusion of the program.

The first priority for metrics and reporting is accurate data. Grantees will not be penalized or required to return funding if the data reflects that the program did not produce the expected results. Grantees are permitted to use grant funds to support the collection and analysis of program data.

Grantees will also be required to participate in a facilitated focus group convened by EOHHS, one year after the receipt of grant funds and again at the end of the grant period. The purpose of these focus groups is to collect qualitative information on what worked, what didn’t work and ways to further enhance and improve coordination and communication.

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.

# SECTION 7: GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

**7.1 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 9**.

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 12.1** for more information about COMMBUYS). However, as described in **Section 6.1**, COMMBUYS **is not** the method to be used for submission or acceptance of applications. Applicants must use the new Grant Portal to submit applications.

**7.2** **Duration of Contract**

Initial Contracts resulting from this RFA will be for a duration of two years (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2025).

**7.3** **Anticipated Grant Awards**

Grant funds will be awarded through a competitive application process according to this RFA. Applications will be evaluated in accordance with **Section 10** and measured according to a uniform evaluation sheet.

# SECTION 8: CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Under any Contract resulting from this RFA, the Awardee will be responsible for the implementation of its proposed Qualifying Program, submission of required reporting, conducting required evaluation activities, communication to eligible beneficiaries 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**.

**8.1 Participation in Contract Activities**

Awardees are responsible for:

1. As EOHHS deems appropriate, participating in periodic phone conferences and meetings with EOHHS staff and other Awardees to provide updates, share lessons learned, and receive feedback;
2. Participating in a facilitated focus group convened by EOHHS, one year after the receipt of grant funds and again at the end of the grant period. The purpose of these focus groups is to collect qualitative information on what worked, what didn’t work and ways to further enhance and improve coordination and communication; and
3. Participating in such activities that EOHHS deems necessary to monitor Qualifying Program status during the term of the Contract and support EOHHS objectives.

**8.2 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 Project. If EOHHS in its sole judgment determines that an Applicant, including 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, 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 9: APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

**9.1 Application Delivery Requirements**

Applicants must upload an electronic version of the completed Application Form 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 bid opening date (deadline for applications) specified in **Section 11**.

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).

**9.2** **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 consist of a complete Application Form, attached here as **Attachment A**, submitted through the Grant Portal. Applicants must provide all required information requested in the Application Form and must indicate when a question or request is not applicable to its proposal.

The Applicant must upload to the Grant Portal any required additional forms or attachments described in this RFA under **Sections 9.4**, **9.5**, and **12.7**.

**9.3 Application 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.

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

Prior to execution of a grant agreement pursuant to this RFA, the Awardee must ensure that it has submitted a complete and accurate Request for Taxpayer Identification and Certification Number (Mass. Substitute W-9 Form) and has received a valid Massachusetts Vendor Code. An original W-9 form is not required. If the Applicant’s name, address, or Tax ID Number have not changed since the Applicant last submitted and executed Mass. Substitute W-9 Form was executed, a new Mass. Substitute W-9 Form is not required. **Applicants may update their Mass. Substitute W-9 form at any time prior to execution of a grant award under this contract. It is not required as part of the Application Form submission.**

**The Mass. Substitute W-9 Form is available at this** [**link**](https://www.mass.gov/doc/form-w-9-request-for-taxpayer-identification-number-and-certification-0/download) **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 Applicant’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.

9.5 Awardee Authorized Signatory Listing

Prior to execution of a grant agreement under this RFA, the Applicant must complete an Authorized Signatory Form available on COMMBUYS or at this [link](https://www.macomptroller.org/wp-content/uploads/form_contractor-authorized-signatory-listing.pdf), in accordance with Comptroller requirements. **Applicants may complete their Authorized Signatory Form at any time prior to execution of a grant award under this contract. It is not required as part of the Application Form submission.**

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 the 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 above the paragraph.

The second page of the form (entitled “Proof of Authentication of Signature”) states that the page is optional. However, the “optional” aspect of the form is that Commonwealth Departments are not required to use it. In the case of Statewide Contracts, however, this page is required, not optional. The person signing this page must be the same person signing the Standard Contract Form, the Commonwealth Terms and Conditions, and the RFA Checklist.

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.

**9.6** **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; 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 using the Application Form. Instead, the Applicant’s attestation will serve as the electronic signature, as described in Section 9.3.**

**9.7 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 Payment Agreement; and
3. The Applicant understands that EOHHS may recoup the amount of any funding not used as proposed and approved.

