

Request for Information

FOR/Maine

*Forest Economy Educational Connections &
Curriculum Design*

Issue Date: August 27, 2021

Closing Date: September 17, 2021

Part 1. Background & Opportunity

1.1 Overview

The forest products industry has a long and proud heritage in Maine and remains a significant economic driver in the state's economy. Technology, globalization, and evolving sustainability trends are bringing change and new opportunities to Maine's traditional forest economy. As global markets shift, new ideas and strategies are needed to keep Maine's forest economy strong and ensure the state's rural communities prosper.

We are a broad coalition of forest industry leaders, the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development, the University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, Maine communities, trade associations, and economic development organizations, working together to develop and implement a long-term Vision & Roadmap for Maine's forest products sector. In addition to industry partners, our collaborative group includes:

- Maine Forest Products Council
- State of Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
- Maine Development Foundation
- University of Maine
- Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
- Maine Woodland Owners
- Maine Technology Institute
- Biobased Maine

This consortium, called Forest Opportunity Roadmap (FOR/Maine) is working together to develop and implement a shared long-term vision for the sector by identifying the most promising opportunities to pursue and key obstacles to overcome to develop greater economic prosperity in the forest products sector across the State.

The Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) has been awarded a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration for the project. A Workforce Strategy and Recommendations were released in July of 2021, and the RFI seeks further information on implementation strategies related to forest economy educational connections and curriculum design.

1.2 Industry Background

The forest product sector (FPS) is a core industrial driver of Maine's economies and provides good jobs for over 13,000 workers across the state. The sector continues to undergo transition in its traditional industry base, while new technologies and opportunities are emerging leading the path for future growth in the sector.

A critical enabler of growth is the availability of a workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to accommodate labor demands of existing and emerging industries. In 2020, FOR/ME established a workforce subcommittee tasked with providing the necessary knowledge to develop a comprehensive workforce strategy that supports long-term competitiveness and growth in Maine’s forest product sector and achieves the goals of the broader FOR/ME initiative. This strategy was completed in July of 2021, and [can be viewed here](#). The next step for the committee’s work is to develop an implementation plan based on the recommendations of the strategy.

1.3 Purpose of the RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to allow the Committee to assess supplier responses and use the resultant assessments in future decision making about the Opportunity. While it is the intent of the Committee to compare supplier responses for the purposes of understanding service offerings and pre-qualification and possible short listing for further consideration, the Committee makes no obligations or undertakings in any way to:

1. go to tender; or
2. accept any RFI information received from suppliers; or
3. include suppliers responding to this RFI in any future tender invitation; or
4. any other commitment to suppliers whatsoever, including any intention to form a contract with any supplier for provision of the Opportunity.

1.4 Opportunity

FOR/Maine is interested in developing a better understanding of the work needed to build curriculum resources that educate and engage students on forest economy topics and subjects which may ultimately result in interest in a career in forest products in Maine. This work is related to implementing the below recommendations, particularly the bolded sections, from FOR/Maine’s Workforce Strategy, developed by the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Southern Maine:

“Recommendation 2. Foster greater education, outreach, and awareness of opportunities in the forest products sector to Maine secondary school students and advisors.

- a. Support teachers and career advisors to promote forestry and wood processing careers, prerequisites, and pathways.*
- b. Provide resources, information, and materials to be sure that the sector is represented.*
- c. Bolster teacher and student engagement through site visits and industry experts.*

d. Connect guidance counselors and educators and industry through regional professional development centers, such as the Central Aroostook Council for Education (CACE) and Western Maine Education Collaborative (WMEC).

e. Improve access to career pathway information for students.

f. Expand flexible internships modelled on the MELOC internship program with community college.

g. Appeal to the environmental stewardship aspects of the industry that align with youth curriculum. “

FOR/Maine is seeking responses that deepen our understanding of implementation strategies related to this recommendation and include Maine Learning Results state standard(s)-aligned curriculum design. Responses should address the following questions:

1. For which grade range should educational materials be developed, and why is this group is recommended?
2. Which Maine Learning Results standards are tied in?
3. What is the appropriate process for curriculum development, and how can local schools participate as partners?
4. What are anticipated deliverables for implementation of this recommendation?
5. How can this work create pathways for underrepresented groups to participate and build a sense of belonging in the effort?
6. How can we best support teachers in adopting new curriculum tools?

