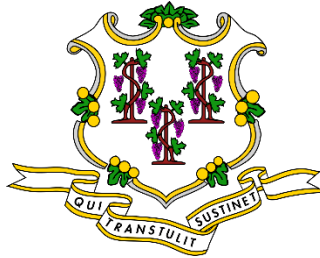


**STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE**

# Request for Proposals (RFP) For Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN) Hub

RFP Name: OEC-24-SFCCNH

Issued by:  
Office of Early Childhood  
July 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 Contact:

Name: Paula S. 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-and-contracts/rfps/>.

Respondents may register for the optional pre-bid conference at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_fIZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fIZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ)

**RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN**

**Wednesday – September 4, 2024**

**5:00 PM E.T.**

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



July 23, 2024

Dear Present and Future Colleagues,

Over the past three years, 551 new family child care businesses were opened across the State of Connecticut bringing the number of licensed family child care as of June 2024 to 1786 according to [eLicense Online](#). These new businesses provide increased access for families to infant/toddler care, preschool and after school child care and evening and weekend care as well. Improving access is a key action step outlined in the *2023 Connecticut's Blue Ribbon Panel Child Care Report, December 2023* found at <https://www.ctoec.org/blue-ribbon-panel>.

The Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN) system plays a key role in supporting family child care (FCC) providers. The system can address barriers experienced by providers by increasing the supply of infant and toddler care, particularly in child care deserts; improving the quality of licensed home-based child care and supporting providers as they seek national accreditation; expanding the options available to working families; and providing professional training and networking supports to FCC providers. The OEC is committed to honoring the critical work in this sector and cultivating a system of geographically defined SFCCNs led by a Hub.

Connecticut's SFCCN system is operationalized through the Hub. The Hub contracts with the Regional Network operators. The Hub ensures that the regional networks provide a robust and consistent suite of services to FCC providers across the state. The Hub is responsible for implementation of the OEC's SFCCN infrastructure. The Hub provides connective tissue between the different regional networks, solidifying the cohesion of the state's overall FCC system. OEC is committed to ensuring that Connecticut's FCC system develops equitably and consistently.

The contractor selected to serve as the Hub will work closely with the OEC staff to directly manage our regional FCC networks, help elevate the FCC profession, and lead capacity-building initiatives that support the pedagogical and operational aspects of running child care businesses. The Hub will help manage \$4.2 million in funding over a 3-year period. The opportunities and capacity the Hub helps unlock make it integral to the state's strategy of advancing structural change in the state's child care sector – especially when we consider that many FCC providers are sole entrepreneurs and women of color who have been previously excluded from formal systems of support.

**The OEC will host a pre-bid conference on Friday, August 2, 2024, at 10:30 am ET.** While this conference is not mandatory, we highly encourage your attendance. Please register for the conference at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_flZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_flZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ). **Proposals are due Wednesday, September 4, 2024, by 5:00 pm ET.**

With this ambitious vision for the Hub and the state FCC system, 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 care community. We look forward to reading through your proposals, and we hope that many of you will respond to this call to action.

In Partnership,

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

Commissioner Beth Bye

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# I. General Information

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## A. INTRODUCTION

- 1. RFP Name and Number.** Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN) Hub: OEC-24-SFCCNH
- 2. RFP Summary.** The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) seeks a strategic partner to serve as a “superstructure” to the state’s cohort of SFCCN. The superstructure, referred to as “the Hub,” will provide facilitative leadership, and directly manage the OEC’s SFCCN in close partnership with the OEC’s staff.
- 3. RFP Purpose.** The OEC is committed to ensuring that Connecticut’s family child care system develops equitably and consistently. The Hub provides a connective tissue between the different SFCCNs, solidifying the cohesion of the state’s overall family child care system.
- 4. Commodity Codes.** The services that the OEC wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:
  - 86000000: Education and Training Services
  - 80000000: Management and Business Professionals and Administrative Services

## • B. INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Official Contact.** 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.

Names: Paula S. 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)

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
  - Non-profit status, if applicable

- Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V
- Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1): <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

**3. RFP Information.** The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

- Agency's RFP Web Page: <https://www.ctoec.org/rfps/>
- State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource bid board, filter by "Early Childhood, Office of"): <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>

It is strongly recommended that any 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:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024  
**Optional RFP Conference:** Friday, August 2, 2024  
**Optional Letter of Intent Due:** Monday, August 5, 2024  
**Q&A Period:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024, through Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Questions received by each Friday in the Q & A period will receive responses the following Tuesday.

