

Department Of Human Services

**Early Care and Education
Professional Development Organizations**

Request for Information (RFI)



August 25, 2017

Table of Contents

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION.....	3
1.1 Purpose of this Request for Information.....	3
1.2 RFI Timeline.....	3
1.3 Disclaimers.....	3
PART 2: BACKGROUND.....	4
2.1 Overview.....	4
2.2 Proposed Scope of Work.....	5
2.3 Exclusions.....	7
PART 3: RFI SUBMISSION FORMAT.....	7
3.1 Response Submission.....	7
3.2 Cover Letter.....	7
3.3 Structure for Response.....	7
PART 4: RFI DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS.....	8

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose of this Request for Information

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Service’s (“Department” or “DHS”) Office of Administration, Bureau of Financial Operations issues this Request for Information (“RFI”) on behalf of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (“OCDEL”) to solicit input regarding the proposed scope of work for the creation and management of regional Early Care and Education Professional Development Organizations (“ECE PDOs”)

The Department anticipates releasing a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) in the near future to identify business partners to provide the leadership, management, and administration of the new regional ECE PDOs. Offerors, as single agencies or in partnership with other local entities, will submit proposals for specific service areas, and, if selected, they will be required to maintain a local presence in order to fully support early care and education providers as well as coordinate with the Early Learning Resource Centers (“ELRCs”). Through a competitive RFP process, agencies may apply as a single agency applicant or as a lead agency submitting with partners.

1.2 RFI Timeline

Event	Date
Release RFI	8/25/17
RFI Responses Due	9/8/17

The Department is requesting that all responses to this RFI be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Responses must be submitted electronically to the following email account with “ECE PDO” in the email subject line:

RA-PWRFICOMMENTS@PA.GOV

1.3 Disclaimers

This RFI is issued for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation for future business, an invitation to submit bids or proposals or any other type of current or future procurement or contractual action, and is only intended to gather information and input. The Department does not intend to convey a predisposition to any particular solution or service delivery model but is only seeking information and input from interested stakeholders.

The Department may use the information gathered through this process in the development of future documents; however, the Department does not guarantee that this will occur.

Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.

The Department will not return responses to this RFI. Respondents will not be notified of the results of the Department’s review, nor will they be provided copies of it. If the Department issues a procurement document, no vendor will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based on its participation in this RFI process.

Respondents should be aware that the responses to this RFI will be public information and that no claims of

confidentiality will be honored. The Department is not requesting, and does not require, confidential, proprietary information, or other competitively sensitive information to be included as part of the RFI submission. Ownership of all data, material, and documentation originated, prepared, and provided to the Department during this RFI process will belong exclusively to the Department.

PART 2: BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

In an effort to promote “Government that Works,” OCDEL has made it a priority to integrate early childhood education services to:

- Provide all families easily accessible quality early care and education programs and the services they need to support their children’s potential;
- Enable all early care and education providers easy access to and successful participation in OCDEL’s quality improvement activities; and
- Enable all early care and education providers to offer multiple OCDEL services to families without duplicating paperwork and efforts.

The creation of OCDEL in 2007 opened the door for Pennsylvania to become a national leader in early care and education system reform. In the past decade, OCDEL has successfully launched multiple programs that have provided great opportunities for Pennsylvania’s families, children, and early learning providers. These programs include Keystone STARS, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships, and evidence-based home visiting.

Over the past year, OCDEL has been listening to early care and education providers, families, and business partners about the consequences and burdens of multi-system monitoring and accountability. OCDEL has been exploring options for improving and integrating services delivered to early learning providers and families. We have been asking the following reflective questions in an effort to support OCDEL’s internal continuous quality improvement efforts.

- How is it possible for Pennsylvania to increase access to high-quality early learning services for all children?
- How is it possible for government to work better for families and early learning providers?
- How is it possible for OCDEL to reduce administrative burden for families and providers?
- How is it possible to meet the Governor’s priorities for:
 - An integrated licensing, program monitoring, and quality improvement system;
 - Streamlined data tracking; and
 - An integrated payment model for providers serving children in multiple programs.

The feedback obtained has led to the articulation of goals and priorities, and in partnership with stakeholders, each of our priority initiatives have been addressed and are in the process of actualization.

In June 2017, the Department released a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for nineteen (19) ELRC service regions, which will serve to support families and providers through access to high-quality early learning settings. RFP 30-16 integrates aspects of the current Child Care Information Service and Regional Key agencies with one notable exception: RFP 30-16 does not include in the scope of work the support for the formal professional preparation and ongoing professional

development (“PD”) for early care and education (“ECE”) professionals that is essential to providing high-quality early learning services to children and families.

OCDEL has made it a priority to develop and implement a PD system for the early childhood workforce that integrates services to ensure that all OCDEL-sponsored PD leads to improved knowledge and skills. Priority for the PD system is preparing teachers for the array of responsibilities, knowledge, and skills needed to successfully work with young children and families by embedding specific and articulated objectives that:

- Show a progression in meeting PD goals and educational advancement by articulating, or transforming PD for training hours into academic credit in order to increase the number of ECE teachers with credentials and/or degrees;
- Build on existing credit-bearing educational opportunities that address the needs and goals of both individual teachers and staff, and the broader ECE field;
- Link to practice and, when possible, combine coursework with individualized modeling and feedback on interactions with children in the professional’s care setting;
- Align with research, theory, and standards for practice;
- Use evidenced-based best practices that are consistent with the principles of adult learning; and
- Respond to each learner’s culture, language, abilities, experiences, and the current context of role and professional goals.

