



**REQUEST FOR FUNDING
OECOSL RFF 20-002 – **ADDENDUM 1****

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROGRAM**

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE: NOVEMBER 8, 2019 AT 5PM EST
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RFF Contact:
Beth Barrett
OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov
Family and Social Services Administration
Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning
402 W Washington St, Rm W362
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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I. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth round of an early childhood education capacity building Request for Funding (RFF) issued by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL). The goal of this RFF is to increase capacity for eligible **four-year-old** children within Indiana to receive high quality early childhood education, through either supporting programs to achieve a PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 rating and/or to expand the number of available seats for eligible four-year-old children if the program has already achieved, or has a plan to achieve, a PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 rating. This RFF requests responses from both individual early childhood education providers and county/community coalitions comprised of multiple individual providers interested in building their capacity to provide high quality early childhood education to eligible four-year-old children. **Only county/community coalitions and/or individual early childhood education providers from the Indiana counties specified in Section II.B that also meet the eligibility criteria listed in Section II.B may apply.** Early childhood education providers from counties not listed in Section II.B are not eligible to apply. Early childhood education providers who received funding from OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 are also not eligible to apply.

A. BACKGROUND

House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1004 of the 2017 legislative session, signed into law by Governor Eric Holcomb on April 26, 2017, expanded the early education pilot program to provide grants to eligible four-year-old children for qualified education services (“On My Way Pre-K Pilot Program”). The On My Way Pre-K Pilot Program funds qualified educational services delivered via accredited private schools, public schools, and community-based early education providers who have achieved Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY (PTQ)¹, Indiana’s voluntary child care quality rating and improvement system that aims to improve child outcomes and increase parent engagement (Appendix A). The program provides four-year-old children from low-income families access to high quality pre-K providers the year before they begin kindergarten through grant funds distributed to the approved On My Way Pre-K program the family chooses to attend. HEA 1628 of the 2019 legislative session continued funding to support this opportunity.

Additionally, HEA 1004, and now HEA 1628, allows for up to 20% of the allocated pilot funding during each state fiscal year (SFY) to be utilized through grants for expansion plans for any existing eligible providers or potentially eligible providers serving eligible four-year-old children (defined in Section II.A). These expansion grants are the focus of this RFF. Providers eligible to receiving funding through this grant opportunity must meet the requirements of an eligible provider set through HEA 1628 (defined in Section II.B of this RFF). For the OECOSL RFF 20-002 opportunity, providers must also be located in one of the eligible counties identified in Section II.B of the RFF. Since money in the pilot fund differs each SFY depending on the

¹ <http://in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/3731.htm>

number of enrollees, the amount of grant funding available may differ each SFY. Further detail on activities funded by the grant can be found in Section II.D.

Based on data included in the 2019 Annual Report from the Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC)², Indiana currently has 1,334 high quality early childhood education programs (high quality is defined as participation in PTQ Level 3, Level 4, or nationally accredited by an approved accreditation body) that serve approximately 50,613 children. In five counties (Clinton, Jasper, Newton, Starke, and Warren) no high quality programs are available, and many counties only have a handful of high quality programs.

This is the fourth early childhood capacity building RFF released by OECOSL and the first opportunity utilizing the 2019 SFY allocation. Applicants from previous RFF opportunities that were not awarded and are located in an eligible county listed in Section II.B of the RFF are encouraged to apply again. All re-applicants are encouraged to carefully review this RFF before submitting an application and to consider enhancing their narrative responses related to how their capacity building plan and included budget items meet one or both of the Objectives of the RFF. Re-applicants are also strongly encouraged to review Attachment E for a list of key considerations for those re-applying for funding via OECOSL RFF 20-002. New applicants may also find this document helpful and are also encouraged to review it.

II. GRANT APPLICATION DETAILS

A. OBJECTIVES

The goal of this RFF is to expand the capacity of high quality early childhood education providers to serve more eligible four-year-old children. A provider serving eligible four-year-old children can meet the capacity building Objectives of this RFF in one or both of the following ways:

- 1. Providers serving eligible four-year-old children with a PTQ Level 1 or Level 2 rating, or no PTQ rating, can apply to utilize grant funding to increase their PTQ rating to Level 3 or Level 4.**

and/or

- 2. Providers that are already PTQ Level 3 or Level 4, or have plans to achieve PTQ rating Level 3 or Level 4 before the end of the grant term, can apply to utilize grant funding to increase their number of available seats for eligible four-year-old children³.**

The RFF aims to solicit proposals from county/community coalitions and/or individual early childhood education providers to accomplish one or both of these Objectives. As required through the Objectives, **all applicants must have a plan to reach a PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 if**

² <http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-ELAC-Annual-Report.pdf>

they have not already attained this level³. For example, an applicant at a PTQ Level 2 rating is ineligible to receive grant funding to increase their number of available seats for eligible four-year-old children unless they have a plan to increase their PTQ rating to a Level 3 or 4 before the end of the grant term. All applicants are also expected to be prepared to apply to be a On My Way Pre-K provider at the end of the grant term if they are not one already.

Applicants may plan on beginning their projects after the signed grant agreement has been executed and the grant is effective on approximately March 1, 2020 (see Section II.J for the RFF timeline). Applicants shall focus on projects for or during the **2020-2021 school year**. Since HEA 1628 defines an eligible child at pre-K level as being “**at least four years of age and less than five years of age** on August 1 of the state fiscal year for which a grant is sought”, and this grant is for projects impacting the 2020-2021 school year, eligible children under this RFF are at least four years of age and less than five years of age by August 1, 2020. Applicants must be prepared to track and show how their chosen RFF Objective(s) was met as a result of the funding received.

As this grant aims to promote community engagement in early childhood education, all applicants are required to seek matching funds from local businesses or other stakeholders who will benefit from the community improvement resulting from the increased capacity of local early childhood education programs. If the applicant is a county/community coalition, it is encouraged that match funding comes from outside the coalition, but match funding can also come from within the coalition as long as the coalition entity providing the match is not an early childhood education provider, and individual coalition members are not providing the entire match. Applicants will receive priority points for how much of their grant provided by the State is matched by a local entity/entities. More information on the priority points received for grant matching can be found in Section III.D.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To receive funding under this grant, an eligible early childhood education provider must provide services to eligible four-year-old children and meet one of the following criteria, as defined by HEA 1628. Additionally, to distribute funding to expand high quality programs throughout the State in areas previously underrepresented by this grant, this RFF is only open to county/community coalitions and individual providers from the specific counties listed in this section. Applicants will be asked to affirm they meet or are trying to meet the following criteria in their application.

Applicant meets all the following:

- A. Be one of the following who provides services to eligible four-year-old children:
- A public school, including a charter school
 - a child care center licensed under Indiana Code (IC) 12-17.2-4
 - a child care home licensed under IC 12-17.2-5

³ A non-public accredited school applicant is not required to reach a PTQ Level 3 or 4 to fulfill the RFF Objective(s), but may elect to reach a PTQ Level 3 or 4.