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

<b>Deadlines for Questions</b>	<b>Responses by</b>
<b>Friday, July 26, 5:00 PM ET</b>	<b>Tuesday, July 30</b>
<b>Friday, August 2, 5:00 PM ET</b>	<b>Tuesday, August 6</b>
<b>Friday, August 9, 5:00 PM ET</b>	<b>Tuesday, August 13</b>
<b>Friday, August 16, 5:00 PM ET</b>	<b>Tuesday, August 20</b>
<b>Friday, August 23, 5:00 PM ET</b>	<b>Tuesday, August 27</b>

**Proposals Due:** Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 5:00PM ET  
**(\*) Proposer Selection:** Tuesday, October 1, 2024  
**(\*) Start of Contract:** Wednesday, January 1, 2025

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

<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>Up to \$4,200,000 (see Budget Expectations Section for budget details)</b>
<b>Number of Awards</b>	One (1)
<b>Contract Term</b>	January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027

<b>Funding Source</b>	This contract will be funded through federal Child Care Development funds.
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**6. Eligibility.** Public or private organizations, for-profits or nonprofits legally registered with CT's Secretary of State or exempt from such registration per State of CT legislation, 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:

- Be able to provide 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.
- Be in sound fiscal health, 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).
- Adhere to generally accepted accounting principles.
- Be registered with [System of Award Management \(SAM\)](#) at the time of contract execution.

**8. Letter of Intent.** A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not required by this RFP but highly 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, if available, 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 conference will be held on Friday, August 2, 2024 at 10:30 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. 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, if available, on the OEC's RFP Web Page. The OEC will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the OEC's RFP Web Page.

- 11. Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals, and all supporting documentation including the budget template, must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time: **Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm ET.**

Please be aware that delays may occur when emailing submissions with large attachments and plan accordingly. If the proposal and/or supporting documentation, including the budget template is received after the due date and time, the proposal will be disqualified from review. The OEC will send an official letter alerting late respondents of disqualification.

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

- One (1) conforming electronic copy of the original 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 contacts for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: **OEC-24-SFCCNH Response**. The main body should be submitted as **PDF**, 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 "ORNAME\_FullProposal." If you are submitting the budget, an appropriate file title would be "ORNAME\_Budget."

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

- 12. Multiple Proposals.** The submission of multiple proposals is not an option for this procurement.

## II. Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

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### A. OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD OVERVIEW

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

### B. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW: STAFFED FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORK (SFCCN) HUB

**The OEC seeks a strategic partner to serve as a "superstructure" to the state's cohort of SFCCN's. The superstructure, referred to as "the Hub," will provide facilitative leadership and directly manage the OEC's SFCCNs.**

#### **Problem Statement**

Family child care<sup>1</sup> (FCC) is attractive to families with young children because, at its best, it delivers an intimately scaled home-like setting with a warm child-centered provider who

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<sup>1</sup> A home child care setting consisting of a private family home caring for not more than six children, including the provider's own children not in school full time.



can support a young child’s cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development. In Connecticut, the diversity found among the State’s 1,700+ active FCC providers<sup>2</sup> allows families to choose a child care arrangement that reflects their own cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. Programs also tend to be more flexible than center based care for families with variable work schedules. In a recent statewide survey of child care businesses with close to 170 FCC providers respondents who disclosed their race, approximately 8% identified as African American and 23% identified as multiracial, Asian, or another racial group. Ethnically, about 59% identified as Latinx.<sup>3</sup>

There are many barriers preventing FCC providers from successfully accessing and leveraging resources to be able to deliver services that successfully address the developmental needs of young children. Working alone at home can be isolating and caring for children is physically and emotionally demanding. FCC providers face a lack of access to resources and services due to language and technological barriers and time demands of running the business. In a recent [child care provider technology survey](#), of FCC providers respondents, 59% reported having enough access to functioning computers, and 41% reported that their primary language was Spanish.<sup>4</sup> Too often, FCC providers’ income for services can be insufficient to justify the business’ continued existence and the provider’s long-term commitment to a career in early care and education.

## **Background**

Under OEC’s theory of change for FCC provider quality improvement, SFCCNs add a needed layer of systemic capacity and help cultivate the conditions for providers’ success. The anticipated result, FCC provider businesses that join a network will be more likely to thrive; produce rewarding careers for providers; and expand the supply of high-quality early care and education for young children – especially for infants and toddlers. SFCCNs currently cultivate FCC providers’ success by:

- Investing in relationship building and partnership with new and existing FCC providers to understand their specific circumstances and needs;
- Enhancing the skills of providers to address the developmental needs of children in their care and support families using their services;
- Retaining experienced FCC providers through measures designed to make FCC providers personally, professionally, and financially rewarding for these early childhood educators; and
- Proactively identifying and connecting these business owners to the appropriate external resources to achieve these goals.

Since 2018, the OEC has contracted with local nonprofit organizations to organize and operate these regional, community-based SFCCNs. In 2021, the OEC launched the Hub model to support [OEC Regional SFCCNs](#).

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<sup>2</sup> As of December 2023, based on “OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD & OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERS, 2024”, prepared by the University of Connecticut-School of Social Work

<sup>3</sup> Mukherjee, B., Lawrence, S.E., Polar, J., & Gould-Kabler, C. (May 2024). 2024 Report on Staffed Family Child Care Network Member Experiences. Prepared by the UConn School of Social Work team in partnership with the Office of Early Childhood.

