

Early Childhood Bond Funds Grant Program and Minor Capital Improvements and Wiring for Technology Request for Proposal

Frequently Asked Questions

A. Fiduciary's Role in this grant process

1. The applicant gets School Readiness funds and is a state contractor. Does this applicant need to use the local board of education as the fiduciary agent?
 - No, applicants who have received checks directly from the State of Connecticut (i.e; Care 4 Kids-C4K, Child and Adult Care Food Program-CACFP, etc.) have a state account and are established on the CORE-CT system and therefore may act as their own fiduciary.
2. The applicant currently gets Direct Electronic Payments from the Vendor Self-Serve program as its contract fiduciary. For this RFP can the applicant apply on its own behalf as fiduciary agent?
 - As stated on Page 8 of the RFP: "For this grant, the fiduciary is limited to the public school, the Town, or a Regional Educational Service Center, with the exception of those applicants who act as their own fiduciary and who are already established and in direct receipt of state funds—they may apply on their own behalf."

Note that this fiduciary requirement is secondary to the eligibility requirements on Pages 5-6. Thus, the applicant must first fulfill the "Eligible Applicants/Funding", including requirement Program Type/Source of Funding (page 5) and Criteria (page 6.)

3. Is the fiduciary held harmless if the grantee or contractor fail in their duties, are negligent or noncompliant in any way. The fiduciary sign off on the Statement of Assurances would indicate that it is responsible.
 - The applicant for the grant is responsible for the administration of the activities and duties expressed in the grant. The execution of the Statement of Assurances by the fiduciary/fiscal agent certifies that the assurances will be implemented fully and that it is responsible ultimately for the projects listed in its grant application.
4. Does the State have any contract language so that the fiduciary has no liability under this grant other than to act as the pass through for the grant funds? Or, in the absence of specific language, is there objection by SDE to the fiduciary creating a contract with

each grantee stating that as the fiscal agent for this SDE grant the fiduciary agent is not responsible for the work of the grantee's or their contractors?

- The SDE does not possess any contract language limiting the liability of the applicant of grant funds. The fiduciary has full responsibility for the projects. The fiduciary may expressly address the liability of any sub grantee or subcontractor in its subcontracts.
5. If there is liability on the part of the fiduciary to be sure the contracts are executed properly, can it charge each grantee an administrative fee so that we can hire a grant manager to supervise grantees and contractors? Can the costs of the fiduciary be included in the Budget?
- A public school, Town or Regional Educational Service Center (RESA) acting as fiduciary/fiscal agent for more than one applicant to this RFP may include a budget object code request for purchased professional/technical services. For all others, a fee would not be warranted.
6. Who signs as the fiscal agent?
- The applicant's legal representative or individual identified as the authorized signatory for the organization.

B Project Bidding

1. Is the bidding process competitive (i.e., we solicit three bids and chose the most qualified contractor with the best price taking into consideration minority enterprise) or is it true public bidding (i.e., publish an ad and publicly solicit state-wide bids, accept all bids and take the lowest, best qualified price taking into consideration minority enterprise).
- The grant does not articulate specific competitive bidding requirements. The applicant would need to follow his own competitive bidding process and articulate that it has abided by it (e.g., show bid comparison sheet, etc.). However, if the applicant does not have an established bidding process, they may want to follow federally established guidelines that use the cost of the project to determine whether to use competitive or public bidding.
 - competitive bidding (in general, three bids) if the cost of the project is under \$100,000.
 - public bidding (run an ad and publicly solicit state-wide bids, accept all bids and take the lowest, best qualified price taking into consideration minority enterprise) if it's over \$100,000.

2. Should competitive bids be sent with the application or follow the process upon a grant award being given or should the bidding of projects happen after programs are selected for funding?

- It is up to the applicant organization when to get the bids. However, approved funds will be capped at the amount requested in the application.

Should you decide to get project bids before writing the application, you do not need to submit them with the application but should keep them on file in case the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requests to see them at a later date.