- or a child care ministry registered under IC 12-17.2-6⁴

AND

B. That has achieved, or is trying to achieve, a Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY

AND

C. That has achieved, or is trying to achieve, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility⁵

AND

D. That is located in one of the following eligible counties:

- Adams
- Benton
- Blackford
- Boone
- Brown
- Cass
- Clinton
- Crawford
- Dearborn
- Decatur
- Fountain
- Franklin
- Fulton
- Greene
- Huntington
- Jasper
- Jay
- Lagrange
- Lawrence
- Martin
- Miami
- Montgomery
- Morgan
- Newton
- Noble
- Ohio
- Orange
- Parke
- Perry

⁴ The Applicant registered with OECOSL (church/religious organization) of the child care ministry must be the applicant for this grant under the same EIN registered with the State. The Applicant (church/religious organization) must be the entity with whom the State executes the resulting contract if awarded. Funds will be dispersed to the Applicant (church/religious organization) for use by the child care ministry.

⁵ <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/3900.htm>

- Pike
- Pulaski
- Putnam
- Randolph
- Rush
- **Scott**
- Spencer
- Switzerland
- Tipton
- Union
- Vermillion
- Washington
- Wells
- Whitley

AND

E. Did NOT receive funding from OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003.

OR

Applicant meets all the following:

A. A non-public school that provides qualified early education services to eligible four-year-old children and is accredited by a national or regional accreditation agency that is recognized by the State Board of Education, or an accrediting agency approved by the Office of the Secretary

AND

B. That has achieved, or is trying to achieve, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility

AND

C. That is located in one of the following eligible counties:

- Adams
- Benton
- Blackford
- Boone
- Brown
- Cass
- Clinton
- Crawford
- Dearborn
- Decatur
- Fountain
- Franklin
- Fulton
- Greene

- Huntington
- Jasper
- Jay
- Lagrange
- Lawrence
- Martin
- Miami
- Montgomery
- Morgan
- Newton
- Noble
- Ohio
- Orange
- Parke
- Perry
- Pike
- Pulaski
- Putnam
- Randolph
- Rush
- **Scott**
- Spencer
- Switzerland
- Tipton
- Union
- Vermillion
- Washington
- Wells
- Whitley

AND

D. Did NOT receive funding from OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003.

The State is seeking two types of applicants for this RFF: **county/community coalitions** or **individual early childhood education providers**. Applicants may apply as a county/community coalition of stakeholders that includes one or more eligible early childhood education provider(s) who would receive funding through this RFF. In this case, the intent would be to receive one application from a county/community coalition detailing their plan to build capacity in their community. County/community coalitions should represent diverse stakeholders in the early childhood education system. For example, these county/community coalitions could be comprised of a local government entity, businesses, or for-profit/nonprofit organizations that have an established partnership with eligible early childhood education providers. This may be a new or established community/county coalition. The county/community coalition must be able to sign a grant agreement with the State to administer funding if awarded (see Section II.F).

The State also encourages applications from individual early childhood education providers. If the provider's community has an early childhood education coalition, the provider may choose to apply with the coalition. However, the State recognizes not all Indiana communities have coalitions. Child care ministries must apply under the church/religious organization registered with the State, as the church/religious organization registered with the State will be the entity to sign the grant agreement to administer funding if awarded (see Section II.F).

More than one application can be received from within a particular county/community. Coalition members or supporting entities like school districts may be included as stakeholders in more than one application. For instance, a community stakeholder may be a member of several coalitions. However, individual early childhood education providers receiving the grant funding for their capacity building projects (whether applying as part of a coalition or individually) may only appear on one application for a particular location, county, or project. Furthermore, individual early childhood education providers with multiple facilities should only submit one application describing the projects for all the locations for which funding is being requested except as follows: If an early childhood education provider operates in multiple counties, it may submit an individual application for one county and be a part of a county/community coalition for a separate and distinct project in a different county as long as both counties are eligible under this RFF. Additionally, the early childhood education provider can also be a part of two county/community coalitions for separate and distinct projects in two different counties as long as both counties are eligible under this RFF.

Important information regarding applicants and awardees of OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, and OECOSL RFF 19-003:

- **Early childhood education providers who were awarded funding resulting from OECOSL 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 are NOT eligible to apply for OECOSL RFF 20-002.**
- Early childhood education providers who applied to OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 and were **NOT** awarded a grant are eligible to apply for OECOSL RFF 20-002, as long as they are located in an eligible county listed in Section II.B.
- County/community coalitions with early childhood education providers who were awarded via OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 shall **NOT** apply to OECOSL RFF 20-002 on behalf of these awarded early childhood education providers.
- County/community coalitions who applied to OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 and had awarded early childhood education providers may apply on behalf of other eligible early childhood education providers who did not receive funding under OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 or were not previously included as part of the coalition application, as long as they are located in an eligible county listed in Section II.B.

C. GRANT FUNDING

The capacity grant available in this RFF will follow a standard competitive grant model. The applicant will apply for the grant per the guidelines in this RFF. If selected, the applicant will

receive a grant to implement the items agreed to in the proposal and eventual grant contract. FSSA reserves the right to make all final award decisions and to award grants based on the quality of applications and available funding.

1. Grant Payments

Funds from the grant will be provided as a combination of reimbursements and upfront payment for approved grant budget items as allowed by Indiana Code. If the awarded grant amount is \$50,000 or more, applicants can receive up to 1/6 (16.67%) of their total grant amount as an upfront payment. If the grant is under \$50,000, applicants can receive up to 1/2 (50%) of their total grant amount as an upfront payment. In both scenarios, the remainder of the grant will be provided through reimbursements by the State.

If the applicant is an individual early childhood education provider, grant payments will be disbursed directly to the provider. If the applicant is a child care ministry, grant payments will be dispersed to the church/religious organization registered with OECOSL to distribute to the child care ministry. If the applicant is a coalition, grant payments will be disbursed to the coalition. It is the coalition's responsibility to distribute the funding to the early childhood education providers within the coalition. Please note, as explained in Section II.D, only eligible early childhood education providers may utilize grant funding to support capacity building projects. Coalitions shall not use grant funding for any other purposes, including supplementing coalition costs. All funding must be used by eligible early childhood education providers to fulfill the Objective(s) of the RFF.

