



**Request for Applications**  
RFA # 001-PDG-2021



**TITLE:** **Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant Data-Informed Local Strategic Planning**

**FUNDING AGENCY:** NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

**ISSUE DATE:** May 10, 2021

**RECEIPT DEADLINE:** Applications, subject to the following conditions, must be received no later than **5:00 pm June 11, 2021**.

**EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email:** [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov).

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted, i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

**INTENT TO APPLY:** Eligible agencies and/or organizations interested in applying for this Request for Applications (RFA) are encouraged to notify DCDEE of their intent to apply via the following link, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DTDJW88> no later than **5:00 pm May 21, 2021**. Agencies are **not** required to notify of their intent to respond to this RFA; this information is requested to assist DCDEE in planning.

**DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES** concerning this RFA in writing to:  
Tilneil Gary, PDG Grant Manager  
Email address: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov)

Sharon Johnson, PDG Contracts Manager  
Email address: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this Request for Applications must be received no later than **5:00 pm May 21, 2021**. All questions must be received in writing, via email to: [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New> no later than **5:00 pm on May 28, 2021**.

**ELIGIBILITY:** This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with expertise in data-informed strategic planning and knowledge of North Carolina’s early childhood education mixed delivery system.

**FUNDING AVAILABILITY:** A contract will be awarded from this RFA beginning August 15 through December 30, 2021, with the opportunity to extend for up to an additional 12-months from January 1 through December 30, 2022, depending on the availability of funds. A total of \$255,000 is available over the course of the grant pending availability of federal funds; with up to \$170,000 immediately available for the initial funding period and an additional \$85,000 to be secured by December 2021. Should a carry forward or no cost extension option be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder, the same option will be available to the contractor.

Please note, the funding period and amounts are projected and may be adjusted in alignment with the approved federal budget and budget period.

**Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Grant Funding Source:**

1. Funding Type	Discretionary
2. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	90TP0056-02-00
3. Federal Award Date (see § 200.39 Federal award date)	12/03/2020
4. Total Amount of the Federal Award (awarded to DCDEE)	\$13,414,500
5. Federal award project description, as required to be responsive to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) +	PDG B-5 Renewal Grants seek to empower state governments to lead the way in leveraging federal, state and local early care and education investments. Renewal grants will assist states in helping low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. In addition, these grants will help improve the transitions between early care and education settings and elementary school. The overall responsibility of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant is to assist states in the coordination of existing early childhood funding streams, resulting in services being provided to more children birth through five in a mixed delivery system.
6. Name of Federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, and contact information for awarding official	Federal DHHS Office Administration for Children and Families NC DHHS/DCDEE 333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, North Carolina 27609
7. CFDA Number and Name; the pass-through entity must identify the dollar amount made available under	CFDA# 93.434

each Federal award and the CFDA number at the time of disbursement	ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five
8. Identification of whether the award is R&D	No

**Federal Requirements on indirect cost rates and calculations according to 2 C.F.R. 200.414:**

1. If your agency has or establishes a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNIR), then the agency is not allowed to charge the “de minimis” rate of 10% (or some other amount) for indirect costs, as directed by 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
2. Agencies with an FNIR are required to charge their agreed upon rate for their indirect costs and include cost items as determined by the FNIR in their indirect costs.
3. If your agency does not have and never had a FNIR, then your agency is allowed to negotiate a different rate or the “de minimis,” as per 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
4. Negotiation of indirect cost rates in excess of the “de minimis” rate of 10% are performed by the NC DHHS Office of the Controller, Cost Analysis and Administration section:

Cost Analysis/Federal Financial Reporting/Administration  
DHHS Office of the Controller  
NC Department of Health and Human Services  
1050 Umstead Dr  
Raleigh, NC 27699-2019  
Phone: 919-855-3696

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

North Carolina's Birth through Five Needs Assessment revealed a need for improved data systems to generate information that can improve the state's ability to track progress toward the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan and Birth through Five Strategic Plan goals. Through the support of the Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5), the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) will implement strategies to address gaps in data systems to support quality, availability, access, and collaboration for early childhood care and education programs and services.

