OEC-QIS-024 Questions and Answers

The following answers to the questions received pertaining to the OEC Quality Improvement Supports Request for Proposals are official.

Eligibility and Logistics

1) *Are you looking for a single organization to do the work or a collaboration to support broad systems development?*

The Proposal Overview on page 18 indicates the possibility of more than one contract will be awarded and encourages Respondents to apply for the activities that suit their expertise. The OEC will be the lead entity coordinating contracts and providing leadership to coordinate statewide efforts.

2) *Can an entity apply from out of state?*

Eligibility to apply for funds is outlined on page 9. Respondents must demonstrate the ability to provide services regardless of administrative location.

3) *Is the bidder's conference mandatory and will information be shared after the conference?*

The bidder's conference is not mandatory. The PowerPoint from the Bidder's Conference is posted on the OEC Website at https://www.ct.gov/oec/cwp/view.asp?Q=610324&A=4638 and the State Contracting Portal at https://biznet.ct.gov/AccountMaint/Default.aspx .

4) *Where does a Respondent enter the information regarding the workforce analysis for BizNet (otherwise known as the State Contracting Portal)?*

Respondents must first register on the DAS BizNet (State Contracting Portal). After successfully registering, Respondents must upload PDFs of the required OPM forms and complete the workforce analysis (CHRO) information in a fillable form in BizNet. The "Open Form" link for the workforce analysis is located at the bottom of the list of Required Company Documents with the description "Commission On Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) Workplace Analysis Affirmative Action Report Employee Information Form (DAS-45)."

5) *What is the deadline with registering with the State Contracting Portal and submitting the documents notarized?*

Wednesday, December 11, 2019 1:00 pm. This is the same date and time the electronic copy is due to OEC.RFP@CT.GOV and a hard copy delivered to 450 Columbus Blvd. Note that prior

registration on the State Contracting Portal is required for online submission of the OPM forms and CHRO information (workforce analysis). See page 9 of the RFP for submission details.

6) *If an agency is applying for a different RFP within a few weeks, can all of the forms in our BizNet account be shared or accessed by OEC.*

Yes, if you have an account in BizNet with all the required OPM forms and insurance documents submitted, OEC can access those same documents from your BizNet account. There is no need to complete new documents required for this RFP as long as your account is complete and up to date with all required documents.

7) *Will another RFP that focuses specifically on family childcare be released in the coming months or in 2020?*

The OEC-RFP-024 includes family childcare settings as benefiting from the technical assistance that would be funded under this RFP. The question regarding an additional RFP is outside the scope of this RFP.

Main Proposal Questions

8) *The Cover Sheet (Attachment 4) appears to be locked. Will OEC unlock the document so Respondents can meet the necessary style requirements?*

The Cover Sheet (Attachment 4) is a fillable form with no locked items. If you place your cursor in the blank boxes, a response box should appear (see below).

If you are unable to see the fillable box format, make sure your setting to view Word documents is on the print layout mode found at the bottom of your screen when using Word.
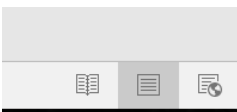
9) *Section b part 2) in the Organization Profile states: "the ability to provide technical assistance to target audience as appropriate by activity", can we include information in general or do we have to be specific based on the activities described in attachment 7?*

The information should be specific to the activities for which you are applying.

10) *The Organizational Experience section talks about attachment 7 describing what needs to be included. Does this point relate only to attachment 7 or does this have to be included as part of the main proposal as well?*

The Organizational Experience section allows for description of both specific activities as outlined in A7 as well as general experience with projects similar the scope of activities.

11) Do we need to submit a list of acronyms, definitions?

Please spell out the acronym and then place the acronym in parenthesis after your first mention and only use the acronym when the abbreviated term is mentioned more than once. Example: Request for Proposal (RFP).

12) Page 23 of the RFP it states" to provide a description of the agency´s computer and software capabilities…" Does this refer to the Respondent/Applicant or to an agency in particular?

The word "agency" in this question refers to the Respondent and/or subcontractor.

13) In the column Payment Terms/Total Value of Attachment 8, does the amount have to be exact or can we provide an estimate?

