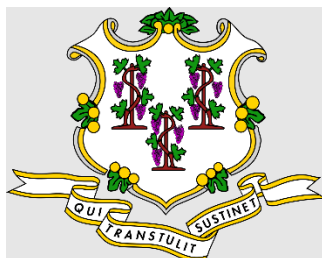


## STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE



**Request for Proposals (RFP)**  
**Early Care and Education**  
**Provider Business Support**

**RFP Name: OEC-24-ECE PBS**

**Issued by:**  
**Office of Early Childhood**  
**Thursday– January 18, 2024**

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 Contacts:

**Names:** Paula DeMarco  
**Address:** Office of Early Childhood  
450 Columbus Boulevard  
Hartford, CT 06103  
**Phone:** (860) 500 – 4412  
**E-Mail:** [oec.rfp.eceqi@ct.gov](mailto:oec.rfp.eceqi@ct.gov)

The RFP is also available on the OEC's website at: <https://www.ctoec.org/rfps/>  
Respondents may register for the optional pre-bid conference at:  
[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YT5a40HPSZO84hb79RIt-g](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YT5a40HPSZO84hb79RIt-g).

**RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN**  
**Thursday–February 29, 2024, 5:00 PM ET**

The Office of Early Childhood 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).



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



January 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The early childhood community continues to face challenges made so apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. The precariousness of the financial model on which child care businesses operate is one of the most complex problems that the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), and the provider community face. The OEC is putting forward this RFP in support of child care business operations and the financial stability of programs throughout Connecticut to address this challenge.

The OEC's theory of change rests on the premise that early care and education providers can thrive when provided the appropriate resources to address their needs. We know that helping providers systematize their financial operations and build their business accumen, while at the same time providing them with financial and systemic resources, improves the stability of business operations. Stable child care operations contribute to the healthy growth and development of young children, and enable their families to work.

The contractor selected through this RFP will work closely with the OEC to design and deliver a system of business supports including tiered supports, grants and incentives that advance a continuous quality improvement business mindset. This system requires intentional design, collaboration, and an understanding of licensed early care and education providers, funding, start up and ongoing operational needs, and capacity gaps across the state. Ultimately, the business supports system created through this RFP will maintain and add child care capacity, and ensure that business related resources and supports are equitably available to our provider community.

**The OEC will be hosting a pre-bid conference on Monday, January 29 at 10:00 am ET** to review our vision for these important business supports and receive questions from prospective respondents. While this conference is not mandatory, we highly encourage your attendance.

Please register for the conference at:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YT5a40HPSZO84hb79Rlt-g](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YT5a40HPSZO84hb79Rlt-g).

**Proposals are due Thursday, February 29, 2024 by 5:00 pm ET.**

We are committed to advancing the financial infrastructure on which each early care and education provider operates, we look forward to working with a strategically aligned partner who shares our commitment to equity, dismantling exclusionary structures, and building on the strengths of our early care community. We look forward to reading through the proposals, and we hope that many of you will respond to this call to action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Bye".

Commissioner Beth Bye

# Table of Contents

<b>I. GENERAL INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
A. Introduction.....	4
B. Instructions, including Procurement Schedule.....	4
<b>II. PURPOSE OF RFP AND SCOPE OF WORK .....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. Office of Early Childhood Overview.....	7
B. Proposal Overview: ECE Provider Business Support	
i. Background and Problem Statement	
ii. Qualifications and Scope of Service	
C. OEC Responsibilities .....	13
D. Contract Management and Data Reporting.....	13
E. Performance Measures.....	13
<b>III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>15</b>
A. .. Submission Format.....	15
B. .. Evaluation of Proposals.....	16
<b>IV. REQUIRED PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OUTLINE .....</b>	<b>19</b>
A. Cover Sheet .....	19
B. Table of Contents .....	19
C. Executive Summary.....	19
D. Main Proposal Submission Questions & Prompts.....	19
E. Attachments.....	22
F. Declaration of Confidential Information.....	22
G. Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement .....	22
H. Statement of Assurances.....	22
<b>V. MANDATORY PROVISIONS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
A. PSA Standard Contracts, Parts I and II.....	23
B. Assurances.....	23
C. Terms and Conditions .....	24
D. Rights Reserved to the State.....	25
E. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance.....	26
<b>VI. APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>29</b>
A. Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Definitions .....	29
B. Statement iof Assurances .....	30
C. Proposal Checklist. ....	31

## I. General Information

### A. INTRODUCTION

- 1. RFP Name and Number.** Early Care & Education Provider Business Support: OEC-24-ECE PBS
- 2. RFP Summary and Purpose.** This contract seeks one vendor to provide a dedicated statewide business support team with expertise in all facets of healthy business practices, with the goal of retaining and expanding capacity of child care slots in sustainable licensed early child care and education programs through the following key areas: business related training; individualized in-depth technical assistance; distribution and tracking of grants and incentives; and partnering with OEC for review and coordination of business supports across OEC initiatives.
- 3. Commodity Codes.** The services that OEC wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:  
**86000000: Education and Training Services**

### B. INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Official Contacts.** The OEC has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of the OEC. Proposers, prospective proposers, 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. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

**Name:** Paula DeMarco  
**Address:** Office of Early Childhood, 450 Columbus Street – Suite 301, Hartford, CT 06103  
**Phone:** (860) 500 4412  
**E-Mail:** [oec.rfp.eceqi@ct.gov](mailto:oec.rfp.eceqi@ct.gov)

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

- 2. Registering with State Contracting Portal.** Respondents must register with the State of CT contracting portal at <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration> if not already registered. Respondents shall submit the following information pertaining to this application to this portal (on their supplier profile), which will be checked by the 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/-/media/OPM/Fin-General/OPM-Form1-Rev-07262021-CampaignContributionCertification.pdf>
- 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 proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement check the Bid Board for any solicitation changes. Interested proposers may receive additional e-mails from CTSource announcing addendums that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