Part 2. Instructions

2.1 Key Dates

Please acknowledge your intention to respond to this RFI by sending an “Intention to Participate” email to Bri Bowman, Program Director of FOR/Maine, at bbowman@mdf.org by September 3, 2021.

Any questions regarding the RFI should be submitted to Bri Bowman no later than September 10, 2021.

All responses to this RFI are due no later than September 17, 2021. Any responses received after this date and time will not be considered.

2.2 Questions

Suppliers are to direct any questions regarding the RFI content or process to the RFI contact. All questions should be submitted to the nominated email address during the RFI question period indicated above. The Committee may choose to convey responses to submitted questions to all suppliers so that each is equally informed.

2.3 Response Methods

Suppliers must submit their response in the following method:

1. By email to: bbowman@mdf.org. The subject heading of the email shall FOR/Maine Educational Connections RFI. Only electronic copies are to be submitted in PDF format and suppliers may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – ex. Email 1 of 3) if attached files are deemed too large to suit a single email transmission.
2. Size of emailed tender not to exceed 15MB.
3. FOR/Maine will confirm receipt of bids as they arrive with a confirmation email to sender.

2.4 Suppliers to Inform Themselves

The Committee has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the RFI is accurate; however, the Committee gives no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or sufficiency of the contained information.

2.5 Costs of Preparing the Response

All costs relating to the preparation and submission of a response are the sole responsibility of the supplier. The Committee shall not pay the supplier, wholly or in part, for its response.

2.6 Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of a response, suppliers must not, without the Committee's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the RFI documents. Suppliers must ensure that their employees, consultants and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

2.7 Acceptance of these Conditions

Suppliers, by submitting a response to this RFI, are deemed to have acknowledged and agreed to the conditions set out in this RFI.

Part 3. Information to be Provided

All responses must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company.

The following is the minimum information suppliers are required to provide to the Committee.

3.1 Supplier Details

1. Supplier name (Trading and Registered), registered address.
2. Details of supplier operating locations.
3. Supplier ownership information.
4. Relationships with any parent company (if applicable).
5. Details of joint venture arrangements (if applicable).

3.2 Supplier Capabilities and Experience

1. A description of the core supplier business.
2. Additional services, products and works provided outside of your core business.
3. Address specific questions related to the Opportunity:
 - For which grade range should educational materials be developed, and why is this group is recommended?
 - Which standards are tied in?
 - What is the appropriate process for curriculum development, and how can local schools participate as partners?
 - What are anticipated deliverables for implementation of this recommendation?
 - How can this work create pathways for underrepresented groups to participate and build a sense of belonging in the effort?
 - How can we best support teachers in adopting new curriculum tools?
4. Describe why you would be uniquely qualified to meet or exceed the requirements of this RFI.
5. If you have conducted similar projects, please indicate other factors that the committee should consider exploring to get the best result.

3.3 Certifications and Awards

1. Details of all certifications held (ex. ISO 9001) including date of last certification and details of the certifying body (copies of certifications may be appended to your response).
2. Details of any recent external corporate awards, including the awarding body, if relevant to the Opportunity.

3.4 Other Information

1. What information would be required by the supplier from the Committee to be able to submit pricing?
2. Please provide 3 relevant references including contact information.
3. Any further information you believe the Committee may require in support of its RFI review activities.

No contracts shall be made with parties listed on the General Services Administration's List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs. All necessary steps will be taken to solicit participation of locally owned, minority-owned, female-owned and small businesses.

We plan to schedule one hour conference call meetings with each supplier to review the submitted information and provide the opportunity for the supplier to provide additional background relevant to this project.