



Request for Proposals (RFP) For
Early Childhood Facility
Renovation and Construction

RFP Name: 22-OEC-Facilities RFP

Issued By:

Office of Early Childhood

August 15, 2022

The Request For Proposal is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal by filtering by Office of Early Childhood

<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

or from the Agency's Official Contact:

Name: Susie Gardiner
Address: 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 301, Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860-500-4412
Email: oec.facilities.rfp@ct.gov

The RFP is also available on the Agency's website at

<https://www.ctoec.org/rfps>.

RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED NO
LATER THAN
September 16, 2022
At 5:00PM

The Office of Early Childhood is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or cancel this procurement at any time if deemed in the best interest of the State of Connecticut (State).

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

■ A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name and Number.** 22-OEC-Facilities RFP

2. **RFP Summary.**

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is soliciting proposals from for-profit and nonprofit organizations to deliver funds to increase access to infant and toddler care and to address early childhood deserts for underserved populations. The designated organization will develop a system to implement and distribute facilities funding primarily to invest in centers, groups, and family child care homes in communities of need as reflected by metrics such as the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and Childcare Accessibility Affordability and Transportation (CAATI). The funding will prioritize families of low and moderate income and impacted communities as outlined in the Treasury Final Rule.

Start-up and/or furniture, fixtures and other equipment costs will also be considered. In addition, this system will include technical assistance to ensure that provider access to funding is equitable, easy to use, and supports program stability. Proposals should include: evidence of organizational capacity; data, reporting and evaluation capabilities; financial strength; work plan; and budget. Proposals should demonstrate the following: a commitment to equity, experience acting as fiscal agent, and capacity to efficiently distribute funds.

3. **RFP Purpose.**

Early childhood programs continue to face challenges highlighted by the pandemic, including but not limited to insufficient staff, insufficient enrollment, and COVID-19 related issues (i.e., classrooms closure due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases). In recognition of this, \$15 million of Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were allocated in the state budget to support facility renovation and construction in center, group, and family child care locations to address unmet needs of infant and toddler spaces and early childhood deserts. Therefore, the state is seeking proposals from for-profit and nonprofit organizations to design, implement, and distribute funds to programs in an efficient and equitable manner that will help to ameliorate the stresses of COVID-19 on providers and families by investing in facilities and addressing unmet child care needs.

4. **Commodity Codes.** The services that the Agency wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:

- 86000000: Education and Training Services
- 80000000: Management and Business Professionals and Administrative Services

■ B. INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contact.** The Agency has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on

behalf of the Agency. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other Agency employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the Agency about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: Susie Gardiner
Address: 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 301, Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860-500-4412
E-Mail: oec.facilities.rfp@ct.gov

Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.

2. Registering with State Contracting Portal. Respondents must register with the State of CT contracting portal at <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration> if not already registered. Respondents shall submit the following information pertaining to this application to this portal (on their supplier profile), which will be checked by the Agency contact.

- Secretary of State recognition – Click on appropriate response
- Non-profit status, if applicable
- Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V
- Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1):
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

3. Registering with Federal Contracting Portal

All applicants must apply for a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) on SAM.gov. A SAM registration is required for an entity to apply for or receive federal funds.

<https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-systems-information-kit/unique-entity-identifier-update>

3. RFP Information. The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

- Agency's RFP Web Page
<https://www.ctoec.org/rfps>
- State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource bid board, filter by Office of Early Childhood
<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement check the Bid Board for any solicitation changes. Interested proposers may receive additional e-mails from CTsource announcing addendums that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

4. Procurement Schedule. See below. Dates after the due date for proposals ("Proposals Due") are non-binding target dates only (*). The Agency may amend the schedule as needed. Any change to non-target dates will be made by means of an amendment to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, the Agency's RFP Web Page

- RFP Released: August 15, 2022
- RFP Conference: Not Applicable

- Letter of Intent Due: August 29, 2022
- Deadline for Questions: September 5, 2022
- Answers Released: Rolling basis
- Proposals Due: September 16, 2022
- (*) Proposer Selection: October 7, 2022
- (*) Start of Contract Negotiations: October 14, 2022
- (*) Start of Contract: November 11, 2022

5. Contract Awards. The award of any contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to the Agency. The Agency anticipates the following:

- Total Funding Available: \$15,000,000
- Number of Awards: One
- Contract Term: November 11, 2022 – December 30, 2024
- Funding Source: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

6. Eligibility. Public or private organizations, for profits or nonprofits legally registered with CT's Secretary of State are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP. Respondents claiming nonprofit status must provide proof of nonprofit status, such as a copy of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination letter.

7. Minimum Qualifications of Proposers. To qualify for a contract award, a proposer must have the following minimum qualifications:

- Be able to provide sufficient staff at the time of award, including managerial and administrative support to implement the required operational, research, and evaluation services, including the ability to meet OEC Research, Planning and Technology report requirements defined in the scope of services description section.
- Be in sound fiscal health, as determined by documentation of clean opinions in audited financial statements for the last 3 years (or whatever number of years are available, for newer organizations); a recent organizational budget; and the respondent's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement).
- Be registered with System of Award Management (SAM) by the time of contract execution.
- Adhere to generally accepted accounting principles.

