

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR

EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTERS

ISSUING OFFICE

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Procurement and Contract Management
Room 832 Health and Welfare Building
625 Forster Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120**

RFA NUMBER

21-21

DATE OF ISSUANCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	iv
Part I – GENERAL INFORMATION	5
Part II – CRITERIA FOR SELECTION	16
Part III – TECHNICAL SUBMITTAL	19
Part IV – COST SUBMITTAL	51
Part V – CONTRACTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SUBMITTAL	52

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A, APPLICATION COVER SHEET

APPENDIX B, ELRC REGIONAL MAP

APPENDIX C, TRADE SECRET CONFIDENTIAL PROPRIETARY INFORMATION NOTICE FORM

APPENDIX D, ELRC LEADERSHIP INDIVIDUAL REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX E, LOBBYING CERTIFICATION AND DISCLOSURE

APPENDIX F, FEDERAL FUNDING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT SUB-RECIPIENT DATA SHEET

APPENDIX G, WORKER PROTECTION AND INVESTMENT CERTIFICATION FORM

APPENDIX H, COST SUBMITTAL WORKSHEET

APPENDIX I, IT CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

APPENDIX J, DHS ADDENDUM TO STANDARD GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS WITH AUDIT CLAUSE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Commonwealth will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

Activity	Responsibility	Date
Deadline to submit questions via email to RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV	Potential Applicants	January 6, 2023 12:00 PM EST
Pre-Application Conference Webinar. Please register at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1667562643406259036 After registering, you will receive a confirmation email.	DHS/Potential Applicants	January 4, 2023 2:00 PM EST
Answers to Potential Applicant questions posted to the Department of General Services website at http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx no later than this date.	DHS	January 20, 2023
Please monitor this website for all communications regarding this Request for Applications.	Potential Applicants	Ongoing
Applications and references must be received by the Issuing Office at RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV as provided in Part I, Section I-13 and I-14.A .	Applicants	February 17, 2023 12:00 PM EST

PART I

GENERAL INFORMATION

- I-1. Purpose.** This Request for Applications (“RFA”) provides to those interested in submitting applications for the subject procurement (“Applicants”) sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit applications for the Department of Human Services’ (“Department” or “DHS”) consideration on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (“Commonwealth”) to satisfy a need for Early Learning Resource Centers (“Project”). This RFA contains instructions governing the requested applications, including the requirements for the information and material to be included; a description of the service to be provided; requirements that Applicants must meet to be eligible for consideration; general evaluation criteria; and other requirements specific to this RFA.
- I-2. Issuing Office.** The Department’s Office of Administration, Bureau of Procurement and Contract Management (“Issuing Office”) has issued this RFA on behalf of the Commonwealth. The sole point of contact in the Commonwealth for this RFA shall be Holly Zeiders, RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV, the Issuing Officer for this RFA. Please refer all inquiries to the Issuing Officer.
- I-3. Overview of Project.** Pennsylvania receives funding through the Child Care and Development Fund (“CCDF”) to support low-income working families’ access to high-quality child care. Early Learning Resource Centers (“ELRCs”) exist regionally to serve as a resource for families seeking services for children, and to administer Pennsylvania’s subsidized child care program (known as Child Care Works (“CCW”) and Pennsylvania’s Early Learning Quality Rating and Improvement System (“QRIS”) (known as Keystone STARS). This RFA is being issued to solicit applications to provide leadership, management, and administration of ELRCs in 19 Regions covering all of Pennsylvania. **Appendix B, ELRC Regional Map**, identifies the 19 ELRC Regions and the counties included within each region.

ELRCs assist families in locating child care, determine eligibility for CCW, and provide other resource and referral services in the community. ELRCs facilitate participation by child care and relative providers in CCW. ELRCs establish Provider Agreements with child care providers serving children enrolled in CCW, process invoices, pay providers, and issue tax documents. The ELRCs work closely with the County Assistance Offices (“CAOs”) within their ELRC Regions to coordinate applications submitted via the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (“COMPASS”) and referrals through eCIS.

The ELRCs provide families a way to choose a quality early care and education program through management of Keystone STARS within each ELRC Region. The ELRCs provide technical assistance, which can include coaching, consultation, and other collaborative activities, to early learning providers to assist in improving the quality of early care and education, supporting early care and education providers in meeting their quality improvement goals, recognizing programs for continuous quality improvement, and meeting higher quality standards.

The ELRCs develop, foster, and expand community collaboration efforts with community partners through strong resource and referral services that are available and offered to families and providers.

ELRCs develop policies and procedures regarding the accessibility to services by all families without burden of traveling outside their county of residence.

The ELRCs serve as regional partners to identify gaps in capacity for child care and assist in recruiting entities to become licensed as child care providers in targeted areas. In addition to the management of the CCW and Keystone STARS programs, the ELRCs build and strengthen relationships with the following groups, including, but not limited to, OCDEL Child Care Certification Regional Offices, CAOs, child welfare agencies, Head Start entities, local Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention, Family Support/Home Visitation programs, stakeholders, community partners, councils, and child care providers through outreach and collaboration efforts in order to achieve enhanced outcomes.

I-4. Objectives.

A. General. The Department’s objective for this RFA is to continue, improve upon, and expand the work of the 19 regional ELRCs. ELRCs are intended to establish a single point of entry for families, early learning providers, local education agencies, and communities to gain information about and access consistent services to support children and families. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning’s (“OCDEL”) goal for the ELRCs is to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care and early learning services for Pennsylvania families and children.

B. Specific. The Department is seeking to enter into agreements with community-based business partners to provide leadership, management, and administration regarding the continued integration of the CCW program and Keystone STARS quality standards. This includes administration of all aspects of the CCW program including, but not limited to, CCW eligibility determinations, provider payments, provider management, and funds management services; and all aspects of the Keystone STARS program, including but not limited to, recruitment, provider coaching, technical assistance, professional development, program monitoring, grants and awards, and child care resource and referral.

Please refer to **Part III, Technical Submittal**, for additional information.

I-5. Access to Documents. An electronic online Procurement Library has been established at www.dhs.pa.gov/contact/DHS-Offices/Pages/OCDEL-ELRC-Procurement-Library.aspx. The Procurement Library contains resource, training, policy, and related materials and documentation that Applicants may find useful in preparing their proposals. All possible effort was made to include complete and accurate materials within the Procurement Library. When a conflict exists, the RFA and all associated Appendices and Addenda will take precedence over materials in the online Procurement Library.

I-6. Method of Award. Applicants may submit applications for one, all, or any combination of the ELRC Regions. Applicants must submit a separate application for each ELRC Region, containing Technical, Cost, and Contractor Partnership Program (“CPP”) Submittals. After final evaluation of applications, if it is determined to be in the Commonwealth’s best interest, the Commonwealth may request that Applicants submit integrated solutions for any combination of ELRC Regions for which they submitted an application.

- I-7. Type of Agreement.** The Department intends to award multiple grant agreements as a result of this RFA. If the Department enters into a grant agreement, it will be a Firm, Fixed Price Grant Agreement containing the IT Contract Terms and Conditions as shown in **Appendix I** of this RFA and the DHS Addendum to the Standard Grant Terms and Conditions with Audit Clause as shown in **Appendix J** of this RFA. Any references in the Appendices to the terms “Contract” or “Contractor” shall refer to the “Grantee” and “Grant Agreement,” respectively. The Department, in its sole discretion, may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, in the judgment of the Department, show them to be qualified, responsible, and capable of performing the Project.
- I-8. Rejection of Applications.** The Department, in its sole and complete discretion, may reject any application received as a result of this RFA.
- I-9. Incurring Costs.** The Commonwealth and the Department are not liable for any costs an Applicant incurs in the preparation and submission of its application, in participating in the RFA process, or in anticipation of Agreement award.
- I-10. Pre-Application Conference.** The Department will hold a Pre-Application Conference as specified in the Calendar of Events. The purpose of this conference is to provide opportunity for clarification of the RFA. Applicants should forward all questions to the Issuing Officer in accordance with **Part I, Section I-11** of this RFA to provide adequate time for analysis before the Department provides an answer. The Pre-Application Conference is for information only. Any answers furnished during the conference will not be official until they have been verified, in writing, by the Department. **Attendance at the Pre-Application Conference is optional, but strongly encouraged.**
- I-11. Questions & Answers.** If an Applicant has questions regarding this RFA, the Applicant must submit the questions by email (**with the subject line “RFA 21-21 Question”**) to the Issuing Officer named in **Part I, Section I-2** of this RFA. If the Applicant has questions, they must be submitted as they arise, but **no later than** the date stated in the Calendar of Events. The Applicant shall not attempt to contact the Issuing Officer by any other means. The Department will post all questions and written answers to the Department of General Services (“DGS”) website by the date stated in the Calendar of Events.

All questions and responses as posted on the DGS website are considered an addendum to, and part of, this RFA in accordance with RFA **Part I, Section I-11** of this RFA.

When questions are submitted after the date specified in the Calendar of Events, the Issuing Officer *may* respond to questions of an administrative nature by directing the questioning Applicant to specific provisions in the RFA. If the Department decides to respond to a non-administrative question *after* the date for receipt of questions, DHS will provide the answer to all Applicants through an addendum.

- I-12. Addenda to the RFA.** If the Department deems it necessary to revise any part of this RFA before the application response date, the Department will post an addendum to eMarketplace at <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx>. It is the Applicants’ responsibility to periodically check the website for any new information or addenda to the RFA. The Department shall not be bound by any verbal information, nor shall it be bound by any written information that is not either contained within the RFA or formally issued as an addendum.

I-13. Response Date. To be considered for selection, Applicants must submit electronic copies of their applications to the Issuing Office no later than the date and time specified in the Calendar of Events. Electronic copies of applications and reference questionnaire forms must be submitted to RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV. Hard copy applications will not be accepted. The Department will reject late applications and reference questionnaires.

I-14. Application Requirements.

A. Application Submission: To be considered, Applicants should submit a complete response to this RFA to the Issuing Office, using the format provided in **Part I, Section I-14.B**, providing **one copy of the Technical Submittal, one copy of the Cost Submittal, and one copy of the Contractor Partnership Program (“CPP”) Submittal**, via email to RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV. The subject line of the email must specify “RFA #21-21 Application”. Email attachments are limited to 10 MB, cumulatively, per email, and files may not be sent in any compressed format. Any part of the application or its attachments over that limit must be sent via separate emails, with each labeled “RFA #21-21 Application Part X of Y”.

The electronic response must be in Microsoft Office or Microsoft Office-compatible format (PDF is considered compatible); and any spreadsheets must be in Microsoft Excel. If an Applicant designates information as confidential or proprietary or trade secret protected in accordance with **Part I, Section I-20**, the Applicant must also include one redacted version of the Technical Submittal, also excluding financial capability information. Applicants may not lock or protect any cells or tabs. Applicants shall make no other distribution of its application to any other Applicant or Commonwealth official or Commonwealth consultant. Each application page should be numbered for ease of reference. An official authorized to bind the Applicant to its provisions must sign the application. If the official signs the **Application Cover Sheet, Appendix A**, and the Application Cover Sheet is attached to the Applicant’s application, the requirement will be met. For this RFA, the application must remain valid for 120 days or until an Agreement is fully executed. If the Department awards an agreement to an Applicant, the contents of the selected Applicant’s application will become, except to the extent the contents are changed through Best and Final Offers or negotiations, contractual obligations.

Each Applicant submitting an application specifically waives the ability to withdraw or modify it, except that the Applicant may withdraw its application by written notice received at the Issuing Office’s address for application delivery prior to the exact hour and date for application receipt. An Applicant may modify its submitted application prior to the exact hour and date set for application receipt only by submitting a new sealed application or sealed modification that complies with the RFA requirements.

B. Application Format: Applicants should submit their applications in the format, including heading descriptions, outlined below. To be considered, the application should respond to all application requirements. Applicants should provide any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to the enumerated categories, as an appendix to the application. All cost data relating to this application should be kept separate from and not included in the Technical Submittal. Applicants should not reiterate technical information in the Cost Submittal. **Each ELRC Region application must be labeled with the ELRC Region number.** If an Applicant is applying for more than one ELRC Region (see **Part I, Section I-6**), the applications

must be submitted separately for each ELRC Region. Each application shall consist of the following three separately sealed submittals:

1. Technical Submittal:

- a.** Applicants should format their responses as outlined below. The Technical Submittal shall include the following sections:
 - Table of Contents
 - Statement of the Project
 - Management Summary
 - Qualifications
 - Financial Capability
 - Work Plan
 - Requirements
 - Performance Standards

The contacts for the ELRC Leadership Reference Questionnaires should submit the completed questionnaires in accordance with **Part III, Section III-3.C**.

