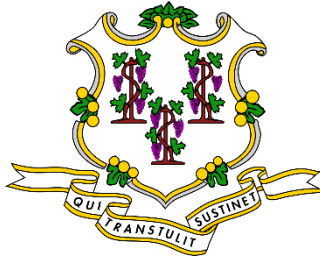




STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE



STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE



Request for Proposals (RFP) For
Early Start CT
Local Governance Partner (LGP) Intermediary
RFP Name: OEC-25-LGPINT
Issued by:
Office of Early Childhood
February 2025

The Request for Proposal is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal by filtering by Organization for the "Early Childhood, Office of" (<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>) or from the OEC's Official Contact:

Name: Paula S. DeMarco
Address: Office of Early Childhood
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: (860) 500-4412
E-Mail: OEC.RFP.Commissioner2@ct.gov

The RFP is also available on the OEC's website at: <https://www.ctoec.org/rfps/>.
Applicants may register for the optional pre-bid conference by [clicking on this link](#).

**RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN
Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 5:00 PM ET.**

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

The OEC reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or cancel this procurement at any time if deemed in the best interest of the State of Connecticut (State).



Dear Present and Future Colleagues,

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is presenting a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a contractor to lead and facilitate the implementation and management of a statewide Local Governance Partner (LGP) system established as part of Early Start, CT's new state-funded early care and education program. Coming out of the [Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care](#), we heard a strong desire to simplify and better coordinate the state's early childhood landscape. The LGP Intermediary will serve as a key structure that works closely with OEC to improve coordination across the system.

The RFP process will help identify a partner to act as a facilitating intermediary organization to support LGPs in achieving their goals: to empower families and amplify parent voice, strengthen system collaboration, improve equitable access to affordable, high-quality care and early childhood services, and promote best practices to enhance providers' ability to support children's learning and development. The ultimate goal of the LGP Intermediary is to strengthen Connecticut's early care system.

We know that building a system that has direct connections with children and families on a local level allows us to reach families where they are, understand their needs and vision, and align resources and services to meet those needs. And doing so effectively is crucial to accomplishing OEC's vision where all young children in Connecticut are safe, healthy, learning, and thriving.

The OEC will be hosting a pre-bid conference on Wednesday, February 19th at 2:30PM ET to review our vision for this opportunity for a strategic partner to help improve infrastructure and support the early care and education communities across Connecticut. While this conference is not mandatory, we highly encourage your attendance. **Please register for the conference at this [link](#), and the recording will be posted on the OEC website.**

Proposals will be due Wednesday, March 19, 2025, by 5:00 pm ET.

We are excited to see the innovative proposals that will come from this request and look forward to partnering with you. Thank you for your continued dedication and for your commitment to Connecticut's children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elena Trueworthy".

Elena Trueworthy
Acting Commissioner

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I. General Information

A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name and Number.** Early Start CT Local Governance Partner Intermediary: **OEC-25-LGPINT**
2. **RFP Summary.** The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) seeks a partner to act as the Local Governance Partner (LGP) Intermediary. The LGP Intermediary ("Intermediary") will directly contract with and manage an initial group of 50-70 newly established Local Governance Partners (LGPs) under Early Start CT.
3. **RFP Purpose.** OEC is committed to supporting a system of state-local partnerships through LGPs, established as part of Early Start CT, that enable the connection, coordination, and communication between families, programs, partners, local communities, and the state's early childhood system. The Intermediary will serve as the crucial link between the state and the local, managing and supporting LGPs to deliver services in line with OEC's vision for the state's early childhood system.
4. **Commodity Codes.** The services that OEC wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:
 - 91000000: Personal and Domestic Services

B. INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contacts.** OEC has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for this RFP. The Official Contact is the only authorized contact for this procurement and, as such, handle all related communications on behalf of OEC. Applicants, prospective applicants, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other OEC employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the OEC about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Applicants or prospective applicants who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Names:	Paula S. DeMarco
Address:	Office of Early Childhood 450 Columbus Boulevard Hartford, CT 06103
Phone:	(860) 500-4412
E-Mail:	OEC.RFP.Commissioner2@ct.gov

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

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

- Non-profit status, if applicable
 - Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V
 - Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1):
<https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>
3. **RFP Information.** The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:
- Agency's RFP Web Page: <https://www.ctoec.org/rfps/>
 - State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource bid board, filter by "Early Childhood, Office of"): <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

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

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

RFP Released:	Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Optional Pre-Bid Conference:	Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 2:30PM ET
Optional Letter of Intent Due:	Friday, February 28, 2025, 5:00PM ET
Q&A Period:	Tuesday, February 11, 2025 - Friday, March 14, 2025

The OEC will collect and respond to questions weekly. Questions received by each Friday in the Q & A period will receive responses on the schedule below.

Deadlines for Questions	Responses by
Friday – February 14	Wednesday, February 19
Friday – February 21	Tuesday, February 25
Friday – February 28	Tuesday, March 4
Friday – March 7	Tuesday, March 10
Friday – March 14	Tuesday, March 18

Proposals Due:	Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 5:00PM ET
(*) Proposer Selection:	Wednesday, April 16, 2025
(*) Start of Contract:	Tuesday, July 1, 2025

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

Total Funding Available	<p>Up to \$17,200,000.00 is available through this RFP. The estimated minimum allocations of funding available for awards in each path are at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Fiscal Year 2026: \$8,600,000.00; 07/01/2025 - 06/30/2026 State Fiscal Year 2027: \$8,600,000.00; 07/01/2026 - 06/30/2027 <p>88.3% of this funding will be subcontracted to individual LGPs. The Intermediary will receive \$1,000,000 each year and \$7,600,000 will be subcontracted by the Intermediary to LGPs each year.</p>
Number of Contracts	One
Contract Term	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027
Funding Source	State of Connecticut funds

6. **Eligibility.** Eligible applicants for this RFP are as follows:

All RFP applicants must be legally registered with CT's Secretary of State or exempt from such registration per State of CT legislation and provide proof of exemption from registration. Applicants claiming nonprofit status must provide proof of nonprofit status, such as a copy of their Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination letter.

