

2026 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROVIDER CYCLE QUESTIONS

(Phase 1: Preliminary Screening LOI; Phase 2: Full Application; Phase 3: Supplemental Info & Site visit)

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY SCREENING LOI

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

You must answer yes to all but the last question to be eligible.

- Is your organization one of the following?
 - A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization
 - A fiscally sponsored program of a 501(c)(3) organization
 - A public school district with pre-K or preschool programs.
 - A public university operating an early childhood center.
 - A governmental unit or public agency.
- Does your organization operate a U.S.-based early childhood program serving children from birth to age 5?
This includes center-based, home-based, Head Start or Early Head Start, Pre-K, Kindergarten, and networks of ECE providers, all of which are eligible.
- Does your early childhood program operate at least six hours per day, for at least 180 days of the year?
- Has your organization been operating an early childhood program for at least two years?
- Do at least 60% of the families you serve through the program have incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level or 50% of the area's median household income?
- Does your organization regularly work with families, community members, and early childhood educators to improve programs and services?
Applicants selected to move forward will be able to demonstrate how these groups helped inform program design and improvement.
- Will your proposed project include at least one standardized classroom, teacher, or child assessment or observational tool as part of its evaluation plan?
- Does your organization currently have active grants with the Foundation?
*Organizations with active grants from the foundation are **NOT** eligible for this opportunity.*

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

We use the information below to create your organization's profile in our grant system. Once your profile is created, much of this information will automatically carry over if you apply for future funding opportunities.

1. Organization Name
2. Address
3. Tax ID
4. Organization Website
5. Annual operating expenses
6. Staff information:
 - a. Number of full-time staff
 - b. Number of part-time staff
 - c. Number of contractors or consultants

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please identify the primary contacts for this application.

1. CEO/Executive Director
2. Request Primary Contact

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

We want to learn more about your organization, its early childhood programs, and its professional development offerings.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. How many years has your organization directly provided early care and education services to young children?

2. Provide a brief overview of your early childhood program.

Bullet points are encouraged. Please include:

- Program type(s)
(Examples: center-based, family child care, Head Start or Early Head Start, Pre-K, kindergarten)
- Hours of operation
(Hours per day and days per year)
- Program size (Number of sites, geographic areas served, educators in the classroom, and children served)
- Key attributes

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

3. What percentage of the children your organization serves comes from families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, or 50% of the area median household income?

4. How does your organization collect or calculate this information?

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

CURRENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

We want to understand your organization's current approach to supporting educator learning and growth over time.

Please answer the following questions using brief responses or bullet points where possible.

5. What types of professional learning opportunities does your organization currently provide to educators?

Examples may include training or workshops, coaching, professional learning communities, mentoring and apprenticeships, onboarding, and leadership development.

Please also include the following for each bulleted activity:

- How often each of these supports is offered
- Typical content covered
- Who delivers it, and who participates

Recommended length: 250 words or fewer; 1-2 sentences per activity – complete sentences not required.

6. How do you help educators apply professional learning in the classroom?

Examples may include observation, modeling, coaching, feedback, and planning.

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

7. Who is responsible for leading or coordinating professional development in your organization?

Please briefly describe:

- Relevant staff roles
- Leadership structures
- Internal capacity that supports implementation

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

8. What data, feedback, or assessment tools do you currently use to understand whether professional learning is effective?

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

9. How do you use this information to improve your approach over time?

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

10. How is professional learning connected to educator goals, competencies, credentials, advancement, or compensation?

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

11. Which of the following are currently part of your organization's professional development system? (Check all that apply)

- Structured onboarding for educators
- Ongoing trainings or workshops
- Ongoing coaching for educators
- Mentoring & Apprenticeships
- Professional learning communities or peer learning groups
- Regular classroom observations
- Individual professional growth plans
- Use of educator competencies, standards, or career ladders
- Staff roles dedicated to professional development, coaching, or instructional support
- Use of classroom, teacher, or child assessment data to guide professional learning
- Formal processes for gathering staff feedback
- Professional learning connected to career advancements, credentials, or compensation.
- Ongoing opportunities for reflection, collaboration, or shared learning among staff.
- Systems for tracking participation in professional learning activities.
- Other (please describe)

PROPOSED PROJECT

12. Which area of your professional development system are you proposing to improve? (select only one high-level area)

Organizations should focus on strengthening one primary area rather than proposing broad changes across multiple areas.

