

Department for Children and Families
Child Development Division
Expanding Infant and Toddler Child Care Capacity
Applications Due: December 11, 2019

1. Introduction

In June 2019, Vermont’s Governor signed Act 72 providing base funding to expand infant and toddler child care capacity across the state. “Infant” means a child who is at least six (6) weeks and under thirteen (13) months of age and “Toddler” means a child between thirteen (13) through thirty-five (35) months of age. The goal is to increase regulated infant and toddler child care capacity by expanding existing infant and toddler child care slots or establishing new slots for infants and toddlers 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.

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 *Expanding Infant and Toddler Child Care Capacity Grant Program* in Vermont. The Grant Program will create more spots for infants and toddlers served by child care programs in Vermont.

The selected organization (“Grantee”) will administer a program that provides individual child care programs (“Recipient Programs”) grants for projects that increase infant and toddler child care capacity.

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 infant and toddler child care slots.

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;
- 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;
- monitor selected Recipient Programs and evaluate sustainability of created child care slots; and
- develop criteria the grantee will use to evaluate Recipient Programs' projects to include the following minimum criteria:
 - be a new or existing regulated, privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home in good regulatory standing with Vermont Child Care Licensing regulations;
 - enroll children/families eligible for and participating in CDD's Child Care Financial Assistance Program ("CCFAP");
 - provide child care and early learning services for infants and toddlers;
 - provide full day/full week/full year child care and early learning 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: Step Ahead Recognition System ("STARS"); and
 - seek to expand the number of infant and toddler child care slots.

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 infant and toddler child care spots, and establish a sustainability plan ensuring the funds will result in the sustained continued addition of infant toddler slots.

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 infant and toddler child care slots.

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

Prior to disbursing funds to the Recipient Programs, the Grantee, in consultation with the CDD, will establish measures to evaluate the number of new slots created and plan to preserved.

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

4. Reporting and recordkeeping requirements

The Grantee will report on the use of funds by all Program Recipients. The Grantee will provide data components and analysis as agreed upon with the CDD such as a description of the methodology used to select Program Recipients, a list of Program Recipients, and the number of infant and toddler child care slots created.

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, CDD Child Care Licensing, Fire and Safety, Agency of Natural Resources, etc.); existing grant-making infrastructure; experience with managing public funds; knowledge and experience in Early Head Start and Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships; 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 *Expanding Infant and Toddler Child Care Capacity Grant Program*;
- detailed budget;
- 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 December 11, 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 \$800,000. The award period is 6 months: funds are available beginning January 15, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020, contingent upon availability of funds.

- Release RFA November 21, 2019
- Applications due December 11, 2019
- Grant award and project start January 15, 2020

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 knowledge of and experience with Vermont regulatory entities related to child care. Bidder demonstrates ability to manage a statewide project. 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. 	10 6 3 2 2 2	
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	15	
<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. 		
Schedule B: Detail of Expenses	10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget narratives are clear and complete explanations for ALL cost items. 		
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:

Rey Garofano
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(802) 241-0840