8. Letter of Intent. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is **required** by this RFP. It is non-binding and does not obligate the interested candidate to submit a final proposal; however, a RFP will not be reviewed without the submission of an LOI. It must clearly identify the prospective applicant, postal address, telephone number, e-mail address and description of your organization. It should be submitted to the Official Contact by e-mail by 5:00PM (Eastern Time) **Monday, August 29, 2022**. Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent, a data set will be shared with applicants that shows unmet child care needs, Social Vulnerability and Child Care Desert Indices by town to inform the development of the RFP proposals.

9. Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or the Agency's procurement process must be directed in writing and sent electronically via e-mail to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the Agency will only answer questions when the source is known (i.e., recognizable email address). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the Agency may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. This RFP

requires a Letter of Intent; therefore, the Agency reserves the right to answer questions only from those who have submitted such a letter. The Agency may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP and posted on OEC's website.

10. RFP Conference. An RFP conference will not be held to answer questions from prospective proposers. Instead, applicants are encouraged to submit written questions to designated contact above. Questions will be answered and posted to the FAQ section of the Agency's webpage. Responses will be released and updated each week until the close of the RFP.

11. Proposal Due Date and Time. The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: 5:00PM (Eastern Time) on September 16, 2022.

Proposals received after the due date and time will be ineligible and will not be evaluated. The Agency will send an official letter alerting late respondents of ineligibility.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- One (1) conforming electronic copy of the original proposal.

The electronic copy of the proposal must be emailed to official agency contact for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: Early Childhood-Facilities Renovation and Construction RFP. Required forms and appendices may be scanned and submitted as PDFs at the end of the main proposal document. Please ensure the entire email submission is properly formatted as outlined in the RFP, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee. In addition, please ensure the entire email submission is less than 25MB as this reflects the Agency's server limitations. Respondents should work to ensure there are not additional IT limitations from the provider side.

The proposal must be signed when submitted electronically. Unsigned proposals will not be evaluated. Proposals received after the due date and time will not be evaluated.

12. Multiple Proposals. The submission of multiple proposals is not an option for this procurement.

II. PURPOSE OF RFP AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

■ A. AGENCY OVERVIEW

Established in 2013, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is the state agency charged with fostering cross-systems integration, coordination, and collaboration at the state and local level to enhance the health and well-being of young children, families, and communities. The OEC brings together leadership, expertise, and a wide range of early childhood and family support services that were formerly housed at five different state agencies. The OEC provides funding standards, regulations, quality improvement supports, technical

assistance, and oversight to ensure that early care and education programs for young children:

- Are safe, healthy, and nurturing.
- Effectively support children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development; and
- Are accessible to all children, particularly those facing barriers, risks or challenges to their health development and success.

OEC is organized into three programming divisions: Early Care and Education and Quality Improvement, Child Care and Camp Licensing, and Family Support. These programming divisions are supported by the Operations, Research, Planning and Technology, and Legal divisions, all under the leadership of the Commissioner's Office. The OEC is the State's lead agency for child care under the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). This federal program supports improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

■ B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The economics of child care have always been challenging and COVID-19 has strained the child care system to the breaking point, reflecting extreme workforce hiring and retention challenges, decreased and variable demand for care, and increased costs related to new health and safety requirements. Many providers are struggling to keep their doors open, much less invest in facilities or even routine maintenance. Yet, these investments could help them become more sustainable as programs.

Families are struggling too. There is a significant shortage of care. According to a recent report commissioned for OEC, 44% of the state's residents live in a child care desert and Connecticut lacks care for nearly 50,000 eligible children, mainly infants and toddlers. This shortfall of care has a direct impact on families' abilities to participate in the workforce. Caring for infants and toddlers requires a lower ratio of staff to children to ensure health and safety. As such, it is more expensive for child care programs to staff infant and toddler space and this expense is passed on to parents. As such, even though there may be demand for infant and toddler space, programs struggling to operate offer fewer spaces because of the added staffing costs.

Given the challenges that providers have with hiring staff, combined with the challenging economics of child care, the aforementioned report suggests that facilities solutions can resolve up to 30% of this infant and toddler care gap, particularly when paired with start-up or operational grants that bolster the underlying economics. Information from this report can be obtained visiting the dataset located at the OEC website.

With \$346 million in relief funding at the onset of the pandemic from the federal government, OEC has rolled out support to child care providers in Connecticut to help them recover and rebuild during COVID-19. Over \$270 million has been allocated to stabilize the child care industry and to expand child care assistance. In addition, funding has been allocated to assist providers with rent, mortgage, utilities, payroll, staff bonuses, staff training and professional development, and mental health supports for staff and children.

Currently, there are limited options to seek facilities funding. An existing or aspiring provider would typically need to approach their local bank or Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) for a loan. There are no dedicated state sources of funds available right now and there have been no facilities funds specifically targeted to address specific unmet needs. OEC's next iteration of support seeks to provide funding to address gaps in this area.

Historically, loan and grant programs favor applicants with greater resources, creating inequities in accessing much needed funds (for home ownerships, business ownership, etc.). Those with the greatest needs are often not aware of funding opportunities, do not have the time, resources or the background knowledge needed to apply for or maintain funding. There are also disparities by type of providers, with family child care providers typically having less awareness leading to fewer accessing funds.

