



**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

<b>RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:</b>	RFA # PFNDM2025002 Major Grants for the Study of PFAS in Agricultural Systems, Round 2
<b>RFP ISSUED BY:</b>	DACF
<b>SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:</b>	12/10/2025
<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:</b>	12/22/2025
<b>PROPOSAL DUE DATE:</b>	2/13/2025
<b>PROPOSALS DUE TO:</b>	PFASFund.DACF@maine.gov

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department's answer.**

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	6.1.3 – 6. Timeline Page 13	Can the PI choose to start the project timeline in September 2026 instead of May 2026?
<b>Answer</b>		Yes. The period of performance for major grants will be twenty-four months. The start date for the contract can be set as September 1, 2026, rather than May 1, 2026.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	6.1.3.6 (page 13)	Should “List and describe major benchmarks and estimated completion dates as if funds were awarded in May 2025” read “...May 2026”?
<b>Answer</b>		Yes. The RFA has been corrected and now reads “May 2026.” DACF anticipates announcing awards in May 2026. Work may begin once a contract is fully executed, usually within 4 to 6 weeks of award notification.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	6.1.3.7. (page 13)	Section 7 (Research Facility...) says “Maps and photos can be included as attachments if appropriate.” Where should those attachments go? Table 2 (pages 11-12) does not specify where those attachments should be included.
<b>Answer</b>		Maps and photos of the research facility can be included after the other attachments listed in Table 2.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
4	6.1.3.7. (page 13)	Do the maps and photos that can be included as attachments count against the 12-page limit for the Project Narrative?
	<b>Answer</b>	
Maps and photos of the research facility included as attachments do not count against the 12-page limit for the Project Narrative.		

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
5	Section 6.1.2; page 12	Are subrecipient institutions allowed to charge their own indirect costs?
	<b>Answer</b>	
DACF will pay indirect costs to the Principal Investigator's institution according to the limitations described in RFA Sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.4, and Attachment E. The PI's institution may choose to pay indirect costs to a subrecipient at a rate agreed to by the two institutions. DACF will not make any payments directly to subrecipients.		

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
6	Section 6.1.2; page 12	Can the submitting institution charge 10% indirect costs on the first \$25,000 of each subaward?
	<b>Answer</b>	
Yes, the submitting institution can charge 10% indirect costs on the first \$25,000 of each subaward.  There is one exception. If the primary Principal Investigator's Maine-based institution has an existing policy that defines the indirect rate for agreements with the State of Maine as a percentage of that institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate, then the indirect rate is no more than one-half of that institution's federally negotiated indirect cost rate, and that indirect rate may be applied to the first \$25,000 of each subaward.		

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
7	Section 6.1.2; page 12	If a subrecipient has a negotiated indirect cost rate with the State of Maine, may they charge up to 50% of that rate?
	<b>Answer</b>	
DACF will pay indirect costs to the Principal Investigator's institution according to the limitations described in RFA Sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.4, and Attachment E. The PI's institution may choose to pay indirect costs to a subrecipient at a rate agreed to by the two institutions. DACF will not make any payments directly to subrecipients.		

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
8	6.1.4 (page 17)	For a subrecipient based outside of Maine, that subrecipient will use a 10% indirect cost rate in their own budget, and then a lead organization that is based in Maine will charge indirect costs equivalent to one-half of their federally negotiated indirect cost rate on the first \$25,000 of the non-Maine-based subaward. Is that correct?
		<b>Answer</b>
		DACF will pay indirect costs to the Principal Investigator's institution according to the limitations described in RFA Sections 6.1.2 and 6.1.4, and Attachment E. The PI's institution may choose to pay indirect costs to a subrecipient at a rate agreed to by the two institutions. DACF will not make any payments directly to subrecipients.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
9	Section 6.1.4; page 17	If personnel from a for-profit institution are providing substantive intellectual input to the project, may they be listed in a formal project role such as co-PI or key collaborator? If so, should their institution be classified as a subaward or as a contractor/consultant entity? If they may be listed as a subaward, are there any budget limitations or additional restrictions (e.g., indirect cost limitations) that apply specifically to for-profit subrecipients? If for-profit personnel are not permitted to be listed as a subaward, what is the appropriate budget mechanism for compensating them (e.g., Services, Consultants, or Other Direct Costs)?
		<b>Answer</b>
		<p>Yes, personnel from a for-profit institution who are providing substantive intellectual input to the project may be listed as co-PI or key collaborator.</p> <p>The distinction between a subaward and services/consultation is based on the type of contribution to the project, not the type of organization. Please see Appendix A of the Budget Narrative Guidance (Attachment E).</p> <p>The submitting institution would decide whether there would be any budget limitations or restrictions for subrecipients based on their type of organization.</p>

10	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	Section 6.1.3; page 14	For quality assurance measures, are the proposers required to follow EPA method 1633? Are there additional guidelines for proposers using untargeted PFAS screening?
	Answer	Determination of the most appropriate analytic method is up to the researchers, based on their expertise and the project being proposed. The research proposal should include an explanation of the quality assurance measures for the analytic method that will be used.

11	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	Section 6.1.3; page 14	Is there a required timeline for public release of data after submission to DACF?
	Answer	Awardees are obligated to provide raw data and metadata to DACF in an open file format upon completion of the period of performance.  At the researcher's request, data will not be released publicly for up to 18 months, to provide time for peer-reviewed publication in an academic journal. Researchers may request that data be embargoed for up to an additional 12 months.

