

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Commissioner



Request for Information Related to the Department's
Processes to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

All communication regarding this RFI may be made directly to Leana Amález, Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Leana.Amaez@maine.gov.

The Department is looking to receive as many responses from interested parties by August 12, 2020. All responses should be provided directly to Leana Amález.

PUBLIC NOTICE

**State of Maine
Department of Health and Human Services
Request for Information
Processes to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The State of Maine, Department of Health and Human Services, is seeking information regarding organization, engagement, and partnerships to promote health equity in the Department’s work.

A copy of the RFI can be obtained at: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/blog/dhhs-issues-rfi-promote-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-2020-07-24>

The Department is looking to receive as many responses from interested parties by August 12, 2020. All responses should be provided directly to Leana Amález, Manager for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at: leana.amaez@maine.gov.

State of Maine - Department of Health and Human Services **Processes to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

PART I INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Background

The Department of Health and Human Services (Department) is seeking information regarding processes related to organization, engagement, and formal partnerships (e.g., through grants, contracts, other arrangement) to improve equitable outcomes from its health and human services programs.

The purpose of this request for information is to gather public input on the Department's organization, grant and contracting processes, and engagement with the diverse communities in Maine. COVID-19 has highlighted some of the ways that such communities experience differential access to health and social services, as well as the identifying challenges that the Department has in engaging and partnering with new, small, non-profit community-based organizations and small businesses. These disparities occur along multiple lines including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, disability, education, income, and rurality. The Department anticipates the ability to utilize information received from the responses in future planning and funding activities.

As background, the Mills' Administration is committed to promoting equity among all Maine residents. To that end, the Department hired a Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion who has initiated work across the Department to promote a diverse workforce, develop and set policies, and ensure the Department's ability to engage with the range of communities across Maine. All Department Offices and Divisions are participating in this on-going work through the development of a Strategic Plan. The Department is in support of a community-needs assessment to better understand the health and social needs surrounding COVID-19 and the underlying health disparities.

This RFI is one part of a larger set of activities and is designed to inform *how* work is structured rather than to identify specific problems, projects, or outcomes with regard to health and social services equity. Participation in this RFI process is optional and appreciated and complements the Department's own efforts to research and implement organizational and process improvements.

B. General Provisions

1. All submissions in response to this RFI will be considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.](#))

PART II INFORMATION SOUGHT

A. Respondents are encouraged to answer some or all of the questions within this RFI:

1. What *organizational models* facilitate dialogue on policy, funding opportunities, and other types of partnerships?
 - a. Should the Department implement a full-time point person focused on community, business, and stakeholder engagement?
 - b. Previously, the Department had an Office of Minority Health (later called the Office of Health Equity) within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC). Should the Department reestablish this Office?

2. What *modes of engagement* are effective with and preferred by different community-based organizations, small businesses, and other stakeholders?
 - a. How should engagement agendas be set?
 - b. Is there value in holding engagements in person consistent with COVID-19 safety protocols?
 - c. How would you or your organization/business prefer stakeholder engagements be set up to ensure each participant can meaningfully engage with the Department around a particular issue, program, or policy?
 - d. Should engagement attendance include all advocates or stakeholders from a variety of groups and locations; only those from a regional area; or those representing a more narrowly defined community?
 - e. When is a large, town-hall size engagement preferred versus a smaller working group?
 - f. Are there topics for which an independent facilitator should be engaged?
 - g. What are other suggestions to ensure a dialogue that is respectful to all participants?

3. How can the Department *improve access to funding opportunities* for small or community-based organizations and *expand the diversity of grantees and contractors*?

a. How would you rate the following in terms of importance?			
1 - High	2 – Medium	3 - Low	Rating
Training related to how to become a contractor, grantee, or sub-recipient of Department services/agreements			
Financial support for developing infrastructure			
State requirements for inclusion of different types of organizations in a Request for Proposals (RFP) or as conditions of receiving funding, such as minority owned, operated, or percentage of board comprised of people of color			
Technical Assistance in meeting federal and State requirements			
Other: (Add other terms that you feel are important for the Department to address)			

- b. Are there approaches to awarding contracts or grants that the Department should consider?
- c. Should the Department consider additional types of support for sub-recipients competing for and receiving funding awards?
- d. Are there other Maine, other state, or federal programs with practices to promote diversity that the Department should review?

PART III SUBMITTING RESPONSES AND REVIEW OF RESPONSES RECEIVED

A. Submitting the Response

1. Responses Due

The Department is looking for responses to be received no later than the date and time listed on the cover page of this RFI document.

2. Delivery Instructions

Responses must be submitted to the RFI Coordinator, via e-mail, listed on the cover page of this RFI document.

3. Response Format

Responses to this RFI may be developed in a manner that suits the respondent. A list of key questions is included within the RFI and all submissions, regardless of format will be reviewed. Respondents are asked to be brief and to respond to as many questions as possible within the RFI. Number each response to correspond to the relevant question or instruction of the RFI to allow comparison and clarity.

B. Review of Responses Received

1. The Department will review responses received for the purpose of gathering information.
2. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Respondents, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the responses received and/or additional information to enhance marketing research efforts.

APPENDIX A

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Commissioner
RESPONSE COVER PAGE
Processes to Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Lead Point of Contact - Name/Title:			
Organization Name (if applicable):			
Tel:		Fax:	
E-Mail:		Website:	
Street Address:			
City/State/Zip:			