- b.** Complete, sign and include **Appendix E, Lobbying Certification** and if applicable, the **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**.
- c.** Complete, and include **Appendix F, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-Recipient Data Sheet**.
- d.** Complete and include **Appendix G, Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form**.

2. Cost Submittal, in response to Part IV; and

3. CPP Submittal, in response to Part V.

Technical Submittals must adhere to the following format:

- a.** Pages must be 8.5 by 11 inches with right and left margins of one inch.
- b.** Must use Arial or Times New Roman font with a type size of 12.
- c.** Section headings, as shown in this **Part I, Section I-14.B, MUST** be used.
- d.** Include a page number and identification of the Applicant in the page footer of each page.
- e.** Specifically reference materials provided in any appendix by page numbers in the body of the application.
- f.** Exceptions for paper and font size are permissible for project schedule (Microsoft Project) or for graphical exhibits and material in appendices.

The Department may request additional information which, in the Department's opinion, is necessary to verify that the Applicant's competence, number of qualified employees, business organization, and financial resources are adequate to perform according to the RFA.

The Department may make investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the Applicant to perform the Project, and the Applicant shall furnish to the Issuing Office all requested information and data. The Department may reject any application if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Applicant fails to satisfy the Department that such Applicant is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the RFA and to complete the Project as specified.

- I-15. Economy of Preparation.** Applicants should prepare applications simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFA.
- I-16. Alternate Applications.** The Department has identified the basic approach to meeting its requirements, allowing Applicants to be creative and propose their best solution to meeting these requirements. The Department will not accept alternate applications.
- I-17. Discussions for Clarifications and Negotiations.** Applicants may be required to make an oral or written clarification of their applications, or both, to the Department for thorough, mutual understanding of the application and clarification of Applicant responsiveness to the solicitation requirements. The Department will initiate requests for clarifications. Clarifications may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of an agreement.

The Department, in its sole discretion, may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, show them to be qualified, responsible, and capable of performing the Project. Negotiations may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of an agreement.

- I-18. Oral or Written Presentations.** Applicants may be required to make an oral or written presentations of their applications to the Department to demonstrate an Applicant's capabilities and ability to provide the services required in the RFA. The Department will initiate requests for presentations; and, for oral presentations, may include a request that Leadership Personnel be present. The oral presentation will be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania or virtually. Presentations may be requested at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of the grant agreement.
- I-19. Prime Applicant Responsibilities.** The selected Applicant must perform services valued at least at 50% of the total agreement cost. Nevertheless, the Department will require the Applicant assume responsibility for all services offered in its application whether it produces them itself or by sub-contract. The Department will consider the selected Applicant to be the sole point of contact for all Agreement matters.
- I-20. Application Contents.**
 - A. Confidential Information.** The Commonwealth does not require, confidential proprietary information or trade secrets be included as part of Applicants' submissions. Except as provided, Applicants should not label applications as confidential or proprietary or trade secret protected. Any Applicant who determines that it must divulge such information as part of its application must submit the signed written statement described in Subsection C below and must provide a redacted version of its application in accordance with **Part I, Section I-14.A**, which

removes only the confidential proprietary information and trade secrets, for required public disclosure purposes.

- B. Commonwealth Use.** All material submitted with the application shall be the property of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has the right to use any or all ideas not protected by intellectual property rights that are presented in any application regardless of whether the application becomes part of an Agreement. Notwithstanding any Applicant copyright designations contained on applications, the Commonwealth shall have the right to make copies and distribute applications internally and to comply with public record or other disclosure requirements under the provisions of any Commonwealth or United States statute or regulation, or rule or order of any court of competent jurisdiction.
- C. Public Disclosure.** After the award of a grant, all applications are subject to disclosure in response to a request for public records made under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know-Law, 65 P.S. § 67.101, et seq. If an application contains confidential proprietary information or trade secrets, the Applicant must provide a signed written statement to this effect with the submission in accordance with 65 P.S. § 67.707(b) for the information to be considered exempt under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(11) from public records requests. Refer to **Appendix C** of the RFA for a **Trade Secret Confidential Proprietary Information Notice Form** that may be utilized as the signed written statement. If financial capability information is submitted in response to **Part III, Section III-5** such financial capability information is exempt from public records disclosure under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(26).

I-21. Best and Final Offers (“BAFO”).

- A.** While not required, the Department may conduct discussions with Applicants for the purpose of obtaining BAFOs. To obtain BAFOs, the Department may do one or more of the following, in any combination and order:
 - 1. Schedule oral presentations;
 - 2. Request revised applications; and
 - 3. Enter pre-selection negotiations.
- B.** The following Applicants will **not** be invited by the Department to submit a BAFO:
 - 1. Those Applicants, which the Department has determined to be not responsible or whose applications the Department has determined to be not responsive.
 - 2. Those Applicants, which the Department has determined from the submitted and gathered financial and other information, that do not possess the financial capability, experience, or qualifications to ensure good faith performance of the grant agreement.
 - 3. Those Applicants whose raw score for their Technical Submittal is less than 75% of the total amount of raw technical points allotted to the technical criterion.

The Department may further limit participation in the BAFO process to those remaining responsible Applicants that the Department has, within its discretion, determined to be within the top competitive range of responsive applications.

- C. The Evaluation Criteria found in **Part II, Section II-4**, shall also be used to evaluate the BAFOs.
- D. Price reductions offered shall have no effect upon the Applicant's Technical Submittal.
- E. The Department, in its sole discretion, also may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, in the judgement of DHS, show them to be qualified, responsible, and capable of performing the Project.

I-22. News Releases. Applicants shall not issue news releases, Internet postings, advertisements or any other public communications pertaining to this Project without prior written approval of the Department, and then only in coordination with the Department.

I-23. Restriction of Contact. From the issue date of this RFA until the Department selects an application for award, the Issuing Officer is the sole point of contact concerning this RFA. Any violation of this condition may be cause for the Department to reject the offending Applicant's application. If the Department later discovers that the Applicant has engaged in any violations of this condition, the Department may reject the offending Applicant's application or rescind its grant Agreement. Applicants shall not distribute any part of their applications beyond the Issuing Office. An Applicant who shares information contained in its application with other Commonwealth personnel or consultants or competing Applicant personnel may be disqualified.

I-24. Department Participation. The selected Applicant shall provide all services, supplies, facilities, and other support necessary to complete the identified work, except as otherwise provided in **Part I, Section I-24**. The Department will provide training materials, policy direction, performance standards, and operational support. The Department will not provide office space. At its discretion, the Department may commence monitoring before the effective or operational dates of the Agreement, and before the formal Readiness Review period. The Department will monitor selected Applicants for compliance with the requirements of the ELRC grant Agreement. Designated staff will coordinate the project, provide or arrange for technical assistance, monitor the requirements of the Readiness Review, and confirm compliance with grant agreement requirements and OCDEL policies and procedures through ongoing monitoring and communication.

I-25. Term of Agreement. The term of the Agreement will commence on the Effective Date and will end five years after the Effective Date. The Department will fix the Effective Date after the Agreement has been fully executed by the selected Applicant and by the Commonwealth and all approvals required by the Commonwealth have been obtained. The selected Applicant shall not start the performance of any work prior to the Effective Date of the Agreement and the Commonwealth shall not be liable to pay the selected Applicant for any service or work performed or expenses incurred before the Effective Date.

Agreements for selected Applicants in ELRC Regions 5 and 18 are anticipated to become effective approximately one year after the Effective Dates of the other ELRC Regions due to the terms of the existing Agreements for those Regions.

- I-26. Applicant's Representations and Authorizations.** By submitting its application, each Applicant understands, represents, and acknowledges that:
- A.** All Applicant's information and representations in the application are material and important, and the Department will rely upon its contents in awarding the Agreement. The Commonwealth may treat any misstatement, omission or misrepresentation as fraudulent concealment of the true facts relating to the application, punishable pursuant to 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904.
 - B.** The Applicant has arrived at the price(s) and amounts in its application independently and without consultation, communication, or Agreement with any other Applicant or potential Applicant.
 - C.** The Applicant has not disclosed the price(s), the amount of the application, nor the approximate price(s) or amount(s) of its application to any other firm or person who is an Applicant or potential applicant, and the Applicant shall not disclose any of these items on or before the application submission deadline specified in the Calendar of Events.
 - D.** The Applicant has not attempted, nor will it attempt, to induce any firm or person to refrain from submitting an application, or to submit an application higher than its application, or to submit any intentionally high or noncompetitive application or other form of complementary application.
 - E.** The Applicant makes its application in good faith and not pursuant to any Agreement or discussion with, or inducement from, any firm or person to submit a complementary or other noncompetitive application.
 - F.** To the best knowledge of the person signing the application for the Applicant, the Applicant, its affiliates, subsidiaries, officers, directors, and employees are not currently under investigation by any governmental agency and have not in the last **four** years been convicted or found liable for any act prohibited by State or Federal law in any jurisdiction, involving conspiracy or collusion with respect to bidding or proposing on any public contract, except as the Applicant has disclosed in its application.
 - G.** To the best of the knowledge of the person signing the application for the Applicant and except as the Applicant has otherwise disclosed in its application, the Applicant has no outstanding, delinquent obligations to the Commonwealth including, but not limited to, any state tax liability not being contested on appeal.
 - H.** The Applicant is not currently under suspension or debarment by the Commonwealth and has not been precluded from participation in any federally funded health care program by any other state or the federal government, and if the Applicant cannot so certify, then it shall submit along with its application a written explanation of why it cannot make such certification.
 - I.** The Applicant has not made, under separate Agreement with the Department, any recommendations to the Department concerning the need for the services or the specifications for the services described in the application.

- J. Each Applicant, by submitting its application, authorizes Commonwealth agencies to release to the Department information concerning the Applicant's Pennsylvania taxes, unemployment compensation and workers' compensation liabilities.
- K. Until the selected Applicant receives a fully executed and approved written Agreement from the Issuing Office, no legal and valid Agreement exists, in law or in equity, and the Applicant shall not begin to perform.
- L. The Applicant is not currently engaged, and will not during the duration of the Agreement, engage in a boycott of a person or an entity based in or doing business with a jurisdiction that the Commonwealth is not prohibited by Congressional statute from engaging in trade or commerce.

I-27. Notifications of Selection for Negotiations and Award.

- A. **Negotiations.** The Department will notify all Applicants in writing of the Applicants selected for negotiations after the Department has determined, taking into consideration all evaluation factors, the applications that are the most advantageous to the Department.
- B. **Award.** Applicants whose applications are not selected will be notified when negotiations have been successfully completed and the Department has received the final negotiated Agreements signed by the selected Applicants.

I-28. Debriefing Conferences. Upon notification of award as provided in **I-27.B**, Applicants whose applications were not selected may request the opportunity to be debriefed by emailing the Issuing Officer identified in **Section I-2**. The purpose of a debriefing is to assist the Applicant in understanding some of the strengths and weaknesses of certain aspects of its technical Submittal and will not compare the Applicant with other Applicants, other than the position of the Applicant's application in relation to all other Applicant applications. In its sole discretion, the Issuing Office may schedule a call to read the written debriefing script to the Applicant or e-mail the debriefing script to the Applicant. Any questions concerning the debriefing must be submitted, in writing, to the Issuing Officer no later than the date stated in the debriefing script. In its sole discretion, DHS may respond to some, all, or none of the Applicant's questions.

I-29. Use of Electronic Versions of this RFA. This RFA is being made available by electronic means. If an Applicant electronically accepts the RFA, the Applicant accepts full responsibility to ensure that no changes are made to the RFA. If a conflict arises between a version of the RFA in the Applicant's possession and the Issuing Office's version of the RFA, the Issuing Office's version shall govern.

I-30. Information Technology Policies. This RFA is subject to the Information Technology Policies ("ITPs") issued by the Office of Administration, Office for Information Technology and DHS Business and Technical Standards ("BTSs") created and published by DHS. ITPs may be found at <http://www.oa.pa.gov/Policies/Pages/itp.aspx>. The DHS Business and Technical Standards may be found at <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/Business%20and%20Tech%20Standards/Business-and-Technology-Standards.aspx>.

All applications must be submitted on the basis that all ITPs and BTSs are applicable to this procurement. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to read and be familiar with the ITPs and BTSs. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Applicant believes that any ITP or BTS is not applicable to this procurement, it must list all such ITPs and BTS in its technical response and explain why it believes the ITP or DHS BTS is not applicable. DHS may, in its sole discretion, accept or reject any request that an ITP or DHS BTS not be considered to be applicable to the procurement. The Applicant's failure to list an ITP or DHS BTS will result in its waiving its right to do so later, unless DHS in its sole discretion, determines that it would be in the best interest of the Commonwealth to waive the pertinent ITP or BTS.