7. **Minimum Qualifications of Applicants.** To qualify for a contract award, an applicant must have the following minimum qualifications:
- Be able to provide sufficient staff at the time of award, including managerial and administrative support, to implement the required operational and evaluation services and resources to meet OEC data/technology and reporting requirements defined in the Scope of Service Description, found in Section II.D.
 - Be in sound fiscal health, as determined by a recent organizational budget. The applicant's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement) and documentation of clean opinions in audited financial statements for the last 3 years (or whatever number of years are available, for newer organizations) must be made available if requested.
 - Adhere to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
 - Be registered with [System of Award Management \(SAM\)](#) by the time of contract execution.
8. **Letter of Intent.** A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not required but encouraged for this RFP. The LOI is non-binding and does not obligate the sender to submit a proposal. The LOI must be submitted to the Official Contact by e-mail by the deadline established in the Procurement Schedule. The LOI must clearly identify the sender, including name, postal address, telephone number, and e-mail address. It is the sender's responsibility to confirm the OEC's receipt of the LOI.
9. **Inquiry Procedures.** All questions regarding this RFP or the OEC's procurement process must be directed, in writing, to the Official Contact (Section I.B.1) before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the

OEC will not answer questions when the source is unknown (e.g., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP, or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, OEC may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. OEC may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and noted as such.

The agency will release the answers to questions on the date(s) established in the Procurement Schedule. The OEC will publish all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the OEC's RFP Web Page. At its discretion, the OEC may distribute any amendments to this RFP to prospective applicants who submitted a Letter of Intent or attended the RFP Conference.

10. **RFP Bidder's Conference.** **The virtual RFP Bidder's Conference will be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 2:30 ET. [Register here](#).** Attendance at the conference is optional, but highly encouraged. The OEC will publish conference material on its website after the conference. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and noted as such. The agency will release an amendment to this RFP, if deemed necessary and publish all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and on the OEC's RFP Web Page.
11. **Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals and all supporting documentation must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: **Wednesday, March 19, 2025, no later than 5:00 p.m. ET.**

Please be aware that delays may occur when emailing submissions with large attachments and plan accordingly. **If the proposal and/or any required supporting documentation are received after the due date and time, the proposal will be ineligible for review.** OEC will send an official letter alerting late applicants of ineligibility.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- One (1) conforming electronic copy of the original proposal. The proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee.

The electronic copy of the proposal must be emailed to the official agency contact for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: **OEC-25-LGPINT Response**. The main body should be submitted as PDF, while the completed budget template should be submitted as a spreadsheet. Required forms and appendices may be scanned and submitted as PDFs at the end of the main proposal document.

Please consolidate the main proposal body and attachments into a single PDF file or as few files as possible. Please be sure that each file submitted with your proposal is appropriately titled with your organization name and an indicator of the content. For example, if you are submitting the main body and attachments as one file, an appropriate file title would be "ORNAME_FullProposal." If you are submitting the

budget, an appropriate file title would be "ORNAME_Budget."

Please ensure the entire email submission is less than 25MB as this reflects OEC's server limitations. Applicants should work to ensure there are not additional IT limitations from the provider side.

II. Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD OVERVIEW

Established in 2013, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is the state agency charged with fostering cross-systems integration, coordination, and collaboration at the state and local level in order to enhance the health and well-being of young children, families, and communities. The OEC brings together leadership, expertise, and a wide range of early childhood and family support services that were formerly housed at five different state agencies. The goal of the OEC is to build an integrated early childhood system that includes high quality services for family support and home visiting services, early intervention services, early care and education programming, and regulation.

OEC provides funding standards, regulations, quality improvement supports, technical assistance, and oversight to ensure that early childhood programs for young children:

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

For more information, visit OEC's website: <https://www.ctoec.org/>.

B. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW:

The Office of Early Childhood is seeking a partner to act as the Local Governance Partner (LGP) Intermediary. This Intermediary will directly contract with and manage the newly established LGPs under Early Start CT.

Background & Problem Statement

Blue Ribbon Panel and Early Start CT

Governor Lamont initiated the Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care by Executive Order in 2023. The Panel was charged with developing a 5-year strategic plan for an equitable, high-quality, and sustainable child care system that ensures every child has a quality educational foundation that will prepare them to grow, learn, and succeed. The culmination of over a year of work, the Blue Ribbon Panel's report incorporates extensive feedback from Blue Ribbon Panel workgroups, national and local experts, panel members, and other stakeholders, including providers, parents, businesses, and advocates.

Connecticut's current state-funded early care and education (ECE) system includes several

different programs that all distribute vital ECE funding for providers but have different funding mechanisms and policies governing them. The Blue Ribbon Panel's report recognized that unnecessary complexity in the child care system leads to inefficiencies and acts as a barrier to improving access for families. A key recommendation in the Blue Ribbon Panel's report included simplifying the state-funded system, elevating family and community voice in system design and implementation, as well as improving the use of data to make the system more responsive to families' changing needs.¹

The Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendation led to the development of Early Start CT, a new consolidated state-funded ECE program that will go into effect July 1, 2025. Early Start CT combines the current School Readiness grants, Child Day Care contracts, and State Head Start supplement grant funding streams. Launching Early Start CT is one step in a broader process of streamlining the early childhood system and increasing collaboration within the system to improve Connecticut's mixed delivery child care system for the children and families it serves. An integral piece of the success of Early Start CT is the institution of Local Governance Partners (LGPs). The LGPs will ensure that the system is reflective of and responsive to each community's independent need and that all necessary voices have input.

State-Local Partnerships - LGPs & the LGP Intermediary

State-local partnerships refer to the connections, coordination, and communication between families, programs, partners, local communities, and the state's early childhood system. LGPs will serve as Connecticut's version of these partnerships, established as part of Early Start CT. Connecticut's LGPs, at least initially, will largely exist at the town/city level, though towns have the flexibility to join to form a regional structure if they prefer.

This RFP seeks a partner to act as the LGP Intermediary. The LGP Intermediary ("Intermediary") will directly contract with and manage an initial group of 50-70 newly established LGP's under Early Start CT. The Intermediary will operate at the statewide level.