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

**RFP Released:** **Thursday, January 18, 2024**  
**Optional Bidders Conference:** **Monday, January 29, 2024**  
**Recommended Letter of Intent Due:** **Monday, February 5, 2024**  
**Q&A Period:** **Thursday, January 18, 2024, to**  
**Monday, February 19, 2024**

**The OEC will collect and respond to questions weekly.**

<b>Deadlines for Questions</b>	<b>Responses by</b>
Monday - January 29	Friday - February 2
Monday - February 5	Friday - February 9
Monday - February 12	Friday - February 16
Monday - February 19	Friday - February 23

Proposals Due: Thursday - February 29, 2024  
 (\*) Proposer Selection: Friday - March 22, 2024  
 (\*) Start of Contract: Monday - July 1, 2024

- 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:

<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>Up to \$6.0 million dollars</b> Fiscal Year 2025: \$2,000,000.00; 07-01-2024 to 06-30-2025 Fiscal Year 2026: \$2,000,000.00; 07-01-2025 to 06-30-2026 Fiscal Year 2027: \$2,000,000.00; 07-01-2026 to 06-30-2027
<b>Number of Awards</b>	One
<b>Contract Term</b>	36 months; 3 years
<b>Funding Source</b>	This contract will be federally funded through the Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) – SID 22975.

- 6. Eligibility.** Public or private organizations, for-profits or nonprofits legally registered with CT's Secretary of State are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP. Respondents claiming nonprofit status must provide proof of nonprofit status, such as a copy of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination letter.
- 7. Minimum Qualifications of Proposers.** To qualify for a contract award, a proposer must have the following minimum qualifications:
- Sufficient staff at the time of award, including managerial and administrative support to implement the required operational, research, and evaluation services, including the ability to meet OEC data/technology and report requirements defined in the scope of services description section.
  - Fiscally sound, as determined by documentation of clean opinions in audited financial statements for the last 3 years (or whatever number of years are available, for newer organizations); a recent organizational budget; and the respondent's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement).
  - Adherence to generally accepted accounting principles.
  - Current registration in [System of Award Management \(SAM\)](#) by the time of contract execution.
- 8. Letter of Intent.** A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not **required** but strongly encouraged. 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 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 (i.e., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the OEC may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. The 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 duly noted as such.

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

**10. RFP Conference.** **A virtual RFP Bidder's Conference will be held on Monday, January 29 at 10 am ET.** Attendance at the conference is optional, but highly encouraged. The OEC will publish conference material on its website following the conclusion of the conference. Any oral answers given at the conference by the OEC's representatives are tentative and not binding on the OEC. All questions submitted will be answered in a written amendment to this RFP, which will serve as the OEC's official response to questions asked at 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 duly noted as such. The agency will release the amendment on the date established in the Procurement Schedule. The OEC will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and the OEC's RFP Web Page at: <https://www.ctoec.org/rfps/>.

**11. Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: **Thursday, February 29, at 5:00 pm ET.**

Please be aware that delays may occur when emailing submissions with large attachments and plan accordingly. **Proposals received after the due date and time will be ineligible for review.** The OEC will send an official letter alerting late respondents of ineligibility.

**An acceptable submission must include the following:**

- A conforming electronic copy of the proposal. The proposal must be complete, include all attachments, the budget template, 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-24-ECE PBS RFP Response**. The main body should be submitted in **PDF** format, while the **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 "**ORGNAME\_FullProposal**". When submitting the budget as a separate file, an appropriate file title would be "**ORGNAME\_Budget**".

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

## II. Purpose of RFP and Scope of Work

### 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 Office is to build an integrated early childhood system that includes high quality services for family support and home visiting services, early intervention services, and early child care and education programming.

The OEC provides funding standards, regulations, quality improvement supports, technical assistance, and oversight to ensure that early child care and education 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 health development and success; and
- Provide equitable access for all.

The OEC is organized into five programming divisions: Early Child Care and Education, Quality Improvement, Child Care and Youth Camp Licensing, Birth to Three, and Family Support. These programming divisions are supported by the Operations and Legal divisions, all under the leadership of the Commissioner's Office. The OEC is the State's lead agency for child care under the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

The work of this RFP is based in the Quality Improvement (QI) division, though it is expected to connect across the agency. The QI division also supports the following interrelated work: OEC's quality improvement system [Elevate, Accreditation Quality Improvement Support \(AQIS\)](#), [Staffed Family Child Care Network \(SFCCN\)](#), [Program Leadership Initiative \(PLI\)](#), the [Early Childhood Professional Registry](#).

### B. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW: ECE PROVIDER BUSINESS SUPPORT

The OEC seeks a respondent to provide statewide training and technical assistance to Connecticut's early care and education (ECE) businesses in order to maintain and expand child care slots in financially viable and sustainable child care businesses, and to support OEC to review, sequence and provide guidance both internally and with external partners.

Early child care and education businesses to receive support shall include:

- OEC licensed family child care homes (DCFH),
- OEC licensed group homes (DCGH),
- OEC licensed child care centers (DCCC),
- prospective providers seeking licensure in the above categories,
- other child care businesses only at the direction of the OEC.

#### 1. Background and Problem Statement

On March 17, 2023, Governor Ned Lamont signed [Executive Order No. 23-1](#) (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-23-1.pdf>) establishing a Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care. The language identifies several key issues pertinent to this RFP:

1. A gap of 20,000-30,000 child care slots, especially for infants and toddlers.
2. An essential workforce to our state's economy where we are currently experiencing a lack of early child care and education businesses and employees to staff businesses.
3. A statement that the largest struggles are presented to lower economic families and families of color.