- Should quotes or engineering plans be submitted with the application?
- Do not submit quotes or engineering plans with the application. However, you should keep them on file in case the CSDE requests to see them at a later date.

3. Can a “project” just cover Fixtures, Furniture & Equipment (FF&E), or does it need to include construction?

- The project may cover FF&E, construction or both as long as the applicant can demonstrate that it is relevant to creating a suitable Early Childhood Education (ECE) space.

4. What is considered suitable evidence of obtaining economical pricing for FF&E?

- Three (3) quotes

5. Can playground construction include equipment?

- Yes, as long as it is ECE-related equipment

6. If the project was bid upon and awarded a contract under another state agency’s bid process, can the applicant use the winning bidder for work covered by this grant or does the applicant need to re-bid that portion of the project after the contract is awarded?

- You need up-to-date bids, thus you may not use bids from other state agencies’ bid processes. In terms of re-bidding after the contract is awarded, it would be up to your organization (please see answer to question two above.)

C. Affirmative Action (AA) portion of the grant

1. To whom does AA apply? Who completes the forms? An Agency? A School? A City? A Contractor?

- For this RFP, the applicant organization (agency or school) should complete and submit with the application the following three AA-related forms:
 - Contract Compliance (page 37 of the RFP)
 - Workforce Analysis (page 38 of the RFP)
 - Affirmative Action Policy Statement (page 44 of the RFP)

The project contractor(s), if using Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), should complete and submit to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) the remainder AA-related forms:

- Appendix D: Affirmative Action Packet (page 35 of the RFP)
 - Notification to Bidders (page 36 of the RFP)
 - Contractor's Minority Business Enterprises Utilization Form (page 41 of the RFP)
 - Affidavit (page 42 of the RFP)
 - Certificate of Corporation (page 43 of the RFP)
2. Is there a project cost lever that triggers MBE?
 - For questions regarding Minority Business Enterprises, contact the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).
 3. If the applicant does not have an AA plan on file with CSDE, should one be submitted with the application?
 - Yes, it should.
 4. Would most contractors already have this on file with the CSDE or is it likely to be something new to them?
 - Please refer to question B.1. For the purposes of this RFP, CSDE's contractors are the public school, the School Readiness funded program and the state-funded Child Day Care Center. They should submit the forms listed on the first part of the answer above. Project contractors chosen by the above-mentioned organizations to do the minor capital improvements and wiring for technology projects are your potential contractors, not CSDE's.
 5. Do contractors expect there will be a detailed 10 page packet to complete for the state when they bid on jobs?
 - Please refer to the answer to question B.1.
 6. Would every contractor who bids on the job need to complete this first, or only the one the applicant chooses?

- It is recommended that you pick the best and most appropriate bid for your type of project.

7. Is there a website where contractors who already have this on file with the CSDE are listed?

- No.

D. Prevailing Wages

1. Would prevailing wage requirements apply to a nonprofit?

2. If the bond request is broken into different parts with different contractors, is prevailing wage required of all contractors (even if their part of the work does not exceed the threshold for that)?

3. Is there a project cost lever that triggers wage rates?

- For all questions regarding wage rates, contact the Department of Labor at 860-263-6791 or <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/prevailwage.htm>

E. Applicant Organization Status

1. Who prepares the application for a School Readiness preschool program located at a church in town where the school/board of education is acting as the fiduciary agent?

- The preschool program would be the applicant. It is up to them to decide whether to apply and if so, to write the proposal. If the program gets the School Readiness funds through the public school/board of education, the public school/board of education may be their fiscal agent/fiduciary or applicants who have received checks directly from the State of Connecticut (i.e; Care 4 Kids-C4K, Child and Adult Care Food Program-CACFP, etc.) and have a state account and are established on the CORE-CT system may therefore act as their own fiduciary.

