

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA# 004-DCDEE-2012

Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute

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

ISSUE DATE: July 20, 2012

RECEIPT DEADLINE: Applications, subject to the following conditions, will be accepted until 2:00 p.m., August 20, 2012.

MAIL OR DELIVER ALL APPLICATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE FUNDING AGENCY ADDRESS SHOWN BELOW

To **MAIL** your application, use this address:

NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
2201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2201

To **DELIVER** your application in person, use this address:

319 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
Raleigh, NC 27603

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES concerning this RFA to:

bj Avent-Farmer
Telephone # 919.662.4535
Email address: bj.farmer@dhhs.nc.gov
Fax#: 919.661.4845

IMPORTANT NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications or any information contained within this Request for Applications will be received until 5:00 p.m., July 25, 2012. All questions must be received in writing, via electronic mail, and responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website (www.ncchildcare.net) no later than July 31, 2012.

ELIGIBILITY: This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public entities and private not-for-profit organizations with a current 501(c) (3) standing.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY:

Up to \$750,100 total is available to fund the Child Care Directors Leadership Project for the following state fiscal years:

- September 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012
- January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013
- January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014
- January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015.

The actual funding amount will be determined by the Division of Child Development and Early Education based on the proposed execution of the project and the utilization of funds as outlined in the applications submitted. An award will be made pending funding availability.

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grants Funding Source:

CFDA: 84.412A
Award #: S412A120027
Type: Discretionary
Department: US Department of Education

Project Description and Application Process

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project is to improve the leadership and program management skills of child care administrators through intensive training. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening the management skills of directors in order for them to successfully operate programs on a daily basis while incorporating the approaches and strategies of leadership. The contractor will collaborate with the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), and stakeholders within the early care and education system to design a leadership curriculum and roll it out through an Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute, as part of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

II. BACKGROUND

The NC Division of Child Development and Early Education is responsible for monitoring and enforcing child care standards throughout the state of North Carolina, overseeing the administration of NC's subsidized child care program, and administering the NC Pre-K Program for preschoolers who are at risk. DCDEE staff license and monitor over 7,800 regulated child care centers and family child care homes across NC. Licensed child care centers and family child care homes receive ratings of one to five stars based on achievements in program standards and staff education levels. Through NC's portion of the federal Child Care and Development Fund, DCDEE also coordinates and implements activities with early care and education partners to improve the quality and availability of child care across the state.

One key to improving the quality of early childhood programs is the leadership and management skills of the directors. The director is the program leader, setting a center's vision and goals; allocating and prioritizing resources for quality improvement and professional development; and creating an ongoing learning environment for children, families, and teachers. This project will provide high-quality training to early childhood directors via an Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute for 100 directors across the state. Topics covered will include: becoming a visionary, culturally competent leader; grounding leadership in values and ethics; understanding the process of change; understanding early childhood systems; evidence-based practice and program assessment; supporting the professional development of teachers; effective family engagement; and advocacy.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

In order to improve the leadership and management skills of early childhood directors, the contractor for this Project will engage in the following activities:

- Phase I: The contractor will develop a leadership and management curriculum for child care center directors so they will be better equipped to successfully operate programs on a daily basis while incorporating the approaches and strategies of leadership. A portion of this curriculum must stand alone as a 1.0 CEU-bearing course, "Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management," which can be facilitated by other presenters with appropriate orientation. (September 2012 – March 2013)
- Phase II: The contractor will organize and facilitate a 3-part Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute for 100 directors of licensed child care centers across the state, utilizing the curriculum developed in Phase I. As part of the Institute, coaches and content experts who will form an "Expert Panel" will work with the directors through the Small Tests of Change (STOC) process.