Data behind the Executive Order identifies a business trend needing reversal. According to 211 Child Care's FY 2022 Child Care Closure Report:

- 64 licensed centers and group homes closed in FY22, while only 42 opened. Of the 28 that reported closure data, the top reason cited "Business Not Profitable" was identified by 35% of responding programs. The comparison to FY21 data is similar: 83 closed and 68 opened. Connecticut repeats its net loss data year after year.
- A similar net loss story emerges in licensed family child care homes (DCFH) in FY22 as 233 programs closed, while only 154 opened. Of the 79 programs that reported closure data, 29% reported retiring as the main reason, while COVID 19 permanent closures (24%) and career change (17%) were the next highest reported.
  - Of note: When family child care owners retire or close for any other reason, there is little opportunity for a new business to take on the business space the way center turn over happens, since the DCFH is attributed to the owner's personal home. The DCFH market requires a different support for capacity building.

The executive order recognizes the return on investment of up to 13% as a major driver to invest in supporting this field's health. All 13 of the required recommendations include business aspects, from infrastructure to reporting systems to equitable access, and all within a true cost of care. The interconnectedness of the business structure, skills, and support is fundamental to ensuring Connecticut's licensed ECE programs are safe, quality spaces with educated and dedicated staff working within a healthy and sustainable business model for all staff and families.

Licensed early child care and education programs are historically businesses built on a broken system of underfunding and a lack of business knowledge. While many providers know programming for young children, they lack the requisite business knowledge to have a thriving and healthy business. COVID-19 further challenged early child care and education providers, as they lacked the connections and business practices to maximize access to certain relief funding and the business knowledge to adequately pivot operations to maintain best practices. Licensed early child care and education settings struggled to remain open and many that did suffer considerable business losses, often at a personal financial level. This type of struggle also leads to poor mental health for Connecticut's licensed early child care and education business staff. These challenges highlight the need for integrated, cohesive, and consistent business support to the provider community.

As of July 3, 2023, OEC licensing reports there are 1,357 licensed centers (DCCC), 22 group homes (DCGH) and 1,826 family homes (DCFH). These early child care and education programs, as well as those aspiring to be one of these license types, are the focus of this work.

This RFP will have the vendor implement a system promoting a continuous quality improvement business mindset. This system requires intentional design, collaboration, and an understanding of licensed early child care and education providers, funding, start up and ongoing operational needs, and capacity gaps across the state.

The broadly stated objectives of this RFP are to:

1. Maintain, where relevant, and add licensed capacity, especially with infant and toddler slots.
2. Maintain, where relevant, and add licensed early child care and education businesses, support healthy business functions across all licensed family child care homes, centers and group homes.
3. Make business support a priority in child care deserts, high social vulnerable index (SVI) rated areas, and where businesses are owned and/or administered by individuals of color, and/or serve families of color.



## 2. Qualifications and Scope of Service

The OEC seeks an organization to provide business supports to Connecticut early child care businesses, also referred to as providers, to enhance their fiscal stability, financial success and ability to deliver on the mission of supporting the development of young children and their families. The business support entity must be adaptable to the changing conditions of the child care industry, the Connecticut business landscape and the Connecticut early childhood workforce.

- a. QUALIFICATIONS:** The OEC seeks potential respondents with the following qualifications:
- 1. Business Expertise.** The OEC will accept responses to this RFP from organizations for whom delivery of business supports is central to their mission and business activities. The ideal respondent possesses deep knowledge of business operations including business strategy, finance, bookkeeping, and marketing; and of the early childhood business environment, and is knowledgeable of Connecticut's child care workforce, regulatory environment and business climate.
  - 2. Record of Success:** The ideal respondent has an organizational history that illustrates its longevity, capacity to manage innovative and complex programmatic initiatives, and track record in the business training field.
  - 3. Innovation and Change management:** The ideal respondent have the capacity to develop and deliver innovative solutions to sector-wide business challenges and to adapt to changing circumstances in the business and early childhood arenas.
  - 4. Strategic Alignment:** The ideal respondent's organizational mission and direction aligns with the RFP's goals and services.
  - 5. Knowledge of State and Regional Nuances:** The ideal respondent has prior knowledge of, or is willing to immerse itself in, Connecticut-wide and region-specific challenges.
  - 6. Training and Technical Assistance Capabilities:** The ideal respondent has prior experience supporting businesses through technical assistance including training, coaching, mentoring and networking. The selected respondent will be expected to organize a system of training and technical assistance that is accessible to the variety of child care businesses throughout Connecticut, formulating training opportunities and assistance to groups and to individual providers.
  - 7. Fiscal Management:** The ideal respondent possesses sophisticated financial control systems and would be able to manage complex fiscal arrangements. The respondent will be expected to implement a system of grant awards to eligible providers according to established guidelines. The respondent will be responsible for developing eligibility criteria, an application process, awarding grants and tracking awardees through a reporting system. The respondent will provide regular financial reporting to the OEC.

**b. SCOPE OF SERVICES DESCRIPTION:**

**1. Organizational Strength**

The Contractor selected will need to have child care industry expertise and connectedness to the wider business-related arena. The Contractor selected must be adaptable, responsive, capable of coordinating multiple projects, fiscally responsible, and strategically aligned to the OEC's vision for success

OEC's vision for success includes the respondent bringing all these characteristics to support licensed and licensed-aspiring early child care and education programs to be healthy and thriving businesses, sustainable over time, dependable employers, and dependable to their families and communities as part of being an essential business to Connecticut's economy. The selected Contractor will constantly seek to identify current trends and business needs in the ECE field and propose to the OEC details for and implementation of new provider business supports.

OEC is interested in potential respondents who can provide factual demonstration of the following characteristics:

- a.** Established relationships with and ability to leverage established partnerships and relationships with national, state and local level business-related government offices

and agencies (Small Business Administration, Department of Economic Community Development, Governor's Workforce Council, Governor's Council on Women and Girls, State Comptroller's Office, Department of Revenue Services, Secretary of the State, and municipal economic development offices) to exchange resources and expertise, and advocate for policy change.