The selected Applicant shall comply with state and federal law and policies requiring electronic and information technology being accessible to individuals with disabilities, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ("WCAG") 2.0, and Commonwealth ITP ACC001-Information Technology Accessibility Policy.

PART II

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

II-1. Mandatory Responsiveness Requirements. To be eligible for selection, an application must:

- A. Be timely received from an Applicant (see **Part I, Section I-13**);
- B. Be properly signed by the Applicant (see **Part I, Section I-14.A**);

II-2. Technical Nonconforming Applications. The two Mandatory Responsiveness Requirements set forth in **Section II-1** are the only RFA requirements that the Commonwealth will consider to be *non-waivable*. The Department may, in its sole discretion, (1) waive any other technical or immaterial nonconformities in an Applicant's application, (2) allow the Applicant to cure the nonconformity, or (3) consider the nonconformity in the scoring of the application.

II-3. Evaluation. The Department has selected a committee of qualified personnel to review and evaluate the Technical Submittals of the timely submitted applications. The Department will provide written notice of its selection for negotiations the responsible Applicants whose applications are determined to be the most advantageous to the Commonwealth after taking into consideration all evaluation factors.

DHS will not review or score the CPP Submittal. Once an Applicant has been selected for negotiations, DHS will review the CPP Submittal of the selected Applicant and may request changes to the selected Applicant's CPP Submittal during grant Agreement negotiations.

II-4. Evaluation Criteria. The following criteria will be used in evaluating each application submitted for each ELRC Region indicated in the RFA:

A. Technical: The Department has established the weight for the Technical criterion as **75%** of the total points. Evaluation will be based upon the following:

- **Soundness of Approach.** This includes, but is not limited to, the Applicant's technical approach for completion of all services by this RFA, if it is responsive to all requirements of the RFA and if it meets the Project's objectives.
- **Applicant Qualifications.** This includes, but is not limited to, the ability of the Applicant to meet the terms of the RFA, including the time constraints involved with the Project and the quality, relevancy, and recentness of projects completed. This also includes the Applicant's ability to undertake a Project of this size.
- **Personnel Qualifications.** This includes, but is not limited to, the competence and sufficiency of the personnel and staff who would be assigned to the Project by the Applicant.

- **Understanding the Project.** This includes the Applicant's understanding of Commonwealth's needs that generated the RFA, the objectives of the RFA, and of the nature and scope of the work involved.

The final Technical scores are determined by giving the maximum number of technical points available to the application with the highest raw technical score. The remaining applications are rated by applying the formula located at:

https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx

- B. Cost:** The Department has established the weight for the Cost criterion for this RFA as **25%** of the total points. The cost criterion is rated by giving the application with the lowest total cost the maximum number of Cost points available. The remaining applications are rated by applying the formula located at:

https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx

- II-5. Applicant Responsibility.** To be responsible, an Applicant must submit a responsive application and possess the capability to fully perform the Agreement requirements in all respects and the integrity and reliability for the good faith performance of the Agreement.

For an Applicant to be considered responsible for this RFA and eligible for selection for BAFO and selection for negotiations:

- A.** The total score for the Technical Submittal of the application must be greater than or equal to **75%** of the **available raw technical points**; and
- B.** The Applicant's conflict-free information must demonstrate that the Applicant meets the conflict of interest requirements defined in **Part III, Section III-6.D**. If the Applicant is not conflict-free at the time of application submittal, the Applicant's work plan, detailing the sequencing of events and the time required to become conflict-free, must sufficiently demonstrate to DHS' satisfaction that the Applicant will meet the conflict of interest requirements by the Effective Date of the grant agreement.
- C.** The Applicant's financial information must demonstrate that the Applicant possesses the financial capability for the good faith performance of the Agreement. The Commonwealth will review the Applicant's previous three financial statements, any additional information received from the Applicant, and any other publicly available financial information concerning the Applicant and assess each Applicant's financial capacity based on calculating and analyzing various financial ratios, and comparison with industry standards and trends.

An Applicant that fails to demonstrate sufficient financial capability to ensure good faith performance of the Agreement as specified herein may be considered by the Department, in its sole discretion, for BAFO or negotiation contingent upon such Applicant providing performance security for the first Agreement year cost proposed by the Applicant in a form acceptable to the

Department. The Department may request documentation or assurances of the Applicant's ability to provide such performance security as part of the BAFO or negotiation processes; however, the Applicant must provide performance security as part of the award process. Based on the financial condition of the Applicant, the Department may require a certified or bank (cashier's) check, letter of credit, or a performance bond conditioned upon the faithful performance of the Agreement by the Applicant. The required performance security must be issued or executed by a bank or surety company authorized to do business in the Commonwealth. The cost of the required performance security will be the sole responsibility of the Applicant and cannot increase the Applicant's cost application or the Agreement cost to the Commonwealth.

Further, the Department will award an Agreement only to an Applicant determined to be responsible in accordance with the most current version of Commonwealth Management Directive 215.9, Contractor Responsibility Program.

II-6. Final Ranking and Award.

- A.** After any BAFO process is conducted, for the applications submitted for each ELRC Region, the Issuing Office will combine the evaluation committee's final technical scores and the final cost scores, in accordance with the relative weights assigned to these areas as set forth in this **Part II**.
- B.** The Issuing Office will rank responsible Applicants according to the total overall score assigned to each, in descending order, for each ELRC Region.
- C.** For each ELRC Region and except as provided in **Section II-6.D**, the Department must select for negotiations the Applicant with the highest overall score.
- D.** For one, all, or some ELRC Regions, the Department has the discretion to reject all applications or cancel the RFA, at any time prior to the time an Agreement is fully executed, when it is in the best interests of the Commonwealth. The reasons for the rejection or cancellation shall be made part of the RFA file.

PART III

TECHNICAL SUBMITTAL

III-1. Statement of the Project. State in succinct terms your understanding of the Project and the service required by this RFA. The Applicant's response should demonstrate that the Applicant fully understands the scope of services to be provided, the Applicant's responsibilities, the performance expectations for the relevant ELRC Region, and how the Applicant will effectively manage the grant. The Applicant should demonstrate its understanding of the demographics (family, early learning and education providers, and community) of the ELRC Region and describe its overall approach to the Project.

The Statement of the Project should discuss specific issues and risks associated with providing the required services and should include proposed solutions to those issues and risks that are progressive, innovative, ambitious, and achievable. If the Applicant is proposing to subcontract portions of the work, the Applicant should identify the subcontractor and describe the general scope of work to be subcontracted.

Applicant Response

III-2. Management Summary. Include a narrative description of the proposed effort and a list of the items to be delivered and services to be provided. The Applicant should condense and highlight the contents of the Technical Submittal in a manner that allows a broad understanding of the entire Technical Submittal.

Applicant Response

III-3. Qualifications.

A. Company Overview. The Applicant should describe its corporate history and relevant experience. The Applicant should provide a corporate organizational chart.

The Applicant should describe its corporate identity, including the name, address, telephone number, and email address for the legal entity that is submitting the application. In addition, the Applicant should provide the name of the principal officers, a description of its major services, and any specific licenses and accreditations held by the Applicant.

The Applicant should provide similar organizational background information on any significant subcontractor for services. A "significant subcontractor" is defined as an organization undertaking more than 10% on the total cost basis of the work associated with this RFA.

If the experience of any proposed subcontractor is being used to meet the qualifications and requirements of this RFA, the Applicant should provide the same information as listed above for the subcontractor. This information must be presented separately within this section, clearly identifying the subcontractor experience and name of the subcontractor.

The Applicant should disclose any contract or Agreement cancellations, or terminations within five years preceding the issuance of this RFA. If a contract or Agreement was canceled or terminated for lack of performance, the Applicant must provide details on the customer's allegations, the Applicant's position relevant to the allegations, and the final resolution of the cancellation or the termination. The Applicant must include each customer's Company or entity name, address, contact name, phone number, and email address.

The Department may disqualify an Applicant based on a failure to disclose such a cancelled or terminated contract or Agreement. If the Department learns about such a failure to disclose after an Agreement is awarded, the Department may terminate the Agreement.

Applicant Response

- B. Prior Experience.** The Applicant should include experience and similar types of experience in administering human services programs, including, but not limited to: determining eligibility for families and providers; coaching early learning programs in developmentally appropriate practices with children; resource and referral services; managing budgets and issuing provider payments; performing data entry, providing technical assistance and offering professional development to early learning service providers; implementing and managing subgrants and awards developing programs through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion; working with at-risk populations; and encouraging early learning providers to access and attend additional professional development that will lead to academic degrees. Experience should be work done by individuals who will be assigned to this Project as well as that of the Applicant. Studies or projects referred to should be identified and the name of the customer shown, including the name, address, and telephone number of the responsible official of the customer, company, or agency who may be contacted.

Applicant Response

- C. Personnel.** Include the number of personnel who will be engaged in the work and provide their physical location (main office, satellite offices, co-located offices, remote/home headquartered locations, and other locations). Describe how the needs of families and providers will be met by the identified personnel.

For ELRC Leadership, defined by OCDEL as the ELRC Director, include the employee's name and, through a resume or similar document, the ELRC Leadership's education and experience in similar size and scope projects. Indicate the responsibilities the individual shall have in this Project and how long they have been with your company. The exact position title of ELRC Leadership may differ from that listed above.

For non-ELRC Leadership positions, including Subcontractor Leadership (if responsible for CCW eligibility or Keystone STARS), Financial/Budget Manager, CCW Eligibility Manager, and Provider/Quality Manager, include position descriptions and minimum qualifications. Exact position titles of non-ELRC Leadership positions may differ from the ones listed above. Examples of job descriptions for these positions are included in the Procurement Library. These job descriptions are provided for informational purposes only and applicants are not required to use these job descriptions in their applications.

Submitted responses are not to include personal identifiable information that will, or will be likely to, require redaction to release of the application under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, including but not limited to home addresses and phone numbers, Social Security Numbers, driver's license numbers or numbers from state identification cards issued in lieu of a driver's license, and financial account numbers. If the Commonwealth requires any of this information for security validation or other purposes, the information will be requested separately and as necessary.

Include organizational charts outlining the staffing, reporting relationships and staff members in its description. Show the total number of staff proposed and indicate the Full Time Equivalents ("FTE") to account for any additional staff (non-Leadership Personnel) that are not assigned on a full-time basis. Provide similar information for any subcontractors that are proposed. The organizational chart must illustrate the lines of authority, designate the positions responsible and accountable for the completion of each component in the RFA, indicate the names and job title and number of personnel that will be assigned to each role, and the number of hours per week each person is projected to work on the Project. The organizational chart must clearly indicate any functions that are subcontracted along with the name of the subcontracting entities and the services they shall perform.

The Applicant should identify a minimum of three client references for each ELRC Leadership position. All client references for ELRC Leadership must be outside clients (non-DHS) who can give information on the individual's experience and competence to perform tasks similar to those requested in this RFA. ELRC Leadership may be a member of the Applicant's organization or of any subcontractor included in the Applicant's application.

The Applicant must submit **Appendix D, ELRC Leadership Individual Reference Questionnaire**, directly to the contacts listed. The contacts should complete the questionnaire and return it electronically to the Issuing Officer identified in **Part I, Section I-2**. Completed questionnaires should be sent, as attachments to, RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV by the due date and time indicated. **The contacts should include "ELRC Leadership Reference Questionnaire for RFA 21-21" in the subject line of the email and the body should indicate the name of the Applicant, Region number, and the name of the ELRC Leadership personnel.** Questionnaires submitted after the due date and time will be rejected.

ELRC Leadership Diversions or Replacement. Once ELRC Leadership personnel are approved by the Department, the selected Applicant may not divert or replace personnel without prior approval of the Department's Grant Administrator. The selected Applicant must provide notice of a proposed diversion or replacement to the Department's Grant Administrator at least 30 calendar days in advance and provide the name, qualifications, and background check (if required) of the person who will replace the diverted personnel. The Department's Grant Administrator will notify the selected Applicant within 10 business days of the diversion notice whether the proposed diversion is acceptable and if the replacement was approved.

"Divert" or "diversion" is defined as the transfer of personnel by the selected Applicant(s) or its subcontractor to another assignment within the control of either the Applicant or subcontractor. Advance notification and approval requirements do not include changes in ELRC Leadership due to resignations, death, disability, dismissal for cause or dismissal as a result of the termination of

a subcontract or any other causes that are beyond the control of the selected Applicant(s) or its subcontractor. The Department's Grant Administrator must approve the replacement personnel.