12	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	Section 6.1.3; Page 16	If the submitting entity is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research corporation that serves as the grants and contracts administration entity for a public university, is it considered a non-accredited research institution? If so, is a financial review required?
	Answer	The answer depends on whether the public university or the nonprofit research corporation will be the contracting entity if a grant is awarded. If the public university will be the contracting entity, no additional financial information is required. If the nonprofit research corporation will be the contracting entity, documentation of good financial standing is required.

13	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	Section 6.1.3; Page 16	If a subaward institution is a non-accredited institution (e.g., for-profit institution), is a financial review required?
	Answer	Organizations listed as subaward recipients do not need to provide financial review documents, although they can be included if the applicant believes they are relevant. It is the responsibility of the awarded organization to ensure that any subcontractors used are reputable.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
14	Section 6.1.4; page 17	If farmers are compensated for field access, personnel time, or animal husbandry activities, should they be budgeted under <b>Services, Subawards, or Other Direct Costs?</b>
		<b>Answer</b>
		There is not an “other” category in the budget template for this RFA. All expenses must be assigned to one of the categories listed on pages 16-17. The distinction between a subaward and services/consultation is based on the type of contribution to the project – generally, field support would be considered services (see the definition of services on pg. 17 of the RFA). If a farmer or agricultural service provider contributes to defining the research question or research methods, then they might be categorized as a subawardee (see the discussion of collaboration on pg. 23 of the RFA). Also see Attachment E: Budget Narrative Guidance, Appendix A: Services Versus Subaward Determination.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
15	Section 6.1.4; page 17	Is there any limit on the <b>number of subawards per project</b> , provided the total project budget remains under \$500,000?
		<b>Answer</b>
		There is no limit on the number of subawards per project, but the PI is expected to have a lead role in the research.

	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
16	N/A	If patentable intellectual property is generated under this award, does the State of Maine retain any ownership, royalty, or licensing rights?
		<b>Answer</b>
		Under the terms of this RFA, the State of Maine would not retain any ownership, royalty, or licensing rights if patentable intellectual property is generated under this award.

17	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	N/A	If equipment is purchased with DACF funds, does ownership remain with the applicant institution, or does the State of Maine retain any ownership interest?
	<b>Answer</b>	
If the equipment is sold within three years of acquisition, the awardee must reimburse the Department for the share of the grant funds paid towards the purchase of the equipment on a pro-rated basis: first year, 100% of grant funds reimbursed; second year, 80% of grant funds reimbursed; third year, 60% of grant funds reimbursed. If the awardee retains ownership, the equipment may be used for other activities once no longer needed for the awarded project. A physical inventory and property records must be maintained for six years after purchase with DACF grant funds, for audit purposes.		

18	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	N/A	Can we confirm that DACF will still consider UMaine a contractor and not a subrecipient if any proposals are funded and UMaine should apply the negotiated ½ state of Maine indirect rate.
	<b>Answer</b>	
UMaine will be a contractor to the State of Maine. UMaine should use one-half of its federal NICRA rate as its indirect rate for purposes of responding to this RFA.		

19	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	N/A	Will projects that included additional leveraged funds, be scored higher than applicants that do not include leveraged funds? This was the case last year, but looks like the language was removed in the FY26 guidance.
	<b>Answer</b>	
In this RFA, availability of additional leveraged funds is not an evaluation criterion. Projects with additional leveraged funds will not be scored higher than projects without leveraged funds.		

20	<b>RFP Section &amp; Page Number</b>	<b>Question</b>
	Eligibility Page 9	Can an organization based outside of Maine be a co-investigator or would they have to be a contractor?
	<b>Answer</b>	
Yes, organizations based outside of Maine can be the PI or a co-PI.		

21	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	Letters of Support Page 15	Should a co-investigator who is also a commercial farmer write a letter of support related to the value of the project for commercial farming? Or should this be included in "Roles and Responsibilities," where qualifications, roles and expected contributions of key staff and collaborators are described?
		<b>Answer</b>
		Typically, a letter of support would not be submitted by a co-PI, unless the commercial farm is providing independent support that is not captured in the description of the co-PI's role and responsibilities. The value of the project for commercial farming could also be addressed in section four of the Project Narrative - "Rationale, Significance, and Outcomes."

22	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	section 6.3.1.8, pg. 14	If an applicant is aware of another similar proposal, do they need to flag their own proposal as duplicative?
		<b>Answer</b>
		No, if the two proposals are distinct and the applicant is not a collaborator on a proposal on a similar topic, the applicant does not need to flag their own proposal as duplicative.

23	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	N/A	Can applicants who submitted separate pre-proposals decide to collaborate on a single full proposal?
		<b>Answer</b>
		Yes, applicants who submitted separate pre-proposals may decide to collaborate on a single full proposal.

24	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	section 6.3.1.8, pg. 14	Can an applicant submit their own full proposal as a PI and be listed as a collaborator on another full proposal on the same research topic?
		<b>Answer</b>
		An applicant may submit their own full proposal as a PI and can also be listed as a collaborator on another full proposal on the same research topic, but both applicants should note their proposed collaboration in their respective proposals under "Duplication of Effort" – see section 6.3.1.8 in the RFA – pg. 14.

25	RFP Section & Page Number	Question
	4 (page 9)	The Timeline in the RFA for Major Grants for the Study of PFAS in Agricultural Systems, Round 2, says that the period of performance closes "Two years post-award." However, the Maine DACF website ( <a href="https://www.mainegov/dacf/ag/pfas/pfas-fund-research.shtml">https://www.mainegov/dacf/ag/pfas/pfas-fund-research.shtml</a> ) says that the period of performance for the same mechanism for closes "12-18 months post award." Is the RFA correct (i.e., the project period is 24 months)?
Answer		The RFA is correct – the project period for major grants is 24 months. The Maine DACF website has been corrected.