At the local level, LGPs are crucial for creating an approach to meet the holistic needs of children and families, inclusive of an effective and equitable mixed delivery child care system in Connecticut. They ensure that the diverse needs of local communities are met, while maintaining alignment with state-level goals and policies. The Intermediary will serve as the crucial link between the state and the local, managing and supporting LGPs to deliver services in line with OEC's vision for the state's early childhood system. The Intermediary will also manage the communication and feedback at the state and local level. By establishing formal feedback loops, LGPs and the Intermediary enable continuous improvement and ensure that policies and programs are informed by the lived experiences of those they serve, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all children in Connecticut².

This will be the first Intermediary OEC is working with as part of the launch of the LGP system under Early Start CT. OEC is committed to identifying an organization to serve as the

¹ Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. (2023). "Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care Report." Source: [Connecticut Office of Early Childhood](#).

² *Ibid.*

Intermediary that is itself committed to the equitable development of Connecticut's unique, innovative, family and community informed state-local partnership system.

Project Goals

In pursuit of OEC's mission and vision for Connecticut's mixed delivery child care system and the objectives outlined in the 2023 Blue Ribbon Panel Child Care Report, OEC seeks a contractor to lead the implementation and direct management of the LGPs statewide. This Intermediary will serve as the contractor and support structure for LGPs to ensure all LGPs are working towards the OEC's overall system goals (see below) in a way that is aligned with the needs and vision of their community.

The Intermediary and LGPs will work together towards these overall system goals:

- **Empower families and amplify parent voice** to better meet the needs of Connecticut children. LGPs will provide parents with the information they need to make informed decisions and establish roles and feedback structures between families, providers, local communities, and the state.
- **Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision** to build lasting partnerships between community stakeholders. To leverage collective actions for greater family and community impact, the LGP system will create structures for collaboration between stakeholders that enable the sharing of knowledge, services, and resources at the local level and statewide.
- **Improve equitable access** to affordable, high-quality care and early childhood services and supports. The LGP system will strengthen understanding of community needs and assets via data collection (qualitative & quantitative) from diverse stakeholders that enables data-driven local decision-making that informs an equitable allocation of state funding by OEC.
- **Promote best practices** to enhance provider's ability to support children's learning and development. These best practices will strengthen outcomes for children across Connecticut and increase provider stability. LGPs, under the leadership of the Intermediary, will convene and connect providers to key resources that support achieving high-quality standards (e.g., NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation) and sound business operations.

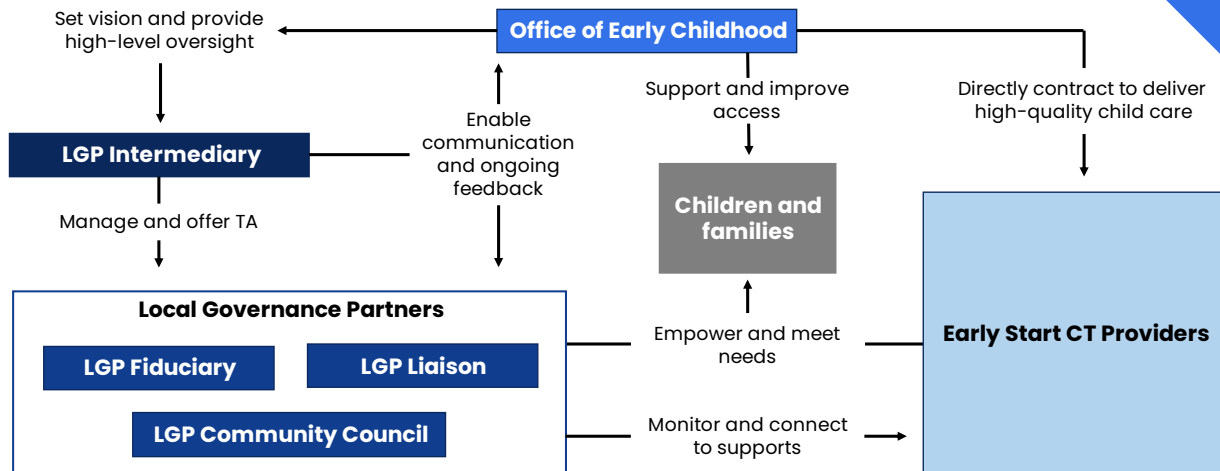
C. VISION FOR SUCCESS

Essential Services Overview

As Connecticut's current state-local partnership system, which includes School Readiness Councils and Local Early Childhood Collaboratives, transitions to the LGP system, OEC believes it is important to acknowledge the parts of the system that work effectively. OEC is committed to continuing to build on these existing strengths. The strengths of the system are reflected in the vision for the Intermediary and LGPs and will be preserved and refined as the system evolves.

The Intermediary and the individual LGPs will form a coordinated approach to state-local partnerships in Connecticut, supporting communities at the local level in accessing and delivering high-quality care and early childhood services. This work is a collaboration between OEC, the Intermediary, and LGPs to support and engage local providers, families, and communities. It consists of the following components:

LGP System Delivery Model



Office of Early Childhood

1

- **Families**, which are central to Early Start CT and are the ultimate beneficiaries of the LGP system. Families in Connecticut are diverse in their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and have unique needs and preferences both within and across communities.
- **Early Start CT Providers**, which are contracted by OEC to deliver high-quality child care for families. Providers deliver services across a range of settings, durations, and times. Together, they make up a piece of Connecticut's mixed delivery child care system.
- **Intermediary**, which is responsible for providing oversight and coordination across this entire system by executing contracts with LGPs, providing onboarding, technical assistance, and training for LGP Community Councils and Liaisons, and facilitating communication and feedback between OEC and LGPs.
- **LGPs**, which are responsible for building and leveraging trusting relationships with both providers and families. LGPs engage directly with providers to assess and identify community-wide needs and bring in resources to match those needs. Each LGP is made up of three distinct parts that each serve a critical role in delivering effective state-local partnerships:
 - **LGP Fiduciary**, which is the entity responsible for signing the contract with the Intermediary and receiving funding to support the liaison and the LGP Community Council activities.
 - **LGP Liaison**, which is an individual(s) who is employed to coordinate and assist the efforts of the LGP Community Council to deliver services and supports, and monitor contract compliance of Early Start CT providers as outlined in Early Start CT legislation ([P.A. 24-78 \(S.B. 14\)](#)).
 - **LGP Community Council**, which is a body made up of early childhood community stakeholders. The LGP Community Council aims to reflect the racial and socioeconomic diversity of the community. Specific membership requirements are outlined in Early Start CT legislation ([linked here](#)). The LGP Community Council is responsible for engaging parents in the community, offering training and technical

assistance opportunities to local early childhood providers in areas such as early care and education and parent engagement, and conducting a data-driven needs assessment to inform a community plan.

