

Department for Children and Families
Child Development Division
Building Child Care Capacity Grant Program
Applications Due: October 4, 2019

1. Introduction

In June 2019, Vermont’s Governor signed Act 72 providing one-time funding to build child care capacity. This funding is specifically allocated to areas of the state where the need is greatest, with a focus on vulnerable populations of children. The goal is to increase regulated child care capacity by expanding existing child care slots or establishing new slots in regulated child care programs. One organization will be selected to receive grant funds and subsequently disburse the funds to early care and education programs in the designated underserved areas.

2. Purpose and Background

This Request for Application (“RFA”) is for competitive applications to be funded through appropriation of funds in Act 72. The RFA is published and administered by the Child Development Division (“CDD”) of the Department for Children and Families in the Agency of Human Services.

The CDD is requesting applications from qualified organizations interested in initiating and administering the *Building Child Care Capacity Grant Program* in Vermont. The Grant Program will create more spots for vulnerable children served by high-quality child care programs in underserved areas of the state; a priority is to create additional infant and toddler spots.

The selected organization (“Grantee”) will administer a program that provides individual child care programs (“Recipient Programs”) grants for projects that increase child care capacity or maintain slots created within the last year. The chosen projects must expend all funds by June 30, 2020.

Recipient Programs may seek funding for capital investments, equipment, materials, or increased levels of staffing (e.g., for hiring, training, or increasing staffing hours) that result in a higher number of high-quality child care slots in underserved areas as defined by the CDD.

Recipient Programs will:

- be in good standing with Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations;
- enroll children/families eligible for and participating in CDD’s Child Care Financial Assistance Program (“CCFAP”);
- enroll infants and toddlers; and
- seek to expand the number of child care slots, particularly for infants and toddlers.

The Grantee will prioritize applications of Recipient Programs that:

- provide full day/full week/full year child care services, i.e., the Recipient Program will provide services at least 8 hours per day, at least 5 days per week, and at least 48 weeks per year, and will not be closed more than 4 full weeks (i.e., 4 weeks comprised of 5 consecutive days);
- participate in Vermont’s quality recognition and improvement system for child care (“STARS”) at the 3-STAR level or above (existing programs only);
- commit to continuous improvement as it relates to STARS (new programs);
- adhere to the CCFAP Provider Rate Agreement without any intentional program integrity violation(s); and
- have or intend to apply for specialized child care status.

A CDD-designated review panel will evaluate, score and rate applications that meet all eligibility and application requirements.

3. Scope of Work

In consultation with the CDD, the Grantee will:

- create a selection process that the Grantee and a selection committee will use to solicit proposals for child care capacity grants to potential Recipient Programs (high-quality child care programs);
- develop a process to solicit, review and (if needed) strengthen Recipient Programs’ proposals, and award funds to selected Recipient Programs;
- manage Recipient Programs’ utilization of funds;
- develop criteria the grantee will use, in consultation with the CDD, to evaluate Recipient Programs’ projects; and
- submit a final, ready-for-publication report on Recipient Programs’ use of funds no later than July 15, 2020.

Develop Selection Process & Establish Committee

The Grantee will establish a process to select Recipient Programs; the process will include but will not be limited to a required list of selection criteria. Specifically, in their proposal, a potential Recipient Program must:

- demonstrate how they will use funds to increase the number of high-quality child care spots for vulnerable children, particularly infants and toddlers, in underserved areas of the state;
- ensure the funds will result in at least 2 additional slots per registered or licensed family child care home, and 6 additional slots per licensed center-based program; and

- show that implementation of their proposed project will begin immediately upon receipt of funds.

The Grantee will also form a selection committee who will review applications from possible Recipient Programs and approve the best proposals. The selection committee will include representatives from CDD and BBF's Early Learning and Development Committee; other interested stakeholders who are not applying to receive these funds may also be included.

Actively Solicit, Review, and Improve Grant Applications

The Grantee will leverage established relationships with child care providers, or develop new relationships that the Grantee will use to maximize the number of applications received from potential Recipient Programs.

The Grantee will develop an application process that ensures that potential Recipient Programs:

- submit applications that can be promptly reviewed and approved by the selection committee;
- develop a timeline that enables prompt funding for projects; and
- will maximize the number of high-quality child care slots for vulnerable children in underserved areas of the state.

Selected Grantee Disburses and Manages Grant Funds

The Grantee will choose Recipient Programs based on recommendations from the selection committee; disburse funds to selected Recipient Programs; and monitor and track utilization of funds by Recipient Programs.

Develop Measures to Evaluate Recipient Program Success

The Grantee, in consultation with the CDD, will establish evaluation measures based on but not limited to the following:

- number of new slots created or preserved;
- measures of childhood resilience, such as ACE scores;
- child care staff retention metrics; and
- pre-K evaluation metrics.