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A key portion of the grant application will be measuring and monitoring outcomes to ensure that Objectives are being met on behalf of the children who will benefit from this funding. As such, all applicants will be required to submit at least **two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**, which act as project goals that track the progress of their plans to increase capacity through reaching a PTQ Level 3 or 4 and/or increasing seats for eligible four-year-old children. These KPIs demonstrate how the State can objectively measure the progress of the project. In general, the applicant's KPIs must be measurable, attainable, and time-limited. Examples of acceptable KPIs include:

- *We will expand the capacity of our early childhood education program by 10 eligible four-year-old children by March 1, 2021; and*
- *We will improve our PTQ rating from Level 2 to Level 3 by March 1, 2021.*

Applicants must submit their KPIs in their response to the Grant Funding/Match/KPIs question in the Technical Proposal (Section III.B.1.v) and detail how the KPIs will be met in their Capacity Building Plan in the Technical Proposal (Section III.B.1.v). Although the KPIs need to be achieved by the early childhood education provider directly, if applying as a county/community coalition, members of the coalition must also take an active role in setting and supporting the achievement of the KPIs in order to promote community improvement. For example, coalition KPIs might be:

- *We will expand the capacity of Young Hoosier Early Education Home and Bright Kids Early Education Facility in Adams County by 25 eligible four-year-old children by the start of the 2021 school year (August 2021); and*

- *We will improve the PTQ rating of Young Hoosier Early Education Home and Bright Kids Early Education Facility in Adams County from Level 1 to Level 3 by March 1, 2021.*

3. Grant Match

Under IC 12-17.2-7.2-8, applicants for OECOSL funding are required to secure a monetary grant match from local businesses or other stakeholders who will benefit from the community improvement associated with this grant. This grant match must be at least 5% and can be up to 50% of the total amount of the total capacity building plan budget submitted in the Grant Budget Proposal in Attachment B.1 or B.2. The grant match requirement only applies to the total amount of grant funding requested from OECOSL. Failure to submit a grant match of at least 5% of your OECOSL total budget request will result in your proposal being disqualified. Each grant matching entity needs to demonstrate its understanding of the KPIs, the grant match amount to be provided, and its commitment to providing the match through a **grant match commitment letter**. A separate grant match commitment letter must be submitted by each entity providing a grant match. Additionally, the grant matching entity/entities must be listed on the Prospective Program Sites and Community Partner Form in Attachment A. Coalitions should disburse the grant match across all early childhood education providers included in their application.

IC 12-17.2-7.2-8 states the match must be paid from donations, gifts, grants, bequests and other funds received from a private entity or person, from the United States Government, or from other sources, excluding this grant or other state funding. Note that all match funding must be monetary in nature – no in-kind grant matches are allowed. Also, please note that no source of State of Indiana government funding may be used at the match. Per the Indiana Department of Education, this exclusion includes Title I funds. Finally, **OECOSL will not permit self-funding of the match**. This means applicants must demonstrate community partnership by securing a portion of the match from an outside entity or entities. The outside entity or entities shall not be the applicant, one of the early childhood education providers in a coalition's application, or anyone with an ownership stake in an early childhood education entity included in an application. Applicants shall not require parents/guardians to pay extra fees in order to fund the match. Further, school corporations and schools shall not fund the match from their operating budgets. Applicants who only self-match will be disqualified.

The total grant match amount will be subtracted from your total OECOSL grant budget to dictate the grant amount provided by the State. The number of priority points received for your grant match will be based on the percentage of the total grant amount matched. Grant matches of 5% will receive 0.5 priority points while grant matches of 50% will receive 5 priority points.

Please see Section II.O for additional resources to assist in finding a grant match. If you have any issues securing a grant match, please reach out to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov.

D. USE OF FUNDS

As required by HEA 1628, grant funds must be used to increase the capacity of high quality early childhood education providers by reaching a PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 and/or increasing seats for eligible four-year-old children. As stated in Section II.A, **an eligible child is “at least four years of age and less than five years of age on August 1 of the state fiscal year for which a grant is sought”**, which for this RFF opportunity applies to children who are currently four or will turn four by August 1, 2020.

Applicants are required to demonstrate in their application response how their requested grant funding will allow them to reach a PTQ Level 3 or 4 and/or increase their number of available seats for eligible four-year-old children if they already have achieved, or have a plan to achieve, a PTQ Level 3 or 4. The estimated number of new PTQ Level 3 or 4 seats for eligible four-year-old children and the estimated increase in PTQ level for each early childhood education provider that will arise from the grant funding must be documented on the Prospective Program Sites and Community Partner Form in Attachment A.

As outlined in IC 12-17.2-7.2-7.4(e), if the applicant fails to use the grant funds in accordance with the criteria described above or comply with the agreement entered into with the State, the applicant shall repay the total amount of the grant awarded.

1. Items Eligible for Funding

Grant funding shall be used to meet the Objectives of this RFF by increasing capacity for eligible four-year old children and may include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- Pre-K classroom teachers or aides participating in the capacity building project
- Workforce investment including training and professional development for teaching staff (see II.D.2 for an important note about CDA training courses)
- Initial costs for necessary staff background checks, CPR/First Aid training, TB tests, etc. for new programs
- Classroom materials that demonstrate improved outcomes for eligible four-year-old children or increased instructional practices for educators that can be tied to outcomes and KPIs in the application
- Evidence-based curriculum/instructional materials with professional development for teaching staff to utilize the curriculum
- Items that increase family engagement activities that can be tied to specific indicators from the Indiana Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit⁶.
- Marketing and communication engagement that can be shown to increase capacity or quality

Please note when selecting items to include in a proposed budget that grant applicants are required to demonstrate how the funding from their proposed project will increase capacity through supporting them in reaching a PTQ Level 3 or 4 and/or supporting them in increasing their number of available seats for eligible four-year-old children as documented in the grant application KPIs. For example, applicants seeking to add new

⁶ <http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Family-Engagement-Toolkit-1.pdf>.

PTQ Level 3 or 4 seats for eligible four-year-old children through their capacity building plan could include pre-K classroom teacher or aide classroom personnel budget items that allow the program to serve more eligible four-year-old children. Additionally, applicants seeking to achieve PTQ Level 3 or 4 through their capacity building plan could include workforce investment (other than CDA/Associates/Bachelor training/CDA Assessment or Accreditation fees covered through Indiana AEYC scholarships) or curriculum budget items that meet the PTQ level requirements.

Grant applicants **must** demonstrate how they will sustain the proposed project after the grant cycle is completed. Further detail regarding the requirements for describing the sustainability of an applicant's capacity building project can be found in Section III.B.1.vi.

2. Items Not Eligible for Funding

According to HEA 1628, the OECOSL grant funds shall not be used for the purchase of land, the purchase of a building, the construction of a building, or the expansion of a building.