- b. Connected to a national entity to both pull from and share expertise.
  - c. Proven track record providing business support statewide, including proven track record providing child care specific business support statewide.
  - d. Experience with supporting clients on adopting software and tools to run more efficient businesses, including child care management systems (CCMS).
  - e. Established trust with child care businesses and small businesses.
  - f. Experience connecting child care providers with each other, other small businesses, and experts, through a community of practice model (supporting, network, learning and sharing together).
  - g. Proven track record of managing grant programs for small businesses and child care providers, funded by municipal, state, federal, and private sources.
  - h. Dedicated, established bilingual child care business support staff with child care and business expertise that have experience successfully reaching, engaging, and supporting non-English speaking child care providers.
  - i. Established registration and data tracking infrastructure allowing child care providers to register for training/TA, and allowing for tracking and analysis of provider use and business changes.
  - j. Established marketing and communications arm to effectively promote child care business services, and showcase provider success stories and organization's economic impact.
  - k. Established fiscal arm with expertise meeting contractual requirements and running fiscally-sound financial operations.
  - l. Viewed as a trusted leader by peers in the business support arena, partners in early childhood business, and community leaders.
- 2. Target Population:** The target population for the services included in this RFP are the child care businesses in Connecticut including new license applicants and already licensed family child care homes, group homes and child care centers.

Family Child Care Providers run and operate home-based child care businesses. FCC providers typically identify as self-employed or sole entrepreneurs. The majority are women. In a recent survey of child care businesses with close to 700 FCC respondents who disclosed their race, approximately 28% identified as African American and 15% identified as multiracial, Asian, or another racial group. Ethnically, about 28% identified as Latinx. This diversity adds to the cultural, racial, and linguistic abundance in FCC options. At the same time, however, most FCC providers are not formally trained in business administration. Moreover, like other segments of the child care industry, FCC providers continue to experience significant instability because of the pandemic. Despite the challenges, FCC providers have displayed admirable resilience in the face of adversity. As of In July 2023, there are approximately 1,820 open FCC businesses in Connecticut.

Child Care Centers and Group homes serve 12 children or more in licensed facilities including private homes (group child care homes), stand-alone facilities and multi-purpose business facilities. Center and group home operators include for-profit and non-profit entities. As of July 2023 are approximately 1375 open Child Care Centers and Group Homes in Connecticut.

- 3. Service Expectations:** The services delivered by the selected respondent will include the following:
- a. **Tier 1 Supports:** Training. This aspect of service includes providing the foundational and developmental business-related training including but not limited to business

strategy, finance, bookkeeping, and marketing. Best practice for early child care and education providers includes content from the Iron Triangle, the Business Administration Scale, the Program Administration Scale, and NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation business-related criteria. Early Child care and Education providers should receive training and support related to differing funding streams, including how to manage them and braid; these include but are not limited to CACFP, School Readiness, Child Day Care contract, Care4Kids, and financial opportunities via CCDF, COVID relief, and other funding. Audience may include program leaders / owners of child care businesses, as well as additional program staff depending upon the training content and applicability by role. A minimum of 500 serviced annually.

- b. Tier 2 Supports:** Individual Phased Support. Using a set of business health benchmarks agreed upon by the OEC and the respondent, the respondent entity will track benchmark achievement and deliver customized client services including provision of and support for use of technology. Tier 2 services will include guidance and opportunity to apply for grants and to receive on-going technical assistance as the provider's business acumen develops and changes. A minimum of 150 serviced annually.
- c. Grants and Incentives:** An important aspect of business development is the use of tools and systems that support efficiency and accuracy in documenting business operations. In support of this goal the respondent organization will provide grants and incentives to engage, advance, and reward participating eligible providers as they advance their business practices.

#### **4. Staffing Expectations:**

- a. Governance and Leadership:** The ideal respondent's governing board, chief executive and senior staff are actively engaged in business support and development of business entities and have the ability to provide strategic leadership in this area.
- b. Dedicated Personnel:** The ideal respondent's staffing structure and allocation of staff time will reflect the business and early childhood knowledge necessary to support the diversity of child care businesses in Connecticut in the areas of business strategy, finance, bookkeeping, and marketing. The staffing structure will provide personnel dedicated to this service delivery and demonstrate availability to meet the language and schedule demands of providers who will access services on nights and weekends. Staffing must address statewide coverage.
- c. Diverse Workforce:** The ideal respondent has, or is actively working toward, a diverse workforce, with multicultural and multilingual employees.

- 5. Coordination and Collaboration:** The ideal respondent will work with OEC divisions and partners to mutually support healthy business development. This includes collaboration with other OEC contractors and vendors, state agencies, and other partners who share mutual interest in advancing best business practices in the child care community. The respondent will also bring its own set of potential collaborating partners and resources, and will be able to describe how its organization is positioned to represent child care businesses as essential workers in the economy to advance the conversation and inclusion of child care as an economic driver.

- 6. Communications:** The ideal respondent will have resources and connections throughout Connecticut and be responsive to regional and local variation, to communicate widely with the provider community and its stakeholders. This includes implementing strategies that are culturally responsive, and multilingual, and that distribute information as well as gather feedback and evaluate effectiveness.

- 7. Child Care Business Advisory Board:** The ideal respondent will establish and engage a Child Care Business Advisory Board (CCBAB) to inform and advance its work in the child care community and with OEC and its partners.

- 8. Data and Technology Expectations:** By definition, the advancement of business practices involves data and technology. The ideal respondent will use data, as an informant to provider decision making, strengthening business-decisions and providing opportunity to quantify and measure results. The ideal respondent will understand that

technology, specifically child care management software and services, creates the foundation for strong business practices and operations that are streamlined and efficient.

- 9. Technology Infrastructure and Utilization:** To effectuate a fully responsive business services support system, the ideal respondent will have training and administrative structures that reflect current best practices across human resources, administration, fiscal and record keeping systems. The respondent will present to OEC an established technology system that gathers and secures data, ensures privacy and confidentiality and can document the organization's financial health. The ideal respondent will demonstrate strength with using technology for marketing its services and maintaining an updated and dynamic web presence, as well as successful use of technology to reach child care providers and to provide training to child care providers.

