

RI State Funded Universal Pre-K RFP Questions and Answers

2019-2020

Proposal Questions

1. For multi-site organizations, is it possible to submit one proposal for all, or do we need to submit separate proposals for each individual site (for example, seeking funding for one classroom in Providence and one classroom in Central Falls)?
 - Each individual site location needs to submit a separate proposal as the facility, staffing and program makeup may differ from site to site. The parts of the proposal that are cohesive throughout the larger organization can certainly be duplicated within applications.
2. If an existing Pre-K program just wants to apply for Pre-K slots for a blended funded classroom, are they required to submit a full proposal as they would for an additional classroom?
 - Yes, if you are applying for additional Pre-K seats you will need to submit a full proposal requesting additional Pre-K seats. Unless you are increasing the size of your current Pre-K classroom from 18 to 20 seats, in which case you will only need to note that on your annual report.
3. Is the Technical Assistant Specialist associated with Bright Stars or is this a new position to support this classroom?
 - Technical Assistance for selected Pre-K classrooms is provided through RIDE administration, the PD/TA Center and BrightStars. DHS CCAP providers can access TA at any time through the Center for Early Learning Professionals PD/TA contract prior to, and during, the application process.
4. The RFP states “Proposed classrooms must not displace children across any age level, including infant and toddler children.” Does this mean that we would not be able to use our current Pre-k classroom, which is licensed for 20 children? If we were to get the grant, we have a second preschool eligible classroom where we would enroll 18 children ages 3-5. Or is the expectation that this proposal would be for a space that is currently empty in our center?
 - Rhode Island’s UPK program Year 1 expansion aims to improve access to high quality early childhood education to all four year old children. It is the expectation that an applicant not remove children currently enrolled in a preschool classroom and replace it with a State Pre-K classroom. As children are chosen for the Pre-K through a lottery there is no

way to guarantee a spot for a particular child and children need to physically reside in the city or town where they attend a State funded Pre-K.

- This means that programs need to be creative when applying for and sustaining State Pre-K programs. Some possible solutions are accessing a previously unused space within their building, using a space that does not currently house an early childhood classroom, building a new classroom, converting a non-classroom space into a classroom, using a blended funding model, dually enrolling children in both the Pre-K lottery and a childcare classroom until the lottery selection is complete, or working collaboratively with other organizations to provide space or program oversight based on each organizations capacity.
 - Programs that apply but are not accepted for Year 1 expansion will receive feedback from the selection committee along with direction to supports and resources to address areas of opportunity through the Center for Early Learning Professionals and can apply again in Year 2.
5. The proposed Pre-K space is planned for renovation and will be completed by June. Are we allowed to apply since the space is under construction?
- Yes, an application will be considered and approved provided that there is a plan to meet all DCYF and CECE regulations by the start date, September 4, 2019.
6. Will the Rhode Island pre- k funded programs be available for Home Day care?
- Rhode Island is committed to preserving a mixed-delivery model for children birth through five served in early learning programs across the state. This includes family child care providers. While family child care providers are not eligible to apply for this phase of funding for state Pre-K, we are currently exploring opportunities to enhance and support family child care providers through a variety of needs assessments and pilot programming over the next year under our Preschool Development Grant. Eligible organizations or entities for this application period include all licensed child care providers, Head Start programs, public schools and non-public schools able to operate a Pre-Kindergarten classroom in any and all Rhode Island communities.
 - Family child care providers can partner with state Pre-K classrooms to offer before/after care for children needing care beyond the six hour school day. Other opportunities for the state's B-5 community will be assisting in RI's PDG activities. You can find those activities at <http://www.kids.ri.gov/documents/PDG%20B-5%20Grant%20Narrative.pdf>