- Clear Structure and Career Pathways
 - Connect learning opportunities that build on one another over time.
 - Use adult learning best practices.
 - Align staff learning to educator competencies, credentials, career growth, or compensation.
 - Provide learning experiences that are individualized, scaffolded, and responsive to educators' needs, experience, and goals.
 - Have dedicated leadership and organizational capacity to support ongoing implementation.
- Using Feedback and Data to Improve
 - Gather regular feedback from staff and families.
 - Use standardized assessment and evaluation tools to understand what is working and where improvements are needed.
 - Make ongoing improvements based on what is learned.
 - Support reflective practice, peer learning, and collaborative inquiry among educators.
- Ongoing and Consistent Support
 - Offer both individual and group learning opportunities, such as training, professional learning communities, coaching, and mentoring.
 - Provide learning opportunities on an ongoing basis rather than in a one-and-done situation.
 - Connect internal and external learning opportunities to make the best use of available resources.
 - Support classroom implementation through observation, modeling, feedback, and continuous improvement cycles.
- Practical and Relevant Learning
 - Provide learning experiences that are practical, relevant, and easy to apply in daily work.
 - Include fundamental topics such as family engagement, effective instruction, developmentally appropriate practice, and classroom management.
 - Align with established standards, research, and effective practices in the early childhood field.
 - Equip educators to support all learners, including multilingual learners, children with disabilities, and children impacted by trauma or adverse experiences.

13. In three to four sentences, summarize the specific improvement your organization is proposing to make to its professional development system.

Please be as specific as possible about:

- What will change
- Who will be affected
- How the improvement will strengthen your overall professional development approach.

Note: Full project details will be requested in the next phase.

Recommended length 75 words or fewer

14. Why did your organization choose to focus on this area for improvement?

Please briefly describe any relevant:

- Data
- Staff or family feedback
- Research
- Previous experiences of lessons learned

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

15. Why is your organization ready to make this improvement now?

Please briefly describe:

- What is already in place?
- Why is this the right next step?
- What organizational capacity exists to support implementation?

Recommended length: 75 words or fewer

OTHER

16. What else should we know about your organization, professional development system, or project?

PHASE 2: FULL APPLICATION

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

We'd like to better understand the children, families, and early childhood professionals your organization serves.

ORGANIZATION SERVICE NUMBERS

1. Please provide the following information for your early childhood program:
 - a. Number of sites
 - b. Number of classrooms
 - c. Number of early childhood educators
 - d. Number of children served annually

DEMOGRAPHICS

2. Describe the demographics of your early childhood staff.

Please include any data you currently track related to:

- Age
- Race or ethnicity
- Sex or gender
- Languages spoken
- Degrees and certifications
- Average tenure/experience

You may include percentages, ranges, bullet points, or brief narrative responses.

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

3. Describe the demographics of your students.

Please include any data you currently track related to:

- Age ranges served
- Race or ethnicity
- Languages spoken at home
- Childcare subsidy participation or other indicators of economic need

If referencing subsidy eligibility, please note the income guidelines used.

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

4. Describe the barriers your families face in accessing high-quality early childhood education, and how your organization helps address them.

Examples may include cost, geographic access, workforce shortages, language access, inclusive services, transportation, limited availability of high-quality programs

If available, you may include relevant local or community-level data.

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

5. To what extent do your organization's leadership, board, and staff reflect the communities, families, and educators you serve?

Please include any information you currently track related to:

- Race or ethnicity
- Language or cultural representation
- Community connection or lived experience

Specific percentages, numbers, or examples are encouraged where available.

Recommended length: 75 -100 words

FUNDING REQUEST

We'd like to learn more about the project you are proposing and how it will strengthen your professional development system over the next one to three years.