The target recipients of this funding will be new and existing center, group, and family child care providers. The project will therefore benefit both providers and families, with an emphasis on addressing unmet needs (e.g., geographical deserts, infant and toddler slots) further defined in Appendix B. The ideal applicant will develop a funding model to distribute funding to center, group and family childcare providers for facilities with priority given to increasing infant and toddler care and reducing child care deserts. These funds will be distributed as grants.

Proposers' grant programs will prioritize equity by striving to:

- Focus funding on high need communities.
- Provide and/or utilize partnerships to ensure the provision of end-to-end technical assistance from initial marketing and awareness to post-funding support to ensure that less resourced providers, particularly family child care providers, have access to funding to address historic inequities in historic lending and grantmaking.
- Ensure that grant recipients are eligible to receive funds and/or are financially solvent to invest in funding proposals.
- In recognition that facilities funding is often insufficient on its own to address unmet need, programs will also be eligible to include as part of their application startup costs items such as furniture, fixtures and equipment directly associated with facility investments up to a maximum of \$50,000 per grant to help support stability.

Vision for Success

The OEC's vision is to support the development of an equitable high quality and sustainable Early Childhood Education (ECE) system that improves outcomes for children and families.

The expectation is that a successful program will develop strong partnerships among the proposer and one or more community partners working together with OEC to ensure equitable access to facilities funding to address unmet needs for infant and toddler slots or geographic child care deserts. Community partners serve to provide content or experiential expertise and/or resources to meet expectations outlined in the RFP. The proposer selected will need to be adaptable, capable of collaborating with multiple stakeholders, fiscally responsible, and understand the issues faced within their communities. They will also be expected to collaborate with OEC to share innovations, lessons learned and contribute to sustainability and expansion efforts.

■ C. SCOPE OF SERVICE DESCRIPTION

1. Organizational Expectations

The OEC is seeking proposals from for profit and nonprofit organizations to administer \$15 million of federal ARPA funds through grants to support facility renovation and construction in center, group, and family based child care facilities in communities of need that address child care deserts and infant and toddler spaces. Program guidelines are at the discretion of individual proposers; however, ideal proposer will be able to demonstrate:

- A clear organization-wide commitment to equity

- Experience acting as a fiscal agent, ideally related to facilities investing
- Knowledge, resources and capacity of existing organizational or community partnerships to provide technical assistance
- An ongoing framework for, or process to determine the prioritization of facilities funding investments equitably, subject to OEC input. This framework should focus funding on businesses that are likely to be sustainable.
- A plan for an efficient survey of facilities construction and renovation needs in high priority areas that would be used to prioritize investments in child care deserts and infant and toddler spaces
- Familiarity with early care and learning opportunities and challenges, including understanding of governing entities and funding streams that support the field of early childhood education
- Ability to comply with funding requirements of State ARPA funds
- Track record of successful, equitable outcomes and evidence-based practice
- A clear design and outline for all facets of their proposed program

2. Service Expectations

Proposers are expected to prioritize applicants in addressing child care deserts for both preschool and infant and toddler spaces as well as infant and toddler spaces in high priority areas as further defined in the Appendix.

The selected proposer will need to develop a phased approach plan and provide services that include:

- **Program structure, resourcing and management**
- **Needs assessment survey** to prioritize facilities funding needs
- **Funding application and evaluation and distribution process**, including scoring rubric for prioritizing investments
- Capacity and plan to provide **technical assistance** throughout the process from initial marketing through to post distribution to support long term business viability (e.g., marketing, communications, business coaching)
- **Reporting and evaluation** including key outcomes, pre and post survey and distillation of key learnings/proof points
- **Budget and timeline**

3. Staffing Expectations

Respondents are expected to ensure dedicated staff with sufficient time allocated to commit to OEC's goals and expectations. Increasing access to infant and toddler spaces and addressing early childhood deserts is a critical unmet need in Connecticut with many dynamic, moving parts. As such, the ideal respondent will have:

- A Governance and/or leadership team, including a governing board, chief executive, senior staff, organizational leadership team, and/ or community partners who are actively engaged in the early education and care field and have the ability to provide strategic leadership in this area.
- Connecticut-based staff and resources to support meeting the RFP objectives, including providing technical assistance to support programs.
- A diverse workforce with multicultural and multilingual employees.

4. Data, Reporting and Evaluation Expectations:

Reliable and relevant data is necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate results and performance, and drive service improvements. It is essential that the ideal respondent has previous experience administering grants as well as the infrastructure to collect and report data. The ideal respondent will also be able to secure all data pursuant to all state and federal data statutes, regulations, and policies to maintain privacy and confidentiality. The ideal respondent will be expected to have a current data system to collect, report and provide data analysis. The ideal respondent will partner with the OEC with a commitment to continuous improvement and transparency. The specific reporting schedule and their contents will be co-created with the OEC in the contracting phase.

5. Financial Expectations

The OEC seeks applications from experienced agencies with a strong track record of success in equitable funding. Therefore, the ideal respondent must be fiscally sound as evidenced by documentation of three audited financial statements, prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant, and reviewed or audited in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (USA). The awarded proposer will be expected to adhere to federal requirements specific to funding allocated in the contract. The federal award terms and conditions will flow-through to the program administrator and the administrator will have to adhere to Federal Uniform Guidance. The awarded proposer is also required to submit an annual audit no later than six months after the close of the Contractor's fiscal year for all program funds. Such an audit shall include audit findings and recommendations.

