REQUEST FOR FUNDING
OECOSL RFF 18-001

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROGRAM

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE: JANUARY 31, 2018
RFF DATE ISSUED: DECEMBER 15, 2017

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I. INTRODUCTION
This is a Request for Funding (RFF) issued by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL). This RFF requests responses from county/community coalitions and/or eligible individual early childhood education providers interested in building their capacity to provide early childhood education programs by serving more children and/or increasing the quality of services provided. All county/community coalitions and/or individual early childhood education providers within the state of Indiana that meet the eligibility criteria in Section II.B may apply.

A. BACKGROUND
House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1004 of the 2017 legislative session, signed into law by Governor Eric Holcomb on April 26, 2017, expanded the early education pilot program to provide grants to eligible children for qualified education services (“On-My-Way Pre-K Pilot Program”). The program funds qualified educational services delivered via accredited private schools, public schools, and community-based early education providers who have achieved Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY, Indiana’s voluntary child care quality rating and improvement system that aims to improve child outcomes and increase parent engagement (Appendix A).

Additionally, HEA 1004 allows the awarding of grants for expansion plans for any existing eligible providers or potentially eligible providers. These expansion grants are the focus of this RFF. After June 30, 2017, any provider that meets the requirements as an eligible provider under the statute (defined in Section II.B of this RFF) may receive grant funding. Funding may not exceed the total of twenty percent (20%) of the pilot funding during each State fiscal year. Since money in the pilot fund differs each fiscal year depending on the number of enrollees, the amount of grant funding available will differ each fiscal year. Further detail on activities funded by the grant can be found in Section II.D.

Based on data included in the Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) Annual Report, Indiana currently has 1,098 high quality early childhood education programs (high quality is defined as participation in Paths to QUALITY Level 3, Level 4, or nationally accredited by an approved accreditation body) who are serving just under 45,000 children. In nine counties (Clinton, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Rush, Starke, Sullivan, Warren, and Wells) there are not any high quality programs, and many counties only have a handful of designated programs.

II. GRANT APPLICATION DETAILS
A. OBJECTIVES
The goal of this RFF is to solicit proposals from county/community coalitions and/or individual early childhood education providers to increase the number of high quality early childhood

1 http://in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/3731.htm
education programs that have achieved Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY and/or expand capacity to serve more children. FSSA will award county/community coalitions and/or individual early childhood education providers a grant to support capacity building projects. Applicants must be prepared to track and show improved program quality and capacity as a result of the funding received.

As this grant aims to promote community engagement in early childhood education, all applicants are required to seek matching funds from local businesses or other stakeholders who will benefit from the community improvement resulting from the increased capacity of local early childhood education programs. If the applicant is a county/community coalition, this match can come from within or outside the coalition. Applicants will receive priority points for having a local entity match all or a portion of the grant provided by the State. More information on the priority points received for grant matching can be found in Section III.E.

**B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**
To receive funding under this grant, an eligible early childhood education provider must meet one of the following criteria as defined by HEA 1004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be one of the following:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A public school, including a charter school,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a child care center licensed under Indiana Code (IC) 12-17.2-4,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a child care home licensed under IC 12-17.2-5,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• or a child care ministry registered under IC 12-17.2-6,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that has achieved, or is trying to achieve, a Level 3 or Level 4 in Paths to QUALITY AND has achieved, or is trying to achieve, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility³.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OR

| A non-public school that provides qualified early education services and is accredited by a national or regional accreditation agency that is recognized by the State Board of Education, or an accrediting agency approved by the Office of the Secretary, AND has achieved, or is trying to achieve, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility. |

The State is seeking two types of applicants for this RFF: county/community coalitions or individual early childhood education providers. Applicants are encouraged to apply as a county/community coalition of stakeholders that includes one or more eligible or potentially eligible early childhood education provider(s) who would receive funding through this RFF. The intent is to receive one application from a county/community coalition detailing their plan to build capacity in their community. County/community coalitions should represent diverse stakeholders in the early childhood education system. For example, these county/community coalitions could be comprised of a local government entity, businesses, or for-profit/nonprofit organizations that have an established partnership with an eligible or potentially eligible early childhood education provider.

³ [https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/3900.htm](https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/3900.htm)
The State also will accept applications from individual early childhood education providers. If the provider’s community has an early childhood education coalition, the provider is encouraged to apply with the coalition. However, the State recognizes not all Indiana communities have coalitions.