The ideal respondent can detail their strong financial systems and reporting capabilities illustrating an ability to manage contract, to deliver training and technical assistance services, to the target audience.

- 10. Data Security, Privacy, and Confidentiality:** The ideal respondent is able to secure all data pursuant to all state and federal data statutes, regulations, and policies.

**11. Financial Expectations:**

**Fiscal Health** –The ideal respondent is in a fiscally sound position, as determined through clean opinions documented in the last 3 years of audited financial statements (or whatever number of years are available, for newer organizations); a recent organizational budget; and the respondent's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement).

**Financial Management** – The ideal respondent has strong financial systems and reporting capabilities; would be able to manage contracts with third parties contracted to support the goals of this RFP and would be able to provide business finance expertise to the providers that are the target audience for this RFP. Respondents should be using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

## C. OEC Responsibilities

The OEC will make every effort to support the awarded vendor in all relevant aspects of the work in a timely manner, including but not limited to the following responsibilities:

1. Post detail about the awarded vendor and the initiative including contact information on the OEC website.
2. Support healthy child care businesses by linking the awarded vendor to other OEC divisions / units and to OEC initiatives both internal and external.
3. Disseminate pertinent information to its roster of current licensed providers in eligible setting types, and through other distribution lists.
4. Advocate for vendor representation at appropriate meetings, task forces, etc.
5. Collaborate with awarded vendor to determine business health benchmarks to document and track child care provider business health
6. Collaborate with awarded vendor to determine qualifications of "active" for providers for continued support from awarded vendor.
7. Review and approve grant categories and grant eligibility criteria

### **Budget Expectations**

Program Funding Sources: This contract may be funded through federal funds. Regardless of funding source, the administrative cap for the services outlined in this request of proposals is 10%. The administrative cap is a combined figure inclusive of the lead agency and any sub-grantee administrative costs.

**Total Available Funding & Award Period:** The respondent selected shall implement ECE Provider Business Supports which includes a maximum of 10% administrative funds over the contract period. Funds will be distributed on a quarterly basis within the following time frames to align with beginning and ending of state fiscal year, as follows:

- July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (4 payments)

- July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 (4 payments)
- July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 (4 payments)

**Cost Standards:** Respondent's 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>.

As these contracts are primarily funded through federal grants, respondents are also expected to adhere to standards prescribed by the Federal Office of Management and Budget Cost Principles, which can be found online at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/management-and-budget-office>

In order to comply with State & Federal requirements, awarded providers must maintain separate accounting/cost centers for State and Federal funding using generally accepted accounting practices. The OEC will reach out to the selected respondent 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 total budget.

Per OPM Cost Allocation guidelines, unused/unexpended State funding at the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) has to be returned to the State and cannot be carried forward to the following SFY. Federal funds can be carried forward to the next Federal Budget year with OEC review and approval.

## D. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT/DATA REPORTING

As part of the State's commitment to becoming more outcomes-oriented, OEC seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with respondents to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works. The awarded respondent should expect to partner extensively with the OEC staff in its own continuous learning and improvement processes.

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

- Frequent, regular meetings focused on project planning; assessing strategy and progress towards goals; assessing professional learning needs in the community and/or with technical assistance providers; engaging in survey development and delivery; and advancing the field within the Quality Improvement System as appropriate.
- Timely submission of program reports, fiscal reports, activity specific data; and
- Open lines of communication to proactively address challenges and course correct.

As the OEC data systems expand, the awarded respondents may be required to enter and adhere to data sharing and reporting agreements with the OEC. Should they occur, the awarded respondent will be required to notify the OEC of any data breaches within 24 hours.

## E. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are two levels of performance measures that will be regularly analyzed throughout the lifetime of this contract. The first addresses the satisfaction and learning of the ECE providers. The second addresses the performance of the respondent and the business development system itself. Data will be used to:

- Understand the experience of the ECE providers in order for the respondent to reflect upon the design and delivery of work and make modifications;
- Respond to emerging needs of ECE providers and technical assistance providers regarding business growth; and
- Inform OEC about the efficiency and effectiveness of business-related systems, contracts, and initiatives in order to consider the respondent's performance.

The table in this section highlights outcomes of interest that the OEC may examine during the course of this contract to understand performance. The table below does not represent an exhaustive list; rather, it is an indicator of how the OEC may approach analyzing its desired outcomes. The OEC looks

forward to working with the respondents to collaboratively refine and define additional important performance metrics.

<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Potential Metric</b>	<b>Potential Data Source</b>
OEC licensed early care and education programs know where to access business-related training and technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # web page hits (OEC and vendor)</li> <li>• # of training registrants; # attended; demographics of attendees</li> <li>• # and demographics of individualized TA recipients; \$ awarded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web analytics</li> <li>• Provider survey</li> <li>• Registration data</li> <li>• Intake data</li> <li>• Award data</li> </ul>
OEC staff and relevant partners know where to refer programs experiencing business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # and type of referral; categories of referring entities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral data</li> <li>• Intake data</li> </ul>
Increase in newly licensed programs remaining open at 1 year and other increments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # new licensed programs</li> <li>• # programs open after one year in business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing data</li> </ul>
Maintaining of slots, and increase in child care slots available, especially in child care deserts and high SVI rated areas, and in infant and toddler specific slots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # slots supported / # new slots supported in T&amp;TA; \$ awarded; incentives awarded</li> <li>• # slots in specific priority categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake data</li> <li>• Provider ongoing support data</li> </ul>
Equitable access to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider languages supported</li> <li>• Demographic data re provider background and gender, license type, SVI rating,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake data</li> <li>• Registration data</li> </ul>
Participating programs understand their financial situation including profit and loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # programs receiving support for development of financial documentation including P&amp;L;</li> <li>• # programs with P&amp;: docs in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant program applicants, Intake data</li> </ul>

In addition to the list above, the OEC will provide quality assurance monitoring of our professional development system. Some examples of quality assurance monitoring strategies include audits of Contractor products by activity, observation of events, and notes to active contract management conversations. OEC may monitor staff and sub-contractor time allocation by activity, across activities, and across contracts.