<sup>4</sup> [“2023 Child Care Provider Technology Survey: Report of Key Findings”](#), prepared by the University of Connecticut School of Social Work

The current Hub is contracting with three (3) SFCCNs serving six (6) regions of the state. As the SFCCNs continue to mature, and as SFCCNs scale-up their membership and service offerings, the OEC is committed to ensuring that the overall SFCCN system develops equitably and consistently.

## **Project Objectives**

To continue supporting the OEC's overall child care policy objectives including those outlined in the 2023 Blue Ribbon Panel Child Care Report and ensure consistent and equitable growth amongst SFCCNs, the OEC seeks a contractor to provide leadership in expanding and strengthening the infrastructure of SFCCNs. The Hub will serve as a superstructure over the individual SFCCNs, ensuring smooth operation and alignment between regional SFCCNs, OEC, and external service providers. The Hub will be responsible for sharing and coordinating resources and services with SFCCNs and ensuring SFCCNs understand how resources and services are delivered. The Hub will serve as a liaison between SFCCNs, OEC, and external service providers by facilitating effective communication and collaboration.

In addition to overseeing the system, the Hub will provide comprehensive support to the SFCCNs which will in turn support the SFCCN system's goals of:

- **increasing the supply of infant and toddler care, particularly in child care deserts;**
- **improving the quality of licensed home-based child care;**
- **supporting providers as they seek national accreditation;**
- **expanding the child care options available to working families; and**
- **providing access to professional training, educational credentials, and networking opportunities.**

## **Essential Qualifications**

Respondents to this RFP should possess diverse skill sets, knowledge, and organizational business practices to run the Hub effectively. Key competencies include knowledge and awareness of the unique function of FCC provider businesses, proven ability to build relationships with FCC providers and/or SFCCNs, a collaborative leadership style, an organizational business practice that can serve as a model for collaboration and communication within the Hub system, and an organizational business practice that will build trust with and between the SFCCNs, their members, and external service providers. Additionally, a deep understanding of racial equity is essential to work with SFCCNs to provide inclusive support to providers in alignment with their specific needs and regional and cultural nuances. Lastly, these skills will be instrumental in driving positive outcomes and fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration.

## **Key Concepts**

### **Facilitative Leadership**

The Hub's role, and its challenge, is to mobilize the knowledge and experience of the SFCCNs through the exercise of facilitative leadership. According to the Interaction Institute for Social Change, found at <https://interactioninstitute.org/>, one of the foremost practitioners of this leadership style:

Facilitative leaders are able to tap the power of teamwork and collaboration to achieve mission-critical goals. They seize opportunities for process improvement and hold themselves and others accountable for performance and results. This empowers individuals

and teams to take more initiative. People want to perform for and with leaders they trust and respect. Facilitative leaders 'walk the talk' and inspire people to do the same.

Unlike conventional top-down leadership based on positional authority, the Hub's facilitative leadership role requires the ability to skillfully balance three components of productive collaboration: a group process that brings out the best in participating network organizations, builds trusting and respectful relationships among participants, and produces shared and measurable mission-critical performance and results. Respondents to this RFP will need to marshal evidence that demonstrates a history of skillfully leading the type of productive, collaborative initiatives the OEC seeks to initiate by funding the Hub as an intermediary situated between the state government and practitioners operating statewide.

### Communities of Practice (CoP)

Education credentials and professional development opportunities furnish an indispensable foundation for new and existing early childhood educators. Applying that knowledge, however, requires skills and experiences acquired through less formal channels gained from observation, problem-solving, and interactions with other practitioners.

CoP bring together groups of people who interact on an on-going basis around a shared interest. CoP are composed of FCC providers who meet regularly around their shared interest in the business and practice of early childhood education. These CoP are nurtured by the Hub and SFCCNs, each of which has significant experience in the early childhood field. Supported by the Hub, SFCCNs plan regular, mostly monthly, membership meetings. These gatherings are both social and professional development events. They build a sense of community among providers who would otherwise operate in isolation. The coordinating SFCCNs' staff build relationships with each provider. This establishes a foundation of trust that makes it possible for the staff to visit the FCC home to observe, coach, and provide expert advice. The SFCCN's staff conducts needs assessments and, in partnership with members, plans interventions.

The stability and professionalism nurtured through the SFCCNs make it possible to integrate FCC providers into the state's system of early childhood development. These outcomes, in turn, should result in greater professional rewards and lead to longer periods of stable business operation. OEC's experience indicates that SFCCNs foster a sense of community among their members, a greater sense of professional identity, cooperative strategies for enhancing earnings, and the adoption of more developmentally oriented professional practices.