The Department's Grant Administrator may request that the selected Applicant(s) remove a person from this Project at any time. For vacancies other than those caused by diversions and unless otherwise approved by the Grant Administrator, the selected Applicant shall have 15 business days to interim fill and 90 calendar days to permanently fill the vacancy with a person acceptable in terms of experience and skills, subject to the Department Grant Administrator's approval.

Applicant Response

D. Subcontractors. Provide a subcontracting plan for all subcontractors who will be assigned to the Project. The selected Applicant(s) is prohibited from subcontracting or outsourcing any part of this Project without the express written approval of the Commonwealth. Upon award of the Grant Agreement, subcontractors included in the application submission are approved. For each position included in your subcontracting plan provide:

1. Name of subcontractor;
2. Address of subcontractor;
3. Primary contact name, email address and phone number;
4. Type of organization;
5. Date of formation;
6. Status of charter and corporate charter number;
7. Unique Entity Identifier Number;
8. SAP/SRM Vendor Number;
9. Number of years worked with the subcontractor;
10. Number of employees by job category to work on this Project;
11. Description of services to be performed;
12. What percentage of time the staff will be dedicated to this Project;
13. Geographical location of staff; and
14. Resumes (if appropriate and available).

If applicable, the Applicant's subcontractor information should include the employees' names, education and experience in the services outlined in this RFA. Information provided should also include the responsibilities each individual shall have in this Project and how long each has been with subcontractor's company.

Applicant Response

III-4. Financial Capability. Describe your company's financial stability and economic capability to perform the Agreement requirements. Provide your company's financial statements (audited, if available) for the past three fiscal years. Financial statements must include the company's Balance Sheet and Income Statement or Profit/Loss Statements. Also include a Dun & Bradstreet comprehensive report, if available. If your company is a publicly traded company, please provide a link to your financial records on your company website in lieu of providing hardcopies. The

Commonwealth may request additional information it deems necessary to evaluate an Applicant's financial capability.

Applicant Response.

III-5. Work Plan. Describe in narrative form your technical plan for accomplishing the work, using the task descriptions identified within this RFA as a reference point. Applicants should provide a response for all tasks with sufficient detail to demonstrate the Applicant's planned approach and processes for successful implementation of the Project. The relationship between ELRC Leadership and the specific tasks, assignments, and requirements proposed to accomplish the scope of work should also be described.

The Applicant should describe its management approach, including how it will implement its proposed work plan. Where applicable, the Applicant should provide specific examples of methodologies or approaches, including monitoring approaches, it will use to fulfill the RFA Tasks and Requirements, and examples of similar experiences and approaches used on comparable projects.

The Work Plan should:

- Align with OCDEL's Mission, Vision, and Priorities, *see* <https://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/>;
- Align with DHS and the Department of Education's equity work and priorities, *see* <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/about/DHS-Information/Pages/Learn-About-DHS.aspx> and <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/equityandinclusion/Pages/default.aspx>;
- Reflect the needs of families, children, child care providers and early education professionals;
- Detail utilization of data, research, and best practices that contain measurable results and outcomes;
- Focus on quality assurance, as well as compliance monitoring, for all services;
- Address the needs of unserved and underserved populations and offer local capacity building supports;
- Leverage and broaden partnerships at the local, regional, and statewide levels; and
- Allow for flexibility to adjust to the changing needs of OCDEL.

Applicant Response

TASKS:

A. Leadership

- 1. Readiness Review.** The selected Applicant must participate in the ELRC Readiness and Performance Review ("Readiness Review") process, which will be conducted onsite by the Department. Readiness Review will begin prior to the date when the selected Applicant(s) are fully responsible for the implementation of all grant activities. This date may be prior to the Effective Date of the agreement.

The primary objectives of the Readiness Review are to:

- Establish a process for transition of responsibilities;

- Complete knowledge transfer and understanding;
- Establish accurate assessments and strong accountability controls;
- Establish compliance practices that align with current state and federal regulatory requirements;
- Mitigate risk to the Commonwealth, Department, clients, and providers;
- Establish facilities and appropriate infrastructure; and
- Review plans and procedures subject to annual review and approval by OCDEL.

During Readiness Review, the selected Applicant(s) must:

- a. Demonstrate knowledge regarding, and application or utilization of:
 - CCW regulations and policies;
 - Keystone STARS and other quality program policies;
 - PELICAN CCW and Keys to Quality, COMPASS, Provider Self Service, and eClient Information System (“eCIS”);
 - Professional Development (“PD”) Registry;
 - Fiscal and funds management requirements;
 - Payment management requirements;
 - Provider management requirements; and
 - Resource and referral requirements.
- b. Verify that the following have been implemented or completed:
 - Develop procedures regarding adherence to ELRC grant performance standards and objectives;
 - Develop procedures regarding adherence to the Department’s time constraints;
 - Provide high-speed internet access and toll-free calling option for families at ELRC primary and satellite office locations;
 - Develop procedures to address how the ELRC will accommodate access to services for families who live in remote areas or a far distance from office locations;
 - Develop a plan for collection and storage of data and records, including separate, secure areas with limited access for the storage of confidential files;
 - Establish staffing levels and organizational structure that will meet the needs of all families and providers to be served;
 - Obtain child abuse, state police and federal criminal history clearances and certifications for all relevant staff as identified in the Section 6344 of the Child Protective Services Law (“CPSL”), 63 Pa.C.S. § 6344, related to employees having contact with children;
 - Document that all required staff have taken Department-approved mandated reporter training as required under the CPSL;
 - Develop operational plans, including, but not limited to, staff training plan, plan for serving families with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”), procedure plan for client and consumer grievances, emergency plan, and disaster recovery plan;
 - Provide that the facility offices are Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliant, have sufficient space for conducting meetings, and have areas to conduct interviews with families in a confidential manner (see **Section III-6.L.** for additional facility requirements); and

- Make appropriate requests for staff access to Commonwealth data systems including signed secure user Agreements.

The selected Applicant(s) will not be permitted to begin operating if it does not show acceptable evidence of readiness during Readiness Review. If needed, the selected Applicant must prepare a Plan of Correction (“POC”) that addresses all outstanding issues. OCDEL will review and monitor the POC through regular meetings.

The Applicant’s response to this Task should:

- Provide a description of the preparations that will occur prior to Readiness Review;
- Describe how the requirements of the Readiness Review listed above have been or will be accomplished prior to the Readiness Review.

Readiness Review is not a paid task.

- 2. Transition.** The selected Applicant(s) must effectuate a Grantee-to-Grantee transition of the current ELRC tasks and requirements. The grant Agreement(s) will provide up to a three-month period for transition from the incumbent Grantee to the selected Applicant, unless extended by the Commonwealth.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Provide a detailed Transition Plan within 30 calendar days of the Effective Date of the grant Agreement;
- Submit an updated, detailed Transition Plan within 10 business days of the completion date of the Readiness Review;
- Maintain continuity of services to families and providers through collaborative efforts; and
- Establish and maintain procedures regarding the storage of all files, including electronic files, per Department policies and specifications.

- 3. Operations.** The selected Applicant(s) is responsible for the efficient development and execution of all ELRC operational practices. The operational practices must be in accordance with OCDEL policies and procedures and meet the needs of families and providers.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Office Resources

- Provide sufficient support and equipment for staff, including, but not limited to: computers, monitors, and associated equipment; network and internet connectivity; supplies; and clerical assistance and administrative supports to perform the full range of ELRC services at its main office.
 - For staff who work remotely or are home headquartered, the selected Applicant must provide all necessary equipment and resources, including, but not limited to, laptop computers, cell phones, hot spots, and access to agency electronic files, to perform their full range of work duties.

Please refer to **Section III-6.L**, Facility Requirements, for additional information concerning office resources requirements.

b. Accessibility

- Establish all physical office locations in an area with high-speed internet accessibility and capability to deliver services in other counties included in the ELRC Region.
 - Provide a detailed explanation, if needed, of whether there are any internet accessibility issues in the ELRC Region, and how they will be addressed.
- Establish a toll-free telephone number for any family or provider who lives within the ELRC Region.
- Have the ability to accept fax and email from families and providers.
- Respond to voice, fax, and email messages within one business day.
- Establish and utilize policies and procedures regarding practices needed to serve families and providers with LEP.
- Create and maintain an ELRC Region website according to Department standards. The website must include but is not limited to: ELRC location address(es), hours of operation, telephone number, email address, counties served, services available to families and providers, and resource information.

c. Scheduling

- Create a staff schedule that promotes availability of staff to answer questions from the public, based on community need.
- Establish and publicize a schedule at the primary and satellite office locations where families and providers can access information, person-to-person communication, and schedule in-person meetings. During these scheduled times, the toll-free telephone number may not have voice mail as the primary mechanism for handling incoming telephone calls except on approved closures, state recognized holidays or, in the case of County Government managed programs, county recognized holidays.
- Establish flexible office hours and work schedules as needed, to allow accessibility and services to families and providers who cannot contact or meet with ELRC staff during scheduled office hours, in order to meet the needs of the community.

d. Notifications/Requests

- Notify and request approval from the Department at least 90 calendar days prior to relocating a physical office location of the ELRC.
- Submit to the Department a copy of the ELRC office work hours schedule.
- Appoint a designee(s), in the absence of the ELRC Director or other ELRC Leadership, with authorization to implement any operational requests directed by the Department and to provide all requested information to the Department within Department-prescribed timeframes.

4. Training. The selected applicant must conduct initial and ongoing training of all staff regarding their job duties, responsibilities, and coordination of work.

The selected applicant shall:

- Train all new staff within 60 calendar days of their start date on all aspects of their job assignments. Provide ongoing staff training within 30 calendar days of any updates or changes to any aspect of their job assignments.
- Cross-train staff so core operational functions can be performed in any circumstances involving staff vacancies and absences.
- Develop and maintain a training plan. Up to two days annually can be designated as training days for all ELRC staff. Such days must be publicly announced at least two weeks prior to the event if the ELRC plans to close operations for the day.
- Attend required trainings, as directed by OCDEL, such as, but not limited to: Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania's QRIS, Keystone STARS Performance Standards, Early Learning Standards, and P3 Systems.

5. Turnover. Turnover is defined as those activities that the selected Applicant(s) must perform at the end of the grant period, to turnover service delivery to a successor grantee or to Commonwealth resources.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Cooperation

- Work cooperatively with any successor grantee and the Department.
- Develop and submit a Turnover Plan that details the proposed transition schedule, activities, and resource requirements for the necessary turnover tasks to be implemented, upon the specified by OCDEL.
- Execute the approved Turnover Plan in cooperation with the successor grantee's Transition Plan.
- Work closely with the Department to confirm that the turnover of responsibilities and the necessary knowledge transfer are completed by the end of the grant period.
- Pay all costs related to the transfer and turnover of materials and responsibilities as a normal part of doing business with the Commonwealth.

b. Records, Equipment, and Supplies

- Confirm all hard copy records, supplies, and equipment are boxed, labeled, and organized in alphabetical order, and by program years.
- Transfer all electronic documents to the successor grantee prior to the grant end date.
- Assume responsibility of the costs and transfer of all files, office equipment, and supplies to the successor grantee or Department.
- Confirm all documents and logs are up-to-date when transferred to the successor grantee or Department.
- Distribute or dispose of unwanted supplies and equipment as directed by the Department.

c. Service Delivery

- Implement procedures and practices that limit any adverse impact to program stakeholders during the transfer of services.
- Maintain service delivery staffing levels during the turnover period unless otherwise expressly approved by the DHS Grant Administrator.

- Not prohibit staff from accepting employment or positions with the Department or any successor grantee.
 - The Department will work with the incumbent and successor grantees on the timing of any transition of incumbent staff.
 - Turnover the operation and management of all service delivery functions to the successor grantee or the DHS Grant Administrator.
 - This turnover must be planned and managed in an orderly fashion so that no disruption of service to children, families, or providers occurs.
 - Final payments may be withheld pending the successful completion of OCDEL transition requirements.
- d. Technology
- Provide IT support for the transfer of electronic files to the successor grantee or Department to confirm all files are readable, compatible, and organized in a manner to allow for full transfer of the electronic files.
 - Provide access to the archive system and purge procedures to the Department, as requested.
 - Purge all files and documents that are not required to be archived per Department policies and procedures.
- e. Notifications/Requests
- Notify the DHS Grant Administrator of reassignment or termination of employment of any of staff during Turnover prior to such reassignment or termination for DHS to determine the need for additional personnel for continuity of services
 - Provide to the DHS Grant Administrator within 15 business days of the request any documentation and records requested by the Department.
 - Respond within two business days to any DHS Grant Administrator and Bureau of ELRC Operations requests regarding turnover information.