The purpose of this RFA is to fund a partner with the expertise to support local communities as they engage in data-informed and cross-sector strategic planning. These efforts will be accomplished by providing training and technical assistance to 30 local cross-sector Human Services leadership on best practices for using and interpreting quality data, as well as to support their respective communities in developing strategic plans based on data. Ultimately these efforts will better coordinate early childhood education services across the state's early childhood care and education (ECE) mixed delivery systems – while aligning with ongoing state and local-level early childhood improvement efforts including but not limited to the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, local-level child abuse prevention plans, and PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

PDG B-5 renewal grants were issued to states in order to build on efforts to facilitate collaboration among early childhood care and education (ECE) programs to better serve children and families. The funding opportunity announcement describes the grant as follows:

“The initial PDG B-5 grants were designed to facilitate collaboration and coordination among existing programs within the state's early childhood care and education system. The purposes of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant remain focused on strengthening the state's integrated ECE system to prepare low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten and improve their transitions across early childhood into the early elementary school grades. Through this renewal grant states have the opportunity to pursue objectives that the data, research, or needs assessment has indicated is needed within their own state. This will help to break down barriers and improve access to higher quality ECE services.

The PDG B-5 Renewal Grants will assist states to expand or build upon their initial grant work. Renewal grants may be used by states to update or enhance their birth through five needs assessment, program performance evaluation plan, and strategic plan. Renewal grants may be used by states to implement collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs in the state's mixed delivery system, including early childhood health programs, as detailed in their strategic plan. Renewal grants may also be used by states to expand access

to existing programs and develop new programs to address the needs of children and families eligible for, but not served by, existing ECE programs. States will be expected to more effectively coordinate with their existing ECE programs, engage parents, prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed, and improve transitions from ECE programs to the local educational agency or elementary school.”

For more information, applicants can view the [funding opportunity announcement](#) for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five, solicitation number HHS-2019-ACF-OCC-TP-1567.

In the PDG B-5 planning year, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Jordan Institute for Families conducted a survey of key users of early childhood data across the state to assess how data is used, as well as barriers to collecting, managing, and using data.

A key recommendation from the survey, “Data quality and management,” was that NC build internal capacity in early childhood settings at the local/community level to collect, manage, and use quality data to support data-informed decision-making about programs, policies, and practices.

In December 2019, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) was awarded funding through the [Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five](#) (PDG B-5) to implement strategies in alignment to the following six required activities in effort to strengthen its early childhood education system:

1. Update the state’s B-5 Needs Assessment to inform ongoing planning to strengthen the early childhood system.
2. Update the state’s B-5 Strategic Plan to ensure the state’s early childhood system best meets the needs of young children, especially those who are most vulnerable.
3. Maximize parent and family choice and knowledge about the state’s mixed delivery system of existing programs and providers.
4. Share best practices among ECE providers by increasing collaboration and efficiency of services, including improving transitions across ECE services and programs.
5. Improve the overall quality of ECE programs and services in the state.
6. Support continuous quality improvement through implementing the program performance evaluation plan and leveraging data to examine the results of grant activities.

In accordance to Activity 6, North Carolina proposes to utilize PDG B-5 funds to act on Recommendation One “Data quality and management,” to enact sustainable and scalable strategies to support community-based data-informed strategic planning. Training and technical assistance would be provided to local communities on best practices for using and interpreting quality data, as well as to support communities to develop data-informed

strategic plans in alignment with other ongoing early childhood improvement efforts including the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, local child abuse prevention plans, and the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

Resources: An applicant may find the following resources linked below (and/or included as an attachment to this RFA) helpful in preparing a successful application narrative.

- The [PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Application](#), outlines planned projects for each of the six required activities, including Activity 6.4 Data-Informed Local Strategic Planning.
- The [PDG B-5 Needs Assessment](#).
- The [PDG B-5 Strategic Plan](#).
- The [North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan](#).
- UNC-CH's Jordan Institute for Families [2019 Report on Early Childhood Education Data Users](#).