The contractor will arrange for an appropriate number of CEUs to be awarded to participants in Phase II. (March 2013 – December 2014)

- Phase III: The contractor will revise the curriculum based upon the evaluation of Phase II, evaluate the project as a whole, and provide the final evaluation and curriculum including the CEU-eligible “Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management” to DCDEE. (January – December 2015)

Further information about the requirements for each Phase is provided below. **Applicants are advised that the design of this project must include all elements of each phase, presented in the order described below, for the participants specified below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit questions for clarification if needed, using the process described on Page 1 of this RFA. Applications that propose a different design without permission to do so cannot be considered. All applicants are further advised to read the questions and answers that will be posted on the DCDEE website, as described on Page 1.**

Phase I:

The contractor will convene a Leadership Faculty and work with them to develop a leadership and management curriculum for child care center directors, suitable for delivery in the form of three 2-day face-to-face learning sessions combined with intensive self-assessment and program assessment by participants, supported by coaches and content experts, between sessions. A portion of the curriculum and learning experiences must also stand alone as a 1.0 CEU “Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management.” The curriculum and learning experiences must address the following topics: becoming a visionary, culturally competent leader; grounding leadership in values and ethics; understanding the process of change; understanding early childhood systems; evidence-based practice and program assessment; supporting the professional development of teachers; effective family engagement; and advocacy.

In preparation for Phase II, the contractor will also arrange for an appropriate number of CEUs to be awarded in conjunction with the learning sessions and other experiences to be presented in that phase. In consultation with DCDEE, the contractor will issue invitations to, and select and orient participants. With DCDEE approval, the contractor will identify, contract with, and train coaches and content experts to prepare them to support participating directors. Funding for these contracts must be allocated in the budget.

Phase II:

The contractor will roll out the curriculum and learning experiences developed in Phase I through an Early Childhood Director Leadership Institute (ECDLI). The ECDLI will be a year-long process that includes facilitated group learning through three 2-day ECDLI meetings/learning sessions. Between these sessions participants will receive support from coaches and the Expert Panel to implement in their programs what they learned in the meetings. Coaches and content experts will use a combination of face-to-face and electronic methods to provide support, such as personal communication, visits, group discussions with other directors, and online communication. Coaches will also be responsible for collecting data to support evaluation of the project, using tools developed and provided by the contractor.

After the first ECDLI learning session, participants will work with coaches and the Expert Panel to begin identifying a framework for changes they wish to make in their programs. After the

second ECDLI learning session, participants will conduct a self-assessment using the Program Administration Scale (PAS). Based upon this self-assessment and their change framework, and with the support of coaches, they will implement a series of Small Tests of Change (STOC)¹ which lead to evidence-based changes in leadership approaches and program practice. Participants will share their successes at the final ECDLI learning session and will continue to have support from coaches through the end of the contract period. The contractor will create an on-line learning platform to connect participants between and after learning sessions. This platform will be used to share team learning and resource and to engage in on-going dialogue about the process. The contractor will also offer webinars to supplement content knowledge between learning sessions.

Phase III:

In Phase III of the project, the contractor will finalize the curriculum including the CEU and complete an evaluation of the project, including documenting the results of the STOC; documenting changes in participant skills and knowledge; and writing a research report on the entire project based on both qualitative and quantitative data as appropriate.

Quarterly Reporting & Final Report:

The contractor will deliver quarterly reports to DCDEE on the status of and progress toward each deliverable, according to a schedule to be specified by DCDEE, in an electronic format compatible with current DCDEE technology.

The contractor will also deliver to DCDEE no later than December 15, 2015, in both hard copy and in an electronic format compatible with current DCDEE technology, the curriculum including the 1.0 CEU-eligible "Introduction to Early Childhood Leadership and Management," and a final report covering the process and data described in this RFA.

The RTT-ELC Grant Conditions established by the US Department of Education specify: "Unless otherwise protected as proprietary information by Federal or State Law or a specific written agreement, the State must make any work (e.g. materials, tools, processes, systems) developed under its grant freely available to the public, including by posting the work on a Web site identified or sponsored by ED or HHS." Consistent with this requirement, all products created as part of this project will be available for use by DCDEE and its contractors at no additional charge.