Applicant Response

B. Communication and Collaboration Building.

- 1. Communication.** All communications and branding shall be consistent with the Department's use of logo and style guides as prescribed by the Department. The selected Applicant(s) shall establish effective communication strategies for use with OCDEL, parents/caregivers, child care providers, and regional stakeholders, which includes, but is not limited to, timely communication in response to OCDEL deadlines and priorities.

The selected Applicant(s), subgrantees, and any parent or subsidiary organizations or similar related entities of selected Applicant(s) and subgrantees, may not use any information obtained as a result of operating the ELRC for any purpose other than those permitted by the agreement or OCDEL policy, and approved by DHS. The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Prominently display the title, "Early Learning Resource Center" at all office locations and on all correspondence to parents, providers, and the public.

- Prominently include DHS-approved ELRC branding on any form of marketing, communication, or publications associated with activities funded by OCDEL.
- Confirm that all staff identify themselves as ELRC staff for any services or actions funded by OCDEL.
- Develop and implement consistent and professional communication strategies regarding all ELRC and OCDEL services and programs for ELRC staff, early learning practitioners, families, and stakeholders.
- Differentiate between communications of the ELRC and communications of the selected Applicant’s legal entity.
- Provide comprehensive information on all ELRC services, including new and existing opportunities that will improve outcomes for children and families.
- Follow or adhere to the current CCW and Keystone STARS “By the Numbers” document that can be referenced in the Procurement Library.
- Engage in periodic face-to-face or virtual meetings with OCDEL staff and key ELRC and subcontractor leadership personnel.
- Distribute to families and providers, upon request of the Department, information regarding:
 - services offered by federal or state agencies;
 - provider agreement policy information from CCW; and
 - information on quality initiatives and support services offered by the Department or the Department’s business partners.

2. Collaboration and Coordination. The selected Applicant(s) will work in an integrated and collaborative way both locally, regionally, and statewide within the early learning service community to serve as a resource and referral entity, implement the CCW and Keystone STARS programs, and facilitate and engage in community planning, support, partnerships, and activities with early childhood education providers, as well as other human service agencies.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Collaboration with Partner Agencies

- Establish a close working relationship with the CAO within the ELRC Region regarding applications submitted via COMPASS/eCIS.
- Establish a working relationship with OCDEL-funded Professional Development Organizations (“PDOs”) which includes, but is not limited to:
 - understanding PDO offerings and eligibility criteria;
 - participating in regional PDO committees;
 - sharing workforce needs with PDOs to advance Keystone STARS move-up goals; and;
 - referring individuals to PDO for their credit-bearing professional development needs, specifically to advance individuals’ Career Pathway levels.
- Collaborate with Pennsylvania Key staff on quality systems supported by OCDEL, including, but not limited to: systems development and the PD Registry, coaching supports, Career Pathway, Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (“IECMH”) coordination, communication support, and Program Quality Assessments.

- Communicate and collaborate with Early Intervention and IECMH in supporting providers to resolve issues or concerns, and to assist in the prevention of suspension and expulsion of children.
 - Establish a relationship with the local Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs in order to support referral, evaluation and planning for EI service delivery for eligible children.
- b. Collaboration with DHS/OCDEL**
- Maintain ongoing collaboration with all OCDEL programs, and staff within those programs, to confirm quality and seamless service delivery to children and families.
 - Establish a working relationship with OCDEL Regional Certification Offices which includes, but is not be limited to:
 - support of OCDEL’s Bureau of Certification efforts;
 - participate in provider orientation activities as it relates to CCW and Keystone STARS;
 - provide guidance and coaching/technical assistance to providers regarding the regulatory referral process;
 - refer providers with potential violations of OCDEL certification regulations to their OCDEL Regional Certification Office;
 - assist, as necessary, in the reviewing, commenting or supporting stakeholder engagement on policy and regulations with a lens towards equity, quality, and decreasing provider burn-out.
- c. Coordination**
- Coordinate regional activities including, but not limited to, community planning that assists children and families.
 - Establish point of contact(s) for county Children and Youth Offices for child welfare and prevention, and Education for Homeless Children and Youth (“EHCY”) or McKinney-Vento Liaisons to coordinate information for families experiencing homelessness.
 - Sponsor and attend meetings of various stakeholders, including but not limited to, child care providers and child care provider directors, to obtain feedback regarding the quality of ELRC operations and service delivery.
 - Pilot innovative programing, practices, and strategies through local partnerships and funding sources.
- d. Participation**
- Participate in state workgroups, such as, but not limited to, OCDEL Integration Efforts, Designator Reliability, PD Registry for Keystone STARS, and Differentiated Designation.
 - Participate in stakeholder meetings.
 - Participate in ELRC Director-level meetings with OCDEL.
 - Participate in work related travel for meetings, trainings, and visits to providers and families.
 - Lead and participate in collaboration and communication efforts at all levels including, but not limited to, local, regional, and state.

- Assist and participate on the Health and Safety Regional Task Force, as outlined in ELRC Policy Communication 20 #12 found in the Procurement Library.
 - Participate in, and when needed, sponsor Local Leadership Council meetings as outlined in the Procurement Library.
- e. Engagement
- Utilize Early Intervention Technical Assistance (“EITA”) resources to promote quality practices and support children receiving Early Intervention services in provider programs.
 - Obtain local and regional knowledge of, and show progress in, working with non-DHS certified early learning programs such as, but not limited to: Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts Private Academic licensed nursery school, and School District Pre-K.
 - Obtain local and regional knowledge of, and show progress in, working with Local Education Agencies (“LEAs”) serving children through third grade, including but not limited to, supporting child care providers in relationship with LEAs to support transition to formal school efforts.
 - Engage in regional and local community planning and collaboration efforts to assist in achieving positive outcomes for children and families.

Applicant Response

C. Support for Families.

1. **Resource and Referral.** The selected Applicant(s) must assist all parents in locating and understanding the benefits of quality child care and early learning programs, maintain current provider data, and perform online searches for parents through COMPASS <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/Public/CMPHome/>, Pennsylvania’s online single access point for applying for various types of health and human services. The selected Applicant(s) must educate parents regarding elements of quality child care, interpret the needs of the parent collected during personal interviews, and supply parents with provider referrals based on their expressed needs.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Provide comprehensive and consistent communications to families regarding all OCDEL programs, including, but not limited to, information sharing and resource and referral services.
- Provide consumer education and referrals for Keystone STARS as it relates to child care and early learning programs.
- Distribute information on the selection of quality child care as identified through the COMPASS website search.
- Engage in information sharing and referrals for families regarding the full system of child and family support services such as, but not limited to, Women, Infants, and Children (“WIC”) Food and Nutrition Program, Children’s Health Insurance Program (“CHIP”), Child and Adult Care Food Program, Family Support/Home Visitation programs, Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs, Family Centers, Community Action Programs, Infant Toddler Contracted Slots, Pre-K Counts, and Early Head Start and Head Start.

- Provide information on the Earned Income Tax Credits and voter registration processes.
- Provide information on housing and homelessness supports, as specified in the McKinney-Vento Act, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter19&edition=prelim>.
- Provide families with information to assist and understanding all aspects of a child development including, but not limited to:
 - knowledge of developmental stages and milestones;
 - the importance of early screening and immunizations as part of a child’s healthy development;
 - advantages of participation in evidenced-based home visitation programs; and
 - benefits of participation in Early Intervention services, if needed.
- Establish and implement complaint resolution and grievance procedures for families that is subject to review and approval by OCDEL.
- Provide comprehensive information on all ELRC services, provide timely responses to all inquiries, and resolve complaints in a timely and professional manner.
- Utilize feedback from family surveys to confirm relevant and equitable services are provided.
- Provide networking opportunities for families with resource agencies and other families.

- 2. Eligibility Determination, Case Action, and Time Constraints.** The selected Applicant(s) must collect and evaluate client income documents; interpret and apply OCDEL regulations and policy to determine CCW eligibility; process applications and redeterminations; follow-up on missing documentation; conduct personal interviews with families; establish and maintain child schedules for payments to providers; generate parent/provider notifications; maintain case files; process appeals; and participate in appeal hearings.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Eligibility Determination

- Possess a working knowledge of, and follow all OCDEL policies and procedures, as outlined in CCW policy and procedure manuals.
- Execute all related eligibility actions effectively and proficiently according to OCDEL policy, procedures, and state and federal statutes and regulations.
- Maintain and process eligibility forms for all subsidy (Low Income, Former TANF, and TANF) clients accurately and timely.
 - For Low Income and Former TANF clients, determination of a family’s eligibility for subsidized child care must occur no later than 10 calendar days following verification of all eligibility factors.
 - A determination of eligibility may not be delayed beyond 30 calendar days following receipt of a completed CCW application from the parent or caretaker.
 - TANF and SNAP clients’ eligibility is determined by the CAO, and the information is provided to the ELRC via an electronic batch file from the eCIS.
- Utilize the correct regulations for all priority groups, such as, but not limited to, TANF, Former TANF, Homeless, Low Income, Teen Parents, and process those cases timely and accurately.
- Determine that parent/caretaker and children meet all eligibility requirements for CCW.

- Determine that the hours of care provided to the child(ren) are based on the parent/caretaker(s) work/education/training hours and their documented need for care.
- Utilize the correct income calculations and determine eligibility correctly based on verified information provided by the parent/caretaker.
- Determine that the household income meets the state’s family gross income within specified Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (“FPIG”) or State Medium Income (“SMI”) limits, whichever is less.
- Determine the amount of subsidy payment authorized based on income, family size, and the Maximum Child Care Allowance (“MCCA”) payment rate schedule and assess the correct co-pay.

b. Case Actions

- Process case actions for suspended and authorized cases, and ongoing determinations/redeterminations within the timeframes established by OCDEL.
 - Ongoing determinations of eligibility and establishment of the family’s next determination date should be completed every 12 months.
 - Determinations of eligibility are to be processed no later than the annual due date.
- Document any explanations and have procedures in place to support eligibility determinations/redetermination practices including:
 - case action information received via inboxes; and
 - update inboxes in case comments.
- Provide support for CCW enrolled families regarding ongoing CCW eligibility.

c. Case Constraints

- Review cases in the eCIS Inbox within five business days of the received date.
- Review cases in the eCIS Update Inbox within 10 business days of the received date.
- Process cases in the Application Inbox within 30 business days of the received date.
- Process cases in the Redetermination Inbox no later than the redetermination due date.

Applicant Response

D. Support for Early Care and Education Providers.

- 1. Provider Management.** The selected Applicant(s) must provide a full array of services to all providers, including DHS-certified, relative, and in-home providers, and monitor program integrity of initiatives implemented as part of this Project.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Offer a Provider Agreement to any child care provider that is determined eligible and seeks to participate in the subsidized child care program.
 - Enroll, execute and maintain CCW Provider Agreements for all DHS certified, relative, and in-home providers.
- Execute, manage, and monitor any contracted slot and subgrant awards as directed by OCDEL.
- Support relative providers as they navigate the required clearance and background checks.

- Monitor relative providers through personal interviews, provider information, invoice payments, and support for certification.
- Monitor fulfillment of DHS-certified child care and relative provider training requirements.
- Collect and verify rate information.
- Manage out-of-state provider certifications.
- Assist providers to enroll in CACFP Provider Enrollment.
- Support providers in utilizing PELICAN Provider Self Service for marketing, certificate renewal, update location and provider profile, and online invoicing.
- Monitor program integrity by verifying that:
 - all documentation is accurate and complete;
 - child care services are provided by a legally operating and eligible provider; and
 - MCCA rates are paid according to OCDEL policy.
- Promote provider utilization of electronic systems such as Provider Self-Serve and the PD Registry.
- Assist OCDEL to conduct periodic Market Rate Surveys.

2. Support Capacity-Building for High-Quality Settings. The selected Applicant(s) must provide coordinated, aligned, and individualized support services for diverse child care programs.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Support

- Support early care and education providers to connect with shared services, alliances, and networks.
- Serve as an information hub for potential child care providers, including offering local capacity building supports for underserved areas.
- Assist with the identification of communities most in need of targeted supports for capacity building related to the number of available slots and increasing the number of high-quality providers.
- Identify and implement strategies to assist in recruiting entities to become licensed as child care providers in underserved communities.
- Assist providers who have been referred from OCDEL’s Bureau of Certification to the ELRC with technical assistance needs and professional development referrals.
- Support early care and education providers in utilizing EITA resources to promote quality practices and support children receiving Early Intervention services.

b. Case Management

- Conduct case management of the Keystone STARS programs through relationship-based professional development, supports, or both, which may include various forms of technical assistance such as coaching, consulting, and other collaborative activities. These activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Coaching caseloads must not exceed a ratio of 1:75, one coach per 75 providers.
 - Program recruitment and retention in attaining higher STAR levels.
 - Participation in a seamless monitoring system with Certification.