Since the information is from the past, an exact amount should be known as the funds are assumed to have been distributed.

14) Do we only use the list of OEC approved technical assistance providers for the activity we are pursuing or can we use other personnel not listed but who meet the qualifications?

The list of approved TA providers is a resource if needed. You may submit any individual or entity you feel is qualified but not listed as an OEC approved technical assistance provider using A2 as a guide.

15) In reference to Attachment 9: If an entity is applying on behalf of a collaborative, but the legal entity will be the fiscal agent for the project, are we allowed to list all relevant employees associated with the collaborative as the Organizational Personnel?

Yes

16) If we are sub-contracting with an independent consultant, are we able to use the last four digits if it is the person's social security number?

The OEC-QIS-024 RFP does not ask for social security number information.

17) Due to the competitive nature of this RFP, do you recommend marking staffing pages as confidential?

Please review the Declaration of Confidential Information found on page 12, item 7. The OEC does not consider any information from Respondents to be confidential.

18) If an applicant is also a subcontractor in another application, should this be noted in the application?

No.

Activity Specific Questions

19) *Regarding the Fiscal Detail/Staffing column in attachment 7, part 2: "Staff and/or sub-contractors are expected to meet the OEC criteria for qualified technical assistance providers (see appendix xxx) and/or submit..." Where can "appendix xxx" be found?*

The reference to "appendix xxx: in Attachment 7 is a typo and is in reference to the attachments pertaining to personnel criteria (attachments 2 and 9). OEC will repost Attachment 7 re-named as **Attachment 7 REV 1 11-20-19** to the OEC website and to BizNet.

20) *For activities 2-11, are projects proposing area-specific solutions eligible for consideration, or is the OEC only considering projects proposing statewide solutions?*

No. Each activity has an identified target audience. OEC is considering Respondents that meet the criteria outlined in each activity to reach the specified target audience.

21) *Is it possible for a proposal to only address some target audiences but not others? To use Activity 9 as an example, could an agency apply to deliver trainings only to family childcare providers and not center-based providers?*

Respondents must address the entire activity.

22) *Some activity descriptions mention using OEC-approved or OEC-developed materials. Is there flexibility around this stipulation? If not, is there a possibility for an agency to submit their own materials for approval by the OEC?*

Respondents who are awarded contracts under this RFP are expected to follow all OEC policies and use OEC materials. There is a place in each activity to make comments to OEC.

23) How will data be stored? Does OEC have a Management Information System (MIS) or do we have to create one?

Respondents who are awarded contracts under this RFP are expected to collect data on awarded activities. The OEC does not have a MIS at this time.

Activity 4 – Program Leadership Initiative

24) Can you provide further clarification on what would be expected with Activity 4?

Under OEC policies, priorities, and approvals, the Respondent is to coordinate the marketing, registration, instructor contracting, procurement of materials, adult learning implementation specifications (i.e. appropriate meeting and support space; food; physical and visual accessibility), data collection, and other details as identified by OEC to hold three offerings of Administration and Supervision of Programs for Young Children (approved by CCAP – Connecticut Credit Assessment Program). Each offering is a double session (2 instructors with up to a maximum of 40 students per offering).

25) Due to FERPA the College is prohibited from sharing information that identifies the student. Instructors are prohibited from sharing information regarding attendance, grades, completion data if identified by individual. What specific data would OEC require and how would this be resolved? For instance, instructors cannot submit grades to the OEC.

The OEC holds the CCAP for this course (ASPYC) and as such holds all data. Grades are submitted to the OEC and formal grade records are generated by the OEC. Should the OEC direct non-CCAP course offerings (courses directly through regionally accredited colleges), policies in place state that grades are under the purview of the college and it is the responsibility of the awarded student to submit a transcript to the OEC Registry upon completion of the course. The OEC respects the applicable laws and integrity of the college.

26) Can courses be offered on-ground as well as on-line or Hybrid?

All CCAP courses are 100% grounded. The OEC reserves the right to direct a non-CCAP course offering via other methods.

Activity 5 – Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Support

27) This Activity is asking for a reliability study. Is this a reliability study using a major research institution or a study just proving the reliability of the tools? How in depth does the study need to be?