More than one application can be received from within a particular county/community. However, the same entity may not submit more than one grant application for consideration.

C. GRANT FUNDING
The capacity grant available in this RFF will follow a standard competitive grant model. The applicant will apply for the grant per the guidelines in this RFF. If selected, the applicant will receive a grant to implement the items agreed to in the proposal and eventual grant contract. FSSA reserves the right to make all final award decisions and to award grants based on the quality of applications and available funding.

1. Grant Payments
Funds from the grant will be provided as a combination of reimbursements and upfront payment as allowed by Indiana Code. If the awarded grant amount is $50,000 or more, applicants can receive up to 1/6 (16.67%) of their total grant amount as an upfront payment. If the grant is under $50,000, applicants can receive up to 1/2 (50%) of their total grant amount as an upfront payment. In both scenarios, the remainder of the grant will be provided through reimbursements by the State.

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
A key portion of the grant application will be measuring and monitoring outcomes to ensure that objectives are being met on behalf of the children who will benefit from this funding. As such, all applicants will be required to submit at least two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which act as project goals that track the progress of their plans to increase capacity through serving more children or adding more qualified providers and demonstrate how the State can objectively measure the progress of the project. In general, the applicant’s KPIs must be measurable, attainable, and time-limited. Examples of acceptable KPIs include: We will expand the capacity of our early childhood education program by 10 children by March 29, 2018; or We will improve our Paths to QUALITY rating from Level 2 to a Level 3 by March 29, 2018. Applicants must submit their KPIs in their response to the Grant Funding/Match/KPIs question in the Technical Proposal (Section III.B.1.vi). Although the KPIs need to be achieved by the early childhood education provider directly, if applying as a county/community coalition, members of the coalition must also take an active role in setting and supporting the achievement of the KPIs in order to promote community improvement.

3. Grant Match
Under IC 12-17.2-7.2-8, applicants for OECOSL funding are required to secure a grant match from local businesses or other stakeholders who will benefit from the community improvement associated with this grant. This grant match must be at least 5% and can be up to 50% of the total amount of the total capacity building plan budget submitted in the Grant Budget Proposal in Attachment C. The grant match requirement only applies to the
total amount of grant funding requested from OECOSL. No grant match is required for projects funded by ELI (see Section II.D.1.) Failure to submit a grant match of at least 5% of your OECOSL total budget request will result in your proposal being disqualified. Each grant matching entity needs to demonstrate its understanding of the KPIs, the grant match amount to be provided, and its commitment to providing the match through a grant match commitment letter. A separate grant match commitment letter must be submitted by each entity providing a grant match. Additionally, the grant matching entity/entities must be listed on the Joint Applicant and Partner Commitment Form in Attachment A.

The total grant match amount will be subtracted from your total OECOSL grant budget to dictate the grant amount provided by the State. The number of priority points received for your grant match will be based on the percentage of the total grant amount matched. Grant matches of 5% will receive 1 priority point while grant matches of 50% will receive 10 priority points.

4. ELI Grant Match Assistance Nonprofit applicants struggling to secure the 5% grant match minimum may request assistance with the grant match from Early Learning Indiana (ELI). Interested applicants that contact ELI may be eligible to receive a grant match from ELI or an introduction to another entity that could provide a match. ELI has a request process for the grant match that is separate from the application for this grant. The grant match must be secured before a grant application is submitted, therefore interested applicants with nonprofit status are encouraged to reach out to ELI as soon as possible to request assistance. Further, to receive match support from ELI, interested individual early education providers must prove they are a nonprofit and interested county/community coalitions must prove the early childhood education provider(s) receiving the match support within the coalition is a nonprofit. Applicants should make attempts to seek a grant match within their community before reaching out to ELI and may be asked by ELI about their efforts to secure a match. To learn more or request support from ELI grant match, contact:

Natalie Brake, Director of Capacity-Building for ELI, at natalieb@earlylearningindiana.org or 317.636.9197 x292.

D. USE OF FUNDS
As required by HEA 1004, grant funds must be used to increase the capacity of early childhood education providers to serve more eligible children and/or increase the number of qualified early childhood education providers. Applicants are required to demonstrate in their application response how their use of grant funding will provide services to more children and/or increase their Paths to QUALITY rating to a Level 3 or Level 4. The estimated number of new/expanded seats and the estimated increase in PTQ level for each early childhood education provider that will arise from the grant funding must be documented on the Prospective Program Sites Form in Attachment B.