### Shared Services

The U.S. Health and Human Services Child Care Technical Assistance Network, found at [National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance \(NCECOQA\) | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.ncecoqa.org/), defines shared services as when "one part of an organization or group providing a service that had previously been found in more than one part of the organization or group." By leveraging shared services within their programs, providers may be able to achieve the following gains:

- Reduced or shared costs and time through joint purchasing, staff sharing, centralized administration, or some combination.
- Shared program or administrative capacity-building using common tools and systems, shared mentoring and supervision, and collaborative improvement processes.
- Reinvestment of cost and time savings into enhanced program quality.

OEC believes that this shared services framework could potentially be useful to advance the adoption of Child Care Management Software across FCC providers as a means to improve provider sustainability and revenue<sup>5</sup>.

## **Essential Functions of the SFCCN System**

The SFCCN system is intended to improve provider retention and increase provider supply in the following priority areas:

- 1. Child Care Deserts**, referring to areas where the supply of licensed early childhood education providers is insufficient to ensure that families are able to locate and afford child care services that meet their preferences. Importantly, families should have access to a variety of choices for care. The Center for American Progress formally defines a child care desert as “any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots.”<sup>6</sup>
- 2. Infant/Toddler Care**, referring to care for children ages 0-3. Historically, access to infant/toddler care has been limited in the State of Connecticut, though the state has recently made efforts to expand its availability as detailed in the *Connecticut’s Blue Ribbon Panel Child Care Report 2023* found at <https://www.ctoec.org/blue-ribbon-panel>.

OEC envisions a coordinated system of support that is a collaboration between the Hub, Regional SFCCNs, and external service providers who provide tailored technical assistance and support to member FCC providers.

**The Hub provides a superstructure to SFCCNs to ensure regional SFCCNs are fully equipped to succeed.** The Hub provides leadership to the SFCCN system, ensuring its integrity and consistency across the state. It does so by collecting data that informs ongoing quality improvement efforts, negotiating working relationships with state agencies and external service providers who support network members, and regularly convening SFCCN stakeholders to ensure operational success.

The SFCCN system will support FCC providers at all levels of operational readiness, including prospective FCC providers in the early stages of seeking licensure, existing FCC providers who need support to keep their businesses open, and mature FCC providers looking to further grow their businesses.

The Hub, as the superstructure for SFCCNs across the state, provides the opportunity to deliver technical assistance to member FCC providers, including training, peer support, and responsiveness to provider needs. The Hub will:

1. Maximize the impact of SFCCN services by systemizing the model, supporting delivery of services to providers and training to network staff;

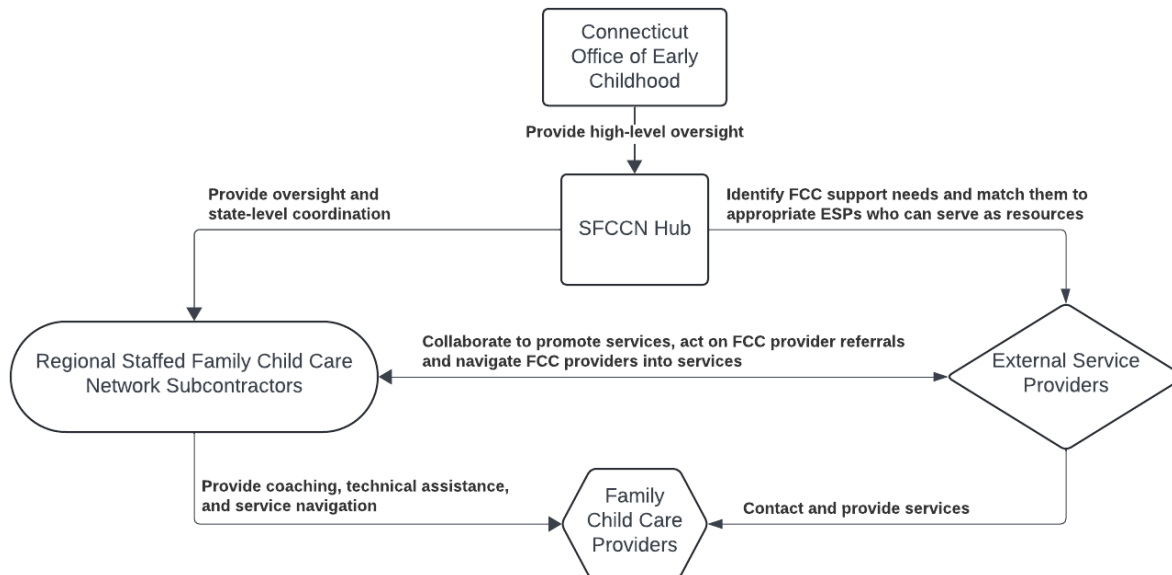
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<sup>5</sup> CCMS reduces time spent on administrative tasks, freeing up hours to focus on children and families while giving providers a more manageable work-life balance. In addition, CCMS can support with tracking enrollment, revenue, and expenses, helping improve business efficiency and allowing providers to seamlessly transfer data with the state’s data systems, informing policy and practice decisions and expediting state subsidy payments to participating providers.