### III. Proposal Submission Overview

#### A. SUBMISSION FORMAT

1. **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.***

2. **Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. The Cover Sheet should include the following:

RFP Name and Number	Contact Person, Title
Entity Legal Name and FEIN	Contact Phone Number and E-mail Address
Street Address	Authorized Official, Title
Town/City, State Zip	Authorized Official Signature

3. **Table of Contents.** All proposals **must** include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.

4. **Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary, not exceeding 2 pages of the main proposal and proposed budget.

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

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

- **Paper Size:** 8 ½ x 11 (Letter)
- **Page Limit:** Maximum **35 pages** for the main body of the proposal (the cover letter, executive summary, budget, and required attachments do not count towards this 35-page limit)
- **Font Size:** 12
- **Font Type:** Times New Roman
- **Margins:** Normal (1 inch)
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5
- **File Size:** email submission must be less than **25MB** (OEC's server limitations)

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

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

9. **Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement.** Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The OEC will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best

interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

**B. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

- 1. Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of the OEC to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts, the 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 individuals, the 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 all 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. The OEC Commissioner will make the final selection. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Evaluation Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.
- 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 that the Evaluation Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The weights are disclosed below.

Evaluation Criterion	% of Total	What would a top score look like?
<b>Organizational Strengths</b>	<b>25%</b>	<p><b><i>The ideal respondent...</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates established:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relationships with, and ability to leverage, established partnerships and relationships with national, state and local level business-related government offices and agencies;</li> <li>- history of engagement and partnership; and</li> <li>- experienced staff and a governing board that have subject-matter expertise.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Has the ability to leverage its own capacity/infrastructure to provide training and business support services to the target audience, as demonstrated through a strong staffing plan with a qualified business support team who individually and/or cumulatively possess the range of business skills and early childhood expertise related to the activities in the proposed scope of work.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding of child care businesses, child care in Connecticut, and the larger child care field.</li> <li>• Demonstrates success delivering training and technical assistance to child care providers statewide.</li> <li>• Clearly articulates a cultural humility and equity framework, with an explanation of how that framework will shape both internal processes and external-facing activities.</li> <li>• Provides past examples and/or future-oriented decision-making frameworks illustrating how they will be responsive and adaptable to a dynamic programming environment.</li> <li>• Has prior experience managing state contracts and working collaboratively with public sector partners. If this is not applicable it is clearly stated that the organization has not engaged in state contracts.</li> </ul>



Evaluation Criterion	% of Total	What would a top score look like?
<b>Scope of Work Application</b>	<b>40%</b>	<p><b>The ideal respondent...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies all Federal and State agencies and commercial vendors for which the Respondent has engaged in similar or related contract work or projects completed within the last three (3) years with emphasis on activities relevant and related to the proposed scope of work. If this is not applicable, it is clearly stated that the organization has not engaged in related contracts.</li> <li>• Demonstrates ability to address the defined scope of work (Section 1-8) as it relates to the intended audience with intentionality addressing equity and access throughout all activities</li> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to create and deliver state-wide business-related training that meets the needs of the provider community, and addresses the needs of adult learners.</li> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to deliver customized supports to individual child care providers including identifying and using benchmarks to track business health, and incentivizing engagement and success.</li> <li>• Demonstrates capability to collect and report relevant data and specified data.</li> </ul>
<b>IT, Data, Evaluation, and Performance Management</b>	<b>15%</b>	<p><b>The ideal respondent...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has prior experience developing and measuring key metrics, and utilizing data to generate performance insights</li> <li>• Demonstrates an ability to effectively communicate data-derived insights and build data literacy among stakeholders</li> <li>• Articulates a clear, logical vision for developing and implementing a performance management framework</li> <li>• Has the IT infrastructure and enhanced data reporting capacity in place to manage performance and program evaluation data</li> <li>• Has internal capacity on staff to support evaluation and to manage contractor/subcontractors in this area, as needed</li> <li>• Has the ability to adhere to all state and federal data share statutes, regulations, and policies and can secure all confidential information</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Profile</b>	<b>10%</b>	<p><b>The ideal respondent...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates 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); a recent organizational budget; and the respondent's most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement)</li> <li>• Responsibly and proactively manages its financial systems, with clearly defined internal controls</li> <li>• Has prior experience managing complex financial reporting requirements</li> <li>• Uses Generally Accepted Accounting Principles with financial systems</li> </ul>
<b>Budget and Staffing Plan</b>	<b>10%</b>	<p><b>The ideal budget and staffing plans...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a reasonable, cost-effective use of funds, reflect a strategic commitment to the overall goals of delivering the project scope in the way that monetary, and staffing resources are allocated.</li> <li>• Describe the organizations expertise in business support and early child care and education and deploy staff across functions to achieve the project scope.</li> <li>• Support state-wide training and individualized consultation in a timely manner, and include maintaining multi-lingual staff and resources to support non English speakers.</li> </ul>

**Note:** As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Plan, 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 or U.S. mail, at the OEC's discretion, 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) 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) 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) 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 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.

## IV. Required Proposal Submission Outline

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

### A. Cover Sheet

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

RFP Name and Number	Contact Person, Title
Entity Legal Name and FEIN	Contact Phone Number and E-mail Address
Street Address	Authorized Official, Title
Town/City, State, Zip	Authorized Official Signature

**Legal Name** is defined as the name of private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. **Contact Person** is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal.

**Authorized Official** is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the proposer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.

### B. Table of Contents

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

### C. Executive Summary

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

### D. Main Proposal Submission Questions & Prompts

**Please note the maximum total page length for the main proposal submission is 35 pages.** All appendices and other attachments should be properly labeled in section E. The OEC Evaluation Committee **will not** read more than 35 pages in the main proposal section.