Financial Control Systems

The ideal respondent will:

- Possess sufficiently sophisticated financial control systems to be able to manage complex fiscal arrangements as evidenced by prior program history of grantmaking distribution of multi-million dollars in funding.
- Demonstrate ability to manage grant applications with multiple objectives (e.g., renovation, construction, infant and toddler and construction/or renovation).
- Commit to providing technical assistance services to community partners and the grantees.
- Meet state and federal funding requirements, including distributing funds, according to state and federal guidelines.
- Demonstrate a track record of success in equitable funding, specifically in facilities funding and ECE financing preferred.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop a phased approach to distributing funds over multiple years.

6. Budget Expectations

Program Funding Sources and Total Available Funding: \$15 million in federal ARPA funds to support early childhood facility renovation and construction pursuant to Sec. 10 of PA 22-118. Land or building purchase are not permissible uses of these funds. Grant award amounts will be capped, in consultation with and approved by OEC, and based on estimations of facility investment needs.

Budgetary information included in the respondent's response to this RFP must comply with the cost standards published by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. The cost standards are available online at [POSCostStandards101816pdf.pdf \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/pos/CostStandards101816pdf.pdf).

Respondents utilizing federal funds will also be expected to adhere to standards prescribed by the Federal Office of Management and Budget Cost Principles [SLFRF-Final-Rule-Overview.pdf \(treasury.gov\)](#).

Respondents are advised that a responsive budget must limit annual administrative costs to 10% of the total over the activity budget. State or federal funding, by activity, will be determined at point of contracting for final determination of administrative cap. Per OPM Cost Allocation guidelines, unused/unexpended State funding at the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) must be returned to the State and cannot be carried forward to the following SFY. Project end date is six months after final distribution, with the possibility of an extension if key performance metrics are met and additional funds are available.

7. Work Plan

Respondents must include a detailed implementation process and timeline, including the identification of all necessary steps to distribute funds to providers. In addition, work plans should clearly demonstrate a commitment to equity.

It is expected that work plans include:

- Goals
- Resources
- Evidence of Outcomes Data, Evaluation and Reporting

Timeline and Key Milestones and Work Steps

D. Performance Measures

The following performance metrics highlight key priorities that will be analyzed. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather an indication of significant performance metrics of interest to the OEC. The OEC looks forward to working with awarded proposer to define additional important performance metrics.

Metric	Data Source	Data Frequency	Responsibility
Metric #1: Infant and Toddler Enrollment in deserts	Grant Award or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator and Provider
Metric # 2 Infant and Toddler Enrollment in FCC's	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator and Provider
Metric # 3 Infant and Toddler Enrollment in Group Settings	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator and Provider
Metric # 4 Creation of new Centers in desert	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator
Metric # 5 Creation of new group homes in desert	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator

Metric # 6 Creation of FCCs in desert	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Monthly	Administrator
Metric # 7 Funding and spaces created by geographic region	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Quarterly	Administrator
Metric # 8 Level of Technical Assistance Requested	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey or Internal Database Collection	Quarterly	Administrator and Provider
Metric # 9 Type of Technical Assistance Requested	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey or	Twice a Year	Administrator and Provider
Metric # 10 Amount of Funds Requested to Address deserts	Provider Application or Pre or Post Survey	Quarterly	Administrator and Provider
Metric #11 Amount of Funds distributed to address infant and toddler spaces	Organizational Reports	Twice a Year	Administrator
Metric #11 Number of applications submitted	Organizational Reports	Monthly	Administrator
Metric # 12 Identified Unmet Need	Organizational Reports	Monthly	Administrator and Provider
Metric #13 Declined Applications and Rationale	Organizational Reports	Annually	Administrator

The outcomes this project is expected to yield:

- Increased infant and toddler slots, prioritized in areas with greatest need in both family child care, group home and center-based providers (excluding school districts and municipalities)
- Decreased child care deserts
- Decrease disparity of access to funds between family child care and center-based providers

■ E. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT/DATA REPORTING

As part of the State's commitment to becoming more outcomes-oriented, OEC seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with providers to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate

results and performance, and drive service improvements. As such, OEC reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from providers.

List expectations on frequency of data collection and review, as well as roles and responsibilities of providers versus agency staff. This may be for specific outcome measures or for broader oversight. Agencies may also highlight specific intended activities related to active contract management where agency staff collaborates with providers during regular meetings to troubleshoot challenges, use data to encourage incremental improvements to services, and holding the overall system of service accountable to meeting outcome objectives.

III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

■ A. SUBMISSION FORMAT INFORMATION

- 1. Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV – Proposal Outline. Proposals that fail to follow the required outline will be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
- 2. Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. The proposer must develop a Cover Sheet that includes the information below. *Legal Name* is defined as the name of private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.
 - RFP Name or Number:
 - Legal Name:
 - FEIN:
 - SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier:
 - Street Address:
 - Town/City/State/Zip:
 - Contact Person:
 - Title:
 - Phone Number:
 - E-Mail Address:
 - Authorized Official:
 - Title:
 - Signature:
- 3. Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.
- 4. Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary, not exceeding 2 pages, of the main proposal and cost proposal. The summary must also include the organization's eligibility and qualifications to respond to this RFP.
- 5. Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in the RFP are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any

component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.