Respondent may plan and conduct or contract with an entity with appropriate expertise to complete a study of reliability using the CT DOTS in conjunction with training on data collection and analysis. Researchers planning the reliability study should have research expertise appropriate to planning and executing a reliability study. Individuals providing training in conjunction with the study should have appropriate expertise in CT DOTS and adult learning.

Activity 6 – Rating Scales Capacity Building

28) Regarding the Description column in attachment 7, part 2: "maintain a cadre of OEC approved raters for tools identified by OEC including but not limited to ECERS-3, ITERS-3, FCCERS-3":

a. Do raters have to use all of the tools identified by OEC?

Raters who are considered a part of the state cadre are required to achieve and maintain reliability for any tools they will use with an OEC approved trainer authorized to provide ERS reliability training.

b. How many tools are there in all?

Tools currently identified by OEC are:

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3)
- Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ITERS-3)
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (FCCERS-3)

c. What are the other tools (i.e., in addition to ECERS-3, ITERS-3, FCCERS-3)?

Respondents who are awarded contracts under this RFP will collaborate with OEC to identify additional tools aligned to quality improvement efforts and develop a cadre of reliable raters to support system development and delivery as needed during the contract period.

29) Under Description: "Offer informational sessions on rating tools currently in use in CT" What are the rating tools currently identified by OEC? Are reliability trainings to be arranged for these other tools? If yes, what tasks/functions/activities are to be performed for reliability training of these other tools?

Currently the ECERS-3 and ITERS-3 are used as a part of the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process required under OEC General Policy B-05. The OEC will work with the contractor in determining the additional tools and appropriate reliability process and capacity for these tools.

30) In relation to the description column in attachment 7, part 2: "collaborate with OEC to identify additional tools aligned to quality improvement efforts and develop a cadre of reliable raters to support system development and delivery":

a. What are the criteria for selecting and implementing a new tool in collaboration with OEC?

There is no criteria for selecting and implementing new tools at this time.

31) Regarding the description column in attachment 7, part 2: "offer informational sessions on rating tools":

a. Are the informational sessions intended to be training sessions for the cadre of raters?

No. The informational sessions are intended for early care and education providers/programs.

b. Are these sessions in vivo, webinar, or combination?
Informational sessions are intended to be in-person sessions.

c. Are these informational sessions only offered in year 2?
No. Informational sessions are offered each calendar year.

d. How many information sessions are anticipated?
Respondents who are awarded contracts under this RFP will be expected to offer informational sessions on tools currently in use in CT. Development of additional informational sessions in collaboration with OEC as needed. The number and timing of sessions will be determined in conjunction with OEC based upon identified needs.

32) In relation to the Fiscal Detail/Staffing column in attachment 7, part 2: "cost for reliable raters to perform ratings minimum of 50 programs in year 1 and year 2"
a. Is it a minimum of 50 programs per year or cumulatively across both years?
The cost is for reliable raters to perform ratings minimum of 50 programs in Calendar Year 2020 and a minimum of 50 programs in Calendar Year 2021.

b. What is the maximum number of programs?
The maximum number of ratings has not been identified.

c. Are these ratings performed sporadically throughout the year?
The timing of the ratings will be determined in collaboration with OEC.

33) What is the OEC approval process and criteria of becoming an OEC approved Environmental Scale reliable rater for FCCERS, ITERS-3 and ECERS-3?

Raters who are considered part of the state cadre must meet OEC's reliability standard of 85% reliable to the OEC approved ERSI trainer, and maintain that reliability as demonstrated in ongoing reliability checks.

34) Are the costs for the minimum of 50 program assessments to be done in year 1 and 2 coming out of activity budget or are programs paying directly for their assessment?

The costs are to be a part of the activities budget. The budgets are divided into State Fiscal Years SFY2020 (January 1 – June 30, 2020); SFY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021), and SFY2022 (July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021), not calendar years, so there should be three budgets covering calendar years 1 and 2.

35) Is there a maximum number of assessments to be completed during the entire contracting period?

The maximum number of assessments has not been identified.

36) Are programs in the "Interim Quality Assurance Process" included in the "minimum of 50 programs"?

No. Programs in the "Interim Quality Assurance Process" pay for their ERS rating.

