

Early Learning Resource Center

Request for Applications (RFA) # 21-21

Pre-Application Conference

January 4, 2023

- Desiree Weisser – Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), Human Services Program Representative
- Holly Zeiders – Bureau of Procurement & Contract Management, Issuing Officer
- Laura Schlagnhauer – DHS Bureau of Employment Programs, Contractor Partnership Program
- Christine Reber, Adrienne Smyth, Robyn Arva, and Carolyn Green – OCDEL

Agenda



- Introductions
- Ground Rules
- Project Background and Goals
- Critical Points and Focus Areas
- Project Overview
- Contractor Partnership Program Overview and Requirements
- Timeline
- Adjourn

Ground Rules



- All questions must be submitted via email to the resource account (RA-pwrfaquestions@pa.gov) by January 6, 2023, at 12:00 PM EST.
- Answers to Potential Applicant questions will be posted on the DGS website (<http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/>) by January 20, 2023.
- Any changes to the RFA will be issued as a formal written addendum in accordance with Section I-12 of the RFA.
- All communication concerning this RFA shall be made through the RFA Issuing Officer.

- To minimize delays in Application evaluation and to avoid rejection of your Application, read the RFA carefully and submit a complete Application, including signature. Evaluations will be based on what is submitted. Follow the Application format as detailed in Section I-14.B. of the RFA. Include the appropriate heading descriptions, respond to all requirements, and provide any other relevant information as an appendix.
- An oral or written presentation, or both, may be requested by the Department.
- Each Application must have three separate submittals; Technical, Cost, and Contractor Partnership Program.

Critical Points (cont.)



- Do not include any cost data in the technical portion of your Application.
- Applicants must submit a complete response to this RFA.
- The references completing the ELRC Leadership Reference Questionnaires must submit the completed forms electronically to RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV.
- Applications and completed ELRC Leadership Reference Questionnaires must be received by 12:00 PM on February 17, 2023.
- The resulting agreement will be for a term of five years.

- The RFA will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - Technical – 75%
 - Cost – 25%
- To be considered responsible, the Applicant's technical submittal must achieve a raw score greater than or equal to 75% of available raw technical points.
- The technical evaluation will be based upon the following criteria:
 - Soundness of Approach;
 - Applicant Qualifications;
 - Personnel Qualifications; and
 - Understanding the Project.

- As detailed in the RFA # 21-21, the Department is seeking applicants to provide leadership, management, and administration of Early Learning Resource Centers in 19 Regions covering all of Pennsylvania.
- 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).
- 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.

Project Overview (cont.)



- ELRCs build and strengthen relationships with various state and local partners and stakeholders through outreach and collaboration efforts in order to achieve enhanced outcomes.
- ELRCs develop, foster, and expand community collaboration efforts 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 of their county of residence.

Project Overview (cont.)



- As it relates to CCW, ELRCs:
 - assist families in locating child care, determine eligibility for CCW, and provide other resource and referral services in the community.
 - establish Provider Agreements with child care providers serving children enrolled in CCW, process invoices, pay providers, and issue tax documents.
 - facilitate participation in CCW by child care and relative providers.
 - work closely with the County Assistance Offices within their ELRC Regions to coordinate services and referrals for families.

- As it relates to Keystone STARS, ELRCs:
 - provide families a way to choose a quality early care and education program.
 - provide technical assistance to early learning providers to assist in improving the quality of early care and education.
 - support early care and education providers in meeting their quality improvement goals and recognize programs for continuous quality improvement efforts.

Requirements Overview



- Applicants must respond to all areas of the technical submittal and propose how the Applicant will satisfy each of the following Requirements. Please reference the RFA for more information.
 - State Legal Requirements
 - Federal Legal Requirements
 - Policies and Procedures
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Staff Clearances
 - Information Handling
 - Disaster Recovery
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Customer Service Transformation
 - Lobbying Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
 - Worker Protection and Investment
 - Facility Requirements
 - Monitoring

This is a broad list of requirements. Please pay close attention to the details describing each in Part III of the RFA.

Tasks Overview



- Applicants must respond to all areas of the technical submittal and propose how the Applicant will satisfy each of the following Tasks. Please reference the RFA for more information.
 - Leadership – includes Readiness Review, Transition, Operations, Training, and Turnover.
 - Communication and Collaboration Building
 - Support for Families – includes Resource and Referral and Eligibility Determination, Case Action, and Time Constraints
 - Support for Early Care and Education Providers- includes Provider Management and Support Capacity-Building for High-Quality Settings
 - Accountability and Data Management
 - Fiscal – includes Funds Management and Provider Payments

- This is a broad list of tasks. Please pay close attention to the details describing each in Part III of the RFA. Applicants should also review and respond to the Work Plan section preceding the tasks.

Contractor Partnership Program

Bureau of Employment Programs
Hoa Pham, Bureau Director

1/4/2023

What is the Contractor Partnership Program (CPP)?

The CPP is a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) and its contractors to increase the employment rate of TANF beneficiaries.

Contractors who hold agreements meeting certain criteria with DHS are required to establish a TANF hiring goal and implementation plan that supports TANF beneficiaries in obtaining employment with the contractor, grantee, or their subcontractors.

What are the benefits for Contractors and Grantees?