6. Style Requirements. Submitted proposals should conform to the following specifications:

- Page Limit: Main proposal should not exceed 40 pages
- Font Size: 12 point
- Font Type: Times New Roman
- Margins: Normal
- Line Spacing: 1.5

7. Pagination. The proposer's name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, including the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.

9. Declaration of Confidential Information. Proposers are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting from them. If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. In subsection F of the proposal submission, the proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

10. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement. Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The Agency will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

■ **B. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

1. Evaluation Process. It is the intent of the Agency to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts,

the Agency will conform with its written procedures for Purchase of Services contracts (POS) and Personal Service Agreements (PSA) procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85). Final funding allocation decisions will be determined during contract negotiation.

- 2. Evaluation Review Committee.** The Agency will designate a Review Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The Review Committee will be composed of individuals, Agency staff or other designees as deemed appropriate. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Review Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions may be rejected without further consideration. The Review Committee shall evaluate all proposals that meet the Minimum Submission Requirements by score and rank ordered and make recommendations for awards. The Commissioner of OEC will make the final selection. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Review Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.
- 3. Minimum Submission Requirements.** To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (3) meet the Eligibility and Qualification requirements to respond to the procurement, (4) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (5) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements may not be reviewed further. The Agency will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
- 4. Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Review Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals.

Financial Strength	30%	<p>The ideal response...</p> <p>Details a track record of success in equitable funding, facilities funding and ECE financing preferred.</p> <p>Demonstrates strong fiscal health as evidenced by documentation of clean audited financial statements for the last 3 years (or fewer for newer organizations); a recent organizational budget; and the applicants most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement).</p>
Work Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commitment to equitable</i> 	30%	<p>The ideal response...</p> <p>Clearly demonstrates the intent</p>

<p><i>distribution</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plan for gathering information to estimate and prioritize facility investment needs</i> • <i>Timeline and milestones</i> • <i>Data, evaluation, and reporting</i> • <i>Resources/partnerships</i> • <i>Budget</i> 		<p>to develop an equitable, responsive plan committed to serving high need communities across the state in prioritized areas.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of work steps to lead to the development of an informed framework to prioritize facility investments</p> <p>Contains a logical sequencing and phasing of planned activities, with clear milestones articulated.</p> <p>Provides a clear description of timeline for the distribution of funds.</p> <p>Provides a clear description of how data will be reported, including amount of funds distributed each month and to which organizations.</p> <p>Clearly identifies the requisite partners and resources to meet RFP objectives and provide letters of commitment from partners.</p>
<p>Organizational Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion</i> • <i>Leadership</i> • <i>Administrative Capacity</i> • <i>Experience working in partnership</i> • <i>Track record of achieved outcomes</i> • <i>ECE and Facilities Expertise</i> 	<p>25%</p>	<p>The ideal response...</p> <p>Clearly articulates how organization's history, mission and core values aligns with equity, diversity, and inclusion-</p> <p>Demonstrates adequate leadership and administrative capability and ability to design and implement the proposed services, including but not limited to conducting self-monitoring for contract compliance, providing quality service delivery, and keeping appropriate, auditable records.</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of Early Care and Education challenges and opportunities, including those</p>

		related to child care facilities.
<p>Data, Reporting and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent and timely data entry</i> • <i>Data use in program decision making</i> • <i>Reporting</i> • <i>Evaluation</i> 	10%	<p>The ideal response...</p> <p>Demonstrates prior experience tracking fund distribution, developing, and measuring key metrics and evaluations related to grantmaking, and utilizing data to inform decisions to encourage continuous quality improvements.</p> <p>Explains the IT infrastructure and data reporting capacity in place to manage performance and program evaluation data.</p> <p>Articulates the organization's data security procedures, belief in data-informed practice, and examples of data insights leading to positive organizational change for families and/or communities.</p> <p>Expresses the ability to adhere to all state and federal data share statues, regulations, and policies and can secure all confidential information.</p> <p>Commits to partnering with OEC to co-create final reporting schedule and contents that ensure evidence-based practice, continuous improvement, and transparency.</p>
Budget	5%	<p>The ideal response...</p> <p>Complies with OPM cost standards Policies Guidelines and Labor Contracts.</p> <p>Adheres to federal American Rescue Plan Act relief funding (See Appendix). Reflects a strategic commitment to the overall goals and objectives of the RFP.</p> <p>Will not exceed more than 10 % on administration cost.</p>

Note: As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Plan, the Review Committee will review the proposer's demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

- 5. Proposer Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Review Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the Commissioner or Agency Head. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the Commissioner or Agency Head. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Agency. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Agency's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The Agency reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the Commissioner or Agency Head considers there are not adequate respondents.
- 6. Debriefing.** Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the Agency, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the ten (10) days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with the Agency to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The Agency may schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. The Agency will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.
- 7. Appeals.** Pursuant to General Statutes § 4e-36 (a), any bidder or proposer on a state contract may contest the solicitation or award of a contract to a subcommittee of the State Contracting Standards Board. Such contest shall be submitted, in writing, not later than fourteen days after such bidder or proposer knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to such contest and shall be limited to the procedural elements of the solicitation or award process, or claims of an unauthorized or unwarranted, noncompetitive selection process.
- 8. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the Agency's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on State Contracting Portal and the Agency website.