Grant funds shall also not be used for the following items:

- **Playground or ANY other outdoor play equipment - even if planning to use indoors**
- Items for children who are NOT the pre-K eligible age of four-years-old, like infants
- Transportation or vehicle costs to help a child get to and from the facility
- Covering or deferring students' tuition costs
- Improvement of program attendance within a provider's existing capacity
- Computers/iPads/laptops predominantly for student use
- CDA or other early childhood coursework for staff, including Associate's or Bachelor's Degree costs (see D.4 for instruction on how to apply for funding for TEACH)
- ANY county/community coalition costs including coalition staffing or administrative fees
- Salaries of program/center directors, salaries of administrative staff, or salaries of staff conducting administrative activities. Any use of grant funds for salaries must be towards classroom education to increase capacity.
- Field trips or field trip fees
- Out of state travel, including for professional development or conferences
- Accreditation fees (see D.II.4 for instructions on how to apply for funding for these expenses)
- Administration costs for obtaining licensure or CCDF eligibility
- Items needed to maintain a provider's current PTQ level (e.g. if an applicant has already achieved a PTQ Level 3 or 4 the applicant shall not include expenses to maintain a PTQ Level 3 or 4)
- Any other items deemed by OECOSL not to meet the Objectives of this RFF

Further, it is the expectation of the State that the projects applied for through this grant are not receiving duplicate funding from another grant or donation source. While applicants can receive funding from different sources for different types of projects, the unique project submitted for this grant application may not be currently receiving funding from any other source.

OECOSL reserves the right to make all final funding decisions. The State will only issue as many grants as funding allows and reserves the right not to award all of the remaining grant funding available. The State also reserves the right to issue a partial award or no award. The State reserves the right to disqualify and not score incomplete proposals that do not provide all required application components or include ineligible funding items as detailed in this RFF. The State reserves the right not to award funding if the State believes it is duplicating funding the applicant has received within the past 18 months or is currently receiving elsewhere.

3. Funding Sources for Other Disallowed Budget Items

While funding for certain items is not permitted in this RFF, OECOSL encourages early childhood education providers pursue teacher certification and center accreditation. There are existing resources for early childhood education providers to receive support for CDA certification and early childhood degree coursework through TEACH and separately to assist with accreditation costs. For this reason, the RFF funding will not be utilized as a duplicate fund source but to fund items not available elsewhere. Applicants may pursue more information regarding how to receive financial support for these items as follows:

- TEACH: <http://secure.iaeyc.org/programs-research/teach-early-childhood-indiana/>
- Accreditation Fees: <http://secure.iaeyc.org/programs-research/indiana-accreditation-project/>

E. GRANT PERIOD

All grants are expected to begin in March 2020 and funds are to be used for the 2020-2021 school year. At the end of the grant period, grant recipients may have the option to request a no-cost extension if additional activities remain that have not been completed.

F. SAMPLE GRANT AGREEMENT

Applicants must agree to the terms and conditions of the Sample Grant Agreement in Attachment C. All grant recipients will be required to sign this grant agreement in order to receive funding. For child care ministries, the church/religious organization registered with OECOSL will be the entity to sign and execute the grant agreement with the State. The entity that applies on behalf of the county/community coalitions must be able to sign and execute the grant agreement with the State to fund the projects awarded to the early childhood education providers in the coalition. The grant agreement outlines the State's terms and conditions that must be followed by an awardee when receiving the grant. Each recipient's proposal will also become a component of the grant agreement.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the process of completing necessary paperwork for contracting in the event the applicant is awarded. This will expedite the process for awardees. For those applicants who may have previously contracted with the State, the applicant should

ensure the documentation and registrations are active and up-to-date and that the applicant is in good standing with the Department of Revenue and Department of Workforce Development. Required documentation for contracting with the State of Indiana includes the following items, and all three can be completed from this link <https://www.in.gov/idoa/2463.htm>:

- Registration with Indiana Department of Administration for a BidderID
- Completion of payment forms with the Auditor of State for a PeoplesoftID
- Registration with the Indiana Secretary of State (applicable to limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, corporations, S-corporations, nonprofit corporations, and limited liability corporations; religious organizations are exempt)

G. APPLICATION SUPPORT

All early childhood education providers are encouraged to seek out application support from local resources while creating their capacity building plan and writing their application response. These resources could be a local United Way, CCR&R Agency, or any of the other resources listed in Section II.N, including using the Lakeshore Learning online tool to assist with classroom setup. Applicants are eligible to receive priority points towards their total application score if they submit proof of application support from a resource, as detailed in Section III.D.

H. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Any interested applicant must submit a complete grant application **no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 8, 2019, to be eligible for award**. Any applicant that does not submit a complete grant application on time may not be considered.

All components of the grant application should be submitted through Early Learning Indiana's online application platform: <https://earlylearningin.submittable.com/submit>. The OECOSL grant application on the Early Learning Indiana platform is labeled "*OECOSL RFF 20-002 – Early Childhood Education Capacity Building Grant Program.*" Applicants will be expected to answer all questions of the Technical Proposal as well as submit all forms associated with the application that are provided for download on the RFF website: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm>.

To submit an application on the Early Learning Indiana online application platform, applicants will be required to create an account and choose the grant they are applying for (OECOSL RFF 20-002 - Early Childhood Education Capacity Building Grant Program). If an applicant already has an account on Early Learning Indiana's online application platform, a new account is not required and the applicant may apply using their current log-on and password. Applicants will be asked to fill out each step of the application, including the General Applicant Information, Technical Proposal, and Grant Budget Proposal. Applicants will be asked to upload the additional forms, as detailed in the Grant Application Components table in Section II.I below. Once the applicant is satisfied with the application, it can be directly submitted on the platform. The applicant can also save any progress and return to the application at any time prior to submission. Once the applicant submits their application, the applicant will receive an automatic email from Early Learning Indiana to the email address linked to the applicant's Early Learning Indiana account confirming the application has been submitted. If the applicant does not appear to have received the application, they should 1) confirm they selected the "submit" button in their application and 2) check all spam and promotions folders for the email address linked to the applicant's Early Learning Indiana account. Once the application is submitted, the applicant

should continue to monitor the email account for any additional notifications from the Early Learning Indiana platform. Please send all issues with or questions about the application or platform to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov.

I. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION COMPONENT OVERVIEW

As part of the grant application, the applicant must submit all Grant Application Components, which are listed in the following table. Instructions regarding how to complete each component are detailed in Section III.

Grant Application Components
<p>General Applicant Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Applicant Information • Prospective Program Sites and Community Partner Form (Attachment A) • Must be signed by an authorized representative – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>For coalitions</u>: Executive Director/CEO or President of the Board of Directors ○ <u>For individual providers</u>: Facility owner or program director
<p>Technical Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Community Need and History ii. Community Engagement iii. Capacity Building Plan iv. Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan v. Grant Funding/Match/KPIs – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Grant Match Commitment Letter(s) from Grant Matching Entity/Entities vi. Sustainability Plan
<p>Grant Budget Proposal</p> <p>A completed Grant Budget Proposal (Attachment B.1 or B.2) must be uploaded and Grant Budget Narrative must be submitted. The applicant must describe other grant awards it has received within the past 18 months.</p>
<p>Priority Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant Funding Matching Amount 2. Application Support 3. Community Letters of Support 4. Highest-Need Counties

J. GRANT APPLICATION TIME FRAME

The overall grant application timeline can be found in the table below. Applicants must submit their grant application by the proposal deadline to be eligible for receiving a grant. Further instructions on submitting a completed grant application can be found in Section II.H.