Ultimately, the Intermediary will ensure LGPs can provide the key functions described in this section while allowing sufficient flexibility to tailor the delivery of these services to the evolving needs of the system. To do this, the Intermediary will work closely with LGPs and OEC to determine where flexibility is needed, and adjustments can be made to empower LGPs to best serve their communities.

The following table provides additional detail about the vision for each of these components of the Service Delivery Model.

	Intermediary Vision	LGP Vision
LGP System Goals	Ensuring all LGPs are working towards the OEC's overall system goals (see below) in a way that is aligned with the needs and vision of their community	Engaging families, coordinating resources, and supporting providers to deliver high-quality care via <i>local</i> partnerships that have <i>local</i> expertise
Empower families and amplify parent voice to better meet the needs of Connecticut children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate feedback loops between the state and local level Identify and address system-wide areas of need for effective Parent Ambassador / Parent leader engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local family engagement, including Parent Ambassadors Facilitate family-oriented programming for the community Make involvement in LGP Community Council efforts accessible for all families, including membership on the LGP Community Council Act as a resource for providing information and referrals to families regarding the early childhood system Connect families to other OEC initiatives, statewide programs, and community resources
Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision to build lasting partnerships between community stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operationalize OEC's system goals and shared vision Provide direction and guidance to LGPs on standardized statewide outcomes for their work, informed in partnership with OEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene early childhood stakeholders to serve as the LGP Community Council Build relationships with families and providers Develop partnerships to provide a range of wraparound supports for

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicate time and create processes for knowledge sharing among LGPs statewide • Develop protocols to ensure effective coordination and communication • Support LGPs in building relationships with local community 	providers, families, and children in the community
Improve equitable access to affordable, high-quality care and early childhood services and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support LGPs in conducting a data-driven community needs assessment and development of a community plan, and apply learning to local LGP implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess community need formally (i.e., through a community needs assessment developed by OEC) and informally (i.e., through observations) to inform the assignment of child care spaces across a mixed delivery system • Match eligible families to state-funded spaces
Promote best practices to enhance provider's ability to support children's learning and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate standardized expectations of LGPs that allow for local flexibility in practice • Communicate OEC General Policies (GPs) for local implementation • Train LGPs on NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation standards • Identify training needs and offer resources for LGPs to better respond to community needs • Coordinate and host training sessions for statewide audience when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources and guidance related to evidence-based practices to providers receiving Early Start CT funding • Assess community and individual provider need and connect them to relevant OEC initiatives, including Quality Improvement resources • Promote awareness and usage of professional development opportunity among community providers • Co-sponsor professional development events with OEC • Leverage dedicated Quality Enhancement funds to meet community needs

Given that the LGP system is in a period of transition, the Intermediary should be prepared to adapt and prioritize its services to ensure that LGPs are in a position to effectively work towards the system goals listed above. As the system continues to grow and evolve, a goal for the

system will be to engage the broader early childhood community, including non-state-funded providers.

D. SCOPE OF SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The contractor ultimately selected for the Local Governance Partner (LGP) Intermediary role will need to be adaptable, innovative, capable of coordinating with multiple stakeholders, fiscally responsible, and strategically aligned with OEC's vision for success. The Intermediary will need to be willing to continually adjust its programming and process as the LGP system evolves over the course of this two-year contract. **Please note that the contractor selected as the Intermediary would be unable to serve as a community's LGP in this contract cycle. This decision may be revised in future contracts.**

In particular, OEC is interested in potential respondents who can deliver the following core services and budget expectations:

- **Core Services** – As the LGP system continues to develop and evolve, OEC anticipates that the Intermediary will continually adapt its supportive activities to meet the needs of LGPs. The core services that the Intermediary is expected to provide during the two- (2) year contract period – either directly or through subcontractors – are in the table below.

The Intermediary will not be expected to provide all core services immediately upon execution. OEC expects responsibilities will be implemented through a phased approach, building towards a cumulative set of responsibilities to ensure a smooth transition to the LGP system. The contractor selected to act as the Intermediary may subcontract portions of the work listed below, pending OEC's approval.

Detailed descriptions of each of the expected services and timing are also provided in the table below. Please note these responsibilities are additive, Year 2 responsibilities include the continuation of all of Year 1 responsibilities and the additional responsibilities listed under Year 2:

Core Services:

Year 1 of contract period:

- Contract Execution and Oversight of LGPs
- Communication Management
- Onboarding and Training of LGPs

Year 2 of contract period:

- Community Needs Assessment Support
- Strategic Planning and Program Development

DESCRIPTION OF CORE SERVICES			
	Services	Relevant Goals	Activities
Year 1	Contract Execution and Oversight of LGPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute contracts with all LGP fiduciaries effective July 1, 2025 (~50-70 contracts). <i>Please note: OEC will work collaboratively with the Contractor to draft a template contract between the Intermediary and LGP Fiduciary.</i> • Disburse LGP administrative funds to LGP fiduciaries, and develop system with LGPs to assure fiscal accountability • Oversee contract to ensure contract compliance, including any required data reporting
Year 1	Communication Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower families and amplify parent voice • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregate and triage questions, raising common themes for OEC and effectively communicating responses to LGPs • Develop a formal communication system, with intentional linkages up, down, and across the LGP system to enable ongoing feedback • Develop common messaging and communication materials to be used by all LGPs within their communities • Gather feedback from families through participation in LGPs
Year 1	Onboarding and Training of LGPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower families and amplify parent voice • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision • Promote best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop onboarding training and materials to kick off the LGP work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicating OEC's set of shared expectations for LGPs ○ Facilitating LGPs in developing joint vision and mission statements, joint outcomes, and priorities that realize OEC's vision • Convene LGPs to share effective practices and peer-to-peer learning from across the state