IV. REQUIRED PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. Cover Sheet**
- B. Table of Contents**
- C. Executive Summary**
- D. Main Proposal**

E. Attachments**F. Declaration of Confidential Information****G. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement****H. Statement of Assurances****A: Cover Sheet**

The Respondent must use a Cover Sheet capturing the following information:

- RFP Name or Number:
- Legal Name:
- FEIN (not required for currently contracted providers/proposers):
- Sam.gov Unique Entity Identifier
- Street Address:
- Town/City/State/Zip:
- Contact Person:
- Title:
- Phone Number:
- E-Mail Address:
- Authorized Official:
- Title:
- Signature:

Legal Name is defined as the name of private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.

B: Table of Contents

Respondents must include a Table of Contents that lists sections and subsections with page numbers that follow the organization outline and sequence for this proposal.

C: Proposer Executive Summary

The page limitation for this section is 2 pages briefly describing how the Respondent meets the eligibility and qualification criteria outlined in the Proposal Overview and a brief overview of why the Respondent should be selected for the activities highlighted in the scope of services.

D: Main Proposal Submission Requirements to Submit a Responsive Proposal

*****Please note the maximum total page length for this section is 40 pages** (all appendices and other attachments should be referred to in section D and then placed in section E). The Agency Review Committee will not read answers longer than 40 pages in this section.

Financial Strength (30%)

Financial Statements: Submit the most recent two years of complete sets of annual financial statements, in good standing, prepared by an independent Certified Public

Accountant, and reviewed or audited in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (USA) for the entire existence of such firm or organization.

Provide example(s) of previous distribution of equitable funding with ECE programs.

Demonstrate example(s) of previous facilities funding to ECE programs.

Demonstrate strong fiscal health as evidenced by documentation of clean audited financial statements for the last two years (or fewer for newer organizations); a recent organizational budget; and the applicants most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement).

Federal Requirements: Affirm understanding that the organization must adhere to federal requirements specific to funding allocated in the contract. Further guidance is available at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/general_terms_and_conditions_2019_final.pdf

Financial Management: Include a description of a system that will allocate and track funding.

Annual Audit: Please affirm understanding that awarded contractor are required to submit an annual audit no later than six months after the close of the Contractor's fiscal year for all program funds. Such an audit shall include audit recommendations.

Work Plan (30%)

Sequence of Activities: Provide a logical sequencing and phasing of planned activities, with clear milestones articulated. Include detail on plans to develop an equitable framework to prioritize facility investments.

Distribution: Clearly demonstrate a commitment to equitable distribution of funds.

Timeline: Provide a clear description of timeline of distribution of funds.

Reporting: Provide a clear description of how data will be reported, including amount of funds distributed each month and to which organizations.

Implementation: Identify the partners and resources to meet RFP objectives.

Organizational Strengths (25%)

Mission and History: Provide a brief description of your organization, its history, core services/programming, and primary population served.

Equity and Cultural Humility: Describe your organization's framework to advancing equity and applying cultural humility to your work. Describe how this framework is applied within your organization, and how it guides your programming and project decisions.

Leadership: Provide a brief description and relevant qualifications of your organization's leadership team and key project members.

Capacity to Launch New Initiatives: Describe a new initiative in ECE your organization planned and launched within the last three years to address ECE challenges and how you

solved them. Include details of how you thought about and put into action a sustainability plan. Please be specific as to how communities and families were impacted in ECE.

Early Childhood Experience: Please describe your organization's experience with early childhood and facilities investments, as applicable.

Reference Letter: Please provide documentation from a previous client who can attest to your services.

Data, Reporting and Evaluation (10%)

Grant Management: Describe your organization's experience managing grant funding and the systems in place to maintain successful partnership with grantor and develop accurate and timely financial and programmatic reports. This may include federal, state or private grants.

Data Informed Decisions: Describe how your organization critically thinks about the data the organization collects and provide an example of how that data are used to make programmatic decisions.

Data Systems: Describe your organization's programmatic data systems and data entry processes.

Data Security: Describe your data security procedures to ensure data collected are kept secure, confidential and complies with all state, federal data share laws, regulations and policies. As a required attachment, share your organization's data privacy policy if one is available. If one is not yet available, describe the process you will take to formalizing data security and privacy into organizational policy.

Evaluation: Affirm your organization's commitment to cooperating with an external evaluation team. This may include but is not limited to providing accurate and timely data reports and staff interviews.

Budget (5%)

Project Budget and Budget Narrative: Complete annual budgets in Excel Spreadsheet form provided and accompanying narrative identifying expenditures.

E: Attachments

Attachments other than the required attachments identified are not permitted and will not be evaluated. See the Proposal Checklist in Appendix E for a list of relevant attachments. Further, the required attachments must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.

F: Declaration of Confidential Information

If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. The proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the

identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

G: Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement

Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

H: Statement of Assurances

Place after Conflict of Interest-Disclosure Statement. Sign and return Appendix C.