As outlined in IC 12-17.2-7.2-7.4(e), if the applicant fails to use the grant funds in accordance with the criteria described above or comply with the agreement entered into with the State, the applicant shall repay the total amount of the grant awarded.
Use of grant funding to increase capacity and quality may include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- Personnel participating in the capacity building project
- Workforce investment including training and professional development for teaching staff
- Classroom materials that demonstrate increased outcomes for children or increased instructional practices for educators
- Evidence-based curriculum/instructional materials with professional development for teaching staff to utilize the curriculum
- Family engagement
- Marketing and communication engagement

Please note when selecting items to include in a proposed budget that grant applicants are required to demonstrate how the funding from their proposed project will increase capacity through serving more children or adding more qualified providers. Grant applicants are also required to demonstrate how they will sustain the proposed project after the grant cycle is completed. Further detail regarding the requirements for describing the sustainability of an applicant’s capacity building project can be found in Section III.B.1.vii.

According to HEA 1004, the OECOSL grant funds shall not be used for the purchase of land, the purchase of a building, the construction of a building, or the expansion of a building.

Further, it is the expectation of the State that the projects applied for through this grant are not receiving duplicate funding from another grant or donation source. While applicants can receive funding from different sources for different types of projects, the unique project submitted for this grant application may not be currently receiving funding from any other source.

1. Additional ELI Funding

Nonprofit applicants interested in receiving funding for some items not allowable in this RFF by Indiana Code, such as the construction or expansion of an existing building owned or rented by an applicant, have the opportunity to apply for a limited pool of separate grant funding from Early Learning Indiana (ELI). ELI will not fund requests to acquire land or a building. The request for the ELI funding is included as part of this grant application but will be evaluated and awarded separately from the OECOSL early childhood education capacity building grant projects.

Applicants interested in requesting ELI grant funding must prove they, or the early childhood education provider who would receive the funding, has nonprofit status by uploading their IRS 501(c)3 Determination Letter as detailed in Section III.A.4, and must also complete additional sections of the Grant Budget Proposal explaining the amount and necessity of these additional funds, as detailed in Section III.D. Examples of capacity building projects that may qualify for ELI funding and do not qualify for OECOSL funding include construction of walls, doors, windows, flooring, and/or restrooms within current classrooms or to create additional classrooms. No additional grant match by an external entity is required to receive ELI funding. The grant match component of this application will only apply to an applicant’s final OECOSL grant amount.
While the application for the ELI funding is included in this OECOSL capacity building grant, OECOSL grant applications shall not be contingent on receiving ELI funding for capital improvements. For example, an applicant could not state, “Unless ELI funds our project to build a new classroom, we will not be able to expand our capacity.”

The ELI funding will be evaluated and awarded separately by ELI and their designees and the funding will be separate from the OECOSL grant. However, ELI will take into account the information provided in this application to make a final decision on whether to award funding. Applicants that apply for ELI funding but do not receive it may forfeit their OECOSL grant as well if they cannot complete their project as described in this application without the ELI funding.

ELI reserves the right to make all final award decisions for funding items not allowable in this RFF by Indiana Code and to award based on the quality of applications and available funding.

E. LENGTH OF GRANT
All grants will last for one year starting from the grant’s effective date. At the end of the grant period, grant recipients will have the option to request a no-cost extension if additional activities remain that have not been completed after one year.

F. SAMPLE GRANT CONTRACT
Applicants must agree to the terms and conditions of the Sample Grant Contract in Attachment D. All grant recipients will be required to sign this contract in order to receive funding. It outlines the State’s terms and conditions that must be followed by an awardee when receiving the grant. Each recipient’s proposal will also become a component of the contract.

G. PATHS TO QUALITY COACH INVOLVEMENT
Any early childhood education provider applicants who have a Paths to QUALITY Coach must involve their coach during the completion of the RFF. Further, an involvement letter from the applicant’s coach is required to demonstrate the role the coach played in the application process. This letter must be uploaded to the online application platform in the General Applicant Information Section III.A.3.

H. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Any interested applicant must submit a complete grant application no later than 4:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on January 31, 2018, to be eligible for award. Any applicant that does not submit a complete grant application on time will not be considered.

All components of the grant application should be submitted through Early Learning Indiana’s (ELI) online application platform: https://earlylearningin.submittable.com/submit. The OECOSL grant application on the ELI platform is labeled “OECOSL RFF 18-001 – Early Childhood Education Capacity Building Grant Program.” Applicants will be expected to answer all questions of the Technical Proposal as well as submit all forms associated with the application that are provided for download on the RFF website: http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm.
To submit an application on the ELI online application platform, applicants will be required to create an account and choose the grant they are applying for (OECOSL RFF 18-001 - Early Childhood Education Capacity Building Grant Program). Applicants will be asked to fill out each step of the application, including the General Applicant Information, Technical Proposal, and Grant Budget Proposal. Applicants will be asked to upload the additional forms, as detailed in the Grant Application Components table in Section II.I below. Once the applicant is satisfied with the application, it can be directly submitted on the platform. The applicant can also save any progress and return to the application at any time prior to submission. Once the applicant submits their application, the applicant will receive an automatic email from Early Learning Indiana to the email address linked to the applicant’s ELI account confirming the application has been submitted. If the applicant does not appear to have received the application, they should 1) confirm they selected the “submit” button in their application and 2) check all SPAM and promotions folders for the email address linked to the applicant’s ELI account. Once the application is submitted, the applicant should continue to monitor the email account for any additional notifications from the ELI platform. Please send all issues with or questions about the application or platform to Beth Barrett at OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov.

I. GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST
As part of the grant application, the applicant must submit all Grant Application Components, which are listed in the following table. Instructions regarding how to complete each component are detailed in Section III.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Application Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Applicant Information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Basic Applicant Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Involvement Letter from PTQ Coach (if applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ELI Match or Funding Nonprofit Applicants: IRS 501(c)3 Determination Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Joint Applicant and Partner Commitment Form (Attachment A) and Prospective Program Sites Form (Attachment B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Must be signed by an authorized representative –</td>
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<tr>
<td>- For coalitions: Executive Director/CEO or President of the Board of Directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>- For individual providers: facility owner or program director</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Proposal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Community Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Capacity Building Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grant Funding/Match/KPIs –</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Grant Match Commitment Letter(s) from Grant Matching Entity/Entities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sustainability Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A completed Grant Budget Proposal (Attachment C) must be uploaded and Grant Budget Narrative must be submitted.

Nonprofits applying for additional ELI funding must complete this section.

### Priority Points
1. Grant Funding Matching Choice
2. Letters of Support
3. Counties with Addiction Issues
4. Counties without High Quality Providers

### J. GRANT APPLICATION TIME FRAME
The overall grant application timeline can be found in the table below. Applicants must submit their grant application by the proposal deadline to be eligible for receiving a grant. Further instructions on submitting a completed grant application can be found in Section II.H.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 2017</td>
<td>RFF sent to potential applicants and posted online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 19, 2017</td>
<td>Application Information Webinar at 1:00 p.m. ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20, 2017</td>
<td>Application questions due to State by 4:30 p.m. ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31, 2018</td>
<td>RFF proposals due at 4:30 p.m. ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2018</td>
<td>Approximate award decisions release date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2018</td>
<td>Approximate grant effective date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The timeline is subject to change. To remain current with any updates to this timeline, it is recommended applicants check the following OECOSL website frequently where any amendments to this RFF will be posted: [http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm).

### K. ONLINE APPLICATION PLATFORM INFORMATION SESSION
An optional online webinar will be held to walk applicants through how to use the ELI online application platform and answer any questions. This webinar will be held on December 19, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. ET. The webinar can be accessed at this link: [https://Indiana.AdobeConnect.com/ecosl](https://Indiana.AdobeConnect.com/ecosl). All applicants should sign in as a guest using their name. The webinar audio will be part of the online program, so webinar participants will need to use speakers or headphones to hear the presentation. Participants will have the opportunity to submit questions during the webinar to be answered. Prior to the webinar, applicants can visit this link to test their connection and ensure all needed updates or add-ins are downloaded: [https://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm](https://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm). Applicants should not use a Citrix or Virtual Private Network (VPN) to join the webinar as these services will not be able to playback audio. For applicants who cannot attend, the webinar will be recorded and posted on the OECOSL website: [http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm).

