

Department for Children and Families
Child Development Division
Supporting Tech Centers in Building the
Early Childhood Education (“ECE”) Workforce
Applications Due: October 4, 2019

1. Introduction and Background

In June 2019, the Governor signed Act 72 providing one-time funding for an innovative project to support career technical education (CTE) centers statewide in promoting the Council for Professional Recognition’s Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential. The project’s goal is to create a pathway that will incentivize, and support students enrolled in CTE centers to obtain the CDA, a credential recognized nationally as well as by the State of Vermont. Specifically, the *Supporting Tech Centers in Building the ECE Workforce* initiative will focus on supporting the development and implementation of a curriculum that leads to the attainment of the CDA credential to be used in Vermont’s CTE centers.

The Council for Professional Recognition promotes improved performance in the field of early childhood and recognizes early childhood professionals who educate children ages birth to 5 years old. In keeping with its goal to meet the growing need for qualified early child care and education staff, the Council administers the Child Development Associate® (CDA) National Credentialing Program. The Program is designed to assess, recognize and credential early childhood education professionals who work in all types of early care and education programs, including Head Start, pre-k, infant-toddler, family child care, center based, and home visitor programs. The Council sets policies and procedures for assessment and credentialing, publishes the Competency Standards and other materials used for CDA credentialing, and administers the assessment.

Students who obtain a CDA Credential take an important step toward meeting qualifications necessary to work in early childhood programs, and benefit because they:

- Exit high school job-ready, with a nationally recognized CDA credential
- Jump-start higher education with core knowledge of child development
- Obtain the knowledge, skills and confidence to work with young children
- Gain valuable competencies that early childhood education employers want
- Earn college credit while still in high school

2. Purpose

This Request for Application (RFA) is for competitive applications to be funded through appropriation of funds in Vermont Act 72 (2019). 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 to initiate and administer the *Supporting Tech Centers in Building the ECE Workforce* program in an effort to develop and implement curriculum that leads to the attainment of the Council for Professional Recognition’s nationally accredited Child Development Associate Credential® (CDA) competencies in career technical education (CTE) centers statewide. A CDD-designated review panel will evaluate, score and rate applications that meet all eligibility and application requirements.

By the end of this project the selected organization (“Grantee”) will develop a standardized curriculum that leads to the attainment of the CDA and create CTE infrastructure that will support completion of all CDA requirements. The curriculum and infrastructure will increase and strengthen Vermont’s early childhood education workforce.

In collaboration with CDD, CTEs, and other partners the Grantee will:

- develop a high-quality curriculum that leads to the attainment of the Council for Professional Recognition’s nationally accredited CDA credential;
- create a pilot program for CTEs that will promote completion of CDA credential requirements and assist interested CTEs that have existing early childhood programs in implementing the curriculum with fidelity across Vermont;
- recruit new CTEs to develop early childhood programs and participate and support this project;
- provide financial incentives to CTE centers, community-based programs and/or students related to fulfilling requirements for obtaining the CDA credential; and
- provide professional development opportunities related to implementing the curriculum that leads to the attainment of the CDA for teachers in CTE centers.

3. Scope of work

The selected Grantee will be required to perform the following services:

- collaborate with the Child Development Division to develop a curriculum that supports obtaining the Council for Professional Recognition’s Child Development Associate Credential® (CDA), by students enrolled in career technical education (CTE) centers throughout the State;
- align curriculum with the existing professional development system in Vermont;
- implement the newly developed, standardized curriculum in a pilot program to include CTE centers that are interested in the CDA curriculum and/or have existing child care programs;
- provide incentives for CTE centers to adopt the standardized curriculum;
- provide incentives to support community-based child care programs in working with students seeking the CDA credential;
- create an advisory group which will advise the leadership team on program implementation;
- develop and implement a marketing and communications plan for students (at the high school or adult learning level) regarding benefits of the CDA credential and possible career paths in early childhood education;
- develop a recruitment and retention plan for CTE instructors, if needed;
- establish a professional development plan for CTE center teachers and high school counselors statewide;
- develop a mentorship program for CTE centers;
- provide workforce needs information to inform CTE centers of the demand and need for qualified child care workforce;
- develop process to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the curriculum to support the Council for Professional Recognition’s nationally accredited Child Development Associate Credential® (CDA);
- provide incentives and subsidies for participants in CDA program to include CDA credential fees, CDA packets, etc.;