<sup>6</sup> Malik, R. & Hamm, K. (August 2017). Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts. Retrieved at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/mapping-americas-child-care-deserts/> on 8 May 2024

2. Build capacity across the SFCCNs to share best practices and advance provider quality; and
3. Implement shared services/build a shared services infrastructure to improve business operations and viability.

### ***The SFCCN Service Delivery Model***



The Hub and its associated SFCCNs are a coordinated approach to providing the right services to FCC providers in service of OEC’s stated objectives. It is a collaboration between a statewide hub, SFCCNs serving geographically defined regions of the state, and external service providers with deep and specialized expertise. It consists of the following components:

- **The Hub**, which is responsible for providing oversight and coordination across this entire system by facilitating information sharing and knowledge between OEC and SFCCNs, disseminating best practices and setting standard procedures among SFCCNs, and establishing protocols and expectations for how regional SFCCNs and external service providers will collaborate with each other. ***This RFP is for the Intermediary Hub.***
- **SFCCNs**, which are responsible for developing close relationships with member FCC providers and provide licensing support and system coordination to help their members grow their businesses, resulting in an increased supply of FCC providers. ***The Intermediary Hub is responsible for contracting with a sufficient number of SFCCNs to effectively serve FCC providers across the entire state.***
- **External Service Providers**, which are responsible for providing expert assistance to member FCC providers in specific areas of need, such as business practices, technology, infant mental health, child and adult food program participation, and other specific areas of need.

The following sections provide additional detail about the role of each of these components of the Service Delivery Model.

### ***Role of the Hub***

To ensure that the SFCCNs are able to provide a robust and consistent suite of services to FCC providers across the state, the Hub is responsible for providing implementation leadership to the OEC's SFCCN infrastructure. In addition to procuring regional SFCCN subcontractors, the Hub will carry out the following responsibilities:

### ***Essential Functions of the Hub***

- **Steering:** The Hub provides overall direction and guidance to the SFCCNs by developing standards for service delivery and updates the standards based on best practices identified during CoP. It sets clear expectations for performance, provides clear feedback and coaching, based on data collected to help SFCCNs more effectively serve their members and achieve agency objectives.
- **Coordination:** The Hub promotes coordination, shared learning among SFCCNs, and the dissemination of new and improved resources for network members. It facilitates effective collaboration between SFCCNs and external service providers by developing protocols for effective system coordination.
- **CoP:** The Hub hosts monthly CoP meetings with all SFCCNs to promote shared learning and collaboration between SFCCNs. These meetings provide regular opportunities for shared learning and feedback between the Hub and SFCCNs, ensuring that they are regularly assessing how they are working together, exchanging best practices, and creating a closed feedback loop between SFCCNs and the TA service providers who work with their referred members. In addition, these CoPs allow the Hub to identify key trends that can be relayed to the OEC to inform statewide policy and practice.
- **Quality Assurance and Impact Measurement:** The Hub collects and analyzes data to understand provider-level needs, using these insights to inform the SFCCN infrastructure's overall strategy for service delivery. Based on these findings, it sets network-wide standards for service delivery, system coordination, and collaboration. The Hub uses data to focus on building the supply of infant/toddler care and address supply in child care desert areas. Finally, the Hub also develops and implements a performance management data collection system.
- **Resourcing:** The Hub identifies and provides trainings to SFCCNs on resources that they can use with their members to deliver services, ensuring that SFCCNs are adequately equipped to use these resources. As needed, it negotiates relationships and expectations with expert service providers to foster collaborative working relationships with SFCCNs and when appropriate, the Hub is responsible for coordinating and hosting trainings suitable for a statewide audience.
- **Promotion:** The Hub oversees all statewide efforts to promote the visibility and utilization of the SFCCN infrastructure through collaboration with the OEC, SFCCNs, external service providers, and other FCC providers stakeholders.

Given the diverse nature of FCC providers, the Hub should also be prepared to provide translation support to the SFCCNs and external service providers and should prioritize ensuring that the entire system of FCC provider supports is accessible in key languages spoken by FCC providers, as identified by SFCCNs. For example, the Hub should make sure it promotes events in multiple languages and arranges for translation services during events.

Ultimately, the Hub's role is to ensure that SFCCNs are able to provide the base level of services described in this section while allowing sufficient autonomy to adapt the delivery of

these services in a way that is tailored to the specific needs of each region. To do this, the Hub should work closely with its SFCCNs to determine where flexibility is needed and what adjustments can be made to empower the SFCCNs to best serve their members without compromising the integrity of the service menu.