### L. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION QUESTIONS
All questions regarding the content of this RFF must be submitted to Beth Barrett at [OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov](mailto:OECOSLgrant@fssa.in.gov) by Wednesday, December 20, 2017, at 4:30 p.m. ET. Please use the
provided Question and Answer Response Template (Attachment E) to submit your questions. The State reserves the right not to address questions about the RFF submitted after the deadline.

The State will post a document with answers to applicant questions on the RFF website one week later on or around Wednesday, December 28, 2017. Applicants are encouraged to check the website for amendments to the RFF when answers to applicants’ questions are posted: http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm.

As stated in Section II.H, questions regarding the ELI platform may be submitted to Beth Barrett at any time and do not need to be submitted using the Q&A template. However, applicants are cautioned from holding these questions until immediately before the application is due as late applications will not be considered for funding.

M. AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Applicants are encouraged to seek out resources and support in the development of their application proposal. Some possible resources to consider for assistance include:

- Your Paths to QUALITY Coach.
- Indiana Youth Institute offers free grant review assistance and help with collecting data for the proposal, but it must be submitted within a reasonable time. Information is available here: http://www.iyi.org/fundraising-grants/other-fundraising-resources.aspx.
- Indiana Association for Education of Young Children (AEYC): http://www.iaeyc.org/.
- Suggestions on possibilities to increase quality standards can be found in the NIEER Standards in Appendix B.

III. GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENTS

A. GENERAL APPLICANT INFORMATION
Each respondent is required to provide the following background information. Applicants will provide this information directly in the ELI online application platform when submitting their application.

1. Respondent Information
   a. Applicant Type: Early Childhood Education Provider Name OR County/Community Coalition Name
   b. County
   c. Applicant Name
   d. Title of Project/Application
   e. Mailing Address
   f. Single Point of Contact for all Communication Regarding the RFF
1. Contact Name
2. Contact Title
3. Contact Phone
4. Contact Email Address

g. Ages of Children Currently Served (Early Childhood Education Providers only)
h. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility status (Early Childhood Education Providers only)

2. Grant Match Information
   a. Have you secured the entity/entities to provide the required grant match?

3. PTQ Coach Involvement Letter
   a. If you have a Paths to QUALITY Coach, please upload the coach’s involvement letter. If you do not have a Paths to QUALITY Coach, please upload a statement explaining the circumstance.

4. Nonprofit Status
   a. ELI grant match or ELI grant funding applicants ONLY: You must upload an IRS 501(c)3 Determination Letter proving your nonprofit status. If you are not applying for an ELI match or funding, you do not need to upload anything.

5. Additional Forms
   a. Please download, fill out, and upload the Joint Applicant and Partner Commitment Form (Attachment A).
      1. All applicants must list match funding entities in this form.
      2. County/community coalitions must also list member entities of the coalition.
   b. Please download, fill out, and upload the Prospective Program Sites Form (Attachment B).

6. Signature of Authorized Representative
   a. The authorized representative must provide an electronic signature certifying that the information contained in the application is correct and that the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions of the FSSA Sample Grant Contract (Attachment D).
      1. Designated Representative (Printed Name)
      2. Designated Representative Title
      3. Date

B. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

1. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL COMPONENTS
   The Technical Proposal narrative section is limited to the defined specific word count for each question. A submission may be less than the maximum word count so long as the questions are adequately answered. All sections outlined below must be addressed.
i. Community Need
(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

Provide a summary of your community’s overall “need” to expand the number of high quality programs and/or high quality seats available. Describe the number of young children in your community and their needs related to early childhood education. Explain the gaps in your early childhood system that are not meeting the needs of your families with young children. You may reference these reports for information:

- IYI Kids Count County Profile: [http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN/5/0/char/0](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN/5/0/char/0).

ii. Community History
(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

Describe how your community has been working together to improve high quality early childhood programs. Explain your community’s successes as well as your struggles to meet this goal. Describe why your community is ready now to receive and implement a capacity grant.

iii. Community Engagement
(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

If you are applying as a county/community coalition: Describe how your coalition is working to improve early learning programs and worked together to develop this application. Include a short explanation describing the role and involvement of the coalition in the community. Do not include the early childhood education providers you will be working with unless the providers also engage in community or countywide efforts.