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tailored high-quality technical assistance to LGPs on topics including, but not limited to: NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation, OEC general policies, Early Start CT funding requirements • Share relevant materials and guides to support LGPs in successfully delivering on the system vision, as outlined by OEC (including best practices for family engagement, support for OEC parent programming like Parent Ambassadors, professional development opportunities, etc.) • Draft materials to support the marketing and recruitment for LGP Community Council membership
Year 2	Community Needs Assessment Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision • Improve equitable access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share timeline and expectations for community needs assessment process with LGPs • Offer LGPs training and support opportunities throughout the development of the community needs assessment and community plan process • Review and follow up, as necessary, with LGPs to ensure sufficient completion of the community needs assessment and plan
Year 2	Strategic Planning and Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower families and amplify parent voice • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision • Improve equitable access • Promote best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a landscape analysis of the current system and uplift strengths and local innovations in the system • Identify opportunities for system improvement in line with OEC's long-term vision for Connecticut's early childhood system • Propose LGP system improvements, adjustment to roles/responsibilities, statewide outcomes, etc.

Budget Expectations

- **Program Funding Sources:** This contract will be funded through state Early Start CT funds.
- **Total Available Funding & Award Period:** \$1,000,000 per year for the Intermediary and \$7,600,000 per year subcontracted to the LGP fiduciaries. The contract period is July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027. Total contract amount for two years is \$17,200,000.
- **Cost Standards:** Respondents' budget and planned expenditures for this RFP must comply with the cost standards published by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. The cost standards are available online at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/POSCostStandards101816pdf.pdf?la=en>

In order to comply with State requirements, awarded providers must maintain separate accounting/cost centers for State funding using generally accepted accounting practices. The OEC will reach out to the selected contractor about allowable expenditures.

In addition to required compliance with the published cost standards, respondents are advised that a responsive budget must limit annual administrative costs to 10% of the annual funding allotted for the Intermediary budget (\$1,000,000.00). No indirect costs should be charged by the Intermediary for the administration of the subcontracted funds. State funding, by activity, will be determined at point of contracting for final determination of administrative cap.

Per OPM Cost Allocation guidelines, unused/unexpended State funding at the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) must be returned to the State and cannot be carried forward to the following SFY.

E. Contract Management/Data Reporting

As part of the State's commitment to becoming more outcomes oriented, OEC seeks to actively collaborate with contractors to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works.

OEC will work with the awarded applicants to set expectations for what contract management will look like. At minimum, this will include:

- Frequent, regular meetings between OEC and the LGP Intermediary focused on project planning; assessing strategy and progress towards system goals; and
- Timely submission of progress updates and fiscal reports; and
- Open lines of communication to proactively address challenges and course correct.

As the data needed to monitor the Intermediary and LGPs expands, the awarded contractor may be required to enter and adhere to data sharing and reporting agreements with the OEC. Should they occur, the awarded contractor will be required to notify the OEC of any data breaches within 24 hours.

F. Performance Measures

The performance measures will be analyzed regularly during the lifetime of all contracts following this RFP. The awarded applicant will be responsible for reporting data as required by OEC on the performance metrics indicated below.

The tables below highlight desired outcomes and performance the OEC will examine during their contract. The tables below do not represent an exhaustive list; rather, these metrics are indicators of how the OEC will approach analyzing its desired outcomes. The OEC looks forward to working with awarded LGPs and the Intermediary to collaboratively refine and define additional important performance metrics.

Performance Measures

	Services	Relevant Goals	Potential Metrics	Potential Data Sources
Year 1	Contract Execution and Oversight of LGPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of on-time payments to LGPs % of on-time data reports submitted to OEC # of contract violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermediary data reporting
Year 1	Communication Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower families and amplify parent voice Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of statewide convenings # of family touchpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGP surveys
Year 1	Onboarding and Training of LGPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower families and amplify parent voice Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision Promote best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of LGPs reached by trainings LGP satisfaction rating of trainings Usage rates of developed materials (including standardized communication, training, and monitoring tools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service offerings and inventory LGP surveys
Year 2	Community Needs Assessment Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen system collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of trainings offered LGP Satisfaction rating of trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service offerings and inventory

		and a shared vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve equitable access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of questions escalated to OEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGP surveys
Year 2	Strategic Planning and Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower families and amplify parent voice • Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision • Improve equitable access • Promote best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of LGP system implementation adjustments based in feedback from LGPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGP surveys

III. Proposal Submission Overview

A. SUBMISSION FORMAT

1. **Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. The Cover Sheet should include the following:
 - RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name of Applicant Organization
 - Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip
 - Contact Person
 - Contact Person Title
 - Contact Phone Number
 - Contact E-Mail Address
 - Authorized Official Title
 - Signature
2. **Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV – Proposal Outline. Proposals that fail to follow the required outline may be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
3. **Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.
4. **Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary, not exceeding one page of the main proposal and proposed budget.

5. **Proposal Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in the RFP are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.
6. **Style Requirements.** Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:
 - Paper Size: 8 ½ x 11 (Letter)
 - Page Limit: Maximum **25** pages for the main body of the proposal (the cover letter, executive summary, budget, and required attachments do not count towards this page limit)
 - Font Size: 12
 - Font Type: Times New Roman
 - Margins: Normal (1 inch)
 - Line Spacing: 1 ½
7. **Pagination.** The applicant's name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, including the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.
8. **Declaration of Confidential Information.** Applicants are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting from them. If an applicant deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the applicant must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. In Subsection F of the proposal submission, the applicant must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is in the proposal.

EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a. For each subsection so referenced, the applicant must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the applicant that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).
9. **Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement.** Applicants must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the applicant and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. A conflict of interest is not evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if an applicant tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The OEC will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the applicant over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, an applicant must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of applicant] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

B. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

1. **Evaluation Process.** The OEC intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful applicants, and awarding contracts, the OEC will conform with its written procedures for POS and PSA procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85). Final funding allocation decisions will be determined during contract negotiation.
2. **Evaluation Committee.** The OEC will designate an Evaluation Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The Evaluation Committee will be composed of OEC staff or other designees as deemed appropriate. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Evaluation Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions may be rejected after review by the Evaluation Committee Chairs. The Evaluation Committee shall evaluate all proposals that meet the Minimum Submission Requirements by score and rank ordered and make recommendations for awards. Attempts by any applicant (or representative of any applicant) to contact or influence any member of the Evaluation Committee may result in disqualification of the applicant.
3. **Minimum Submission Requirements.** To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (2) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (3) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements may be disqualified upon review of the Evaluation Committee Chairs. The OEC will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
4. **Evaluation Criteria and Weights.** Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards the Evaluation Committee will use to evaluate the proposals' technical merits. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The weights are disclosed below.

Evaluation Criterion Title	What Would a Top Score Look Like?
Organizational Strengths (20%)	<p>The ideal respondent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an organizational mission that aligns with the Intermediary's proposed function within Connecticut's state-local partnership infrastructure. • Have a clear organizational structure and history that illustrates its capacity to manage and deliver innovative and complex programs, and a track record in the early childhood field. • Demonstrate experience managing state contracts and working collaboratively with public sector partners. • Have knowledge of and experience with early childhood mixed delivery systems, the early childhood workforce, and the early childhood regulatory environment. • Have familiarity with early childhood state-local partnership systems (e.g., In Connecticut - School Readiness Councils, Local

	<p>Early Childhood Collaboratives, Regional Education Service Centers, etc.) and state and local early childhood funding streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess knowledge of evidence-based practices for supporting the learning and development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
<p>Core Services (40%)</p>	<p>The ideal respondent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess and have experience using sophisticated financial control systems to successfully manage complex fiscal procedures and subcontracting with multiple entities simultaneously. • Have prior experience providing regular financial and contract reporting to an external partner. • Demonstrate prior experience supporting capacity building initiatives for other organizations and the ability to identify onboarding and training needs of multiple subcontractors and leverage its capacity/infrastructure to provide onboarding and training. • Demonstrate experience and an ability to engage and manage multiple stakeholders utilizing the three components of productive collaboration: a group process that brings out the best in participating network organizations; builds trusting and respectful relationships among participants; and produces shared and measurable mission-critical performance and results. • Foster productive collaboration and build partnerships with LGPs and other early childhood stakeholders.
<p>IT, Data, and Performance Management (20%)</p>	<p>The ideal respondent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate experience developing and measuring key metrics, collecting data from multiple partner organizations, and utilizing data to analyze performance outcomes. • Have the IT infrastructure and enhanced data reporting capacity in place to manage performance and program evaluation data. • Secure all data pursuant to all state and federal data statutes, regulations, and policies.
<p>Financial Profile and Administration (10%)</p>	<p>The ideal respondent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate strong fiscal health as determined through clean opinions in the last 3 years of audited financial statements (or whatever number of years are available, for newer organizations); and a recent organizational budget; and the respondent's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement). • Responsibly and proactively manage its financial systems with accuracy and clearly defined internal controls. • Have experience managing complex financial processes, reporting requirements, and multiple funding streams. • Utilize Generally Accepted Accounting Principles with financial systems.
<p>Budget & Staffing Plan (10%)</p>	<p>The operation of an Intermediary for the LGP system is an ambitious endeavor with many dynamic, moving parts. As such, the respondent's staffing structure and allocation of staff time should reflect a commitment to properly resourcing the Intermediary's goals</p>

	<p>and activities through dedicated personnel who individually or collectively possess early childhood experience.</p> <p>The ideal respondent will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a minimum of one full-time staff member responsible for operationalizing and overseeing the Intermediary, with one (1) additional FTE to help coordinate resources and implement programming. • Provide one (1) FTE, who will be in-person, in Connecticut for at a minimum forty (40) hours monthly to support in-person visits and convenings. • Detail a reasonable, cost-effective use of funds, with the total monetary “ask” within or under budget that does not include funding that is passed through to the LGPs. • Provide strategic leadership in the early childhood field utilizing their actively engaged governing board, chief executive, and senior staff. • Actively work towards, a diverse workforce, with multicultural and multilingual capabilities that will allow the Intermediary to meaningfully engage with the LGPs supporting Connecticut’s diverse early childhood mixed delivery system.
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Note: As part of its evaluation of Organizational Structure, the Evaluation Committee will consider the proposer’s demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

- 5. Proposer Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Evaluation Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the OEC Commissioner. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the OEC Commissioner. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the OEC. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Pursuant to Governor M. Jodi Rell’s Executive Order No. 3, any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The OEC reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the OEC Commissioner considers there are not adequate respondents.
- 6. Debriefing.** Within ten (10) calendar days of receiving notification from the OEC, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered “day one” of the ten (10) calendar days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contacts and request a meeting with the OEC to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The OEC will schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) business days of the request. The OEC will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.

- 7. Appeal Process.** Pursuant to General Statutes § 4e-36 (a), any bidder or proposer on a state contract may contest the solicitation or award of a contract to a subcommittee of the State Contracting Standards Board. Such contest shall be submitted, in writing, not later than fourteen calendar days after such bidder or proposer knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to such contest and shall be limited to the procedural elements of the solicitation or award process, or claims of an unauthorized or unwarranted, noncompetitive selection process.
- 8. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the OEC's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on State Contracting Portal and the OEC website.

IV. Required Proposal Submission Outline

- A. Cover Sheet**
 - B. Table of Contents**
 - C. Executive Summary**
 - D. Main Proposal**
 - E. Proposal Attachments** (clearly referenced to summary and main proposal where applicable)
 - F. Declaration of Confidential Information**
 - G. Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement**
 - H. Statement of Assurance**
-

A. Cover Sheet

The applicant must include a Cover Sheet capturing the following information:

- RFP Name or Number
- Legal Name
- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
- Street Address
- Town/City/State/Zip
- Contact Person
- Title
- Phone Number
- E-Mail Address
- Authorized Official Title
- Signature

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

B. Table of Contents

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

C. Executive Summary

The page limitation for this section is one (1) page briefly describing how the applicant meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the Proposal Overview and a brief overview of why the applicant should be selected for the activities highlighted in the scope of services.