- establish partnerships and work collaboratively with stakeholders such as:
 - Northern Lights at CCV
 - CTE Centers across Vermont
 - Child Development Division
 - Department of Labor
 - Agency of Education
 - Building Bright Futures Early Learning and Development Committee
 - Building Bright Futures Professional Development Committee
 - Building Bright Futures Regional Councils
 - Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
 - Let's Grow Kids
 - Vermont Child Care Industry and Careers Council
- communicate with the Council for Professional Recognition to ensure certificates of professional development will be accepted and address all different subject areas;
- design standards, opportunities, and incentives for child care programs who host interns;
- design a sustainability plan for the program;
- identify whether enough capacity exists in Vermont to support access to CDA Professional Development Specialists (as designated by the Council) and develop and implement a plan to create additional capacity if needed;
- explore additional funding opportunities for sustainability of this program via other state and federal sources (e.g., Vermont Department of Labor, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, private sources, etc.);
- evaluate how certificate of proficiencies can be used to articulate to CDA;
- establish mechanism for progress reporting to CDD, CTE Centers and advisory group;
- work with Vermont Agency of Education Early Childhood Development to align with publicly funded child care instructor regulations; and
- develop a final, ready for publication report that describes the goals, objectives, implementation and lessons learned for this project.

4. Reporting and recordkeeping requirements

The grantee will submit quarterly program performance and financial reports to the grant manager in an electronic format prescribed by the Child Development Division. Both detailed and aggregate reporting of accomplishments may be required; narrative reporting may be included. Reports will outline progress toward achieving grant-related goals and objectives. Reports will be required to facilitate prompt review of the grantee's accomplishments in support of payment.

- Interim report March 30, 2020 for work completed through March 15, 2020
- Final report on July 15, 2020 for work completed through June 30, 2020

5. Applicant Eligibility and Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate knowledge of, and expertise in early childhood education, existence of a structure that will support development of this project, existence of strong partnerships with Vermont's early childhood stakeholders, and ability to manage a statewide project. The CDD review

team will prioritize applications that demonstrate experience with curriculum development, an existing connection to Vermont's ECE workforce, experience with professional development, expertise in (or access to) marketing, branding and communications, experience working with CTE centers or similar organizations, history of work with high schools, high school students and high school administrations, working knowledge of the CDA credential. The following information should be included in the applicant's application:

- leadership team and staffing for implementing the program;
- detailed budget that demonstrates that funds will be expended by June 30, 2020;
- fiscal reporting mechanism;
- 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 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 an applicant may request is \$300,000. Funds are available beginning November 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020, contingent upon availability of funds.

- Release RFP September 17, 2019
- Respond to RFP 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 knowledge of, and expertise in early childhood education. Bidder demonstrates ability to provide services state-wide. Bidder demonstrates experience with curriculum development. Bidder's experience with professional development. Bidder's expertise in or access to marketing, branding and communications. Experience working with CTE centers or similar organizations. Working knowledge of the CDA credential. 	<p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	
B. Bidder's Capacity to Perform	25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bidder demonstrates an existence of a structure that will support development of the project. The bidder demonstrates existence of strong partnerships with Vermont's early childhood stakeholders. Bidder's existing connection to Vermont's ECE workforce. The bidder has experience working with Vermont government agencies and partners. Bidder demonstrates their commitment and ability to provide a timely and appropriate product. Bidder demonstrates Organizational Quality. The bidder has experience managing projects of comparable scale, scope, and complexity. 	<p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	
2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS		
A. Responsiveness to Specifications	25	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bidder's description of resources, materials, etc. that will be developed to support the goals of the project. 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 collaborate with CDD and other identified partners. 	<p>10</p> <p>10</p> <p>5</p>	
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: Summary of incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed information on portion of funding that will be designated as incentives. 	10	
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	100	
CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score

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
rey.garofano@vermont.gov
(802) 241-0840

Lynne Robbins
lynne.robbins@vermont.gov
(802) 241-0823