37) What is the expected breakdown on the type of assessments to be conducted at these programs? Is there a minimum or maximum number of ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS and/or "other" assessment?

The breakdown of the use of the various ERS tools will be determined by review of data and OEC priorities.

38) Why isn't FCCERS cited in scope of work, column 3?

OEC has identified that having a reliable rater is a priority but the use of the tool with providers is an emerging practice and the scope of this work has not yet been determined.

39) Is there a responsibility to arrange reliability training in year 2?

Yes.

Activity 7 – Trauma Informed Practice and Insecure Housing Support

40) Please clarify: " Conduct a Training of Trainers for up to 15 participants utilizing funds to purchase the services of the facilitator and to provide stipends for up to 15 participants to attend the training of trainers." Does the stipend refer to a gift certificate, mileage reimbursement, payment for the cost to attend? Do we need to identify the 15 participants or does OEC already have them identified?

A stipend for participants' time to attend and reimbursement for mileage is expected. The form of the stipend will be discussed with Respondents who are awarded contracts under this RFP during contract negotiation. Contractors would need to recruit participants.

Activity 8 – Early Childhood Teacher Credential Individual Review Route

41) Is there opportunity to receive additional funding to support the scope of work activity as the ECTC part-time position at $40,000 plus benefits a year and the reviewer costs have a potential to exceed the allocated amount?

There is a place for comments about the activity for OEC consideration in Part 2 of the Scope of Work Details.

42) Are you seeking Contractors outside of higher education institutions to manage the Individual Review Route?

The OEC is seeking Respondents to describe how they are suited to perform the scope of work as outlined.

Fiscal
43) What will the $4.6 million RFP will be used for? Is it for additional support to the provider networks or professional development?

Please review the RFP document found at
https://www.ct.gov/oec/cwp/view.asp?Q=610324&A=4638 . Specific amounts and target audiences for technical assistance activities are outlined in Attachment 7.

44) Do separate budget worksheets need to be completed for each Activity that the respondent is writing for?

Yes. Submit a separate budget for each activity divided by SFY2020 (January 1 – June 30, 2020); SFY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021), and SFY2022 (July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021).

45) The budget for these activities crosses three fiscal years. Does the OEC expect that the same funding amounts will be equally spread across all three budget years? If no, will OEC accept and allow for the amounts to be flexible across the three budget years?

The funds for the activities are not equally distributed across the three State fiscal years (SFY) covered by Years 1 (calendar year 2020) and 2 (calendar year 2021). Respondents are expected to estimate the cost to complete the work in a two calendar year time –frame in Part 1 of the Application for Service Delivery (Attachment 7). The budget pages (Attachment 11), are where the Respondent further outlines the two calendar year cost distributed across three fiscal years 6 months of SFY2020 (January 1 – June 30, 2020); 12 months of SFY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021), and 6 months of SFY2022 (July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021).

46) Under the Contract Award (pages 11-12) of the RFP, it does not state whether OEC will entertain a fee for service-based proposal or whether activities are expected to be cost-reimbursement based Purchase of Service (POS) contracts. Which approach will OEC accept under this RFP?

The contracts from OEC will be Personal Service Agreements. Respondents are encouraged to submit an application for the reimbursement method that best suits the Respondent's fiscal practice and represents the essence of the Activity for efficient and effective implementation.

47) Is all clerical support and marketing included in Admin?

See Activity descriptions in Attachment 7 indicating whether or not marketing/recruiting is mentioned as part of the Activity expense. See budget object code descriptions for line 100 and line 111 to determine if the personal services are administrative.

Miscellaneous
48) The RFP title and subject line refers to QIS, is the RFP tied to the QIS?

The RFP title is Quality Improvement Supports (QIS), not in reference to a model or framework commonly thought of as a Rating or Recognition system.

49) At what stage is the development of the framework of the QIS and is there a draft QIS Framework that can be shared?

This question is beyond the scope of the RFP

50) When does OEC expect to launch a full pilot of the QIS?

This question is beyond the scope of the RFP

51) In regards to ECTC, how does OEC envision keeping this in legislation? What will future needs look like?

This question is beyond the scope of the RFP