Date	Event
September 23, 2019	RFF sent to potential applicants and posted online
October 2, 2019	Application Information Webinar at 9:30 a.m. ET
October 3, 2019	Application questions due to State by 5 p.m. ET
October 11, 2019	Answers to questions posted (subject to change based on volume)
November 8, 2019	RFF proposals due at 5 p.m. ET
January 3, 2020	<i>Approximate award decisions release date*</i>
March 1, 2020	<i>Approximate grant effective date*</i>

The timeline is subject to change.

**Depending on how many applications OECOSL receives, the award date and grant effective date may change to allow for adequate time for evaluation.*

To remain current with any updates to this timeline, it is recommended applicants check the following OECOSL website frequently where any amendments to this RFF will be posted: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm>.

K. ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM INFORMATION SESSION

An optional online webinar will be held to walk applicants through how to use the Early Learning Indiana online application platform, provide application tips, and answer any questions. This webinar will be held on October 2, 2019, at 8:45 a.m. EST. The webinar can be accessed at this link: <https://Indiana.AdobeConnect.com/oecosl>. All applicants should sign in as a guest using their name. The webinar audio will be part of the online program, so webinar participants will need to use speakers or headphones to hear the presentation. Participants will have the opportunity to submit questions during the webinar to be answered. **Space is limited, and the State kindly requests only one computer per location be used to log-on to the webinar so all interested applicants may join.**

Prior to the webinar, applicants can visit this link to test their connection and ensure all needed updates or add-ins are downloaded:

https://indiana.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm. This link will prompt the user with any needed updates or add-ins. Applicants should not use a Citrix or Virtual Private Network (VPN) to join the webinar as these services will not be able to playback audio. For applicants who cannot attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted on the OECOSL website: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm>.

L. IN-PERSON INFORMATION SESSIONS

In an effort to help spread awareness for this grant opportunity and support applicant success, the State will be holding in-person information sessions to support applicants in writing high-quality applications that meet all grant requirements. All providers interested in applying to OECOSL RFF 20-002 are welcome and encouraged to attend these in-person information sessions. These information sessions will be held across the State will take place at the following times and locations:

- Tuesday, October 15, 6:00pm – 7:00pm EST, Huntington Co. Learning Center, 2201 N. Jefferson St. Huntington, IN 46750
- Wednesday, October 16, 6:00pm – 7:00pm EST, Putnam Co Hospital 3rd floor Classrooms 2 and 3, 1542 S Bloomington St. Greencastle, IN 46135
- Thursday, October 17, 6:00pm – 7:00pm EST, Community Foundation of Orange County, 1075 N. Sandy Hook Road Ste. 2 Paoli, IN 47454

There will only be twenty (20) spaces available to attend each information session. Prospective attendees must RSVP beforehand to reserve their seat by emailing Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov. The deadline to RSVP is Friday, October 11, 2019 at 5 p.m. EST. Any requests received after this deadline may not be given a seat. **Seats will be given in the order in which they are requested.**

If your organization cannot attend any in-person information session, a representative from OECOSL may be available for a 15-minute one-on-one discussion over the phone or through WebEx to offer additional assistance or answer questions. All requests or questions regarding assistance can be submitted to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov.

M. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION QUESTIONS

All questions regarding the content of this RFF must be submitted to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov by October 3, 2019 at 5 p.m. EST. Please use the provided Question and Answer Response Template (Attachment D) to submit your questions. The State reserves the right not to address questions about the RFF submitted after the deadline.

The State will post a document with answers to applicant questions on the RFF website one week later on or around October 11, 2019. Applicants are encouraged to check the website for amendments to the RFF when answers to applicants' questions are posted: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm>.

As stated in Section II.H, questions regarding the Early Learning Indiana Submittable platform may be submitted to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov at any time and do not need to be submitted using the Q&A template. However, applicants are cautioned from holding these questions until immediately before the application is due as late applications will not be considered for funding.

N. AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR APPLICATION SUPPORT

In addition to the information sessions described above, applicants are encouraged to seek out resources and support in the development of their application proposal. Some possible resources to consider for assistance include:

- Indiana Youth Institute offers free grant review assistance and help with collecting data for the proposal, but it must be submitted within a reasonable time. Information is available here: <http://www.iyi.org/fundraising-grants/other-fundraising-resources.aspx>.
- Your local Community Foundation: <http://www.incommunityfoundations.org/>.
- Your local United Way/United Fund Agency <http://apps.unitedway.org/myUW/luindex.cfm?id=browsecities&zip=00000&abbr=IN&app>.

- Your Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R): As of October 1, 2019 - <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5712.htm>.
- Indiana Association for Education of Young Children (AEYC) which may be able to provide coaching support: <http://www.iaeyc.org/>.
- Lakeshore Learning offers an online tool to assist with classroom design and supplies: <https://www.lakeshorelearning.com/>.
- Suggestions on possibilities to increase quality standards can be found in the NIEER Standards in Appendix B.

O. AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR GRANT MATCH

Applicants are encouraged to seek out resources and support in finding the required grant match for their application proposal. Applicants can **NOT** supply their own match dollars. Some possible resources for assistance include:

- Your local Community Foundation: <http://www.incommunityfoundations.org/>.
- Your local United Way/United Fund Agency: <http://apps.unitedway.org/myUW/luindex.cfm?id=browsecities&zip=00000&abbr=IN&app>.
- Your local Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.officialusa.com/stateguides/chambers/indiana.html>.
- Your local Mayor's Office.
- Businesses/individuals in your community passionate about early childhood education.

III. GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The section provides specific instructions related to each application component. Applicants must review the requirements for each component thoroughly. Attachment F provides a high-level check-list that applicants may view and print to help ensure all required elements are submitted with the application.

A. GENERAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

Each respondent is required to provide the following background information. Applicants will provide this information directly in the Early Learning Indiana online application platform when submitting their application.

1. Respondent Information

- Applicant Type: Early Childhood Education Provider OR County/Community Coalition
- County (Must be from the list of eligible counties in Section II.B)
- Applicant Name⁷
- Title of Application
- Single Point of Contact for all Communication Regarding the RFF
 - Contact Name
 - Contact Title

⁷ Child care ministries must apply under the church/religious organization registered with the State.

3. Contact Phone
4. Contact Email Address
5. Contact Mailing Address

2. Grant Match Information

- a. Have you secured the outside entity/entities to provide the required grant match?