2. If an applicant is under consideration for NAEYC accreditation does it qualify to apply?

- If the program meets funding eligibility criteria described on page five of the RFP it may apply. In addition, follow the guidelines included below to meet the accredited or approved criteria requirement (RFP's page six):

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

- For currently accredited sites, submit a copy of your NAEYC certificate and maintain your accreditation status;

- For new sites not currently accredited, there is a three-year window in which you must achieve accreditation and submit your certificate. The three-year window commences the month the site begins to serve school readiness children. Accreditation must be achieved prior to the end of the third year.

or Awarded Federal Head Start status.

3. Page five of the RFP clearly identifies School Readiness and state-funded Day Care Centers to be eligible for funding. Are programs participating in state-funded Head Start also eligible for funding?
 - No. State Head Start is not considered the primary source of funding for the programs that receive these funds. School Readiness and the state Child Day Care program are the primary funding sources which allows the programs funded by them to be eligible applicants for this RFP.
4. Are these funds restricted to state-funded services or can these funds also be applied to repairs of sites that serve only federally-funded children?
 - All program types eligible for funding under this RFP are state-funded, either under the School Readiness grant or the Child Day Care Center Contract Program.
5. Should applicants that own a child care center building attach a copy of the deed?
 - No. You do not need to attach the deed or other documentation with the application. However, at a later time, you may be asked to verify ownership of the facility where project funds will be used.
6. What exactly is needed for proof of the following items for licensed group child care homes receiving School Readiness Grant funds:
 - Ownership of the home?
 - See answer to question E.5.
 - A plan to remain in building for 10 years?
 - In the Abstract, as you describe the need for the project, be sure to indicate how long you have been running your business. Also, attach a copy of the child care license.
 - Compliance with codes, regulations and standards?
 - Current license from the CT Department of Public Health to operate a child care group home.

F. Other General Aspects of the RFP

1. On page 13 of the application, is the “Local Program Title” the name of the center, or is it the name of our project?
 - Name of the project for which you are requesting funding.
2. Where can the Grantee code on page 19 be found?
 - The grantee code will be assigned if and when your application is approved to be funded.
3. What is the anticipated timeframe for awarding contracts?
 - Timeframes are contingent upon the Bond Commission meeting schedules and agendas.
4. Do applicants getting School Readiness funds need to sign pages 27, 31?
 - RFP applicants must submit their organization’s Affirmative Action Plan (page 27) with the application. If the applicant does not own the building where the child care program is located and for whom the minor capital improvements/wiring for technology is requested, it will be up to the applicant to get the landlord’s approval for any/all modifications planned for the building and it will be the landlord’s and applicant’s authorized signatures that will go on the Permission to Allow Improvements and Minor Capital Repairs to Leased or Rented Facility form (page 31.)
5. Are pages 33-36 for CSDE review only?
 - Appendix B on page 33 is for CSDE use and for the convenience of applicants to this RFP.
 - Appendix C on page 34 is to be used by public schools running a SR program or a state-funded Day Care Center.
 - Appendix D on pages 35-36, Contractor’s Minority Business Enterprises Utilization Form on page 42, Affidavit on page 42, and Certificate of Corporation on page 43 are to be completed by project contractors/applicant’s subcontractors and submitted to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), not to the SDE.
6. If the applicant has more than one site should a separate application be submitted for each site?
 - Yes. You must submit a separate application for one or more projects in different sites.

7. The RFP requests an original and four (4) copies of the application on page seven, and an original plus one (1) copy on page 11. How many copies should we send?
 - Please submit one signed original and 4 copies
8. Should the start date on the cover page be July 1, **2013**?
 - The date refers to the current state fiscal year which runs from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013
9. Usually there is a dollar amount cap on the cover page. Is there a cap on this one? Is there a range of funding that can be requested under this grant?
 - There is no cap amount/range of funding established for this RFP.
10. Are the documents in Appendix E to be filled out after being awarded the grant?
 - Appendix E is a sample contract provided for informational purposes. Applications receiving approval for funding under this RFP will turn in contracts along the lines of the sample included in this Appendix.