### ***Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN)***

OEC's approach to supporting FCC providers relies on SFCCNs which provide support directly to FCC providers, leveraging close and trusting relationships to allow them to effectively identify FCC providers needs and match members to support at the right time. Specifically, SFCCNs will carry out the following key functions:

#### ***Essential Functions of the SFCCNs***

- **Membership:** SFCCNs promote their own SFCCNs to recruit FCC providers as members, and manage member relations to establish trust, engagement, and a sense of group identity that can serve as the foundation for effective collaboration and support.
- **Technical Assistance and CoP:** SFCCNs work with members in group and 1-1 settings to determine and address the pedagogical, business support, family support and professional development needs of their members. Through these engagements, they also identify member needs that external service providers can address. In addition, the SFCCNs host monthly network-wide CoP meetings for their members to convene member FCC providers to build a sense of community among otherwise isolated providers, provide opportunities for professional development, and to allow the SFCCNs to build trusting relationships with providers. Through these engagements, SFCCNs establish a foundation of trust through which they also can provide coaching, expert advice, and help identify member needs that external service providers can address.
- **System Coordination:** SFCCN staff promote the usage of these external service providers; they engage in co-programming and shared outreach activities with external service providers to increase providers' awareness of these services. SFCCNs keep careful records of these engagements to ensure they can follow up with members and track their progress.
- **Licensing and Accreditation Support:** SFCCNs provide support and leverage training and resources developed by OEC Divisions to assist their members in seeking licensing, advancing in Elevate, OEC's Quality Improvement System, and achieving national accreditation. This includes working with FCC providers to develop Elevate plans for OEC approval and supporting ongoing efforts to implement approved Elevate plans.

SFCCNs must be prepared to provide system coordination in response to a wide range of provider needs. As a baseline, OEC has identified the following services as essential to the SFCCN model. Note that the Hub is responsible for data collection for each of these services; the data collection measures listed below represent a starting point for the Hub's data collection efforts and are subject to revision as necessary to better achieve OEC's stated objectives.

<b>Essential Function of the SFCCN</b>	<b>SFCCN Activities</b>	<b>Potential Hub Data Collection Measures</b>
<b>Membership:</b> Engage FCC providers in SFCCN to help them improve business and pedagogical practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit new members.</li> <li>Sustain existing members</li> <li>Membership agreements with members</li> <li>Engage members in SFCCN services/activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of signed Membership Agreements</li> <li>Membership retention</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Assistance:</b> Support FCC provider to improve the quality of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-on-One consultation</li> <li>Small group consultation</li> <li>SFCCN meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of one-on-one member meetings</li> <li>Member participation in SFCCN meetings</li> <li>Member participation in SFCCN training sessions</li> </ul>
<b>System Coordination:</b> SFCCN staff promote the usage of external service providers, they engage in co-programming and shared outreach activities to increase providers' awareness of these services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist members with a 'warm hand-off' to external service providers</li> <li>Be knowledgeable of external service providers and community resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of referrals to external service providers</li> <li>Number of events including external service providers and community resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Licensing Support:</b> Grow the number of licensed FCC providers and ensure licensing in good standing for FCC providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify community members interested in becoming licensed</li> <li>Support members with licensing violations to correct areas of concern</li> <li>Target recruitment of new providers in child care deserts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of community members that attend licensing training</li> <li>Number that complete licensing training</li> <li>Percentage of training participants that become licensed</li> <li>Licensing status of members</li> <li>Number new licensed spaces</li> </ul>
<b>NAFCC Accreditation Consultation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to provider requests for information about the NAFCC accreditation process</li> <li>Assist FCC providers in accessing resources to reduce or minimize the cost of NAFCC accreditation</li> <li>Assist FCC providers to complete the self-study process and submit materials</li> <li>Assist FCC providers to prepare for the additional components of the accreditation process</li> <li>Linking to OEC scholarship fund for FCC provider's accessing credit based course work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of members that use funding available to purchase self-study materials</li> <li>Percentage of those members that start the self-study process and that complete the self-study</li> <li>Percentage of those that complete the self-study that become NAFCC accredited</li> </ul>



## C. SCOPE OF SERVICES DESCRIPTION

### Organizational Expectations

The contractor ultimately selected for the Hub role will need to be adaptable, responsive, capable of coordinating multiple stakeholders, fiscally responsible, and strategically aligned to the OEC's vision for success. The Hub should be willing to continually adjust its programming and processes as the SFCCN system evolves over the course of this three-year contract. In particular, the OEC is interested in potential respondents with the following qualifications:

- **Early Care and Education Expertise** - The ideal respondent possesses deep knowledge of early childhood development – including pedagogical, infant, and toddler care practices – and deep understanding of the family child care model. The respondent should also have familiarity with the ecosystem of organizations, governing entities, and funding that supports the field of early childhood education. The ideal respondent would also be knowledgeable of Connecticut's child care workforce with a focus on FCC and regulatory environment.
- **Track 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 early care and education field.
- **Innovation and Change Management** – The ideal respondent has the capacity to develop and deliver innovative solutions to sector-wide challenges and to lead a process for facilitating change in the way providers have managed their businesses since their inception.
- **Strategic Alignment** – The ideal respondent's organizational mission and direction aligns with the Hub's proposed function and positionality within Connecticut's FCC infrastructure.
- **Facilitative Leadership** – The ideal respondent would be able to exercise facilitative leadership to build robust supports for FCC providers that successfully integrates home-based programs into the state's larger early care and education system.
- **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. The ideal respondent would be able to leverage this knowledge to balance regional service adaptations with system-wide goals.
- **Organizational Development** – The ideal respondent has prior experience supporting capacity building initiatives for other organizations. The respondent ultimately selected as the Hub will be expected to organize a system for identifying professional development needs and providing technical assistance to the SFCCNs to meet the needs of FCC providers.
- **Fiscal Management** – The ideal respondent possesses sophisticated financial control systems and would be able to manage complex fiscal arrangements. The Hub will be expected to contract directly with SFCCNs. Additionally, the Hub will need to provide regular financial reporting to the OEC.

## **Staffing Expectations**

- **Governance & Leadership** – The ideal respondent’s governing board, chief executive, and senior staff are actively engaged in the early education and care field and have the ability to provide strategic leadership in this area.
- **Dedicated Personnel** – The operation of a Hub for the SFCCN system is an ambitious endeavor with many dynamic, moving parts. As such, the ideal respondent’s staffing structure and allocation of staff time would reflect a commitment to properly resourcing the Hub’s goals and activities through dedicated personnel. The OEC anticipates one full-time staff member responsible for operationalizing and overseeing the Hub, with one (1) FTE of additional staff support to help coordinate resources and implement programming.
- **Diverse Workforce** – The ideal respondent has, or is actively working towards, a diverse workforce, with multicultural and multilingual employees.

## **Service Expectations**

- **Target Population** – While the Hub’s primary clients are the staff of different SFCCNs, the contractor selected as the Hub should possess a comprehensive understanding of the different layers of clientele that the SFCCN system serves.
  - **Families** are the ultimate end-users of the SFCCN system. Families who choose home-based child care in Connecticut are often diverse in their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.
  - **FCC 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 SFCCN providers, of those who reported their race, 51% reported a race other than White. Ethnically, about 59% identified as Hispanic/Latinx.
  - **SFCCNs** provide support directly to FCC providers, leveraging close and trusting relationships to allow them to effectively identify FCC providers’ needs and match members to support at the right time. As noted in earlier parts of this RFP, SFCCNs are typically operated by small and medium sized nonprofits with a regional focus. While the staff at SFCCNs are experts in their regions and in particular services, they may not have state-wide or systems expertise. The Hub provides a connective tissue between the different SFCCNs, solidifying the cohesion of the overall SFCCN system’s structure.
- **Core Services** - As the SFCCN system continues to evolve, the OEC anticipates that the Hub will continually adapt its supportive activities to the needs of the SFCCNs. Listed below are the core services that the Hub is expected to provide during the three (3) -year contract period – either directly or through subcontractors.

The Hub will be expected to provide all core services immediately upon contract execution, and to contract with the existing network of SFCCNs as soon as possible, ideally within the first six (6) months of contract award.

Detailed descriptions of each of the expected service areas are also provided in tables below:

*Core Services*

1. Oversee Infrastructure of SFCCNs
2. Strategic Planning and Program Development
3. Marketing and Enrollment
4. Providing Technical Assistance to SFCCNs
5. Network Capacity Building
6. Resource Commons
7. Data Collection and Evaluation
8. Rate Card Administration