# SECTION 10: APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS

* 1. **Application Review**

1. Applications submitted in response to this RFA will 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. Applications that meet the minimum requirements will be further evaluated on the following:
   1. **Priority Criteria:** The extent to which the proposal addresses the priority criteria listed in **Section 4 B.** Applications that address at least one of the priority criteria will receive funding priority.
   2. **Design:** The level of detail provided in program activities, implementation plan and anticipated outcome as well as the options for sustainability beyond the grant term.
   3. **Evaluation:** The proposed metrics and the process to gather and track these metrics. Applications with strong evaluation plans that will result in clear outcome data which can be used for future program and policy development will receive higher ratings.
   4. **Staffing and Management:** The extent to which the level of effort has been considered and the appropriate staffing resources have been dedicated to support program implementation.
   5. **Budget:** The level of detail provided to describe and justify program expenses. Funding provided to each partner organization must be identified.
2. The third-party vendor will compile and summarize the key information from the Applicant’s application for EOHHS’ internal Evaluation Committee (the “Committee”) and make initial recommendations.
3. 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 Committee with technical assistance, as the Committee deems necessary, during its review.
4. The Committee will then make recommendations of Awardees, at which point Awardees and associated amounts will undergo EOHHS executive review and approval.
5. Applications that lack adequate detail with respect to the information required under **Section 6**, 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 10.5**, below.
6. All applications will be rated according to an evaluation sheet, which shall establish uniform criteria, and each application will be rated for each criteria 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 for each criteria. These ratings will then be used to make recommendations for Awardees and award amounts, through the following categories for funding awards: “Strongly Recommend,” “Recommend,” “Recommend if Funding Remains Available,” or “Do Not Recommend.” Higher ratings on each criteria will correlate with “Strongly Recommend” or “Recommend” categories, while lower ratings on each criteria will correlate with “recommend if Funding Remains Available” or “Do Not Recommend” categories.
7. 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.

**10.4 Budget Submission and Approval**

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 to clarify something in the initial proposals. 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.

* 1. **Non-compliance and Clarifications**

1. EOHHS reserves the right to reject an Applicant’s application at any time during the evaluation process if the Applicant:
2. Fails to demonstrate to EOHHS’s satisfaction that it meets all requirements of this RFA.
3. Fails to submit all required information or otherwise satisfy all response requirements in **Sections 6 and 9**;
4. Has any interest that may, in EOHHS’s sole determination, conflict with performance of services for the Commonwealth or be anti-competitive; or
5. Rejects or qualifies its agreement to any of the mandatory provisions of this RFA, the Contract or the Commonwealth’s Standard Contract or Terms and Conditions.
6. 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.
7. The Committee may seek clarification from the Applicant if it determines some element of an Applicant’s application requires clarification or correction.

# SECTION 11: TIMETABLE

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Description** | **Date** |
| 1 | RFA Issued | December 6, 2022 |
| 2 | Applicants’ Conference (refer to **Section 12.3** for details) | December 14, 2022, 3:00-4:00 pm. |
| 3 | Deadline for receipt of written questions on the RFA  (refer to **RFA Subsection 12.4**) | December 16, 2022 |
| 4 | Bid Opening Date (Deadline for Applications) | January 13, 2023, by 5:00 pm |
| 5 | Awardees and award amounts determined (anticipated) | March 17, 2023 |
| 6 | Executed Contracts due from Awardees to EOHHS (anticipated) | March 31, 2023 |
| 7 | Projected Contract start date (anticipated) | April 1, 2023 |

**SECTION 12: ADDITIONAL GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND TERMS**

**12.1 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 procurement, and
* Any Q&A records or updated Frequently Asked Questions document (**Attachment B**) related to this procurement.

The Commonwealth accepts no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit a Response to this RFA based on out-of-date information or 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 notification 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, which 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](http://www.mass.gov/anf/budget-taxes-and-procurement/procurement-info-and-res/conduct-a-procurement/commbuys/quick-click-resource-center.html).

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 12.2**.

**12.2** **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.

**12.3 Applicants’ Conference**

Potential Applicants and interested parties are invited to attend a non-mandatory Applicants’ Conference. The Applicants’ Conference will take place virtually on the date and time specified in the timetable in **Section 11**. Please email the RFA Contact at the e-mail address listed in **Section 12.2** to receive the meeting link.

Potential Applicants and interested parties are urged to submit questions in advance of the Applicants’ Conference to the RFA Contact at the e-mail address listed in **Section 12.2**. In the subject line, type “Respite Innovations Grant Program RFA.”

EOHHS will address questions pertaining to this RFA during the conference. Oral answers will be given if the information is available but shall be non-binding. Written answers may be prepared for certain questions of general interest and made available to prospective Applicants after the date of the conference.

**12.4 RFA Inquiries**

Applicants may make written inquiries concerning this RFA until no later than the date and time specified in the timetable in **Section 11** of this RFA. Written inquiries must be sent to the RFA contact at the email address listed in **Section 12.2** above. No acknowledgment of receipt must 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 11** 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.

**12.5 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.

**12.6** **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.

**12.7** **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**.**

**12.8 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. The Electronic Funds Transfer Sign-Up Form is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/tips-for-completing-the-electronic-funds-transfer-eft-form>. 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.

**Applicants may submit their Electronic Funds Transfer Sign-Up Form at any time prior to execution of a grant award under this contract. It is not required as part of the Application Form submission.**

**12.9 Incorporation of RFA**

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

**12.10** **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**.**

**12.11 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.

**12.11 Application Duration**

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