IV. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY

Applicants must have successfully managed leadership development and change projects and have demonstrated expertise in the fields of child development, early care and education, leadership development, cultural competence/responsiveness, coaching and mentoring, and success in collaborative learning initiatives. Applicants must demonstrate familiarity with, and the capacity to work effectively with, licensed child care center directors in programs for children Birth through five years. Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to manage funds and programs at this level in collaboration with multiple partners through satisfactory audit report; education, experience, and

¹ <http://www.ihl.org/knowledge/Pages/HowtoImprove/ScienceofImprovementTestingChanges.aspx>

expertise of key personnel; and demonstrated support for the proposal from the applicant's organization.

V. APPLICATION CONTENT

All proposals must include the following (**form attached*):

- 1) **Application Cover Page***
- 2) **Proposal Summary:** Provide a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the project, including how you would accomplish the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 3) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications:** Provide a brief (1-3 pages) introduction to your organization, including the organization's mission, history, and goals; experience with the content area of this project and capacity to develop related curriculum, training, coaching, and the qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this project. **Please focus most of your response on experience, expertise, and capacity related specifically to the content and goals of this project.** Audits or links to audits for the past three years, demonstrating the agency's fiscal soundness, are also required.
- 4) **Project Design, Time Line & Strategies:** Provide a brief narrative (5-7 pages) describing the proposed project design, the rationale for the design, and the activities/tasks that will be accomplished with the available resources. Summarize the methodologies that will be employed at each phase of the development process described above. Describe each Phase clearly and separately, and elaborate on strategies you would use to accomplish key tasks. Specify deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task by position. **Applicants are advised to describe the proposed design clearly in everyday language to ensure understanding of the proposal by a diverse review team.**
- 5) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors (if applicable):** Identify any collaborative partners or subcontractors you plan to work with to implement this project. Include partner or subcontractor name and address; nonprofit or for-profit status; and key personnel qualifications, resume/vita. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward the project, including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable
- 6) **Evaluation Plan:** Include a 2- to 4-page description of how activities will be evaluated for interim and final effectiveness throughout the project to ensure desired outcomes. Elaborate on specific assessment strategies you will use to generate the information required to determine the project's effectiveness, and/or describe how such assessments will be developed. Outcome evaluation must be timely and measurable, including both intermediate and final activity evaluations. The evaluation plan must include an Outputs Worksheet* and an Outcomes Worksheet*, plans for regular meetings with DCDEE during each fiscal year, and plans for quarterly and final reports. In addition, applicants should describe how any necessary adjustments will be made to accommodate challenges that may present themselves throughout the process.
- 7) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet*:** Complete and submit a proposed line item budget according to the format provided with this RFA, within the \$750,100 total budget allotted, and following all stipulations included in the "DCDEE Budget Narrative and Line Item Budget Instructions" provided with this RFA. Also, complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the "DCDEE Budget Narrative and Line Item Budget Instructions." The Budget Narrative form also includes the separate "FTE Detail for Budget Line 11" worksheet, which is provided as part of this RFA. Budgets, budget narratives and FTE sheets must be submitted for each fiscal year identified in "Funding Availability" found on page 2.

Where appropriate for the applicant agency include the following documents:

- 1) 501(c)(3) Determination Letter (non-profit agencies only)
- 2) Board of Directors List (non-profit agencies only)
- 3) Agency Organizational Chart
- 4) Resumes of Key Personnel
- 5) Agency's Audits for Past Three Years, or links to Audits

VI. SELECTION PROCESS

A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **5** points):
Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III above.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners** (Maximum of **20** points):
Response must reflect the applicant's history of and capacity for developing curriculum, training, coaching, and assessment tools related to cultural competence and coordinating collaborative learning programs, and the qualifications of key personnel to provide leadership for a rigorous process as described in Section IV above. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Project Design, Time Line & Strategies** (Maximum of **40** points):
Response must reflect a design and methodology that will result in the creation of effective curriculum, training, coaching, and assessment tools related to cultural competence as described in Section III above. Timeline should be complete, logical, and realistic for the tasks proposed.
- 4) **Evaluation Plan:** (Maximum of **20** points):
Plan must reflect appropriate strategies for regularly assessing the achievement of interim and final outputs and outcomes for the project. Applicant must also show evidence of the ability to anticipate and adjust for challenges that may arise throughout the project.
- 5) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative and FTE Sheet*:** (Maximum of **15** points):
Budget must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must not exceed the \$750,100 total budget allotted, and must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures.