V. MANDATORY PROVISIONS

■ **A. POS STANDARD CONTRACT, PARTS I AND II**

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State's "standard contract" for POS:

Part I of the standard contract is maintained by the Agency and will include the scope of services, contract performance, quality assurance, reports, terms of payment, budget, and other program-specific provisions of any resulting POS contract. A sample of Part I is available from the Agency's Official Contact upon request.

Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the POS contract. Part II is available on OPM's website at: http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/standard_contract

Note:

Included in Part II of the standard contract is the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice (pursuant to C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2)) advising executive branch State contractors and prospective State contractors of the ban on campaign contributions and solicitations. If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Agency and the resulting contract has an anticipated value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts has an anticipated value of \$100,000 or more, the proposer must inform the proposer's principals of the contents of the SEEC notice.

Part I of the standard contract may be amended by means of a written instrument signed by the Agency, the selected proposer (contractor), and, if required, the Attorney General's Office. Part II of the standard contract may be amended only in

consultation with, and with the approval of, the Office of Policy and Management and the Attorney General's Office.

■ B. ASSURANCES

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly gives the following assurances:

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. The Agency may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.
- 4. Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the Agency may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.
- 5. Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the Agency for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

■ C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- 1. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with

Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.

- 2. Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor the Agency shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
- 3. Exclusion of Taxes.** The Agency is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
- 4. Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
- 5. Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the Agency may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the Agency, and at the proposer's expense.
- 6. Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by the Agency. The Agency may ask a proposer to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by the Agency. At its sole discretion, the Agency may limit the number of proposers invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per proposer.
- 7. Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by the Agency, a proposer must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The Agency may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a proposer to evaluate further the proposer's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the Agency may also check or contact any reference provided by the proposer.
- 8. RFP Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the Agency or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and the Agency and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Agency and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.
- 9. Federal Uniform Guidance.** The administrator will have to adhere to Federal Uniform Guidance.

■ D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

- 1. Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the Agency.
- 2. Amending or Canceling RFP.** The Agency reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if the Agency deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.
- 3. No Acceptable Proposals.** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, the Agency may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.
- 4. Award and Rejection of Proposals.** The Agency reserves the right to award in part, to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. The Agency may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The Agency reserves the right to reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
- 5. Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.
- 6. Contract Negotiation.** The Agency reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. The Agency further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the Agency may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. The Agency may set parameters on any BFOs received.
- 7. Clerical Errors in Award.** The Agency reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
- 8. Key Personnel.** When the Agency is the sole funder of a purchased service, the Agency reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The Agency also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The Agency further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the Agency.

■ E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1. Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.
- 2. Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
- 3. Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81. Consulting Agreements Representation, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this Contract, except for the agreements listed below. "Consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information, or (C) any other similar activity related to such contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.
- 4. Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf

5. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252. Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:

(1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;

(2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and

(3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.

Any bidder or proposer that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

6. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a). Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract.

7. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and 4a-60a. If a bidder is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide the State agency with *written representation* in the resulting contract that certifies the bidder complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. This nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The authorized signatory of the contract shall demonstrate his or her understanding of this obligation by either (A) initialing the nondiscrimination affirmation provision in the body of the resulting contract, or (B) providing an affirmative response in the required online bid or response to a proposal question, if applicable, which asks if

the contractor understands its obligations. If a bidder or vendor refuses to agree to this representation, such bidder or vendor shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

8. Access to Data for State Auditors. The Contractor shall provide to OPM access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to OPM in a format prescribed by OPM and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.

VI. APPENDIX

A. ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
BFO	Best and Final Offer
CDFI	Community Development Financial Institution
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (US)
LOI	Letter of Intent
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OEC	Office of Early Childhood (CT)
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
RFP	Request For Proposal
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
U.S.	United States

- *Contractor:* a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the Agency as a result of this RFP
- *Proposer:* a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Agency in response to this RFP. This term may be used interchangeably with respondent throughout the RFP.
- *Child care desert:* Childcare Accessibility Affordability and Transportation (CAATI) is built upon best practices by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS measures deserts using several measures, including, reasonable effort, affordability, supporting a child's development, meeting parents' needs and equity. The index is scalable, portable, replicable, and relies on public data. CAATI is developed at the Block Group level, that is, by areas of 600 to 3,000 people. Census block groups are typically subunits of towns. In the table included in this workbook, OEC has modified CAATI values to summarize at the town level. CAATI values above 5 are considered to be child care deserts. For this funding opportunity, the geographic area used to measure population is at the town level. An area is identified as a child care "desert" if there are three or more children under the age of five per available child care slot in a local center, group or family child care center.