- Coaching support that aligns with OCDEL coaching efforts.
- Management of funds to support quality at the program level.
- Monitoring and designation reciprocity opportunities as outlined in the Keystone STARS performance standards.
- Continuous Quality Improvement (“CQI”) supports that include identifying ELRC staff member(s), and their full-time equivalency, who can serve as the subject matter experts and offer intentional supports, such as technical assistance, PD, and coaching, on the following subjects and populations including, but not limited to: Family Child Care (“FCC”), Health and Safety, and Children Experiencing Homelessness.
 - ELRC FCC support staff are expected to perform the following responsibilities, including but not limited to:
 - provide supports for FCC providers to comply with CCW payment policies;
 - provide targeted supports for CCW enrolled families receiving care at FCC related to ongoing CCW eligibility;
 - support FCC providers’ movement through Keystone STARS;
 - coordinate with PDOs related to FCC providers’ career pathway;
 - convene networking opportunities for interested FCC providers within the ELRC regions;
 - participate in the *Leading for Change Project* in Pennsylvania to develop additional facilitation skills that will be used to support current FCC leaders and build capacity for additional FCC leaders within an ELRC Region;
 - work with FCC leaders to identify FCC providers and understand family needs specific to ELRC Region;
 - inform ELRC Leadership and OCDEL ELRC Operations staff of any family needs that may require additional review.
- Assist Keystone STARS programs in marketing and promoting consumer awareness about quality services in their communities.

c. Networking and Feedback

- Navigate the full system of provider support agencies and programs.
- Coordinate and facilitate opportunities for providers to offer feedback to OCDEL and the ELRC regarding services.
- Utilize feedback from OCDEL-directed or ELRC created surveys to assist in offering enhanced services to providers.
- Provide networking opportunities for providers.
- Provide information and assistance, as needed, related to the prevention of child care expulsion and suspension, information and referral to IECMH, and any other child, family and provider services, including Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention.

d. Professional Development

- Encourage all early learning practitioners to increase their educational attainment by working with the PDOs for credit bearing offerings, and accessing Teacher Education

And Compensation Helps (“T.E.A.C.H.”) funding, Rising STARS Tuition Assistance (“RSTA”) Program, and the Child Development Associate (“CDA”) voucher program.

- Assist providers in understanding and applying Pennsylvania’s Professional Standard and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, <https://www.pakeys.org/get-professional-development/professional-competencies/early-learning-professional-competencies/>, to all aspects of their work.
- Assist providers in understanding and accessing appropriate, ongoing professional development through the PD Registry.
- Assist providers in understanding and accessing Strengthening Business Practices. Reference the Procurement Library for additional information which includes, but is not limited to, identifying a staff member(s) with expertise in business practices, offering professional development and coordinating resources, including contracting with regional subject matter experts when needed.

Applicant Response

E. Accountability and Data Management.

- 1. Accountability.** The selected Applicant(s) must have practices in place to follow all OCDEL policies, procedures, and requirements to confirm outcomes related to reporting, monitoring, documentation, and data management integrity are met.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Compliance/Audits

- Respond to OCDEL report requests and required submissions, both scheduled and special requests, within the designated timeframes. The types of reports may include, but are not limited to: Grant, Budget Revisions, Funding Adjustments, End of Year Recap, fiscal year-end closeout, OSIG improper use of funds, other OCDEL-specified, and other financial and informational requests from OCDEL.
- Submit and implement Plans of Correction for any areas of ELRC non-compliance.
- Collect and report data for the agency’s obligations under the National Voter Registration Act.
- Track and submit to OCDEL the emergency removal enrollment tracking spreadsheet per established OCDEL timeframes.
- Plan, coordinate, implement, and assess status of state and agency tasks and requirements within defined timeframes.
- Show quarterly progress in meeting all CCW, Keystone STARS, and other prescribed Contracted Slots targets, as established by OCDEL.
- Support all requirements for mandated state and federal reporting.
- Complete an annual audit to comply with terms of DHS Agreement.

b. Keystone STARS

- Accurately record STARS Designations in PELICAN Keys to Quality (“KTQ”) within OCDEL’s specified timeframe.

- Complete Keystone STARS Designations/Renewals before the expiration date for all provider types participating in Keystone STARS.
- Complete Keystone STARS Designators reliability visits.
- Confirm that the data quality between the PD Registry and Keystone STARS entered into KTQ meets OCDEL’s requirements.
- Enter Keystone STARS suspensions in KTQ according to OCDEL-specified requirements and include appropriate notation in the comment field of KTQ specifying the reason for Keystone STARS suspension and any other designation type.
- Notify providers of the completion of Keystone STARS suspensions within the specified timeframes found in KTQ, and when applicable, in coordination with local, state, and federal authorities.
- Enter Keystone STARS grant request amounts and information accurately and timely into KTQ.
- Base provider eligibility for Keystone STARS grants and awards on current OCDEL policies and guidelines which can include, but is not limited to, the percent of program participation for serving vulnerable populations and as it relates to each grant type.

2. Data Management. The selected Applicant(s) shall utilize OCDEL prescribed data systems for the administration of CCW, Keystone STARS, and any other OCDEL prescribed programs. The selected Applicant(s) shall utilize PELICAN and PD Registry/QRIS for the administration of the Department’s subsidized child care program, CCW, and various Department databases for the administration of Keystone STARS.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Utilize COMPASS and FindChildCarePA.gov to assist families in locating quality early learning programs.
- Participate with legally operating providers who are registered in PELICAN CCW.
- Comply with the requirements regarding updating provider information in PELICAN CCW, as required by the Department.
- Meet all procedural requirements for maintenance of provider information, excluding initial data entry of DHS certified providers, which is the responsibility of the Department.
- Utilize the electronic Client Information System (“eCIS”) as prescribed by the Department.
 - eCIS is the database used by the County Assistance Offices (“CAO”) to determine a family’s eligibility for child care under the TANF and SNAP.
 - eCIS sends eligibility information to PELICAN to support child care enrollments and provider management for these families.
- Utilize PELICAN KTQ to manage the Keystone STARS QRIS program as defined by OCDEL.
- Utilize the Program Assessment Communication Tool (“PACT”) to manage the requests for Keystone STARS participating programs’ request for assessment.
- Utilize the PD Registry to designate the quality level of participating child care programs in Keystone STARS, refer early care and education program providers to appropriate professional development opportunities, and verify staff qualification.

- Utilize PD Registry Coaching and CQI modules to manage, monitor and support Coaching/technical assistance relationships and CQI efforts for participating child care program staff.

Applicant Response

F. Fiscal.

1. Funds Management.

The selected Applicant(s) must establish and maintain a process of fiscal integrity across the scope of work.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

a. Management

- Implement and maintain an accounting system for fiscal accountability.
- Implement and maintain a payment system to verify payments for services rendered for provider and subcontractor work.
- Provide management for TANF and SNAP clients determined eligible for child care by the CAO.
- Manage late or incorrect invoices according to Department policy and pay approved invoices by the next payment cycle.
- Continue to enroll children from the wait list when funds are available in accordance with OCDEL’s overbooking percentages and enrollment procedures.
- Manage overbooking levels throughout the year based on direction from OCDEL.
- Make referrals to the Office of State Inspector General (“OSIG”) for suspected fraud.

b. Budgets/Recaps/Recoupment

- Confirm and acknowledge budgets and budget revisions.
- Provide any additional OCDEL fiscal year start up/end requirements.
- Complete OCDEL’s recap reports and process regarding ELRC final expenditures.
- Determine and collect overpayments.
- Recoup funds upon notification from the Department, and through payment adjustments, from any provider or sub-grantee that has an outstanding financial obligation to the Department. The selected Applicant will not assume responsibility for these overpayments if unable to collect.

c. Grants

- Follow all OCDEL policies and guidelines as they relate to the review, issuing of payments, and monitoring of Keystone STARS and other OCDEL prescribed grants and awards.
- Utilize PELICAN KTQ to manage Keystone STARS quality funds to child care providers and issue payment under guidance provided by OCDEL for grants and awards, as available.

- Conduct fiscal monitoring and expenditures of Keystone STARS grants and any other OCDEL prescribed monitoring of grants, in accordance with OCDEL policy and procedures.

d. Reporting/Monitoring

- Utilize any and all OCDEL identified systems for the reporting and monitoring of funds and programming.
- Manage subcontractors and related Agreements for the provision of approved activities to support and provide oversight of fiscal monitoring, expenditures, provider payments, and technical assistance as directed by OCDEL.
- Monitor the expenditures of ELRC service allocations monthly, CCW service allocations, as appropriate, manage all grants and incentives related to Keystone STARS and any other OCDEL prescribed programs.
- Monitor overpayments monthly and, upon request, report to the Department if the total sum of all overpayments exceeds one percent of the service allocation.
- Establish specific set-aside service funds, as directed by the Department, and monitor the fiscal management of set-aside service funds to verify there is neither over-expenditure nor significant under-expenditure of funds at the end of the grant period.
- Validate invoices from participating providers to verify that payment is made only for authorized services.

2. Provider Payments.

The selected Applicant(s) must review, authorize, and make payments for provider invoices regarding child and family services for all child care providers that include DHS certified providers, uncertified relative providers, and in-home care providers who provide care for eligible parents/caretakers receiving child care in their own home.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Provide accurate and timely payments for monthly invoices.
- Monitor and analyze provider invoice submissions for accurate child enrollment, service level, approval of service schedule, and to render timely and accurate payments to providers.
- Offer support for providers to assist with compliance of CCW payment policies.
- Reimburse providers based on the provider's reported rates up to a maximum amount published by the Department and referenced in PELICAN CCW.
- Confirm all child care providers who submit accurate invoices for payment by the fifth calendar day of the month following the month in which care was provided are issued payment by the 20th day of that month.
- Participate in all invoicing methods including online attendance tracking and paper invoices.
- Manage service allocations in a manner that maximizes expenditures, available funds, and encumbrances.
- Issue timely and accurate payments to providers via check and direct deposit for CCW, Keystone STARS, and any other OCDEL prescribed programs, grants and awards.
- Notify OCDEL immediately of any funds commitment issues.

Applicant Response

III-6. Requirements.

A. State Legal Requirements. The application must be submitted on the basis of the following state regulatory requirements:

- Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 168, Child Care ([55 Pa. Code Ch. 168](#)), as may be amended; and
- Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 3041, Subsidized Child Care Eligibility ([55 Pa. Code Ch. 3041](#)), as may be amended.

The Applicant must also comply with Article IV of the Pennsylvania Human Services Code, [62 P.S. art. IV](#), as may be amended.

Applicant Response

B. Federal Legal Requirements. The selected Applicant(s) must comply with all following federal regulations, statutes, and restrictions, as may be amended, as they may apply to this Project:

- Child Care Development Funds (“CCDF”) regulations, [45 C.F.R. § 98.56\(b\)\(1\)](#), Restrictions on the use of funds;
- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#);
- Contract Cost Principles and Procedures, [48 C.F.R. Part 31](#); and
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, [42 U.S.C. § 2000d](#), by taking action as required to allow meaningful access to the programs administered by the selected Applicant(s) for all persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Applicant Response

C. Policies and Procedures. The selected Applicant(s) must comply with all OCDEL Policies and Procedures, including, but not limited to, CCW and Keystone STARS. OCDEL Policies and Procedures are communicated through OCDEL-wide and ELRC specific Announcements and Communications and are distributed via email and posted on the ELRC Portal.

ELRC Announcements are communications signed by the OCDEL Deputy Secretary regarding implementation of subsidized child care and quality policies and procedures. ELRC Communications are policy and procedure clarifications related to implementation of the subsidized child care and quality programs. They include the background of the issue, implementation instructions, next steps, a timeframe for implementation, and, if applicable, a sunset date for the policy.

Applicants may review announcements, communications and related documents for planning purposes in the ELRC Procurement Library at www.dhs.pa.gov/contact/DHS-Offices/Pages/OCDEL-ELRC-Procurement-Library.aspx.

Applicant Response

- D. Conflict of Interest.** The Department prohibits all employees and sub-grantees of the selected Applicant(s) from participating in any act in which the employee uses the authority of a position or confidential information for private pecuniary benefit of said employees, any member of said employee's immediate family, or any business with which said employee or a member of said employee's family is associated.