Maximum Points: 100

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements of this project as described above.

Following review of written proposals, the selection committee will name finalists for further consideration. Finalists will be required to make a face-to-face presentation to the selection committee,

focused on the proposed Project Design, Time Line, & Strategies, and the proposed Evaluation Plan. Finalists should also be prepared to answer questions about any aspect of their proposal during the presentation. Up to 50 points will be awarded for the presentation. The selection committee will then use the total number of points earned for the written application and the presentation together to determine their final recommendation.

The selection committee will submit their recommendations to the Division of Child Development and Early Education based on the selection process described above. DCDEE will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing no later than September 15, 2012.

FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, contractors must submit a monthly reimbursement request to DCDEE for all expenses incurred. Expenditures may begin immediately upon receipt of a completely signed and approved contract but not before. Timely dispersal of contract funds will be dependent upon the contractor's compliance with the reimbursement and reporting requirements established by a contract with the Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Department of Health and Human Services, and its addenda.

The Procurement Process

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to the Division's website by July 31, 2012. Web address: ncchildcare.net
2. **Two originals and five copies** of each application must be received from each agency or organization. The originals must be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by the funding agency not later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. Electronic and faxed applications will not be accepted.
4. Upon receipt, the date and time of delivery for application packets from each responding agency and organization will be documented. Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request additional information from any or all applicants for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agency's or organization's staff, cost, etc. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit, but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.

7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.

General Information on Submitting Applications

1. **Award or Rejection**
All qualified applications will be evaluated and award made to that agency or organization whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. Successful applicants will be notified by September 15, 2012.
2. **Cost of Application Preparation**
Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency's or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.
3. **Elaborate Applications**
Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
4. **Reference to Other Data**
Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not suffice.
5. **Titles**
Titles and headings in this RFA and any subsequent RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.
6. **Form of Application**
Each application must be submitted on the form provided by the funding agency, and will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).
7. **Exceptions**
All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and condition by any agency and organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application. Funded agencies and organizations specifically agree to the conditions set forth in the Performance Agreement (contract).
8. **Advertising**
In submitting its application, agencies and organizations agree not to use the results there from or as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of the funding agency.

9. **Right to Submitted Material**
All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.
10. **Competitive Offer**
Pursuant to the provision of G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.
11. **Agency and Organization's Representative**
Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.
12. **Subcontracting**
Agencies and organizations may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom. All information required about the prime grantee is also required for each proposed subcontractor.
13. **Proprietary Information**
Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.
14. **Participation Encouraged**
Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.
15. **Gifts Ban**
N.C.G.S. § 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.
16. **Contract**
The Division will issue a contract to the recipient of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point.

The successful applicant may be required to undergo an audit in accordance with G. S. 143-6.2 as applicable to the agency or organization's status. In addition, the final contract may include assurances that the successful applicant will be required to sign and execute as part of the contract.

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

Contracts with private non-profit agencies must include a notarized conflict of interest policy statement and a Certification of No Overdue Taxes. Review the instructions, complete the forms and include with RFA application submission.

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

Applicants must submit organization's DUNS number. D-U-N-S is the abbreviation for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by Dun and Bradstreet. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) online registration Visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> to receive one free of charge.

***Attached Forms:**

1. Cover Sheet
2. Outputs Worksheet
3. Outcomes Worksheet
4. Line Item Budget and Instructions
5. FTE Sheet
6. Notarized Conflict of Interest (non profit agencies only)
7. No Overdue Taxes (non profit agencies only)

All items must be satisfactorily completed and included for an application to be considered complete.