- Fulfills workforce needs by connecting entities to a pool of job candidates.
- Connects entities to PA's Employment & Training network who can assist in developing workforce training, hiring and retention at no cost.
- Entities may be eligible for tax credits for hiring individuals receiving TANF such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit

WOTC

- Establishes your entity as part of a collective solution to lifting people out of poverty.

RFA Requirements

- The RFA contains an overview of CPP in Appendix K.
- Applicants should submit the information being requested in Section 3 of Appendix K as their CPP Submittal.
- This submittal will NOT be part of the scoring criteria, but it must be completed. After selection for negotiations, DHS will review the selected Applicant's CPP Submittal and may approve or request changes as part of negotiations.

Implementing a Hiring Plan

- As part of its CPP submittal, each Applicant should submit a hiring target; subgrantees must be included if part of the grant.
- Applicants should review the positions the organization currently offers and anticipate their needs not only as a result of being awarded an agreement but generally throughout the organization for:
 - Both degree and non-degree positions
 - CPP hires are not specific to the work outlined in the contract
 - All positions should be considered, not just positions assigned to the contract work

How is the hiring target determined?

As part of their CPP submittal, Applicants will report their number of Pennsylvania hires annually for the past three years and calculate their average number of hires per year; the target will be 10% of the average, **for each year of the contract.**

The CPP submittal must also contain and take into consideration any hires made by subcontractors within the same period following the same calculation.

Contractor and subcontractor hires should then be combined to create the hiring target

Program Requirements

- Submit a hiring goal. The hiring goal should be 10% of the average of annual PA hires over the past 3 years.
- Establish a Business Folder in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) and ensure contact information remains current.
- Implement the hiring plan (post jobs, connect with Employment and Training programs to find qualified candidates)
- Complete quarterly employment forms via the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (even if no hires were made during that quarter).
 - Q1-October 15 Q3-April 15
 - Q2-January 15 Q4-July 15
- Maintain communication with program office contract monitors or CPP staff on progress and challenges.

CWDS Data Entry Instructions will be provided once the contract is awarded

Contractor Requirements-Additional Notes

- **Contract Specific:** The CPP requirement is contract specific, meaning each contract held with the Department may require a hiring goal. If a contractor has multiple contracts with DHS, they may have multiple goals.

- **Subcontractors:** Hires made by subcontractors also count towards the CPP hiring goal. All hires made by the grantee and subgrantees should be used to determine the 10% hiring target. Subcontractors may also be designated to complete the quarterly reports in CWDS.

- **Eligible positions:** Hires can be for any position; the position does not have to be related to the specific contract project(s). TANF beneficiaries possess a wide range of skill sets and can fulfill a variety of positions, depending on the individual's background and experience. Common industry-specific certifications include areas such as:
 - Data Entry Specialist
 - Customer Service
 - Health Care
 - Administrative Services

How can DHS connect the selected Applicants with TANF beneficiaries?

- Selected Applicants can post available positions via PA CareerLink® online: pacareerlink.pa.gov
- DHS can connect entities with local employment and training programs including the Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN), Work Ready, and Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) providers who work directly with TANF beneficiaries.

EARN and Work Ready

Providers	Participant Services
22 Local Workforce Development Boards 11 Community Action Agencies	<p>With a major redesign beginning July 2020, EARN and Work Ready now provide the following services to participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individualized coaching or case management• Support to address employment barriers• Employability skills development• Counseling services• Access to training programs leading to credentials• Job placement and job search assistance• Support services such as child care and transportation• A minimum of one year of retention services to help navigate the transition into the workforce

Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS)

Providers	Services
14 Community Colleges	<p>The KEYS Program supports participants who are attending an approved program primarily at Pennsylvania’s community colleges. Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-site support to pursue certificates and degrees• Help with navigating college requirements• Assistance with financial aid and scholarship applications• Support services such as child care, transportation, books, and supplies• Connections to other college services such as academic advising, tutoring, student activities, and career services

What are the responsibilities of oversight staff?

The Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) and Project Monitors will work together to:

- Provide support to selected Applicants
- Ensure that the selected Applicants designate and maintain a point of contact for CPP purposes
- Support selected Applicants in making connections to job candidates and provide technical assistance as needed
- Conduct outreach when selected Applicants fail to submit quarterly reports in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS)
- Review CPP targets during annual monitoring and targeted technical assistance visits
- Share quarterly updates with DHS leadership.

Contact Information

Contractor Partnership Program

Email: RA-BETPCPP@pa.gov

PA CareerLink® online:

pacareerlink.pa.gov

- The Project Timeline includes:
 - December 19, 2022 – RFA # 21-21 is Issued
 - January 4, 2023 – Pre-Application Conference
 - January 6, 2023 by 12:00 PM – Deadline to submit questions
 - January 20, 2023 – Answers to Potential Applicants' questions will be posted to the DGS website
 - February 17, 2023 – Due date for Applications

Questions



- We will not answer any question not provided in writing.
- No answer is official until it is answered in writing and posted to the DGS website as an addendum to the RFA.

- This concludes the Pre-Application conference.
- Answers to all questions posed will be posted to the DGS website at <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx> by close of business on January 20, 2023.

Holly Zeiders
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Any contact with the Department concerning this RFA
must be through the RFA Issuing Officer.