D. Main Proposal Submission Questions and Prompts

*****Please note the maximum total page length for the main proposal submission is 25 pages.** All attachments should be referred to in Section D and placed in Section E of your proposal. Please provide a clear and concise narrative which addresses the following:

Organizational Strengths (20%)

Prompt 1: Mission & Strategic Alignment: Provide 1) your organization's mission statement; 2) the strategic rationale for your organization to step into the Intermediary role; 3) an explanation of the relevance of your organization's programmatic and operational activities to the proposed Intermediary role in the Early Start system.

Prompt 2: Track Record of Success: Provide a brief organizational history and description of core programs, highlighting innovative programs and engagement with the early childhood programs. Detail prior experience managing state contracts. If there is no prior experience, describe a plan for how the applicant will take on the new management/reporting responsibilities.

Prompt 3: Early Childhood Expertise: Describe your organization's experience and expertise in the early childhood field, highlighting knowledge of mixed delivery early childhood systems and state-local partnership systems in particular.

Core Services (40%)

Prompt 1: Fiscal & Contract Management: Describe your current fiscal control system and your organization's experience with and capacity to manage complex fiscal arrangements with multiple subcontractors. As part of the required attachments, please provide your payment procedures for contractors. What competencies does your organization possess that have made (sub)contract management and funding disbursement successful?

Prompt 2: Organizational Development: Share an example of a current or prior project where your organization supported capacity building for another organization (or cohort of organizations). What was the goal of the project? How did you identify the coaching and technical assistance needs of the recipient organization? What onboarding and training did you provide and what external resources did you draw on?

Prompt 3: Productive Collaboration: Describe how your organization will foster the three components of productive collaboration (a group process that brings out the best in

participants; building trusting and respectful relationships; and moving participants towards measurable performance and results) across 50-60 stakeholders. In your response, be specific on how each of the three components are established and how communication will play a part throughout the process. In addition, please reference past experience where relevant.

IT, Data, and Performance Management (20%)

Prompt 1: Performance Management: Describe your experience developing and measuring metrics and using outcome- oriented, innovative approaches, to achieve performance measures on a recent project. Describe the process your organization would take to develop a performance management framework to assess system progress in achieving OEC's desire outcomes.

Prompt 2: IT Infrastructure: Describe your current IT infrastructure and data reporting capacity. Share an example of how your data reporting capacity was used for a recent evaluation.

Prompt 3: Data Systems, Security, Privacy, and Confidentiality: As part of the required attachments share a description of your computer system and software. Describe your data security procedures to ensure data collected is kept secure, confidential and complies with all state, federal data share laws, regulations, and policies.

Prompt 4: Data Privacy Policy: As part of the required attachments, share your organization's data privacy policy if one is available. If one is not yet available, describe the process you will take to formalizing data security and privacy into organizational policy.

Financial Profile (10%)

Prompt 1: Fiscal Health: As part of the required attachments, provide 3 years of audited financial statements, your most recent organizational budget, and your most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement). For applicants who have been incorporated for less than 3 years, include audited financial statements for whatever years you have available.

Prompt 2: Financial Management: Describe the financial management and internal accounting procedures that will be used to ensure proper financial management, including the fiscal controls designed for accountability. Any respondent to this RFP must agree to maintain its financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (as defined by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants).

Prompt 3: Financial Reporting: Describe the processes your organization has taken to manage and analyze financial reports – as both a producer/generator of financial reports, and as a consumer/recipient of financial reports, as well as your organization's ability to track and report on multiple funding streams.

Budget & Staffing Plan (10%)

Prompt 1: Proposed Budget & Budget Narrative: As part of the required attachments, submit a detailed budget using the OEC's standard budget template. The budget should reflect how your funding request will be utilized and include a narrative

description of the spending plan. Respondents are advised that a responsive budget must limit annual administrative costs to 10% of the total budget. The OEC will work closely with the selected contractor on a regular basis to analyze funding and ensure that both the Intermediary and the LGPs are sufficiently resourced and functioning efficiently, given the available funding.

Prompt 2: Governance & Leadership: As part of the required attachments, provide a list of your organization's board of directors (and advisory councils, if appropriate) and include a brief summary of their qualifications. Indicate which members have experience in the early childhood space. Describe the organization's Board meeting cadence and attendance (%) over the past two years.

Prompt 3: Staffing Plan / Dedicated Personnel: As part of the required attachments, supply a staffing plan that includes the following:

- A count of your organization's total employees;
- A chart indicating where (within which business or program unit) the Intermediary staff will be located organizationally; Identify which staff will be responsible for meeting the in-person, in-state requirement of a minimum of 40 hours per month.
- A detailed explanation of the supervisory structure to be used to oversee the Intermediary's activities, including the FTE staffing to be devoted to the Intermediary;
- A detailed explanation of how your organization continually works towards diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of your workforce.

Prompt 4: Staff Qualifications: Provide a brief summary of the qualifications and tenure of each key staff member who will be assigned to resource the Intermediary's activities. In the required attachments, also include resumes of key staff. If you plan to hire additional staff to fulfill staffing requirements for this project, include draft job descriptions for anticipated hires and hiring timelines. (Please compile all resumes and job descriptions into one document, as opposed to sending separate files for each resume or description.)

E. PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS

Proposal Attachments other than the ones identified below are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required attachments must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.

- Proposal Budget (Found in the Budget Template)
- Most Recent Organizational Budget
- Most Recent Statement of Financial Activities (Profit and Loss Statement)
- Copy of your data security and privacy policies, if available (Indicate "in progress" or "see main proposal" if your organization does not currently have one in place).
- Audited Financial Statements for the last 3 years (or whatever number of years are available for newer organizations).
- Proof nonprofit status (i.e., IRS Determination Letter), if applicable. Indicate "Nonprofit status not applicable" in your attachments section if this does not apply.

- Staffing Plan as outlined on page 26-27 of Prompt 3 located in **Budget and Staffing Plan**
- Payment Procedures
- Description of computer system and software

F. DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

If an applicant deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the applicant must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. The applicant must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is in the proposal.

EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a. For each subsection so referenced, the applicant must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the applicant that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

G. CONFLICT OF INTEREST – DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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

H. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

Sign and return Attachment B, Statement of Assurances, and place after Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement in the RFP Application.

V. Mandatory Provisions

A. PSA STANDARD CONTRACTS, PARTS I AND II

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the applicant implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State’s “standard contract” for PSA: Part I of the standard contract is maintained by the OEC and will include the scope of services, contract performance, quality assurance, reports, terms of payment, budget, and other program-specific provisions of any resulting PSA contract. A sample of Part I is available from the OEC’s Official Contact upon request. Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the POS contract. Part II is available on OPM’s website at: <https://portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-pos/standards/pos-standard-contract-part-ii>

Note: Included in Part II of the standard contract is the State Elections Enforcement Commission’s notice (pursuant to C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2)) advising executive branch State contractors and prospective State contractors of the ban on campaign contributions and

solicitations. If an applicant is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the OEC and the resulting contract has an anticipated value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts has an anticipated value of \$100,000 or more, the applicant must inform the applicant's principals of the contents of the SEEC notice. Part I of the standard contract may be amended by means of a written instrument signed by the OEC, the selected applicant (contractor), and, if required, the Attorney General's Office. Part II of the standard contract may be amended only in consultation with, and with the approval of, the Office of Policy and Management and the Attorney General's Office.

B. ASSURANCES

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

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

C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

- 1. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.
- 2. Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor the OEC shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by an applicant in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
- 3. Exclusion of Taxes.** The OEC is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Applicants are liable for any other applicable taxes.
- 4. Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
- 5. Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the OEC may request and authorize applicants to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the OEC, and at the applicant's expense.
- 6. Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by the OEC. The OEC may ask an applicant to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations, or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by OEC. At its sole discretion, the OEC may limit the number of applicants invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per applicant.
- 7. Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by the OEC, an applicant must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The OEC may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of an applicant to evaluate further the applicant's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the OEC may also check or contact any reference provided by the applicant.
- 8. RFP Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the OEC or confer any rights on any applicant unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the applicant and the OEC and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements, alleged, or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the applicant or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful applicant is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the OEC and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

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

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

E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

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

1. **Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act

(FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Applicants are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the applicant indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The applicant has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While an applicant may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.

2. **Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.

3. **Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81. Consulting Agreements Representation, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this Contract, except for the agreements listed below. "Consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information, or (C) any other similar activity related to such contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.

4. **Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of

\$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf

- 5. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252.** Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:
- (1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;
 - (2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and
 - (3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person. Any bidder or applicant that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked applicant or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.
- 6. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a).** Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract.
- 7. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and 4a-60a.** If a bidder is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the applicant must provide the State

agency with written representation in the resulting contract that certifies the bidder complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. This nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The authorized signatory of the contract shall demonstrate his or her understanding of this obligation by either (A) initialing the nondiscrimination affirmation provision in the body of the resulting contract, or (B) providing an affirmative response in the required online bid or response to a proposal question, if applicable, which asks if the contractor understands its obligations. If a bidder or vendor refuses to agree to this representation, such bidder or vendor shall be rejected, and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

- 8. Access to Data for State Auditors.** The Contractor shall provide to OPM access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to OPM in a format prescribed by OPM [or the Client Agency] and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.
- 9. Adherence to the federal regulations related to apprenticeship,** found in Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 29 and 30.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS

ECE	Early Care and Education
GP	General Policy
LGP	Local Governance Partner
LOI	Letter of Intent
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OEC	Office of Early Childhood
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
RFP	Request for Proposals

ATTACHMENT B: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES TEMPLATE

Please use the following to create your statement of assurance, sign and attach this required document to your submission for the RFP:

Office of Early Childhood

The undersigned Applicant affirms and declares that:

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

- e. Neither the Applicant or any official of the organization nor any subcontractor to the Applicant or any official of the subcontractor's organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.

Legal Name of Organization:

Authorized Signatory

Date

ATTACHMENT C: PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

To assist applicants in managing proposal planning and document collation processes, this document summarizes key dates and proposal requirements for this RFP. Please note that this document does not supersede what is stated in the RFP. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Overview, Required Proposal Submission Outline, and Mandatory Provisions (Sections II, IV, and V of this RFP) for more comprehensive details. Each applicant is responsible for ensuring that all required documents, forms, and attachments are submitted promptly.

Procurement Timetable		
The OEC reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1	Optional Pre-Bid Conference	February 19, 2025; 2:30pm ET
2	Optional Letter of Intent (LOI)	February 21, 2025; 5:00pm ET
3	Deadline for Questions	March 14, 2025; 5:00pm ET
4	Proposals Due	March 19, 2025; 5:00pm ET

Contract Awards: 1

Registration Link for Pre-bid Conference:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rr7VQFSXQgKGKN0GlzGTqw#/registration

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

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

Proposal Content Checklist

- ☐ Cover Sheet including required information:
- RFP Name or Number
 - Legal Name
 - Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
 - Street Address
 - Town/City/State/Zip
 - Contact Person
 - Title
 - Phone Number
 - E-Mail Address

- Authorized Official Title
- Signature
- ☐ Table of Contents
- ☐ Executive Summary: high-level summary of proposal and cost, one-page maximum
- ☐ Main Proposal Body (not to exceed **25** pages)
- ☐ Required Attachments
 - Proposal Budget (Found in the Budget Template)
 - Most Recent Organizational Budget
 - Most Recent Statement of Financial Activities (Profit and Loss Statement)
 - Copy of your data security and privacy policies, if available (Indicate "in progress" or "see main proposal" if your organization does not currently have one in place).
 - Audited Financial Statements for the last 3 years (or whatever number of years are available for newer organizations).
 - Proof nonprofit status (i.e., IRS Determination Letter), if applicable. Indicate "Nonprofit status not applicable" in your attachments section if this does not apply.
 - Staffing Plan as outlined on page 26-27 of Prompt 3 located in **Budget and Staffing Plan**
 - Payment procedures
 - Description of computer system and software
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement
- ☐ Statement of Assurances

Formatting Checklist

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