The selected Applicant(s) and its subgrantees may not use its authority or presumed authority as the ELRC to require, coerce, or otherwise pressure providers to make financial contributions to a parent organization, subsidiary organization, or similar related entity of the selected Applicant(s) or subgrantees, except as permitted by the agreement or OCDEL policy and approved by DHS. The selected Applicant(s) and its subgrantees may not use its authority or presumed authority as the ELRC to require, coerce, or otherwise pressure providers to pay for services provided by a parent organization, subsidiary organization, or similar related entity of the selected Applicant(s) or subgrantees, except as permitted by the agreement or OCDEL policy and approved by DHS. The selected Applicant(s) and subgrantees, and any parent, subsidiary, or similar related organizations of selected Applicant(s) or subgrantees may not use information obtained as a result of operating the ELRC for purposes other than those permitted by the agreement or OCDEL policy and approved by DHS to further the pecuniary interests of the selected Applicant(s) and subgrantees, and any parent, subsidiary, or similar related organizations of selected Applicant(s) or subgrantees.

If the selected Applicant(s) operates its own child care program, it must develop and implement a board/organization approved conflict of interest policy. This policy must offer parents/caregivers a variety of child care options and the freedom to choose from these options. It also must separate the management of the ELRC from the child care program.

At a minimum, the conflict of interest policy shall include provisions for:

- Providing information to parents regarding all types of child care arrangements available in the area as well as information on how to select appropriate quality child care so parents have the opportunity to choose a child care setting that best suits the needs of their family;
- Providing parents with a minimum of three quality program choices that meet the families needs related to access (location and cost), quality, and alignment to family priorities;
- Separate management of the ELRC and the child care facility owned or operated by the ELRC (which might include separate governing bodies); and
- Documenting the implementation of the conflict of interest policy.

The selected Applicant(s) must avoid conflicts of interest in the performance of their work as it relates to this RFA and funding by OCDEL. Any selected Applicant(s) or subcontractors of the selected Applicant(s) awarded funding by OCDEL must only utilize those funds for personnel and operational needs to complete the tasks and requirements outlined in this RFA. Any violation, whether intentional or unintentional, can result in financial penalties, and intentional violations can result in criminal prosecution.

As part of the response, the Applicant must submit complete organizational information that includes an organization chart listing all relationships with child care providers that are part of

the legal entity and a notarized statement regarding the Applicant's plans for addressing any conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest including the Applicant's proposed conflict of interest policies and protocols. The selected Applicant(s) must be free of any conflicts of interest prior to entering into a grant Agreement with DHS.

Applicant Response

- E. Staff Clearances.** The selected Applicant(s), including all subcontractors, that perform services pursuant to this RFA, must comply with the requirements of sections 6383 (63 Pa.C.S. § 6383), related to education and training, and 6344 (63 Pa.C.S. § 6344), related to employees having contact with children, of the Pennsylvania CPSL by completing DHS-approved mandated reporter training regarding the recognition and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, and obtain Federal criminal, Pennsylvania state criminal, and child abuse clearances. Information regarding how to access and complete mandated reporter training and clearances can be found at <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Pages/default.aspx>. Any expenses associated with mandated reporter training, clearances/certificatons/verfications are the responsibility of the selected Applicant.

The selected Applicant(s), including subcontractors, must provide written confirmation that the background checks and a Department-approved mandated reporter training have been completed before services can be provided by the selected Applicant staff, including subcontractors, to children and families. If, at any time, it is discovered that a selected Applicant's employee or subcontractor staff has an impermissible criminal record as set forth in Section 6344 of the CPSL (63 Pa.C.S § 6344), relating to grounds for denying employment or participation in a program, activity, or service, the selected Applicant(s) shall not assign that employee to any Commonwealth service program; shall remove any access privileges already given to the employee; and shall not permit the employee remote access unless the Department consents to the access, in writing. Persons with convictions of one of the prohibited crimes are not permitted access to program data and systems, and salaries of such persons cannot be supported, either in part or in full, by the ELRC grant. Failure of the selected Applicant(s) to comply with the terms of this paragraph may result in default of the selected Applicant under its Agreement.

Applicant Response

- F. Information Handling.** The selected Applicant(s) must comply with all federal or state laws related to the use and disclosure of information, including information that constitutes Protected Health Information ("PHI") as defined by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA"). The selected Applicant(s) must comply with the Business Associate language provided in **Appendix I**. The selected Applicant(s) must protect the confidentiality of all Commonwealth information. The selected Applicant(s) agrees that any breach of this provision may, at the discretion of the Commonwealth, result in termination of the Agreement.

The nature of the work of the ELRC requires the handling of sensitive information. All personnel of any selected Applicant, including subcontractors, assigned to the provision of enrollments of children, administrative processes, direct service system management, and the treatment of providers by the selected Applicant(s) must comply with applicable federal and state laws,

regulations, and regarding the security and confidentiality of information pertaining to individuals receiving CCW.

Compliance must include:

- All personnel and/or employees of sub-selected recipient(s) of the selected Applicant and its reporting agent, as applicable, must comply with HIPAA;
- All personnel and/or employees of sub-selected recipient(s) of the selected Applicant and its reporting agent, as applicable, must receive training in confidentiality regulations, including HIPAA Privacy and Security training and Medicaid confidentiality requirements;
- All personnel and/or employees of sub-selected recipient(s) of the selected Applicant must sign a confidentiality Agreement. Personnel policies must address disciplinary procedures relevant to violation of the signed confidentiality Agreement; and
- Both confidential and sensitive information must not be used by the selected Applicant or subcontractor or given to another agency other than for the purpose of carrying out obligations of the Agreement.

The selected Applicant(s) shall:

- Establish and administer adequate measures to prohibit unauthorized access, copying, and distribution of information during work on this Project.
- Properly dispose of both hard and electronic working copies of information during work on this Project, as well as any remaining information upon the completion of the Project.
- Transfer, if needed, sensitive information to other agencies, vendors, or to the Commonwealth pursuant to the requirements of the Agreement.
- Follow Commonwealth procedures for information handling and sharing.
- Retain all records for seven years after becoming fully inactive or until the disposition of court hearings, audits, and appeals are complete.
- Follow record retention procedures for all applicable federal, state, and local government agencies.
- Collect data required by the Department related to their management of the Department's subsidized child care program, Keystone STARS program, and any other OCDEL prescribed program. All data collected remains the sole property of the Department and cannot be shared without Department approval, in accordance with the Department's Data Governance Process.
- Provide the Department with copies of the data and specific reports that are generated from the data, as requested by the Department. All data requests for information from external agencies, including federal or state agencies, shall be referred to identified OCDEL staff and ELRC Program Representative. The selected Applicant must immediately forward any data requests for information to the Program Representative.

The selected Applicant(s) may provide the following information without Department consent:

- Consumer education activities performed by the selected Applicant(s) or its agents;
- Informational brochures, which are approved by the Department. All brochures must acknowledge that the program was made possible by OCDEL, the Department of Human Services; and
- Statistics related to Resource and Referral activities.

The Department may modify this list of exceptions upon written notice to the selected Applicant(s).

Applicant Response

G. Disaster Recovery. The selected Applicant(s) must develop and document a disaster recovery plan for electronic records and files maintained by the selected Applicant(s). Within 72 hours, the ELRC must be operational at a temporary site with an operating telecommunications system and give public notification of the new location and new ELRC telephone number(s). Backup data, for all business records not contained in PELICAN CCW, must be stored off-site for seven years.

The selected Applicant(s) must utilize reasonable data backup and disaster recovery procedures to prevent loss of information and an interruption in the use of its proposed systems.

The selected Applicant(s) must:

- Describe its data backup and disaster recovery plans for restoring and maintaining operations during catastrophic, natural or human-induced disasters, influenza, pandemic, or any other occurrence that damages systems or data.
- Provide detailed information regarding its backup and disaster recovery systems, architecture/frameworks, capabilities, governance, and procedures.
- Describe how its backup and disaster recovery plans enable the continuation of critical business processes for the protection and security of the data.
- Provide an annual update of the data backup and disaster recovery plan and the disaster recovery plan testing process and testing frequency of the yearly anniversary start date of the fully executed agreement.
- Reference Management Directive 505.33 for additional guidance.

Applicant Response

H. Emergency Preparedness. To support continuity of operations during an emergency, including a pandemic, the Commonwealth needs a strategy for maintaining operations for an extended period of time. One part of this strategy is to ensure that essential Agreements that provide critical business services to the Commonwealth have planned for such an emergency and put contingencies in place to provide needed goods and services.

1. Describe how you anticipate such a crisis will impact your operations.
2. Describe your emergency response continuity of operations plan. Please attach a copy of your plan, or, at a minimum, summarize how your plan addresses the following aspects of preparedness:
 - a. Employee training (describe your organization's training plan, and how frequently your plan will be shared with employees).
 - b. Identified essential business functions and key employees necessary to carry them out.
 - c. Contingency plans for:
 - i. How your organization will handle staffing issues when a portion of key employees are incapacitated due to illness.

- ii. How employees in your organization will carry out the essential functions if measures prevent from coming to the primary workplace.
- d. How your organization will communicate with staff and suppliers when primary communications systems are overloaded or otherwise fail, including key contacts, chain of communications (including suppliers), etc.
- e. How and when your emergency plan will be tested, and if the plan will be tested by a third-party.

Applicant Response

I. Customer Service Transformation. The Commonwealth is committed to improving digital interactions with citizens as well as individuals and entities that conduct business with or on behalf of the Commonwealth (each a “Business Partner”). Customer Service Transformation was launched to help the Commonwealth achieve these objectives and is based on the following six design principles:

- A single online destination for services;
- Secure access to services through a single login;
- Consistent and user-friendly online experience across all services;
- A consolidated and streamlined digital footprint;
- Continuous improvement through customer feedback; and
- A single phone number to direct citizens or Business Partners to the services they are seeking.

Applicants are expected to acknowledge these principles. The selected Applicant(s) shall align their performance and deliverables under the agreement awarded from this RFA with these principles.

Design Principles and Requirements:

1. Keystone Login provides:

- a. A single online destination for services that enables citizens and Business Partners to locate services and conduct business in the Commonwealth, even if they do not know which agency to contact. Citizens and Business Partners can still navigate directly to services on agency websites if they wish.

The selected Applicant(s) must be able to integrate with the single online destination, starting with PA.GOV. The selected Applicant shall be able to receive and validate the credentials of a citizen or Business Partners that were previously authenticated from an active session.

- b. Secure access to services through a single login: The Commonwealth implemented a single login system known as Keystone Login. The purpose of Keystone Login is to provide a consistent and secure approach to account administration. The Keystone Login offers citizens and Business Partners a single online point of access to services offered by multiple Commonwealth agencies or other Business Partners. It is critical that by using Keystone Login any citizen or Business Partner can work with any Commonwealth

agency or other Business Partner through the Commonwealth's external facing applications using a single login credential.

The consistent and modern authentication standards available through Keystone Login will increase convenience for citizens and Business Partners by simplifying account management and eliminating the need to remember multiple usernames and passwords, while also strengthening the Commonwealth's security posture. In addition, Keystone Login provides the ability for a citizen or Business Partner to create a single profile managed by Keystone Login.

The selected Applicant(s) shall register with and utilize the Commonwealth's Keystone Login.

Applications that utilize Keystone Login can leverage authentication methods through one of the following approaches: (1) via a series of Application Programming Interfaces ("APIs"), or (2) as a redirect to the Keystone Login Portal. A detailed Developer Integration Guide will be provided to the selected Applicant, however, to aid in determining the level of effort, a summary version of the Developer Integration Guide and the Keystone Login Branding Guidelines are available at the following location: <http://keystonelogindevelopers.pa.gov>.

Applicants should review the summary revision of the Developer Integration Guide and the Keystone Login Branding Guidelines to gain an understanding of the mandatory Application Programming Interfaces and services to be made available to citizens and Business Partners.

Applicants should acknowledge that they will utilize the Keystone Login for citizens. If an Applicant requires any additional information to verify the identification of citizens through the authentication process provided by Keystone Login, the Applicant must identify the additional required information in its Technical Submittal. Additionally, the Applicant must commit to utilizing the Keystone Login for Business Partners when required by the Commonwealth. The timeframe for implementation of the Keystone Login to Business Partners will be mutually agreed upon by the selected Applicant(s) and the Commonwealth and will be documented through the contract change order process.

If the selected Applicant(s) is responsible for helpdesk calls from application users, the selected Applicant shall provide Tier 1 Helpdesk support. Keystone Login provides an internal admin dashboard designed to provide Helpdesk information to add a caller with several Tier 1 level tasks. This is a secure internal administration site; hence, the selected Applicant will need a COPA account, along with VPN in order to access this site and be provided access by the Commonwealth. The dashboard provides the following information:

Exception Logs: A log of all the errors that occur in the Keystone Login site, calls to Keystone Login APIs, and the Admin site. The list can be searched and filtered by different parameters (User Name, Email Address, Start Date, End Date, Agency, or

Application). Returns: ID, Log Date, User Name, User Email, Application Code, Message, Method, File Path, Line Number and Stack Trace.