### **III. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The successful applicant will implement activities for data-informed strategic planning at the local level, through providing technical assistance to local cross-sector human services leadership teams to train communities about best practices for using and interpreting quality data, as well as to support 30 communities to develop strategic plans based on data.

Applicants should describe in their proposal how they would successfully develop and provide training and technical assistance over a series of cohorts addressing the following tasks and deliverables: 1) identify and select county-level cross-sector human services leadership teams; 2) develop and implement a technical assistance plan and training curriculum to build the capacity of local communities to use data to support decision-making and strategic planning; 3) evaluate efforts utilizing a continuous quality improvement approach; 4) convene leadership teams to showcase strategic plans; and 5) utilize findings to develop a scale up plan to engage all 100 counties and sustainability plan to continue efforts beyond PDG B-5 funding.

To ensure alignment with ongoing state and local level efforts, applicants shall describe how they will support communities in designing scalable and sustainable plans that build upon strategies defined in other state or local plans that address early childhood services including but not limited to the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, local-level child abuse prevention plans, and the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. Recognizing that the State of North Carolina Governor's Office is anticipating the reestablishment of the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council in 2021 (a Council that will lead forthcoming revisions to the NC Early Childhood Action Plan), the applicant's proposal shall demonstrate an agile project design and implementation plan adaptable to forthcoming revisions to the NC Early Childhood Action Plan. The trainings and technical assistance provided shall support local communities in not only establishing data-informed improvement plans that address

their individual community needs, but also align with the strategies, data measures and targets defined in revisions of the NC Early Childhood Action Plan to improve early childhood outcomes considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

**A. Final Products:**

- i. By 2022, 30 local communities establish data-informed, cross-sector early childhood improvement plans aligned to state and local level early childhood improvement efforts including but not limited to the NC Early Childhood Action Plan and local child abuse prevention plans, and the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.
- ii. Each participant receives a certificate and/or credential for having participated in the professional development opportunity.
- iii. A scale up implementation plan developed to expand data-informed strategic planning to all 100 counties.
- iv. A plan to sustain training and technical assistance developed to support communities participating in the data-informed strategic planning process.

**B. Outputs:**

- i. Collaborate with DCDEE to implement an application process to recruit county-level cross-sector human services leadership teams to receive training and technical assistance for data-informed strategic planning. An applicant's proposal shall describe strategies to facilitate the identification and selection of county-level cross-sector human services leadership teams.
- ii. Develop a technical assistance plan and training curriculum designed to build the capacity of local communities to utilize data to support county-level decision-making. The TA plan should be customizable based on a given county's needs. The curriculum design should include information for audiences with a range of expertise in working with data, from basic expertise to advanced. The curriculum should address the following topics:
  1. How to convene stakeholders using an equity approach to data.
  2. How to communicate about data to support making meaning for a variety of audiences (legislators, members of the community, etc.), such as visualizing information, writing to synthesize information.
  3. How to reliably request and access data from local, state, and national sources.
  4. How to ask questions that lead to actionable change in their community using data as a driver.
  5. How to build a data story blending quantitative information with qualitative/anecdotal perspectives.
  6. How to utilize data-informed approaches into existing workflows and systems.



7. Best practices in data privacy, including how to safely share data.
  8. How to evaluate the strengths and limitations of a given data source.
  9. Build relationships with key data stakeholders from across the state and nationally, such as research institutions, non-profits, and think tanks.
- iii. Provide training and technical assistance to established cohorts, with ongoing and customized technical assistance provided to all participating cohorts through the end of the project period.
  - iv. Conduct an evaluation of each cohort at the end of the defined training period – utilizing observations, data and feedback to make continuous quality improvements to the training/technical assistance plan, curriculum, and design as needed.
  - v. Conduct a full-scale evaluation of all participating cohorts, measuring local progress, observed best practices, successes and lessons learned in the creation and implementation of local data-informed strategic plans.
  - vi. Coordinate a convening to showcase of community-level strategic plans.
  - vii. Utilize evaluation findings and continuous quality improvement strategies to design a scale-up implementation plan to facilitate local data-informed strategic planning to all 100 counties. Additionally, the selected partner shall support the Division in developing a plan to sustain training and technical assistance provided to existing and new counties participating in data-informed strategic planning.