If you are applying as an individual provider: List any organizations in your community that are committed to improving early childhood education and how you are working with your community to provide quality early childhood education.

iv. Capacity Building Plan
(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Describe your capacity building plan including the activities for which you are seeking funding and answer the following points about your plans for capacity expansion.

- Explain your overall plan for increasing the number of high quality early childhood programs in your community and/or increasing the quality of early childhood education in your community.
• If you are a county/community coalition, describe the different types of early childhood programs that will improve their capacity or quality (e.g., public schools, including charter schools, private schools, licensed child care centers, homes, and registered ministries).
• Explain how you will use the grant funding to support the expanded capacity of high quality programs and describe the types of activities for which you are seeking funding.
• Describe the strategies you will employ to support the program(s) you have proposed.
• Include a project plan and timeline for implementing the grant and reaching your program goals. The timeline should have key dates you plan to meet and the project plan should describe how you will reach these dates and complete the goals of your project. This may be provided as an uploaded file. The timeline will not count towards this section’s word limit.

v. Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan
(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Describe your plan to improve the quality of the early childhood education workforce, including more high quality lead and assistant teachers beyond the Paths to QUALITY workforce standards and leveraging TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) as well as other scholarship programs. Also include your plan for providing training on improving child outcomes by using an evidence-based curriculum and/or child assessments and increasing family knowledge about the importance of high quality early childhood education and being involved in the program. This includes your plan to incentivize teachers and workers to receive training for higher qualifications or attracting those who already have them. Describe how you plan to utilize IDOE Early Learning Foundations in your quality improvement initiatives. Finally, if you plan on introducing or maintaining any of the following criteria in your quality improvement plan, describe how you will do so:
• Implementing a quality, formalized curriculum that is evaluated for child level results. If you are proposing curriculum, provide detail on its evidence-based methods and how you will ensure professional development occurs to teach staff how to use the curriculum.
• Training on instructional practices that increase child outcomes.
• Increasing family engagement to better support successful child outcomes and transitions to kindergarten.
• Using ISTAR-KR assessment data to inform instruction and practice.
• Increasing parental choice in programs and setting types.

vi. Grant Funding/Match/KPIs
(Word Count Limit: 1000 words)

Describe how you will ensure your grant funding is spent effectively and accurately.

Describe your grant match, including the entity/entities that will be providing it, the match amount, and how you are going to ensure these funds will be received. You must include a grant match commitment letter from each of the entity/entities providing a grant match. This letter must confirm the grant match amount and demonstrate understanding and support of the project goals. The letter of support will not count toward this section’s word limit.

Propose two measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on your project type that you will be expected to meet by the end of your grant to demonstrate how you are improving early childhood education capacity and quality. You must describe how your KPIs will ensure your funding increases early childhood education capacity and outcomes and how these will be measured.

vii. Sustainability Plan
(Word Count Limit: 600 words)

Describe your plan to ensure the longevity and sustainability of your project beyond the grant period. Include detail regarding how you will ensure enrollment in the new, expanded high quality early childhood education programs. Describe how you will support the early childhood education programs to maintain their high quality status and ensure families enroll in these programs.

2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL POINTS
A breakdown of the maximum points each section of the Technical Proposal can receive is outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Maximum Points Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Community Need</td>
<td>15 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Community History</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>5 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>Capacity Building Plan</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>Quality Improvement and Assurance Plan</td>
<td>25 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>Grant Funding/Match/KPIs</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td>Sustainability Plan</td>
<td>15 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Technical Proposal Points:</strong></td>
<td><strong>90 Points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL
This section provides instructions for the completion of the Grant Budget Proposal and the Grant Budget Narrative explaining the request for funds.
Allowable Expenses: Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance. Please refer to Section II.D for more information on the allowed use of funds. Instructions for providing any costs related to the additional ELI funding are located in Section III.D.

1. Grant Budget Proposal: Complete a detailed budget for the total grant amount you are requesting by submitting the associated Grant Budget Proposal in Attachment C. The Grant Budget Proposal is available in an Excel document file that can be downloaded from the OECOSL website: [http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5465.htm). The applicant shall fill out the yellow cells in this document (all other cells will be locked). The completed Grant Budget Proposal, including the amount of the grant match, shall be uploaded directly onto the online application platform. The grant amount requested will not be scored.