Facility Questions

7. Can a State Pre-K classroom be located on the second floor without a handicap assessable ramp?
 - According to DCYF Regulations, classrooms used by Preschool or School Age children must be on the first or second floor and stairways used by Preschool and/or School Age children must have a handrail no higher than 28 inches from the stair tread.
 - You may need to confirm with authorities having jurisdiction, such as, but not limited to the local Fire Marshall and Building Inspector to enroll children on the second floor.
 - Accessibility is also the jurisdiction of The Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities.
8. If agency doesn't have an OSHA inspection/certification can their application be approved while awaiting inspection? (we are presently offering Head Start and Early Head Start and have undergone multiple federal inspections and have monthly inspections by Children's Friend)
 - Yes, an application without complete inspections will be considered and approved provided that there is a plan to meet all regulations by the start date, September 4, 2019.
9. If program is housed in community agency and has locked interior doors accessibly by doorbell and keypad, must the building's exterior doors remain locked? If not, are volunteers able to monitor the doors, or should the agency hire individuals to monitor doors?
 - According to DCYF Regulations all entrances to the program are kept locked with mechanisms in place for monitoring entry. If at any time an entrance to the program is unlocked (e.g. drop off/pick up, service deliveries), a designated **staff** person is required to directly monitor all entries/exits from the program.
10. Since we will be offering before and after school care, DCYF allows 18 students in the room while RIDE will allow for 20, which agency will we be operating under if all 20 students need before and after care as well as school vacation weeks?
 - RIDE defers to DCYF Regulations for all licensing requirements. DCYF regulations allow 20 4 year old children in a room based on maintaining a minimum of 35 square feet of usable floor space for each child. If DCYF has licensed a classroom for 18 four year old children then only 18 children may be enrolled in the Pre-K classroom.
11. Will DCYF allow us to use this room for our summer program?
 - The Pre-K classroom is a fully licensed classroom by DCYF and can be used for vacation and or summer camp programming as long as it does not interfere with the Pre-K school year.

Staffing Questions

12. Is it possible for one Education Coordinator to oversee UPK classrooms at multiple sites within one organization?
 - Yes, an Education Coordinator can oversee UPK classrooms at multiple sites within one organization as long as they meet the requirements outlined within the RFP and CECE approval, can maintain a regular and ongoing supervision schedule and are supervising an appropriate number of classrooms given their hours. Refer to the chart located in CECE and DCYF Regulations.
13. Are lead teachers in UPK classrooms required to hold RI ECE certification as of the first day of school, or are teachers who meet the educational and student teaching requirements, but who must complete PRAXIS testing, allowed to do so within a certain time frame?
 - Teachers within Community and Head Start Programs are able to lead UPK classrooms with a Bachelor's Degree. Lead UPK teachers must comply with all UPK requirements and have a documented plan for achieving their certification within seven years.
14. If the Ed Coordinator is shy of meeting the CECE requirements and their IPDP states they are working towards them are they able to work as the Ed Coordinator? Ex: needs 3-6 more credits in ECE
 - Yes, provided there is a plan in place for the Ed Coordinator to attain the appropriate requirements in their IPDP within 2 years.
15. Will our child care center use the RI Early Learning Workforce Knowledge & Competencies and Bright Stars standards for the Teaching Assistant positions?
 - Yes, the WKC should be used to create and support job descriptions and evaluation tools for all staff positions within the Pre-K.
16. The Education Coordinator is to use the Supervision Model for the staff, how do we find out about this system?
 - The Education Coordinator or Site Coordinator meets with each Teacher or staff to consult on program planning and to assist in the planning for individual children at least monthly. This position requires the program to submit a system of staff support document each school year that details the schedule of when and where Ed coordinators meet with teaching teams and how that is documented to show goals and outcomes of both the

children through TSG and staff towards their IPDP. The State's PD/TA Center will provide resources to the Education Coordinator to understand, and implement, the Supervision Model.

17. Since we are non-profit and do not offer health insurance to our employees, how do we go about offering it to the staff, admin. and Ed coordinator? Can we use Healthsource RI? Can we opt-out if a staff employee has coverage with their spouse or significant other?

- Health insurance must be offered to all full time State Pre-K staff. How each individual program secures that benefit is at the program's discretion. While insurance benefits must be offered we realize that not all staff will choose to enroll, as that is a personal decision.