3. Additional Form

- a. Please download, fill out, and upload the Prospective Program Sites and Community Partner Form (Attachment A). Applicants shall not make any modifications to the form and shall utilize the provided form to submit the requested data. Information in the Prospective Program Sites and Community Partner Form includes:
 1. Name(s) of Prospective Program Site(s)
 2. Proof of Applicable Childcare Licensure or Registration
 3. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Eligibility Status
 4. Current PTQ Level
 5. PTQ Level to Be Achieved with Grant Funding
 6. Number of Eligible Four-Year-Old Children Currently Served and Number of New Seats from Grant Funding for Eligible Four-Year-Old Children
 7. Total Number of All Children Served including with New Seats
 8. Indication of Plan to Achieve PTQ Level 3 or 4
 9. Community Partners
 - i. All applicants must list any community partners in this form, as applicable.
 - ii. All grant matching entities must be listed in this form.
 - iii. County/community coalitions must also list all member entities of the coalition.

4. Signature of Authorized Representative

- a. The authorized representative must provide an electronic signature certifying that the information contained in the application is correct and that the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions of the FSSA Sample Grant Contract (Attachment C).
 1. Designated Representative (Printed Name)
 2. Designated Representative Title
 3. Date

B. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

1. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

The Technical Proposal narrative section is limited to the defined specific word count for each question. A submission may be less than the maximum word count so long as the questions are adequately answered. Please note applicants are expected to answer those questions with higher allotted word counts with more details and explanation than those

with lower word counts. Thus, for the questions with larger word count limits, be sure to provide specific details and examples to demonstrate the thought that went into crafting the response. All sections outlined below must be addressed. In each question, please refer to the “Applicant Tip” for additional guidance on how to create a thorough response.

i. Community Need and History

(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

Provide a summary of your community’s overall “need” for more PTQ Level 3 and 4 providers and/or seats for eligible four-year-old children at PTQ Level 3 and 4 providers. Describe the number of young children in your community and their needs related to early childhood education. Explain the gaps in your early childhood system that are not meeting the needs of your families with pre-K age children. Further describe how your community has been working together to improve high quality early childhood programs and why it is ready to receive a capacity grant.

You may reference these reports for information:

- ELAC Early Childhood County Profiles: <http://www.elacindiana.org/why-early-childhood-matters/early-childhood-profile/>.
- IYI Kids Count County Profile: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN/5/0/char/0>.

Applicant Tip: Be sure to note if your community does not have enough PTQ Level 3 or 4 providers or seats to serve all eligible four-year-old children seeking early education services. A thorough response will provide details to support the claim that more PTQ Level 3 or 4 providers or seats are needed in their community.

ii. Community Engagement

(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

All applicants shall provide information on community engagement efforts.

If you are applying as a county/community coalition: Describe how your coalition is working to improve early learning programs and worked together to develop this application. Include a short explanation describing the role and involvement of the coalition in the community. Do not include the early childhood education providers you will be working with unless the providers also engage in community or countywide efforts.

If you are applying as an individual provider: List any organizations in your community that are committed to improving early childhood education and how you are working with your community to provide quality early childhood education. Describe how your community will benefit from your project and meeting the Objectives of this RFF.

Applicant Tip: If applicable, be sure to provide the history of how your organization has worked in the past to improve early childhood education in your community and how this grant would enable your organization to continue this work. If new community engagement efforts are being proposed, describe those in detail.

iii. Capacity Building Plan

(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Provide the capacity building plan for your grant applicant by responding to the following components:

- State whether you will be fulfilling Objective 1 (increasing PTQ Level to 3 or 4) and/or Objective 2 (increasing seats for eligible four-year-old children) of the RFF (See Section II.A for the full details of each Objective). If you are a county/community coalition, state whether each early childhood programs included in your application will be fulfilling Objective 1 or 2.
- Describe your plan for achieving your chosen RFF Objective(s). Provide specific details for how your capacity building plan will result in the execution of your chosen RFF Objective(s). Include specific dates for when you will meet key milestones, including the ultimate date of when you plan for the PTQ Level or additional seats to be achieved.
- Describe how the items included in your grant budget fit into your capacity building plan. Describe how your included items are required for fulfilling your capacity building plan and meeting your chosen RFF Objective and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Include estimated dates for when these items will be purchased.
- Describe how your capacity building plan will prepare you to become an On My Way Pre-K provider at the end of the grant period, if you are not one already.
- Describe any barriers you foresee to implementing your capacity building plan and how you may overcome them.
- Include a timeline for implementing your capacity building plan, achieving your KPIs you propose in Question v, applying to become an On My Way Pre-K provider, and reaching your chosen RFF Objective(s). The timeline should have key dates you plan to meet and include descriptions for how you will reach these dates and complete the goals of your project. *This may be provided as an uploaded file. The timeline will not count towards this section's word limit.*

Applicant Tip: Be sure to include specific descriptions and dates for how and when your chosen RFF Objective(s) will be achieved. A thorough response will demonstrate how each budget item is supporting the capacity building plan and will lead to achieving the RFF Objective(s).

iv. Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan

(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Provide your plan to improve the quality of your early childhood education program by responding to the following quality improvement and assurance components:

- Describe how you will utilize the grant to improve the quality of your early childhood education program and increase your PTQ level (if applicable).
- Describe any plans to improve the quality of your workforce to meet or exceed all PTQ workforce standards. Describe any plans to incentivize teachers and workers to receive training for higher qualifications, to attract those with higher qualifications, and to sustain high qualifications going forward. Describe any plans to utilize training on instructional practices that improve child outcomes.
- Describe any plans to improve instruction and practice quality through utilizing child assessment data.
- Describe any plans to improve the quality of your curriculum. If applicable, describe how you will incorporate an evidence-based curriculum that is evaluated for child level results including details on its evidence-based methods and how you will ensure professional development occurs to teach staff how to use the curriculum.
- Describe any plans to improve the quality of your family engagement to better support successful child outcomes and transitions to kindergarten. Describe any plans to increase family knowledge about the importance of high quality early childhood education and family involvement or increase parental choice in programs and setting types. Include any areas of growth needed after completing the Indiana Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit⁸ and how your requested grant dollars will help you address those insufficiencies.
- Describe how you plan to utilize IDOE Early Learning Foundations⁹ in your quality improvement initiatives.

Applicant Tip: Be sure to provide specific examples of ways you plan to improve classroom quality with your requested grant funding, including high quality teachers, curriculum, assessments, training, or family knowledge. A thorough response will reference PTQ standards, Indiana Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit, or IDOE Early Learning Foundations where applicable.

v. Grant Funding/Match/KPIs

(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Describe how you will ensure your grant funding is spent effectively and accurately.

Describe your grant match (including the entity/entities that will be providing it and how their participation demonstrates community engagement), the match amount, and how you are going to ensure these funds will be received. You must include a grant match commitment letter from each of the entity/entities providing a grant match.

⁸ <http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Family-Engagement-Toolkit-1.pdf>.

⁹ <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/earlylearning/foundations-2015-august-12.pdf>.