- *Construction:* Structural changes, extensive alterations of, or newly built child care spaces.
- *New Program:* An individual or entity that is not licensed and is applying for licensure to operate a child care program at a specific location.
- *Family Child Care Homes*
A "family child care home" which consists of a private family home caring for not more than six children, including the provider's own children not in school full time, where the children are cared for not less than three or more than twelve hours during a twenty-four-hour period and where care is given on a regular recurring basis except that care may be provided in excess of twelve hours but not more than seventy-two consecutive hours to accommodate a need for extended care or intermittent short-term overnight care. During the regular school year, a maximum of three additional children who are in school full time, including the provider's own children, shall be permitted, except that if the provider has more than three children who are in school full time, all of the provider's children shall be permitted.
- *Social Vulnerability Index:* The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a composite measure created by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The SVI takes into account 15 different variables about the demographics, income, and living conditions of residents of a community. Using this index, OEC directed additional funds to programs located in historically marginalized communities. SVI values fall between 0 and 1, where 0 represents lower vulnerability and 1 represents greater vulnerability. SVI is calculated at the census tract level. Not all census tracts map cleanly to town boundaries, so it is not always possible to simply average across a town's census tracts to get a "town level" calculation. The UConn School of Social Work Research Partnership team worked with OEC develop a modified SVI measure at the town level by fitting the census tracts into town boundaries and weighted the SVI for population. Methodology is available upon request and these data are to be used for internal decision making.

B. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Office of Early Childhood

The undersigned Respondent affirms and declares that:

1) General

- a. This proposal is executed and signed with full knowledge and acceptance of the RFP CONDITIONS stated in the RFP.
- b. The Respondent will deliver services to the Agency the cost proposed in the RFP and within the timeframes therein.
- c. The Respondent will seek and obtain prior approval from the Agency before making any changes to the location of services.
- d. Neither the Respondent or any official of the organization nor any subcontractor the Respondent or any official of the subcontractor organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with the State of CT or the Federal Government.

- e. Neither the Respondent of any official of the organization nor any subcontractor to the Respondent of any official of the subcontractor’s organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.
- f. The Respondent understands that federal award terms and conditions will flow-through to the program administrator and the administrator must adhere to Federal Uniform Guidance.

Legal Name of Organization:

Authorized Signatory

Date

C. LETTER OF INTENT FORM

Return via e-mail to oec.facilities.rfp@ct.gov and include “Facilities RFP LOI [your organization name]” in the subject line. All emails must be received by August 29, 2022.

Instructions:

1. Respondents must designate an authorized representative and one alternate in Section A of this letter. The authorized representative and alternate will be the only individuals to communicate with the OEC official contact during the open submission period. The letter must be signed by the organization’s Chief Executive Officer or another official with signatory authority.
2. Respondents must describe the name of their organization name and address.

Note: This mandatory letter of intent is a non-binding expression of interest and does not obligate the sender to submit a proposal.

Applying Agency/Organization:

To the Office of Early Childhood:

I, the undersigned, for and on behalf of the named applicant agency, do herewith intend to apply for this funding and attest that to the best of my knowledge the statements made herein are true.

Signature of Authorizing Official

Date

Typed name and Title

D. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

To assist respondents in managing proposal planning and document collation processes, this document summarizes key dates and proposal requirements for this RFP. Please note that this document does not supersede what is stated in the RFP. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Overview, Required Proposal Submission Outline, and Mandatory Provisions (Sections II, III, and IV of this RFP) for more comprehensive details. It is the responsibility of each respondent to ensure that all required documents, forms, and attachments, are submitted in a timely manner.

Key Dates

Procurement Timetable		
The Agency reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1	RFP Released	August 15, 2022
2	Mandatory Letter of Intent Due	August 29, 2022
3	Deadline for Written Questions	September 5, 2022
4	Proposals Due	September 16, 2022
5	Proposer Selection	October 7, 2022

Registration with State Contracting Portal (if not already registered):

- Register at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration>
- Submit Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1):
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

Proposal Content Checklist

- Cover Sheet** including required information:
 - RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name
 - FEIN
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip
 - Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - E-Mail Address
 - Authorized Official
 - Title
 - Signature
- Table of Contents**
- Executive Summary:** high-level summary of proposal and cost
- Main proposal body answering all questions with relevant attachments.**
Proposers should use their discretion to determine whether certain required information is sufficiently captured in the body of their proposal or requires additional attachments for clarification. Additional attachments may include (bullets below are examples only):
 - Staffing plan with FTE status
 - Agency and program organizational chart detailing reporting structure
 - Staff resumes and applicable licensures
 - Work plan describing organization's efforts, progress, or plans to diversify workforce
 - Detailed plan on cultural competence and humility in service delivery
 - Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding with referral partners
 - Copies of applicant-created and/or evidence-based model intake, eligibility, enrollment, and assessment forms
 - Written financial policies and procedures
- IRS Determination Letter** (for nonprofit proposers)
- Two years of most recent annual audited financial statements; OR any financial statements prepared by a Certified Public Accountant** for proposers whose organizations have been incorporated for less than two years. *Agencies may swap in use of EARS system if applicable.*
- Proposed budget**, including budget narrative and cost schedules for planned subcontractors if applicable.

- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**
- Statement of Assurances**

Formatting Checklist

- Is the proposal formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 (letter-sized) paper?
- Is the main body of the proposal within the page limit?
- Is the proposal in 12-point, Times New Roman font?
- Does the proposal format follow normal (1 inch) margins and 1 ½ line spacing?
- Does the proposer's name appear in the header of each page?
- Does the proposal include page numbers in the footer?
- Are confidential labels applied to sensitive information (if applicable)?

Work Plan Example

Goals	Action	People/Organization Involved and Responsible	Timeline	Resources	Evidence of Outcomes (Data, Evaluation, Reporting)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					