

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY

1. **We are a for-profit entity or a membership organization. Are we eligible to apply for funding?** The Stranahan Foundation only funds IRS-designated 501(c)(3) charities.
2. **I work for the County Office of Education. Are we eligible to apply for funding?** As a private foundation, we can grant funds to government units or departments. To initiate the LOI process, please contact our team, as our system requires an EIN that can be found in the IRS database.
3. **NEW My organization runs an early childhood education center or program. Are we eligible?** Yes, but ultimately, your eligibility depends on the intended beneficiaries of your project. If your organization currently employs more than 25% of the anticipated beneficiaries or plans to employ them in the future, the project is likely to align more closely with our provider cycle.

Please be aware that exceptions to this rule may apply. If you manage an early childhood network or have a Head Start contract with subgrantees and are considering proposing a substitute or floater teacher for this group, we encourage you to contact us directly to discuss your eligibility.

4. **Are programs or organizations affiliated with religious institutions eligible for funding?** The Stranahan Foundation may support religiously affiliated early childhood organizations if they:
 - Do not engage in proselytizing or require participation in religious activities.
 - Do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), or disability.
5. **I am using a fiscal sponsor, or I am part of a university system. Whose information should I reference in the application?** Here are some general guidelines we have historically provided for applicants:
 - Use the *Organization Overview* question to describe your specific department or institute's work.
 - For board-related information, please refer to the fiscal sponsor or the university's board of directors.
 - For questions about board composition, you may describe your department, institute, or project advisory board.
 - Any board lists required should include both the larger entity and your advisory board.
 - It is ultimately essential to clearly indicate whose information you are referring to in your response.
6. **I work for a public school district or higher education institution, and I'm having trouble using my EIN in the portal. Am I ineligible?** Please contact grants@stranahanfoundation.org to begin the process. Our system requires a searchable EIN in the IRS database to proceed.
7. **Can organizations submit more than one proposal?** Typically, we only permit one LOI per organization. The only exception may be for colleges and universities or fiscal sponsors. Please note that we do not anticipate advancing more than one proposal from any single institution or fiscal sponsor beyond the LOI stage.

TARGET POPULATIONS

8. **Does the foundation support professional development for family/home-based childcare providers?** The Foundation is setting agnostic. We provide support for a variety of early childhood settings, including family childcare, Early Head Start and Head Start, center-based childcare, pre-K, and kindergarten. It does not favor one specific type of setting over another.
9. **Are home-visiting and specialty staff (e.g., behavioral health specialists, speech pathologists, family navigators) considered eligible early childhood professionals?** We recognize and appreciate the vital role these staff members play in early childhood education. However, the Foundation's funding is aimed explicitly at supporting program-level leaders, instructional coaches, and teaching staff (e.g., classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and teacher aides).

10. **How does the Stranahan Foundation define “low-income”?** The Foundation defines “low-income” as families with an income that does not exceed either 200% of the federal poverty level for your area or 50% of the area's median household income. Click [here](#) for the official Department of Health & Human Services 2025 Poverty guidelines.
11. **NEW My organization would like to propose a substitute or floater teacher pool project that would primarily benefit the sub-recipients of our Early Head Start or Head Start contracts. Would this project be eligible?** Generally, we encourage organizations that hold Head Start contracts to apply through our provider cycle. However, given the specific focus on networks as part of this cycle, yes, you would be eligible.

PROPOSED PROJECT

12. **NEW What constitutes a scalable and affordable coaching model?** Under this priority, we are primarily seeking alternative approaches to site-based instructional coaching for ECE educators that enable organizations to provide expanded, individualized instructional support (through observation, reflection, and feedback loops) across programs without requiring a full-time coach at every site. Coaching content may focus on general teaching and learning practices, language and literacy, social-emotional learning and behavior, or other relevant content domains.
13. **Does my “innovation” project proposal need to involve technology?** No. We welcome technological tools and platforms that support early childhood workers and improve teaching and learning. However, the Foundation defines “innovation” more broadly. It can encompass various elements, including curricula, coaching strategies, programs, tools, and models.
14. **Does the Foundation put a limit or cap on indirect costs?** Yes, indirect costs may not exceed 10% of the requested direct program costs.
15. **Is there a specific limit on the percentage of the total budget the foundation will fund?** The foundation does not typically limit the amount of a project we will fund. However, we rarely provide full funding for any project. We prefer to see other funders involved to ensure the work will continue after funding ends.
16. **Can we include funding for existing staff positions?** Yes. Historically, we have supported staff salaries and benefits for staff responsible for overseeing or implementing project-related activities.
17. **NEW How rigorous does my evaluation plan need to be? Do I need to hire an external evaluator?** All proposals must include a plan for tracking key outputs, outcomes, and lessons learned throughout the project. Additionally, each proposal must utilize at least one standardized assessment tool for classrooms, teachers, or children. The strongest proposals will incorporate some form of process or implementation evaluation, formative evaluation, and outcome/impact evaluation.

However, ultimately, the evaluation tools, methods, and scale should fit the model’s context and stage of development. It should also consider any existing evaluative evidence that informs the approach. For example, a pilot project may require a smaller feasibility assessment, whereas a more advanced model seeking to build its evidence base might necessitate a larger and more robust evaluation. An external evaluator is not required, and the need for one would depend on your organization's internal capabilities.

PROCESS

18. **Am I required to indicate the type of project or strategy for which I seek funding?** Yes. During the preliminary screening, you will be asked to specify the development stage of your model, which corresponds to our innovative or proven PD strategies. Your answers to these questions will determine the additional questions you encounter during the process.

19. **Do you have a list of application questions available outside of the portal?** Yes, please see the *Application Process* section of the RFP Overview.
20. **Do we need to attach a project budget as part of the initial application stage?** No, a project budget is not required at the LOI stage. However, if you have already secured a portion of the funding for the project, we encourage you to share this information in the *Additional Information* section of the LOI.
21. **Are there word or character limits in the portal?** We provide recommended word limits for questions where applicants generally give too much information. However, there are no system-imposed limitations.

APPLICANT SUPPORT

22. **I need help submitting my application; who do I contact?** For applicants who need assistance accessing or submitting their application, please email grants@stranahanfoundation.org.
23. **I haven't heard back from the Foundation; the deadline is tomorrow. What should I do?** THE FOUNDATION WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE SUBMISSIONS OR APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED SYSTEMS. It is essential to review the timeline carefully and to plan to submit your application materials well in advance of each deadline.