2. Grant Budget Narrative (Word Count Limit: 600 words): Provide a narrative justifying how you created your budget. Your Grant Budget Narrative shall include a description of how you have arrived and represented your costs, including explaining what you are asking for and why the stated amount is necessary. This shall be typed directly into the online application platform. The Grant Budget Narrative will be worth 10 points.

D. ADDITIONAL ELI FUNDING PROPOSAL
Only nonprofits applying for additional ELI funding for items not allowable in this RFF by Indiana Code, such as the construction or expansion of a building, must complete this section. All other applicants are not required to complete this section. The Additional ELI Funding Proposal will be worth 0 points towards the OECOSL grant evaluation. Instead, it will be used by ELI to make award decisions for the ELI funding.

1. ELI Grant Narrative: Within the designated location in the online application platform, describe how the additional ELI funding will help you achieve your capacity building project goals. This narrative should include a description of how this funding will help address the needs of your community and how you will ensure this funding is spent effectively and accurately. You must also justify how you represented your costs, why this funding is necessary for your project goals, and what will happen to your project if you do not receive the additional ELI funding.

2. ELI Grant Budget Proposal: Using the “Additional ELI Funding” tab of the Grant Budget Proposal Excel, list the items for which you are requested funding and their associated dollar value. You must follow the instructions listed in the Grant Budget Proposal Excel file.

E. PRIORITY POINTS
Applicants are eligible to receive up to 20 additional priority points for meeting certain needs or goals as follows. Applicants will be asked to select from a list which of these criteria they meet on the online application platform.
1. Grant Funding Matching Choice (up to 10 points)
Applicants will receive priority points for having a local business or community stakeholder match all or a portion of the grant provided by the State. This entity can be within or outside the coalition. This grant match must be at least 5% and up to 50% of the total amount of the total capacity building plan budget submitted in the Grant Budget Proposal in Attachment C. Priority points will be awarded as a percent of the amount of funding being matched. For example, applications that have the maximum grant match (50%) will receive 10 priority points, while applications that have the minimum grant match (5%) will receive 1 priority point. Partial points may be awarded depending on the percent match. The grant match amount should be depicted in the Grant Budget Proposal.

2. Letters of Support (1 point per letter, maximum of 2 points)
In addition to the required grant match commitment letter and coach involvement letter outlined earlier in this RFF, applicants can receive priority points through submitting additional letters of support to demonstrate community partnerships. While there is no limit to the number of letters than can be submitted, each letter will be worth 1 priority point with a maximum of 2 points that can be received. Potential partners include a food sponsor, United Way, Community Foundation, CCR&R, or a business partner outside of the coalition.

3. Counties with Substance Use Disorder Issues (4 points)
Applicants will receive priority points for representing a county that has significant addiction issues. The list of eligible counties is as follows: Allen, Blackford, Boone, Clark, Dearborn, Delaware, Fayette, Franklin, Grant, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Lake, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Monroe, Morgan, Porter, Randolph, Scott, St. Joseph, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh, Vigo, and Wayne.

4. Counties without High Quality Providers (4 points)
Applicants will receive priority points for representing a county without any high quality providers (high quality is defined as participation in Paths to QUALITY Level 3, Level 4, or nationally accredited by an approved accreditation body). The list of eligible counties is as follows: Clinton, Jasper, Newton, Pulaski, Rush, Starke, Sullivan, Warren, and Wells.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA
Proposals will be evaluated based upon the proven ability of the applicant to satisfy the requirements of the RFF. Each of the evaluation criteria categories is described below with a brief explanation of the basis for evaluation in that category. The points associated with each category are indicated following the category name (total maximum points = 120). If any one or more of the listed criteria on which the responses to this RFF will be evaluated are found to be inconsistent or incompatible with applicable federal laws, regulations, or policies, the specific criteria will be disregarded and the responses will be evaluated and scored without taking into account such criteria or disqualified altogether. The State reserves the right to make all final award decisions. The State will only issue as many grants as funding allows. Although the ELI
funding is separate from the OECOSL grant and is not scored with this application, ELI reserves the right to make all final award decisions for its ELI funding based on the quality of applications and available funding. Finally, the State reserves the right to disqualify and not score incomplete proposals that do not provide all the required items as detailed in this RFF.