### **C. Estimated Timeline of Outputs:**

Note: This is an estimated timeline, the applicant should suggest a timeline that aligns with its proposed plan to meet the outputs and outcomes defined in this RFA.

- By November 30, 2021: Recruit, train and provide technical assistance to 2021 cohort(s).
- By December 30, 2021: Conduct evaluation of initial cohort(s).
- By October 30, 2022: Recruit train and provide technical assistance to 2022 cohort(s).
- By November 30, 2022: Conduct evaluation of 2022 cohort(s). Conduct full-scale evaluation of all participating cohorts, measuring local progress, observed best practices, successes and lessons learned in the creation and implementation of local data-informed strategic plans.
- By December 30, 2022: Convening showcase of community plans.
- By December 30, 2022: Submit a plan summarizing recommendations to scale-up implementation of local data-informed strategic planning to all 100 counties and a plan to sustain ongoing training and technical assistance to existing and new participating counties.

#### **D. Intended Outcomes:**

- i. Of the 30 participating local communities, 100% will have establish data-informed, cross-sector early childhood improvement strategic-plans.
- ii. Of the 30 participating local communities, 100% will demonstrate evidence of using data to improve services, policies, or practices.

#### **IV. Additional Requirements**

1. **Reports** – Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements and as needed for the state’s B-5 Needs Assessment, B-5 Strategic Plan, or PDG Program Performance Evaluation. This includes submitting monthly, quarterly and annual reporting by the deadlines provided by DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder.
2. **Feedback** – Providing feedback at least monthly to DCDEE is required throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
3. **Collaboration/Partnerships** – The applicant may propose cross-sector collaborators and partners to successfully implement the deliverables of this project.

#### **V. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY**

Applicants must exhibit comprehensive knowledge of early childhood education (ECE) systems, demonstrate capacity to develop and provide training and technical assistance on data-informed strategic planning, a demonstrated ability to develop and execute equity focused projects, and program design and evaluation expertise. Applicants must be able to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders, including state and local agencies.

Preference will be given to applicants with extensive knowledge of the NC Early Childhood Action Plan; and who have established credibility in providing technical assistance to local communities.

Applicants must detail the qualifications of key personnel who will be developing and providing training and technical assistance for this project. The submission of work products that demonstrate similar or relevant efforts are required.

#### **VI. LINE ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE**

The applicant will submit two line-item budgets, one for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the initial budget period of August 15, 2021 through December 30, 2021,

and one for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the 12-month period of January 1, 2022 through December 30, 2022. The budget must address the cost to complete deliverables outlined in this RFA. A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budget. Each justification should show how the amount on the line item budget was calculated, and it should be clear how the expense relates to the project's activities. The total for the two budgets added together may not exceed \$255,000.

### **Travel Reimbursement Rates**

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement, presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: [https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budman5-travel-policies#TP5\\_1](https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budman5-travel-policies#TP5_1).

### **Current Rates for Travel and Lodging**

<b>Meals</b>	<b>In State</b>	<b>Out of State</b>
Breakfast	\$8.60	\$8.60
Lunch	\$11.30	\$11.30
Dinner	\$19.50	\$22.20
<i>Total Meals Per Diem Per Day</i>	<i>\$39.40</i>	<i>\$42.10</i>
<b>Lodging</b> ( <i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i> )	\$75.10	\$88.70
<b>Total Travel Allowance Per Day</b>	<b>\$114.50</b>	<b>\$130.80</b>
Mileage	\$0.575 cents per mile	

## **VII. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT**

The submitted electronic application must be formatted to print on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch, except for the spreadsheets used in the budget template. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only** no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (*\* indicates form included in RFA posting*).

- 1) **Application Checklist\***: Summarizes the application components to be submitted.