18. What plan should we have in place for a substitute teacher in this classroom?

- Programs need to have both a short and long term substitute plan. We realize that teachers and assistants will occasionally need to access sick time. Programs will submit a plan for who will cover classroom(s) in their absences. During a long term absence, like an FMLA leave, programs will write to how they will cover that teacher or assistant to provide continuity of care to the children in the classroom.

19. Does the program have to provide benefits beyond what they offer their current employees? For example, our current employees only receive the mandated RI sick leave hours and no health benefits, which is less than a public school teacher gets.

- Competitive compensation refers to salaries and benefits which are comparable to individuals with similar educational credentials, levels of experience, and levels of responsibility. In the early childhood field, this generally reflects salaries which would be paid to certified teachers employed within public school systems.

20. We are renovating the classroom for the proposed State Pre-k and therefore do not have teachers hired for this classroom. Are we allowed to apply?

- Yes, an application will be considered and approved provided that there is a plan to meet all DCYF and CECE regulations by the start date, September 4, 2019.

21. Do we need to hire a special education teacher?

- No, you do not have to hire a special education teacher. You need a teacher who meets the qualifications for early childhood teachers as specified in Standard 4.2 of the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval.
 - Programs are expected to support the identification, provision and implementation of special education services. Pre-K programs are expected to engage, communicate, and work with their local special education teams to support the referral process, the development of the IEP goals and the implementation of IEP goals within the classroom.
22. Can the education coordinator and the director be the same person? This person would solely be responsible for the state Pre-K classrooms.
- Yes, as long as they meet the qualifications for Education Coordinator as specified in Standard 4.1 in the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs Standards for Approval and commit to working the entire 41-week Pre-K program year and stay within the approved number of classrooms as regulated by DCYF and CECE.
23. The current student adult ratio is 1-9. If class size can increase to 20 is the expectation that there will be 3 adults for a class of 20? What is the adult to student ratio for a class of 20 students?
- The DCYF ratio for 4 year old children is 1:10 and the CECE regulations are being amended to reflect that ratio. For a class of 20 four year old children, the regulation remains at 2 educational staff members. Many programs have found ways to support more than 2 staff within a room for some, if not most of the time, to support a high quality early learning environment.

Child Enrollment Questions

24. If a child requires additional services or a higher level of care (where the safety of the child, other children and staff is a concern) and the family is opposed does RIDE have a policy for handling it?
- No child shall be expelled or suspended from any Pre-K classroom. When programs have concerns about a child, they should refer to their comprehensive services plan and all available community and educational supports, while maintaining the child's enrollment in the program, and speak to the RIDE Pre-K Administrator.
25. Will the children chosen through the lottery be placed close to our school? If not, how does transportation play a part?

- State Pre-K does not provide transportation. When parents apply to the lottery they choose the Pre-K program(s), within their city, that they wish to attend. Transportation to a State Pre-K program is the sole responsibility of the family.
26. The pre-k classroom would end after a six-hour day, meaning some children would need after school care. Would these 4 year olds be allowed to mix in with our current school age children? DCYF regs currently state that children 5-12 can be together. Will this change?
- RIDE defers to DCYF Regulations which state that a 4 year old Pre-K child may not be combined into a school age wrap around program.
 - Pre-K children who turn 5 during the Pre-K school year may be integrated into a school age program that meets the allowable age group combination #4 listed in the DCYF Regulations. This states that Pre-K children who are 5 maybe combined with 5 & 6 year old children who are Pre-K or Kindergarten only.
27. Will these children need a rest time? Currently DCYF regs require children to have a rest time until entering kindergarten.
- DCYF Regulations state that sleeping routines meet the individual needs of children in the program, that staff do not force children to sleep or stay awake and that there is a sleep plan appropriate to the needs of each child.
28. We will be able to offer both before and after school care, but if any parent needs transportation for just the Pre-K hours, do we need to provide that or will we be able to use the bussing system for the child's district?
- Currently there is no transportation provided within the Pre-K grant. Programs are not expected to provide transportation but are asked to consider how families will access services based on your location.
29. Are children with younger siblings in the program more likely to get picked in the lottery?
- No, at this time children with younger siblings are not given any priority within the lottery selection process.
30. If we offer a before and after school program, can children who are not enrolled in the State Prek participate in the before-and-after school program?
- Yes, Universal Pre-K grantees are responsible for providing wrap-around child care OR have a very strong connection with and transportation to and from at least one child care

or family childcare provider for families who need it. Programs may have both State Pre-K and community families enrolled in the before and after school program.