A. RFF EVALUATION CRITERIA

Step 1: Review for Mandatory Requirements and Complete Application
In this step, proposals will be evaluated to ensure that they adhere to all grant requirements, including applicant eligibility. Applicants must submit all information required by this RFF. Incomplete proposals may be disqualified. Further, all applications received after the deadline set forth in the RFF shall be disqualified.

Step 2: Qualitative Review (Technical and Grant Budget Proposals)
Complete proposals will be scored based on the specifications set forth in Section III.B and III.C. This scoring will have a maximum possible score of 100 points (90 Technical Proposal points and 10 Grant Budget Proposal points). Step 2 may include one or more rounds of grant proposal clarifications or discussions (oral and/or written) between the State and the applicant focused on the details of the Technical and/or Grant Budget Proposal. Note that Grant Budget Proposals will not be scored based on the grant funding amount requested. Grant Budget Proposals will be scored based on the justification provided in the Grant Budget Narrative.

Step 3: Priority Points
Applicants may receive up to 20 priority points as outlined in Section III.E. The State will review the applicant’s responses to the priority points section and calculate the total priority points earned. Priority points will be added to the total points received for the Technical Proposal and Grant Budget Proposal to create a final score for each applicant.

Step 4: Award Recommendation and Notification
All proposals will be ranked on the basis of their scores. The committee responsible for reviewing the proposals will make grant award recommendations based upon the highest scoring applications. The State reserves the right to make all final award determinations. FSSA intends to notify grant applicants of award when evaluations are completed.

B. APPLICATION POINTS
The following table demonstrates the maximum points available for each grant application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Points Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adherence to Grant Requirements</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Technical Proposal</td>
<td>90 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grant Budget Proposal</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Priority Points</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points:</strong></td>
<td><strong>120 Points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A: INDIANA’S PATHS TO QUALITY™ RATING SYSTEM

Paths to QUALITY™ is Indiana’s framework for systemic, continuous quality improvement of early care and education. Paths to QUALITY™ is dedicated to supporting the well-being and success of all Indiana children through a statewide system that improves child development and age-appropriate learning experiences, promotes high quality child care, and supports and empowers parents as teachers and decision makers.

Level 4 – National Accreditation
Level 4 programs are the highest rated programs and have demonstrated a commitment to the highest level of professionalism in high quality child care—achievement of a nationally recognized accreditation. Level 4 programs are managed by a provider or director who has volunteered to provide mentoring to others in the field.

Level 3 – Planned Curriculum
Level 3 programs have demonstrated the knowledge and skill necessary for planning appropriate activities and opportunities that lead children toward school readiness. Level 3 programs have made a significant investment in the professional development of the staff, and they incorporate family and staff input into the program.
Level 2 – Learning Environments
Level 2 programs have demonstrated a commitment to improve program quality. They offer opportunities for children to advance their growth and development. Level 2 programs will have evidence of a consistent daily schedule, planned activities for children, and will provide relevant program information for families.

Level 1 – Health and Safety
Level 1 programs have demonstrated that they are operating in good standing and have been recognized by the state of Indiana as having met all required health and safety standards.

Paths to QUALITY™ Standards are available here:
- Unlicensed Registered Ministries [http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/MinistriesPTQStandards.pdf](http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/files/MinistriesPTQStandards.pdf)
- Public Schools [http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/4926.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/pathstoquality/4926.htm)

For more information about Paths to QUALITY™ please visit [http://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/2554.htm) or [http://www.childcareindiana.org](http://www.childcareindiana.org)
APPENDIX B: NIEER STANDARDS
The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) conducts and communicates research to support high quality, effective early childhood education for all young children. Such education enhances their physical, cognitive, and social development, and subsequent success in school and later life.

For more information on the NIEER report on Early Education Research visit http://nieer-www1.rutgers.edu/

NIEER has identified ten national quality standards for early childhood programs:

1. Comprehensive Early Learning and Development Standards that are horizontally and vertically aligned, supported, and culturally sensitive
2. Support for Curriculum Implementation
3. Lead Teacher Degree (BA)
4. Lead Teacher Specialized Training in ECE/CD
5. Assistant Teacher Degree (CDA)
6. 15 hour/year of professional development, individualized plans professional development plans, and coaching for lead and assistant teachers
7. Maximum Class Size (20)
8. Staff-Child Ratio (1:10)
9. Screenings and Referrals
10. Continuous Quality Improvement System