- 2) **Application Face Sheet\***: Requires electronic or scanned signature of authorized authority.
- 3) **Proposal Summary**: Provide a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the activities the applicant proposes to implement.
- 4) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications**: Provide a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including:
  - The organization's mission, history, and goals;
  - Qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative including up to three work samples; and
  - The organization's experience in the content area specified in the application.
- 5) **Proposal Design, Timeline & Strategies**: Provide up to an 8-page narrative describing the proposed project design and the activities/tasks as described in Section III that will be accomplished with the available resources. Include as part of scope of services the major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task, by position.
- 6) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors**: Provide a 1-3-page narrative describing any collaborative partners or subcontractors you plan to work with to support local-level data-informed strategic planning training and technical assistance. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward this initiative, including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable. Requested attachments will not count toward the applicant's page limitations.
- 7) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet\***: Complete and submit two proposed line item budget according to the format provided with this RFA. The budgets shall reflect the separate timeframes of August 15, 2021 through December 30, 2021 and January 1, 2022 through December 30, 2022. When added together, the total of both budget periods may not exceed \$255,000. Also complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the "DCDEE Line Item Budget & Narrative Instructions." The FTE worksheet is also required as part of this RFA. Please complete the FTE sheet first so that the line item budget will populate Salary/Fringe values in Column C.

## **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS**

The following is a general description of the process for selecting applications for funding for this initiative. A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **10** points): Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners** (Maximum of **20** points): Response must reflect the applicant's history of and capacity for successful completion of developing and providing equity focused technical assistance on data-informed strategic planning, as well as demonstrated expertise of North Carolina's ECE mixed delivery system and ability to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Proposal Design, Time Line & Strategies** (Maximum of **30** points): Response must reflect how the proposal will result in the 2021 cohort of communities successfully developing cross-sector ECE strategic plans based on data by December 30, 2021. The proposal design must reflect agility and flexibility in adapting technical assistance and training provided to local communities to ensure alignment of local strategic planning efforts to state-level initiatives to address emergent needs and opportunities to improve early childhood outcomes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The criteria for the Scope of Services outlined in Section III must be addressed. The applicant shall include a timeline of deliverables for the timeframe of August 15, 2021 through December 30, 2021, and a timeline of deliverables for January 1, 2022 through December 30, 2022.
- 4) **Alignment with the NC Early Childhood Action Plan:** (Maximum of **15** points): Applicant's proposal demonstrates alignment with ongoing state and local early childhood improvement efforts including but not limited to the NC Early Childhood Action Plan, local child abuse prevention plans, and the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan. The applicant proposes an agile project design that to ensure alignment with current and forthcoming revisions to the North Carolina's PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan completed in the initial phase of the planning grant, and the NC Early Childhood Action Plan. For more information on how to access these documents, see this list of resources outlined in Section II "Background" of this RFA.
- 5) **Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** (Maximum of **10** points): Recognizing child outcomes vary disproportionately across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical and developmental ability, and geography, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to design and implement culturally responsive programming. The services provided by this contract (as well evidence of past work) shall include a focus of employing a diversity, equity and inclusion framework in project development and execution – to ensure the program that is developed is representative of and responsive to diverse identities of North Carolina families.

- 6) **Line Item Budget\*, Detailed Budget Narrative & FTE Sheet\***: (Maximum of **15** points):  
Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. Two budgets must be provided to show the funding needed for the initial funding period through December 30, 2021 and for up to 12 additional months through December 30, 2022. When added together, the total of both budget periods may not exceed \$255,000. Should a carryover or no cost extension be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder to complete PDG activities, the same option will be available to the contractor.

**Maximum Points: 100**

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements for this project as described. Attachments will not count against the applicant's page limitations. The selection committee will submit recommendations to DCDEE based on the selection process described. The Division will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing and/or electronically **no later than 5:00 pm on June 11, 2021**.

**IX. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/>) by **May 28, 2021**.
2. **An electronic submission** of the application must be received from each agency or organization. The submission must include an application face sheet with an electronic or scanned signature by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by DCDEE via email not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. **Paper copies or faxed applications will not be accepted.**
4. The date and time of application receipt will be documented by the date and time shown on the email submission received via [DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov). Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application submitted.
5. At their option, the RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for clarification or to support the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's

documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.