OCDEL will release a RFP to identify business partners to provide the leadership, management, and administration of the ECE PDOs. As single agencies, or in partnership with other local entities, Offerors will submit proposals for specific services areas (Table 1), for which they will identify how they will offer PD that aligns with the above principles, key services, and scope of work identified below. It is anticipated that the RFP process will result in a three-year grant agreement with two one-year options for renewal. These grant agreements will include funds to support the development and implementation of needs-based PD and CDA courses (both of which are credit bearing), collaboration and articulation agreements with higher education institutions, and collaboration and coordination among all PD business partners (Table 2).

2.2 Proposed Scope of Work

ECE PDO business partners will:

- Offer credit-bearing PD that aligns to Keystone STARS’ elements of structural and process quality and aligns with the education requirements of the CDA credential (Table 3);
- Utilize the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (“PQAS”) to train and deploy high-quality instructors;
- Work with regionally-adjacent ECE PDO business partners, community colleges, colleges, and universities to create seamless pathways for transformation and articulation of credits from the CDA Credential to Associate and Bachelor’s degrees;
- Coordinate with and support ELRCs in improving quality of early care and education providers; and
- Assess ECE PDO regional need and provide feedback to OCDEL regarding the needs of the early care and education workforce.

Table 1 Proposed ECE PDO Regions

Region	Alignment to ELRC Service Areas	# of Child Care Providers
Western	1- 6	2,009
Central	7-10	1,338

Northeast	11-14	1,142
Southeast	15, 16, 17, 19	1,336
Philadelphia	18	1,773

Table 2 DRAFT Implementation Timeline

Phase 1 ECE PDO Installation	Phase 2 Initial Implementation	Phase 3 Full Implementation	Phase 4 Full Implementation	Phase 5 Data Analysis Expansion
YEAR ONE Content development / roll out, cooperative agreements established.				
YEAR ONE and TWO 25% increase of ECE staff are enrolled in or have completed an academic program to support achievement of their next education level.		YEAR THREE & FOUR 50% increase of ECE staff are enrolled in or have completed an academic program to support achievement of their next education level.		
			YEAR FOUR & FIVE Articulation and Transformation Agreements in all Academic Institutions. 75% increase of ECE staff are enrolled in or have completed an academic program to support achievement of their next education level.	

Table 3 Initial Course Offerings

Course Offerings	CDA Competency Goal
Deliver OCDEL developed STARS orientation content related to:	
The STARS System and CQI Principles Elements of Assessing and Building Quality	I, II, V, VI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pennsylvania Core Knowledge Competencies (“CKC”) Pennsylvania Big Ideas Framework Continuous Quality Improvement (“CQI”) PA Early Learning Standards Using Caring for our Children Basics (“CFOCB”) to Support Practice Assessment tools that support program quality 	
Develop and implement professional development at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels related to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Development 	II, III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practices 	II, III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting interactions with children and families 	IV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and implementing activities that support language development and academic achievement of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse 	II, III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and emotional development - possible topics include: Pyramid Model; Social and Emotional Development; and Infant Early Childhood Mental Health 	III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum implementation 	V, II, III
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale for and administration of developmental screening 	I, II, III, IV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rationale for and administration of observation-based assessment of children’s development 	I, II, III, IV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and management 	V, VI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business development 	V
Develop and implement professional development courses for non-instructional staff regarding:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmentally appropriate practices 	I, V, II, III

• Diversity	III
• Age-appropriate standards; and	II, III
• Appropriate child-adult interactions	III

2.3 Exclusions

Entities who are a successful Offeror for one or more ELRC service areas under RFP 30-16 will not be eligible to submit an offer for the ECE PDO service areas when and if the ECE PDO procurement is issued.

PART 3: RFI SUBMISSION FORMAT

Through this RFI, the Department is soliciting input regarding the proposed scope of work for the ECE PDOs and whether additional services should be added. All interested stakeholders are asked to respond in writing to this RFI. Comments gathered through this process may be used in the development of future documents.

3.1 Response Submission

Please submit a concise response. All responses should be produced in 12-point font or larger. Please limit responses to no more than 4 pages. The pages may be double-sided. The cover letter does not count as a page in the response submission. Please do not send marketing materials to the Department.

3.2 Cover Letter

Please include a cover letter with the following information:

1. An introduction to the respondent’s organization, background, and interest in Pennsylvania’s early care and education system.
2. General information about the respondent or respondent’s organization, to include an address and a point of contact along with a telephone number and an e-mail address.

3.3 Structure for Response

The following provides a suggested structure for a response to this RFI. This structure is intended to minimize the effort required to develop and analyze submitted responses.

Respondents are invited to address the following:

1. RFI Discussion Areas & Questions. Respondents may respond to any or all of the discussion areas in Part 4.
2. Respondents may also provide ideas for improving the ECE PDO project that are not addressed in Part 4.

PART 4: RFI DISCUSSION AREAS & QUESTIONS

The Department requests that interested respondents send responses to all or any of the questions and discussion areas detailed below:

Discussion Area 1: Scope of Work.

1. Did the Department clearly address the scope of work of the ECE PDOs?
2. How could the scope of work be improved?
3. Did the Department clearly address the Keys services?
4. How could the Department's description of the Keys services be improved?
5. Should any services be added to or removed from the scope of work? If so, which services should be added or removed, and why?

Discussion Area 2: PD System Priorities.

1. Did the Department clearly address the elements necessary to create a high-quality PD system?
2. How could the PD system's quality be improved upon?
3. Are there any priorities that should be added to or removed from the Department's PD System Priorities, and, if so, why?

Discussion Area 3: ECE PDO Service Regions.

1. Did the Department define manageable service regions to address early care and education provider PD needs?
2. How could the ECE PDO service regions be improved?
3. Describe the ideal composition of service regions and provide your reasoning.