This letter must confirm the grant match amount and demonstrate understanding and support of achieving your chosen RFF Objective(s). The letter must also include the name and contact information of the person/entity supplying the match. *The grant match commitment letter will not count toward this section's word limit.*

Propose two measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on your project type that you will be expected to meet by the end of your grant to demonstrate how you are improving early childhood education capacity by reaching a PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 and/or increasing seats for eligible four-year-old children. You must describe how your KPIs will ensure your use of grant funding increases early childhood education capacity and how these will be measured.

Applicant Tip: Be sure to include two measurable KPIs containing specific numbers and dates they will be achieved in your response.

vi. Sustainability Plan

(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Describe your plan to ensure the longevity and sustainability of your project beyond the grant period. Include detail regarding how you will ensure enrollment in the new, expanded high quality early childhood education program(s). Describe how you will support your program(s) in maintaining its PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 status and ensure families enroll in your program(s). If you have proposed a pre-K classroom teacher or aide classroom personnel or other reoccurring expenses, describe how you will sustain these expenses after the grant period ends and your funds have been expended. If you have proposed teacher training or methods for attracting teachers with higher qualifications, describe how this will be sustained. Sustainability shall not be dependent on receiving funding from any other OECOSL sources.

Applicant Tip: Be sure to describe how any recurring costs, like salaries, will be sustained after the grant period ends. A thorough response will not include any budget items for recurring expenses that cannot be continued after the grant period.

2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL POINTS

A breakdown of the maximum points each section of the Technical Proposal can receive is outlined in the table below.

Section	Title	Maximum Points Available
i.	Community Need and History	5 Points
ii	Community Engagement	5 Points
iii.	Capacity Building Plan	30 Points
iv.	Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan	20 Points
v.	Grant Funding/Match/KPIs	10 Points

Section	Title	Maximum Points Available
vi.	Sustainability Plan	20 Points
Total Technical Proposal Points:		90 Points

C. GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL

This section provides instructions for the completion of the Grant Budget Proposal and the Grant Budget Narrative explaining the request for funds.

Allowable Expenses: Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of your chosen RFF Objective(s). All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance. Please refer to Section II.D for more information on the allowed use of funds.

1. Grant Budget Proposal: Select the appropriate Grant Budget Proposal form for the type of application you are submitting: early childhood education provider (Attachment B.1) or county/community coalition (Attachment B.2). Complete a detailed budget for the total grant amount you are requesting by submitting the associated Grant Budget Proposal. The Grant Budget Proposals are available in an Excel document file that can be downloaded from the OECOSL website: <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm>. The applicant shall fill out the yellow cells in this document (all other cells have been locked by OECOSL and applicants shall not try to modify them). County/community coalitions shall complete a budget tab for EACH early childhood education provider included in their coalition. The completed Grant Budget Proposal, including the amount of the grant match, shall be uploaded directly onto the online application platform. The grant amount requested will not be scored.

Applicants who do not submit their budget in the Grant Budget Proposal form may be disqualified. Applicants shall not unlock the form and shall not make modifications to the locked template. Applicants who are having difficulty with the form should reach out to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov for assistance well in advance of the application deadline.

2. Grant Budget Narrative (Word Count Limit: 600 words): Provide a narrative explaining how you created your budget and why the items in your budget will help you achieve your chosen RFF Objective (Section II.A) and your capacity building plan. Your Grant Budget Narrative should explain why the requested items and amounts were included and how they will expand capacity, including specifically addressing how they will result in reaching a PTQ Level 3 or 4 and/or increasing seats for eligible four-year-old children. This shall be typed directly into the online application platform. The Grant Budget Narrative will be worth **10 points**.

Applicant Tip: Be sure there are no ineligible budget items included in your Grant Budget Proposal, like field trips, outdoor play equipment, or items used for children who are not four-years-old (e.g. infant crib). A thorough response will demonstrate how each budget item directly relates to achieving the chosen RFF Objective(s). Additionally,

please note that all costs included in your Grant Budget Proposal must occur during the grant period.

3. Recent Grant Funding: Provide a brief response detailing any grant funding you have received in the past 18 months, who received the funding, what the funding was/is being used for, and how that grant funding differs from your current OECOSL RFF 20-002 request. This shall be typed directly into the online application platform. Applications who have not received any grant funding in the past 18 months may indicate this in the response field provided in the platform. Early childhood education providers who received funding from OECOSL RFF 18-001, OECOSL RFF 19-002, or OECOSL RFF 19-003 are not eligible to apply for OECOSL RFF 20-002.

D. PRIORITY POINTS

Applicants are eligible to receive up to **15 additional priority points** for meeting certain needs or goals as follows. Applicants will be asked to select from a list which of these criteria they meet on the online application platform.

1. Grant Funding Matching Choice (up to 5 points)

Applicants will receive priority points for receiving higher percentages of match dollars from local entity/entities. This grant match must be at least 5% and up to 50% of the total amount of the total capacity building plan budget submitted in the Grant Budget Proposal in Attachment B.1 or B.2. Priority points will be awarded as a percent of the amount of funding being matched. For example, applications that have the maximum grant match (50%) will receive 5 priority points, while applications that have the minimum grant match (5%) will receive 0.5 priority points. Partial points will be awarded depending on the percent match. The grant match amount should be depicted in the Grant Budget Proposal.

2. Application Support (2 points)

Applicants can receive 2 priority points for demonstrating that they received support from local early childhood education resources in creating their application, as described in Section II.G. This could include support from a local United Way, CCR&R Agency, or any of the other resources listed in Section II.N. In order to receive priority points, applicants must submit written verification that they received application support. For example, applicants can submit a letter from the local supporting early childhood education resource describing the support provided, or provide a copy of a classroom design created using the Lakeshore Learning online tool.

3. Community Letters of Support (1 point per letter, maximum of 3 points)

Applicants can receive priority points through submitting additional letters of support to demonstrate community partnerships. While there is no limit to the number of letters that can be submitted, each letter will be worth 1 priority point with a maximum of 3 points that can be received. Potential partners include entities that want to support increasing the early childhood opportunities in your local community including the provider's city's mayor, a food sponsor, or a business partner outside of the coalition.

4. Highest-Need Counties (5 points)

Applicants will receive priority points for serving a highest-need county that currently has less than five (5) PTQ Level 3 or Level 4 programs and no On My Way Pre-K programs. The list of eligible counties is as follows:

- Benton
- Crawford
- Decatur
- Fountain
- Fulton
- Jay
- Morgan
- Ohio
- Parke
- Randolph
- Scott
- Switzerland
- Union
- Vermillion
- Whitley

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the proven ability of the applicant to satisfy the requirements of the RFF. Each of the evaluation criteria categories is described below with a brief explanation of the basis for evaluation in that category. The points associated with each category are indicated following the category name (total maximum points = 115). If any one or more of the listed criteria on which the responses to this RFF will be evaluated are found to be inconsistent or incompatible with applicable federal laws, regulations, or policies, the specific criteria will be disregarded and the responses will be evaluated and scored without taking into account such criteria or disqualified altogether.