6. Project Title

7. Requested Amount

8. Total Project Budget

9. Proposed Grant Period

10. Which area of your professional development system is the primary focus of your proposed project?

Organizations should focus on strengthening one primary area rather than proposing broad changes across multiple areas.

⊕ Clear Structure and Career Pathways

- Connect learning opportunities that build on one another over time.
- Use adult learning best practices.
- Align staff learning to educator competencies, credentials, career growth, or compensation.
- Provide learning experiences that are individualized, scaffolded, and responsive to educators' needs, experience, and goals.
- Have dedicated leadership and organizational capacity to support ongoing implementation.

⊕ Using Feedback and Data to Improve

- Gather regular feedback from staff and families.
- Use standardized assessment and evaluation tools to understand what is working and where improvements are needed.
- Make ongoing improvements based on what is learned.
- Support reflective practice, peer learning, and collaborative inquiry among educators.

⊕ Ongoing and Consistent Support

- Offer both individual and group learning opportunities, such as training, professional learning communities, coaching, and mentoring.
- Provide learning opportunities on an ongoing basis rather than in a one-and-done situation.
- Connect internal and external learning opportunities to make the best use of available resources.
- Support classroom implementation through observation, modeling, feedback, and continuous improvement cycles.

⊕ Practical and Relevant Learning

- Provide learning experiences that are practical, relevant, and easy to apply in daily work.
- Include fundamental topics such as family engagement, effective instruction, developmentally appropriate practice, and classroom management.
- Align with established standards, research, and effective practices in the early childhood field.
- Equip educators to support all learners, including multilingual learners, children with disabilities, and children impacted by trauma or adverse experiences.

11. In three to four sentences, summarize the specific improvement your organization is proposing to make to its professional development system. *(LOI response will auto-fill with option to edit)*

Please be as specific as possible about:

- What will change
- Who will be affected
- How the improvement will strengthen your overall professional development approach.

Recommended length 75 words or fewer

12. Why did your organization choose to focus on this area for improvement? *(LOI response will auto-fill with option to edit)*

Please briefly describe any relevant:

- Data
- Staff or family feedback
- Research
- Previous experiences of lessons learned

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

13. Using the downloadable template, please describe how your organization will implement the proposed project.

Please include:

- Key activities
- Timeline or phases
- Staff responsible for implementation
- How you will measure success

14. Please provide your project budget and associated narrative using the downloadable template below.

15. How will the success of the project be measured? Be sure to include some targets.

16. If this project is successful, how might your organization share effective practices, lessons learned, or tools with other early childhood providers or partners?

Please focus on approaches that are realistic and aligned with your organization's capacity and partnerships.

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

OPTIONAL

17. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your organization, project, or fundraising efforts?

PHASE 3: SUPPLEMENTAL INFO & DOCUMENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION

We need to know who to contact if we have questions about a specific topic.

1. CEO/Executive Director
2. Organization Signatory
3. Finance/Payment Contact
4. Request Primary Contact

ORGANIZATION & PROJECT INFORMATION

BOARD

5. Number of board members
6. Number of meetings per year
7. Average board meeting attendance
8. Percentage who contribute financially
9. Percentage who contribute outside of their board service
10. Upload Current Board List

The list should include a Board member's company affiliation, board role, and the knowledge, expertise, and experience they bring to the organization.

OPTIONAL

11. A copy of the organization's strategic plan (if available)

PROJECT TEAM

12. Will any external partners, consultants, or vendors play a significant role in the project? If yes, please briefly describe their role, how and why they were selected, and if you have an MOU in place.

Recommended length: 100 words or fewer

FINANCIALS

Please upload the following required organization and request documents to the portal.

13. Last year's financial statements or the most recently available financial audit
14. Most recent income statement and balance sheet for the current fiscal year.

PAYMENT PREFERENCE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have any additional information you think is important to share with us, please provide it here. Otherwise, feel free to move forward with submitting your documents.

1. What else should we know about your organization, financials, fundraising progress, or this project?