Budget Questions

31. Please explain the percentages next to each line item of the budget on page 16 of the RFP. For instance, what amount is the Teacher and Teacher Assistant line 100% of?

- The percentages listed are estimations of the cost for running a Pre-K classroom. The total identified budgetary allocations are suggestions based on national standards. Within each category you will find a more detailed breakdown of what percentage of the total should be spent. For instance, the expectation is that the salaries for Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistant in the Pre-K classroom will be completely covered (100%) by the Pre-K grant.

32. Is \$178,000 the maximum amount available for classrooms with 18-20 students? What if the average rent in our area is considerably higher than it is in other areas of the state?

- No. \$178,000 is not a maximum amount. Applicants should prepare a preliminary proposal based on your agency's anticipated costs to operate a Rhode Island Pre-K classroom in the cost categories outlined in the RFP, and for cost categories that exceed the State's estimated percentages, provide a detailed justification as part of the technical proposal.

33. Can you elaborate what the State Funded Grant Requires and the Grant Award Funding program?

- Applicants should be aware that they must comply with State Funded Grant Requirements which can be accessed here: [Grant Award Funding](#)

34. For reimbursement for just the Pre-K room in our building, do we use a % to figure out reimbursement for such items as insurance premiums, rent, utilities, etc.?

- Yes, State Pre-K will pay for a percentage of your usage. For example, if you have 6 classrooms we would pay 1/6 of your overhead expenses, within reason.

35. Will we get more points if a program does not ask for reimbursement for such items as above named and pays for these through the program's tuition income?

- Points are awarded competitively through the budget proposal. In theory, a lower budget, providing you can still sustain quality and meet all regulations, will be awarded more points.
36. Looking at the Technical Proposal Criteria, we are not sure if the money we receive for CCAP children is a state funded or federal funded program.
- If you receive CCAP funding you may speak to it, regardless of the source.
37. Would the budget cover costs to employ a teacher, teacher assistant AND education coordinator?
- In general, the Pre-K grant covers about 60% of the Pre-K salaries. This includes 100% of the Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistant salaries and a percentage of the Education Coordinator/Administrator/Administrative Support salaries.
38. What is the maximum budget we can receive for each classroom? We are developing the new classrooms, planning the outdoor space, and planning the purchase of all fixtures, furnishings, and supplies. What would we need to do to ensure we receive the maximum budget to cover the costs?
- When developing the budget for a Pre-K classroom programs should consider each cost category described, provide an explanation of how Pre-K grant funds and any other local or federal funds will be used; include a rationale for how the funds are reasonable and sufficient to achieve Pre-K Program outcomes. For cost categories that exceed the State's estimated percentages, a detailed justification must be provided; clearly explaining the need for those costs and describing the positive impact that these additional costs will have in supporting improved children's learning and development.

CACFP Questions

39. Can a local company cater lunch for our students; do we need to offer a lunch program to the other students in other classrooms?
- Yes, you may utilize a catering company that meets all of the CACFP Guidelines which can be accessed here: [CACFP](#). No, you do not have to participate in CACFP for other classrooms.
40. Does the program have to provide a lunch program?
- Universal Pre-K grantees are responsible for the enrollment and management of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program for eligible children and families. Federal funds accessed through this program should be applied to the cost of providing meals and

snacks for eligible children. Prior to the school year start date, the program Administrator is required to attend USDA training in order to enroll in the program.

Curriculum Questions

41. We are not currently following one of the endorsed ECE curriculum on the list provided. Can we purchase and train on one of these that are listed by May/June 2019; so we are still eligible for the State Funded Pre-K?

- Yes, you may submit a Pre-K proposal which includes a plan to move to one of the RIDE Endorsed Curriculums by the start date, September 4, 2019.