Publish Final Report

The Grantee will submit a final, ready-to-publish report on the use of funds by all Program Recipients. The report will include data components and analysis as agreed upon with the

CDD such as a description of the methodology used to select Program Recipients, the definition of vulnerable children, the definition of underserved areas of the state, a list of Program Recipients, and the number and type of child care slots created by underserved region as well as statewide. The final report must be submitted to the CDD no later than July 15, 2020.

Deliverables

- The selection criteria
- A list of committee members
- Evaluation criteria
- Application for capacity grants
- Written reports to keep the CDD apprised of the status of fund utilization. The frequency of reporting will be outlined in the grant agreement
- A final report documenting the use of funds

4. Reporting and recordkeeping requirements

The Grantee will be required to submit budgets, financial reports, and status reports to the Grant Manager in an electronic format. The reports will outline progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the funds as outlined in the grant agreement and provide specifics on Recipient Programs. The format and frequency for reporting will be prescribed by the CDD; adherence to the format and timely reporting are required to facilitate prompt review of the Grantee's accomplishments in support of payment.

5. Application Eligibility and Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate knowledge of, and expertise in the early childhood industry; existence of a structure that will support development of this project; and ability to manage a statewide project. The CDD review team will prioritize applications that demonstrate the organization applying for funds has knowledge of and experience with Vermont regulatory entities related to child care (for example, Fire and Safety, Agency of Natural Resources, etc.); existing grant-making infrastructure; experience with managing public funds; and experience with reporting expectations required under a grant agreement with the State of Vermont. The following information must be included in the applicant's application:

- leadership team and staffing needed to initiate and implement the *Building Child Care Capacity Grant Program*;
- detailed budget that demonstrates that funds will be expended by June 30, 2020;
- reporting mechanism to the CDD; and
- timeline for implementation.

Applications should be no more than 10 pages and submitted via email by 4:30 pm on October 4, 2019 to the attention of Rey Garofano; contact information is provided in Section 8. This RFA does not commit the State of Vermont to pay any costs incurred by any applicant in the submission of an application. The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the response to this RFA. The State reserves the right to reject any or all applications at any time with no penalty, to negotiate with any qualified source, or cancel the RFA in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the State of Vermont. This solicitation of applications in no way obligates the State of Vermont to award a contract. All materials submitted in response to the RFA will become the property of the State of Vermont upon delivery.

6. Funding timeline/availability and submission:

The maximum amount of the grant is \$1,400,000. The award period is 9 months: funds are available beginning November 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, contingent upon availability of funds.

- Release RFA September 17, 2019
- Applications due October 4, 2019
- Grant award and project start November 1, 2019

Payments shall be made upon receipt of a written request for payment from the Grantee on a reimbursable basis at the completion of the performance measures. These requests shall be accompanied by reports or other documentation supporting the payment request as outlined in the payment provisions of the grant. Reimbursement payments for Federal subawards shall be made within 30 calendar days after receipt of the billing, unless the request is believed to be improper.

Be advised, the Vermont State Fiscal Year Close Out starts the last week of May/first week of June and runs through early July. During this period of time, no financial reports or invoices are processed for payment in the State of Vermont Vision System.

7. Evaluation and selection

CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score
1. INFORMATION FROM THE BIDDER		
A. Quality of Bidder's Experience	25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bidder demonstrates expertise in the early childhood industry. Bidder demonstrates ability to manage a statewide project. Bidder demonstrates knowledge of and experience with Vermont regulatory entities related to child care. Bidder demonstrates experience with reporting expectations required under a grant agreement with the State of Vermont. Bidder demonstrates experience with managing public funds. The bidder has experience managing proposals of comparable scale, scope, and complexity. The bidder has experience working with Vermont government agencies and partners. 	10 10 1 1 1 1 1	
B. Bidder's Capacity to Perform	25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bidder demonstrates existence of a structure that will support development of this project. Bidder demonstrates existing grant making infrastructure. Bidder demonstrates Organizational Quality. 	10 10 5	
2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS		
A. Responsiveness to Specifications	25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bidder's description of how they will respond to the scope of work contained in section 3 of the Bid. Bidder's description of how they will ensure that all deliverables will be readily accessible and provided in a timely manner. Bidder's description of how they will work with the Vermont Proposal Development Team and its partners. 	10 10 5	
B. Program Cost	25	
Schedule A: Summary Program Costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness and reasonableness of the Bidder's budget which will include project costs, list of positions, % FTE, wages, and fringe, travel/mileage expenses and administrative fees. 	15	
Schedule B: Detail of Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget narratives are clear and complete explanations for ALL cost items. 	10	
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	100	

8. Contact Person

All questions related to this Request for Application, and submission of all electronic applications shall be directed to the attention of:

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