#### **Organizational Strengths**

1. **Mission, Values & History:** Provide your organization's mission statement, values, a brief organizational history, and a description of core programs. How does your organization put your values to practice?
2. **Organizational Expertise in Business:** Describe your organization's experience and expertise in business supports, highlighting your ability to design and deliver professional training and technical assistance, including but not limited to child care business trainings, business templates, grant making and incentivizing recipients, and collaborating with partners, to advance best practices in business operations.
3. **Familiarity with Early Childhood Education:** Describe your organization's involvement with the early childhood and education system related to provider business support, technical assistance, trainings, grants/incentives, and public policy.
4. **Organizational Governance:** 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 early childhood business support. Also provide a brief

- explanation of how major strategic and programming decisions are made at your organization and submit the minutes of your last two board meetings as a required attachment.
5. **Cultural Humility and Equity:** Describe your organization's framework for advancing equity and applying cultural humility to your work. How is this framework applied *within* your organization, and how does it guide your *programming and project decisions* for ECE Business Support?
  6. **Statewide and Regional Support:** Describe any past or current projects your organization has worked on related to statewide and/or regional early child care and education business support issues in Connecticut. How would you go about deepening your knowledge of statewide and regional ECE Business Support issues? What approaches would you take to providing resources equitably to all providers statewide?
  7. **Capacity Building:** Provide two examples of a current or prior project where your organization supported early child care and education providers with best business practices. Use one example to detail this process in relation to evaluation of and work with child care management systems (CCMS). What was the goal of the project? How did you identify the needs of the recipient organization or individuals? How did you incorporate knowledge transfer and sustainability into your business support practices? What internal resources did you leverage to support the other organization(s), and what external resources did you draw on?
  8. **Contract Management:** Describe your experience managing state contracts. How was success defined? What competencies does your organization possess that made the contract management successful? If applicable, what adjustments did you make in between when the contract first started and when it ended to effectively meet the goals of the contract?
  9. **Adaptability Case Study:** Tell us about how your organization responded to the Covid-19 public health crisis, organizationally and programmatically. How did you support your staff members? How did you work with external partners or clients to address their needs? How did you put your equity and cultural humility framework into practice? What did you learn from this experience, what will you carry forward, and what will you let go?
  10. **Organizational Networks:** List and describe existing organizational partnerships with entities whose expertise complements your capacity in the early education arena. Include any Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding you have with relevant partners and current subcontractors in the required attachments section. (If you do not have any memoranda to include, simply indicate "No relevant memoranda" in your attachment section.)
  11. **Productive Business Support Collaboration:** Describe the process that your organization will use that balances the three components of productive collaboration (a group process that brings out the best in participants; builds trusting and respectful relationships; and moves participants towards measurable performance and results). In your response, be specific on how each of the three components are established.
  12. **Stakeholder Management:** Share an example of a time when there was disagreement or dissent between different stakeholders you were working with. How did you address the disagreement? What was the result of your efforts, and/or what would you have done differently based on what you learned from that experience?

### **Scope of Work Application**

1. **ECE Provider Supports:** Detail your plan to carry out the activity as described in the context of the RFP expectations with particular focus on activities within the first year of the project including timelines, staff deployment and infrastructure building. Please include Federal agencies, State agencies and commercial vendors for which you have provided similar contract work or projects completed within the last three (3) years with emphasis on activities relevant and related to the proposed scope of work. The OEC is particularly interested in understanding how a respondent would:
  - a. Monitor and adjust delivery of the activities based on information from the field and your experience;
  - b. Address equity and access for child care providers throughout the work plan
  - c. Measure your effectiveness; and

- d. Propose innovative ideas for adjustments to OEC.
2. **Target Audience:** The scope of work must relate to the intended audience with intentionality addressing equity and access throughout business support.
3. **ECE Business Delivery and Data:** Detail how you will create and deliver state-wide business-related training and supports that meets the needs of the provider community. Please include how you will develop customized supports to individual child care providers including identifying and using benchmarks to track business health, and incentivizing engagement and success. Provide how you will collect and report relevant data and specified data.

**Note:** The OEC understands that work plans are dynamic documents, and that often the granular aspects of project implementation will not become clear until the project itself is in motion. As such, high-level descriptions of planned activities in later years of this contract are acceptable.

### **IT, Data, Evaluation, and Performance Management**

1. **Performance Management:** Describe the process your organization would take to develop a performance management framework that moves early child care and education provider business quality, individual supports, and the overall early child care and education system towards OEC's desired business health and slot capacity outcomes. Provide an example of how your organization collected and used key metrics for performance management internally, as well as by the contract holder and early child care and education providers.
2. **Technology Capacity:** Describe your organization's expertise with regard to evaluating and using child care management systems (CCMS) and other technology needed to efficiently and effectively run a business; describe your staff capacity for technology support to child care providers.
3. **Data Protocols:** Describe your organization's ability to collect data and how data are presented. Provide an example of how data literacy is actively supported among early child care and education providers and stakeholders. Describe your data security procedures to ensure data collected are kept secure, confidential and complies with all state, federal data share laws, regulations and policies. As a required attachment, share your organization's data privacy policy if one is available. If one is not yet available, describe the process you will take to formalize data security and privacy into organizational policy.
4. **Business Support Example:** Suppose that in Year 2 of the project, the child care businesses / providers are not engaging in offerings provided by your agency. How would you propose a shift in delivery of services? What are metrics you would propose collecting, and how would you analyze them?

### **Financial Profile**

1. **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).
2. **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.
3. **Fiscal Health:** As part of the required attachments, include **3 years of audited financial statements**, your most recent organizational budget, and your most recent statement of financial activities (profit and loss statement). For respondents who have been incorporated for less than 3 years, include audited financial statements for whatever years you have available.

### **Budget and Staffing Plans**

1. **Proposed Budget & Budget Narrative:** 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.