7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
8. **Application Process Summary Dates**
  - 05/10/2021: Request for Applications issued.
  - 05/21/2021: All questions due via email no later than 5 pm.
  - 05/21/2021: Interested applications submit **optional** Notice of Intent no later than 5 pm.
  - 05/28/2021: Answers to Questions posted to the DCDEE website no later than 5 pm.
  - 06/11/2021: Applications must be received via email no later than 5 pm.
  - 06/18/2021: Successful applicant will be notified.
  - 08/15/2021: Estimated contract start date.

## **X. General Information on Submitting Applications**

1. **Award or Rejection**

All complete and timely submitted applications will be evaluated and awards will be made to that agencies or organizations whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant will be notified by June 18, 2021.
2. **Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.
3. **Elaborate Applications**

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond what is necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
4. **Oral Explanations**

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.
5. **Reference to Other Data**

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not be considered.

**6. Titles**

Titles and headings in this RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

**7. Form of Application**

Each application must be submitted utilizing the forms provided by DCDEE, and upon award, these forms will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

**8. Exceptions**

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any agency or organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.

**9. Advertising**

In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results of the selection process as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of DCDEE.

**10. Right to Submitted Material**

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

**11. Competitive Offer**

Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

**12. Agency and Organization's Representative**

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions regarding the application.

**13. Subcontracting**

Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom.

**14. Proprietary Information**

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish



disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

**15. Participation Encouraged**

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

**16. Gifts Ban**

N.C.G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

**17. Contract/Funds Disbursement**

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipients of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicants must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

**18. Audit**

Please be advised that successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more. Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses on the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity.

**19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application**

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

**20. Federal Certifications**

Agencies or organizations receiving federal funds are required to execute Federal certifications regarding non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities.

**21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)**

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

**22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution**

Contracts will require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign expenditure reports.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name, address, and DUNS number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.
- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private non-profit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private non-profit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
  - i. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.

- ii. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.
- f. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should **NOT** be generated, signed or returned with application.

**Note:** At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

### **23. Registration with Secretary of State**

Private non-profit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See [www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations](http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations).)

### **24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement**

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the Division, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

### **25. Salary Limitation**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

The Appropriations Act of 2017 (N.C. Session Law 2017-57), which was adopted by reference in 2019 budget legislation, SECTION 6.4 limits the State funds used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization to \$120,000.

Per the statute *"No more than one hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$120,000) in State funds, including any interest earnings accruing from those funds, may be used for the annual salary of any individual employee of a nonprofit organization."*

- *The term "State funds" is defined by law in N.C.G.S. 143C-1-1(d)(25): Any moneys including federal funds deposited in the State treasury except moneys deposited in a trust fund or agency fund as described in G.S. 143C-1-3.*
- *HHSAR 331.101.70(b) Part 353: The salary rate limitation does not restrict the salary that an organization may pay an individual working under a Department of Health and Human*

*Services contract or order; it merely limits the portion of that salary that may be paid with contract funds.*

- *The salary cap is for a 12-month period. That means that the cap amount is reduced for the 9-month academic period or 3 months contract period.*
- *The cap is for a 1.0 FTE. That means the cap is proportionally reduced for a .75 or .50 FTE.”*

## **XI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

The following items must be included in the application. Please assemble the application in the following order in the format identified in Section VII:

- ☐ Application Checklist – Item 1
- ☐ Application Face Sheet – Item 2
- ☐ Proposal Summary/Design/Evaluation Plan – Item 3
- ☐ List of Subcontractors – Item 4
- ☐ Line Item Budget & FTE Worksheet – Item 5
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Approval Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Commitment or Statements of Support – Item 6
- ☐ IRS Tax Status Documentation – Item 7
  - a. IRS letter documenting your organization’s tax identification number  
OR
  - b. IRS determination letter regarding your organization’s 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for private nonprofits