User Logs: A log of all user activity. The list can be searched and filtered by different parameters (User Name, Email Address, Start Date, End Date, Agency, or Application). Returns: ID, Log Date, User Name, User Email, Application Code, User Event Type and Message.

Search: Used for searching users in Commonwealth domains. Search also provides the ability to edit Keystone Login accounts, unlock accounts when locked, change, or reset passwords. User search: Username, Email Address, First Name, Last Name, Phone or Domain. Returns: Name, User Name, Domain with buttons to see Details, User Logs, Exception Logs, Reset Password, Change Password, Edit, or Social Logins.

2. A consistent and user-friendly online experience across all services:

A common look and feel increases trust by enabling citizens and Business Partners to easily recognize official services provided by the Commonwealth. This also includes ensuring that online services and information are accessible to all citizens and Business Partners, regardless of ability.

The selected Applicant(s) shall comply with the Commonwealth's web site and mobile application design standards, including ITPs SFT002 - Commonwealth of PA Website Standards, NET005 – Commonwealth External and Internal Domain Name Services (“DNS”), and SFT 009 – Application Development and RFA requirements specified in **Part III, Section III-6**.

The selected Applicant(s) must acknowledge and demonstrate compliance to relevant federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, and legislation, including:

- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability;
- Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which requires all Federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to those with disabilities; and
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability for entities receiving federal funds.

In addition, Applicants must acknowledge compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”) 2.0, which are industry standards. The selected Applicant(s) must provide quarterly reports that demonstrate compliance with WCAG. Refer to the Commonwealth ITP ACC001 – Information Technology Accessibility Policy for additional information.

3. A consolidated and streamlined digital footprint: The Commonwealth is looking to streamline its online presence and make information easier to find by eliminating or consolidating small, outdated, or low traffic Commonwealth websites.

The selected Applicant(s) must use the PA.GOV domain for proposed websites. By using PA.GOV, citizens and Business Partners will know that they are utilizing official services from the Commonwealth.

4. Continuous improvement through customer feedback:

The Commonwealth will be collecting feedback from our citizen and Business Partners regarding the Customer Service Transformation. The Commonwealth may use the feedback to identify new opportunities to improve and innovate services.

The selected Applicant(s) shall have the ability to collect satisfaction and feedback related data from citizens and Business Partners.

5. A single phone number to direct citizens to the services they are seeking.

The Commonwealth intends to make it easier for citizens and Business Partners to find the services they are seeking by calling a single Commonwealth phone number. Citizens and Business Partners may still contact agencies directly through existing call centers and phone numbers, if they wish.

The selected Applicant(s) will be expected to collaborate with this initiative where appropriate.

Describe your strategy to incorporate the Customer Service Transformation design principles and requirements in the operation of your Project.

Applicant Response

J. Lobbying Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities. This Project will be funded, in whole or in part, with federal monies. Public Law 101-121, Section 319, prohibits federal funds from being expended by the recipient or by any lower tier sub-recipients of a federal contract, grant, loan, or a cooperative Agreement to pay any person for influencing, or attempting to influence a federal agency or Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant or loan, or entering into any cooperative Agreement. All parties who submit applications in response to this RFA must sign the **Lobbying Certification Form**, attached as **Appendix E**, and if applicable, complete the **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form**, also attached as **Appendix E**.

Applicant Response

K. Worker Protection and Investment. Pursuant to Executive Order 2021-06, *Worker Protection and Investment* (October 21, 2021), the Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring that every Pennsylvania worker has a safe and healthy work environment and the protections afforded them through labor laws. To that end, contractors and grantees of the Commonwealth must certify that they are in compliance with all applicable Pennsylvania state labor and workforce safety laws.

Such certification shall be made through **Appendix G, Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form (BOP-2201)** and submitted with the application.

- L. Facility Requirements.** The selected Applicant(s) must provide at least one main physical office location for staff and services defined in this RFA. This facility must be accessible to the majority of families within the ELRC Region. The facility must be fully ADA compliant, have sufficient space for conducting meetings, and have areas to conduct interviews with families in a confidential manner. The physical office location must have adequate parking for staff and visitors and such parking must be fully ADA compliant. The Commonwealth staff assigned to this Project will be located separately.

Applicant Response

- M. Monitoring.** OCDEL has developed standards to monitor the operational work of the ELRC grant. An example of these monitoring standards is included in the Procurement Library and titled *ELRC Operations Monitoring Tool and Guide*. In addition, ELRCs will be monitored on federal compliance standards as outlined in the Child Care Improper Payments Data Collection Instructions located at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/CCDF_Improper_Payments_Data_Collection_Instructions_for_2022-2025.pdf. Federal compliance standards are updated every three years and could include additional standards that will need to be met by the ELRC. Any changes to the operational monitoring standards or the federal compliance standards will be communicated to the ELRC by OCDEL. The selected Applicant must meet or exceed all grant monitoring standards and implement a continuous quality improvement process to affirm services are being delivered in an effective manner, desired outcomes are being achieved, and the needs of the family, children, and providers are being met. The first three months are a transition period for new ELRC grantees, and the Department will not impose any formal POC based on a failure to meet the monitoring standards.

III-7. Performance Standards.

The selected Applicant's performance will be reviewed and assessed by the Department. The Department's Grant Administrator will give written notice of each failure to meet a monitoring standard set forth in the *ELRC Operations Monitoring Tool and Guide* in the procurement library, as may be amended, or any other agreement requirement to the selected Applicant(s) and a POC will be required, as outlined below.

- A.** For any deficiency, including ones relating to the monitoring standards, the selected Applicant will prepare and submit a POC for any observation or finding contained in a notice of deficiency. The selected Applicant must submit the POC to the Department within 10 business days of notification of the deficiency or such longer time as may be agreed to by the Department.
- B.** The POC must include, but is not limited to:
1. Brief description of the findings;
 2. Specific steps the selected Applicant will take to correct the situation or reasons why it believes corrective action is not necessary;
 3. Name(s) and title(s) of responsible staff person(s);
 4. Timetable for performance of the corrective action steps;

5. Monitoring that will be performed to implement corrective action;
 6. Signature of the selected Applicant's Program Manager or a senior executive.
- C. The selected Applicant must implement the POC within the timeframe agreed to by the parties for that particular POC. Failure to implement a POC, in the manner agreed to, may result in further action by the Department, including, but not limited to, a finding of default.
- D. In the event the Department determines a deficiency to be a serious non-compliance with the selected Applicant's obligations under the Agreement, the Department may find the selected Applicant in default.

Applicant Response

PART IV

COST SUBMITTAL

IV-1. Cost Submittal. The information requested in this **Part IV** shall constitute the Cost Submittal. The Cost Submittal shall be submitted as a separate attachment and shall not be submitted as part of the Technical Submittal. The total proposed cost, including subcontractor costs, should be broken down into the components set forth in **Appendix H – Cost Submittal Worksheet**. Applicants should **not** include any assumptions in their cost submittals. If the Applicant includes assumptions in its Cost Submittal, the Department may reject the application. Applicants should direct in writing to the Issuing Officer pursuant to **Part I, Section I-11** any questions about whether a cost or other component is included or applies. All Applicants will then have the benefit of the Department's written answer so that all applications are submitted on the same basis.

The Department will reimburse the selected Applicant(s) for work satisfactorily performed after execution of a written Agreement and the Effective Date of the grant Agreement, in accordance with Agreement requirements.

PART V

CONTRACTOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

- V-1. General Information - Contractor Partnership Program.** The Contractor Partnership Program (“CPP”) was created by the Department to address workforce needs by connecting beneficiaries of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) to jobs while simultaneously helping to fill the hiring needs of employers. The program is a collaborative effort between DHS and its contractors and grantees to lift families out of poverty.

CPP requires entities who are awarded a contract or agreement with DHS to establish a hiring target that supports TANF beneficiaries in obtaining employment with the contractor, grantee, or their subcontractors for jobs within their organizations that may or may not be related to the contract or grant services. The Department encourages selected Applicant(s) to consider TANF beneficiaries not only for employment opportunities that will be created through the award of an Agreement but also for general employment opportunities within the organization. DHS staff will work cooperatively with selected Applicant(s) to assist in meeting their hiring targets by assisting with the identification of qualified job candidates through the Department’s employment and training programs and providing technical assistance as needed. The selected Applicant(s) may also be eligible to receive hiring incentives, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

Through CPP, DHS expects not only to increase the employment rate for individuals receiving TANF cash assistance, but to continue to contribute to the economic growth of the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Contractor Partnership Program, please contact: RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov or 1-866-840-7214.

- V-2. Participation Requirements.** Entities who are awarded a contract or agreement valued at a minimum of \$5 million through a competitive procurement process are automatically included in CPP. To receive credit towards meeting the CPP requirements, these entities must hire or make good faith efforts to hire individuals currently receiving TANF cash assistance. This includes but is not limited to individuals receiving TANF who are currently participating in Department employment and training programs as well as TANF beneficiaries outside of these programs.

The Department’s vision for CPP participation is that the selected Applicant(s) are able to obtain employment for TANF beneficiaries in a number equal to 10% of the average of the annual number of the selected Applicant’s new hires in Pennsylvania over each of the prior three years.

- V-3. RFA Requirements.** Applicants must provide a written narrative that addresses the following and must include the information in the CPP Submittal of their application(s). If the Applicant is applying for more than one Service Region, it shall submit separate CPP Submittals; one for each Service Region.

- a. Applicant’s name, telephone number and mailing address.

- b. Type of business entity (i.e. not-for-profit, government entity, public corporation, university).
- c. Address of the company's headquarters; if located in Pennsylvania, include county.
- d. The name, title, phone number, mailing address, and email of the Applicant's point of contact for the CPP.
- e. Address of all satellite offices located in Pennsylvania, including the county.
- f. A list the subcontractors' name, address, and phone number; if located in Pennsylvania, include the county.
- g. Type of services being provided under the Agreement.
- h. Type of services provided by Applicant.
- i. Based on the calculation below, the anticipated number of positions that will be established as the hiring target.

For each of the prior three years, provide the number of new hires at your organization's Pennsylvania offices. The hiring target will be 10% of the average of the annual number of new hires in Pennsylvania over each of the last 3 years. Hiring targets can be discussed with the Office of Income Maintenance CPP staff to determine if a waiver or reduction of this requirement is warranted.

- j. Type of positions anticipated to be available during Agreement term.
- k. Describe the strategies that will be used to identify and recruit TANF individuals.
- l. Describe the methods that will be used to retain the individuals once they are employed, including opportunities for professional development.
- m. Identify the staff and processes that will be used to meet the CPP requirements, including the reporting requirements
- n. Provide a brief explanation of any additional efforts that will be made to meet and maintain TANF hiring commitments.

After selection for negotiations, the Department's Office of Income Maintenance Bureau of Employment Programs will review the CPP Submittal for accuracy and completeness. The Department will either accept a selected Applicant's CPP commitment or negotiate and clarify during negotiations.

- V-4. Agreement Requirements.** The approved hiring target will become a performance benchmark, included as part of the Agreement. Hiring targets will apply to the full term of the Agreement, including any extensions.

After an Agreement has become effective, the selected Applicant(s) must establish a login for the DHS data tracking system, the Commonwealth Workforce Development System ("CWDS"), create a business folder, and complete and submit all required forms to the CPP staff. The selected Applicant(s) must complete the Quarterly Employment Report on a quarterly basis to document the number of TANF beneficiaries hired for that quarter. The Office of Income Maintenance will monitor the submission of the Quarterly Employment Report in CWDS and will share the information with the Program Office responsible for the Agreement.

Quarters	Begin Date	End Date	Reports Due*
1 – First	July 1	September 30	October 15
2 – Second	October 1	December 31	January 15
3 – Third	January 1	March 31	April 15
4 – Fourth	April 1	June 30	July 15

**If the 15th falls on a weekend or state holiday, the report is due the next business day.*

The selected Applicant(s), regardless of the Effective Date of the Agreement must complete the Quarterly Employment Report based on the schedule above. If an Agreement begins in the middle of a quarter, the information reported will be based on activity that occurred from the Effective Date through the end of the quarter. If no activity occurred, an entry reporting zero hires must still be submitted via CWDS.

In addition, the selected Applicant(s) must report information documenting the use and outcomes of their hiring strategies and demonstrating the good faith efforts to hire TANF beneficiaries on a quarterly basis. The Department will work with the selected Applicant(s) to develop a form and submission requirements for this reporting.

Verification Process

Data entered in CWDS will be cross referenced with the Client Information System (“CIS”) to confirm TANF eligibility; CIS will automatically credit the selected Applicant(s) whenever a TANF hire is submitted. The CPP staff and the Project Manager will work together to ensure that selected Applicant(s) are meeting their hiring goals.