2. **Staff Qualifications:** Please list all key staff working directly on this project, indicating their roles and specifically detailing how staffing will ensure statewide delivery of services in a timely, accessible manner. Describe how the staffing plan will deliver training and consultation to address the targeted audience and meet the project scope. List all sub-contractors you know you will be utilizing or plan to utilize that are directly related to this work. Indicate how the organization will ensure services are delivered in the provider's language, both via staff and accessing relevant services.

## E. Attachments

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.

- Staffing Plan
- Résumés of Key Personnel may be requested but not necessary to attach at this time.
- Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding for Subcontractors (Indicate "No relevant memoranda" if this is not applicable)
- Last Three Years of Audited Financial Statements (respondents with less than three years' organizational history should include audited financial statements for whatever years you have available)
- Most Recent Organizational Budget
- Most Recent Statement of Financial Activities (Profit and Loss Statement)
- Minutes from Last Two Board Meetings
- 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)
- Proof of nonprofit status (i.e., IRS Determination Letter), if applicable. Indicate "Nonprofit status not applicable" in your attachments section if this does not apply.

## F. Declaration of Confidential Information

If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL prior to submission. The proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

## G. Conflict of Interest – Disclosure Statement

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

## H. Statement of Assurances

Place after Conflict of Interest-Disclosure Statement.

## V. Mandatory Provisions

### A. PSA STANDARD CONTRACT, PARTS I AND II

*By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State's "standard contract" for 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 PSA 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 a proposer 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 proposer must inform the proposer's principals of the contents of the SEEC notice.

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

### B. ASSURANCES

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

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. The OEC may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.

4. **Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the OEC may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.
5. **Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the OEC for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

## C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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



necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and the 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 proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the 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, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:*

- 1. Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the 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 and all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. The OEC may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The OEC will reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
- 5. Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.
- 6. Contract Negotiation.** The 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 proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the OEC may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. 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 a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
- 8. Key Personnel.** When the OEC is the sole funder of a purchased service, the OEC reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel 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 proposer'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 proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:*

- 1. Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.
- 2. Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
- 3. Consulting Agreements 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://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/Fin-General/OPM-Form1-Rev-07262021-CampaignContributionCertification.pdf>

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

rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

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

## VI. Appendix

### A. ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS.

BAS	Business Administration Scale (for Family Child Care)
BFO	Best and Final Offer
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CCBAB	Child Care Advisory Board
CCDF	Child Care Development Fund
CCMS	Child Care Management System
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
DCCC	OEC Licensed Child Care Center
DCFH	OEC Licensed Family Child Care Home
DCGH	OEC Licensed Group Home
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
FCC	Family Child Care Provider
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (US)
LOI	Letter of Intent
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OEC	Office of Early Childhood (CT)
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
PAS	Program Administration Scale
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
RFP	Request for Proposal
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
SFFCN	Staffed Family Child Care Network(s)
U.S.	United States

- **Contractor:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the OEC as a result of this RFP
- **Proposer:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Department in response to this RFP
- **Prospective Proposer:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the Department in response to this RFP, but has not yet done so
- **Respondent:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Department in response to this *RFP*
- **Setting:** Refers to settings where young children are served, such as, family child-care, center- and school-based programs.
- **Subcontractor:** an individual (other than an employee of the contractor) or business entity hired by a contractor to provide a specific health or human service as part of a POS contract with the OEC as a result of this RFP.

**B. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES**

**Office of Early Childhood**

The undersigned Respondent affirms and declares that:

**1) General**

- a. This proposal is executed and signed with full knowledge and acceptance of the RFP CONDITIONS stated in the RFP.
- b. The Respondent will deliver services to the OEC per the cost proposed in the RFP and within the timeframes therein.
- c. Neither the Respondent of any official of the organization nor any subcontractor the Respondent of 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.
- d. Neither the Respondent of any official of the organization nor any subcontractor to the Respondent of any official of the subcontractor’s organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.

**Legal Name of Organization:**

---

Authorized Signatory	Date
----------------------	------

---

Typed Name of Signatory	Date
-------------------------	------

**C. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST:**

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

**Key Dates**

<b>Procurement Timetable:</b> The OEC reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion.		
Item	Action	Date
1	RFP Bidder’s conference	Monday, January 29, 10 am ET
2	Recommended Letter of Intent Due (Suggested)	Monday, February 5, 2024; 5:00 pm ET
3	Deadline for Questions	Monday, February 19, 2024; 5:00 pm ET
4	Proposals Due	Thursday, February 29, 2024; 5:00 pm ET

- 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) <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

**Proposal Content Checklist**

**Cover Sheet** including required information:

RFP Name and Number	Contact Person, Title
Entity Legal Name and FEIN	Contact Phone Number and E-mail Address
Street Address	Authorized Official, Title
Town/City, State, Zip	Authorized Official Signature

- Table of Contents**
- Executive Summary:** high-level summary of proposal and cost, two-page maximum
- Main Proposal Body** (not to exceed 35 pages)
- Required Attachments**
  - Staffing Plan
  - Résumés of Key Personnel
  - Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding for Subcontractors (Indicate "No relevant memoranda" if this is not applicable to you)
  - Last Three Years of Audited Financial Statements (respondents with less than three years’ organizational history should include audited financial statements for whatever years you have available)
  - Most Recent Organizational Budget
  - Most Recent Statement of Financial Activities (Profit and Loss Statement)
  - Minutes from Last Two Board Meetings
  - 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)
  - Proof of nonprofit status (i.e., IRS Determination Letter), if applicable. Indicate "Nonprofit status not applicable" in your attachments section if this does not apply to you.
- Proposed budget** in standard OEC budget template, including budget narrative and cost schedules for planned subcontractors if applicable.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement** (see page 15 of this RFP)
- Statement of Assurances** (see page 30 of this RFP)

**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 1.5 line spacing?
- Does the proposer’s name appear in the header of each page?
- Does the proposal include page numbers in the footer?
- Are confidential labels applied to sensitive information (if applicable)?