The State reserves the right to make all final award decisions, including selecting recipients based on the State's evaluation, total evaluation score, and other factors to be determined by the State. The State may incorporate strategic considerations when making award decisions. The State will only issue as many grants as funding allows and reserves the right to issue a partial award or no award. Finally, the State reserves the right to disqualify and not score incomplete proposals that do not provide all the required items as detailed in this RFF.

A. RFF EVALUATION CRITERIA

Step 1: Review for Mandatory Requirements and Complete Application

In this step, proposals will be evaluated to ensure that they adhere to all grant requirements, including applicant eligibility and county eligibility. Applicants must submit all information required by this RFF. Incomplete proposals may be disqualified. Further, any applications received after the deadline set forth in the RFF may be disqualified.

Step 2: Qualitative Review (Technical and Grant Budget Proposals)

Complete proposals will be scored based on the specifications set forth in Section III.B and III.C. This scoring will have a maximum possible score of 100 points (90 Technical Proposal points and 10 Grant Budget Proposal points). Step 2 may include one or more rounds of grant proposal clarifications or discussions (oral and/or written) between the State and the applicant focused on the details of the Technical and/or Grant Budget Proposal. Note that Grant Budget Proposals will not be scored based on the grant funding amount requested. Grant Budget Proposals will be scored based on the narrative provided in the Grant Budget Narrative.

Step 3: Priority Points

Applicants may receive up to 15 priority points as outlined in Section III.D. The State will review the applicant’s responses to the priority points section and calculate the total priority points earned. Priority points will be added to the total points received for the Technical Proposal and Grant Budget Proposal to create a final score for each applicant.

Step 4: Award Recommendation and Notification

All proposals will be ranked on the basis of their scores. The committee responsible for reviewing the proposals will make grant award recommendations based upon the highest scoring applications. The State reserves the right to make all final award determinations and to determine the budget line items included in the award. FSSA intends to notify grant applicants of award when evaluations are completed.

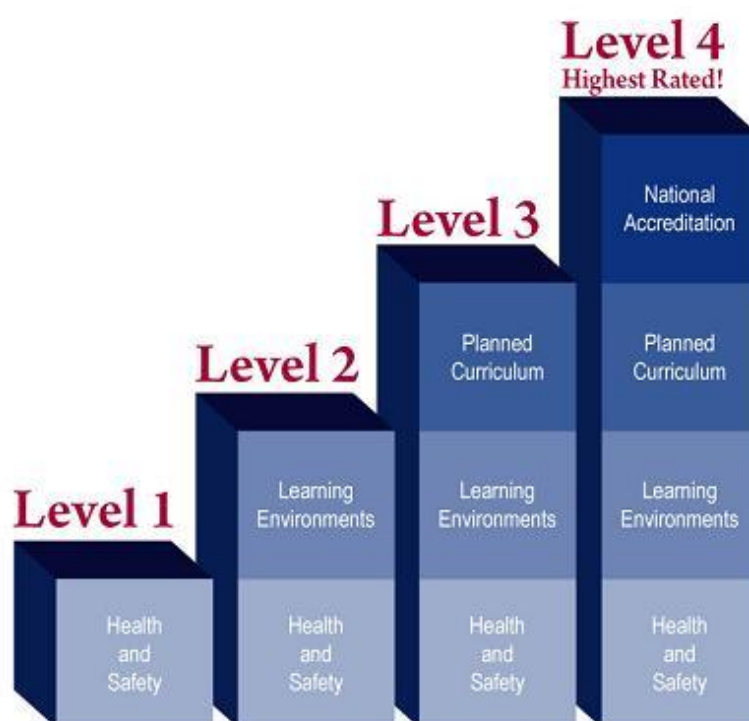
B. APPLICATION POINTS

The following table demonstrates the maximum points available for each grant application.

Criteria	Maximum Points Available
1. Adherence to Grant Requirements	Pass/Fail
2. Technical Proposal	90 Points
3. Grant Budget Proposal	10 Points
4. Priority Points	15 Points
Total Points:	115 Points

APPENDIX A: INDIANA'S PATHS TO QUALITY™ RATING SYSTEM

Paths to QUALITY™ is Indiana's framework for systemic, continuous quality improvement of early care and education. Paths to QUALITY™ is dedicated to supporting the well-being and success of all Indiana children through a statewide system that improves child development and age-appropriate learning experiences, promotes high quality child care, and supports and empowers parents as teachers and decision makers.



Level 4 – National Accreditation

Level 4 programs are the highest rated programs and have demonstrated a commitment to the highest level of professionalism in high quality child care—achievement of a nationally recognized accreditation. Level 4 programs are managed by a provider or director who has volunteered to provide mentoring to others in the field.

Level 3 – Planned Curriculum

Level 3 programs have demonstrated the knowledge and skill necessary for planning appropriate activities and opportunities that lead children toward school readiness.

Level 3 programs have made a significant investment in the professional development of the staff, and they incorporate family and staff input into the program.

Level 2 – Learning Environments

Level 2 programs have demonstrated a commitment to improve program quality. They offer opportunities for children to advance their growth and development. Level 2 programs will have evidence of a consistent daily schedule, planned activities for children, and will provide relevant program information for families.

Level 1 – Health and Safety

Level 1 programs have demonstrated that they are operating in good standing and have been recognized by the state of Indiana as having met all required health and safety standards.

Paths to QUALITY™ Standards are available here:

- Licensed Homes <http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/HomesPTQStandards.pdf>
- Licensed Centers <http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/CentersPTQStandards.pdf>
- Unlicensed Registered Ministries
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/MinistriesPTQStandards.pdf>
- Public Schools
<http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/4926.htm>

For more information about Paths to QUALITY™ please visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm> or <http://www.childcareindiana.org>

APPENDIX B: NIEER STANDARDS

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) conducts and communicates research to support high quality, effective early childhood education for all young children. Such education enhances their physical, cognitive, and social development, and subsequent success in school and later life.

For more information on the NIEER report on Early Education Research visit <http://nieer-www1.rutgers.edu/>

NIEER has identified ten national quality standards for early childhood programs:

1. Comprehensive Early Learning and Development Standards that are horizontally and vertically aligned, supported, and culturally sensitive
2. Support for Curriculum Implementation
3. Lead Teacher Degree (BA)
4. Lead Teacher Specialized Training in ECE/CD
5. Assistant Teacher Degree (CDA)
6. 15 hour/year of professional development, individualized plans professional development plans, and coaching for lead and assistant teachers
7. Maximum Class Size (20)
8. Staff-Child Ratio (1:10)
9. Screenings and Referrals
10. Continuous Quality Improvement System