<b>Description of Core Services</b> <i>Services that should be provided during the 3-year contract period</i>	
<b>Oversee Infrastructure of SFCCNs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contract with, and oversee the performance of, the existing network of SFCCNs.</li> <li>● Monitor service offerings across SFCCNs to ensure that services address needs of local providers and reflect system goals.</li> <li>● Create and track metrics to gauge each SFCCNs' outcomes, the effectiveness of this system's programmatic initiatives, and the system's overall impact. Potential metrics could focus on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the number of FCC providers affiliated with a SFCCN</li> <li>▪ supply and quality of child care services delivered by SFCCN members</li> <li>▪ number of referrals and successful engagements with TA providers</li> <li>▪ network member engagement</li> <li>▪ longevity and stability of FCC provider businesses</li> <li>▪ evidence of career attachment and provider well-being</li> <li>▪ child enrollment</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Convene and facilitate CoP meetings with the SFCCNs to share information, improve programmatic activities, identify needs, and plan and coordinate service delivery for the network. Provide leadership-level presence in Connecticut's early childhood system, such as sit on councils and attend regional and statewide early childhood meetings, to ensure that FCC providers and the emerging FCC providers system are represented and well-integrated into the state's larger early childhood system including with OEC and its initiatives and contractors.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Planning and Program Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Convene network cohort, representatives from the provider community, and OEC liaison on a quarterly basis to chart the buildout of Connecticut's SFCCN system, identifying high yield innovations in terms of provider well-being, business performance or programmatic quality and resourcing.</li> <li>● In collaboration with OEC and SFCCNs, schedule, resource, plan and implement strategic initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing and Enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Direct all statewide marketing and outreach efforts, including promotional campaigns to raise awareness of OEC SFCCNs, recruit FCC providers to join SFCCNs, and retain existing network members, coordinating with SFCCNs to execute campaigns.</li> <li>● Where appropriate, work with SFCCNs to align their regional marketing to OEC campaigns, ensuring that SFCCNs have consistent and accurate messaging to promote resources to their members.</li> <li>● Ensure third-party child care search engines and organizations list network-affiliated FCC providers and receive updated data on availability.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Capacity Building and Technical Assistance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In coordination with OEC, continue to ensure the availability and use of specialized services and programs of need to FCC providers.</li> <li>● Building on existing external provider supports (such as the Professional Registry, Behavior Health, and Business Technical Assistance), offer, or procure NAFCC accreditation consultation, and Child and Adult Care Food Program participation. SFCCNs will refer member providers to these services as needed.</li> <li>● In consultation with the cohort of SFCCNs and OEC, develop and (if appropriate) sign MOUs with professional development and technical assistance providers who can accept network referrals to work with FCC providers to improve the quality of their services and measures to sustain and improve the performance of their FCC provider as a business enterprise.</li> <li>● Support SFCCNs in navigating Elevate Connecticut’s Quality Improvement system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Network Capacity Building</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SFCCNs are expected to cultivate relationship-based connections with their members. One of the most valuable support services for providers is individualized coaching. The Hub is to ensure consistency and quality in the one-on-one services SFCCNs deliver.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Translation Services and Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contract with a professional translation service that can translate communication materials and partner with external service providers to provide direct translation support as needed.</li> <li>● Ensure that communication and marketing materials developed by the Hub are available in languages other than English.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Data Collection and Evaluation of Network Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with OEC, SFCCNs, and external service providers to identify priority outcomes for the SFCCN system and define measurable indicators for each outcome. Potential outcomes and associated measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engagement: percentage of members who attend more than 60% of their network meetings, percentage of members who have reached out for 1:1 support</li> <li>○ Accreditation: percentage of network members achieving NAFCC accreditation</li> <li>○ Network trust: number of members willing to engage TA partners for home visits by coaches, consultants, and observers using various rating tools</li> <li>○ Business Performance: average enrollment rates, bad debt rates, gross to net income, hours worked per week</li> <li>○ Career attachment: average number of years in operation</li> <li>○ Licensing: Number of new FCC providers licensed</li> <li>○ Enrollment: Absolute number and changes in infant/toddler enrollment</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Develop a reporting system to allow SFCCNs to provide provider-level data on metrics and is able to track increases or decreases in metrics over time.</li> <li>● Collaborate with OEC and SFCCNs to collect and report on these outcome measures.</li> <li>● Analyze the performance of the Hub and the SFCCNs in achieving outcomes and delivering services that meet provider needs.</li> <li>● Adhere to data privacy, data confidentiality, and data security protocols pursuant to all state and federal data statues, policies, and regulations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rate Card Administration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Serve at the direction of OEC as the managing entity for SFCCN rate card funds and disburse incentive payments to SFCCNs on OEC’s behalf when rate card goals are met.</li> <li>● In collaboration with OEC, define, collect data, and monitor rate card metrics to determine SFCCN eligibility for incentive payments.</li> </ul>

## **Data Expectations**

- **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.

## **Financial Expectations**

- **Fiscal Health** –The ideal respondent is in a fiscally sound position, as determined through clean opinions documented in the last three (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 the cohort of SFCCNs and with third parties contracted to deliver training and technical assistance services to the SFCCNs and their FCC provider members; and would be able to provide business finance expertise to the cohort of SFCCNs and their FCC provider members. Respondents should be using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

## **Budget Expectations**

- **Program Funding Sources:** This contract will be funded through federal Child Care Development funds.  
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- **Total Available Funding & Award Period:** The contractor selected as the Hub will manage up to \$4,200,000 in funding over a three-year period. The estimated annual breakdown is not to exceed the following:
  - Year 1: \$1,200,000 (\$960,000 to Networks) + \$200,000 Rate Card incentives to Networks
  - Year 2: \$1,200,000 (\$960,000 to Networks) + \$200,000 Rate Card incentives to Networks
  - Year 3: \$1,200,000 (\$960,000 to Networks) + \$200,000 Rate Card incentives to Networks

OEC intends to also implement a rate card system for SFCCNs, which will consist of metrics and accompanying incentive payments for meeting targets. The Hub will serve as the passthrough entity for these funds and will be responsible for verifying outcomes and administering incentive payments. Funding for the rate card is not required as part of the proposal budget. OEC will work separately with the Hub to establish metrics and a budget for the rate card.

Budgets submitted in response to this RFP should reflect these spending priorities. The OEC will work closely with the selected contractor on a regular basis to analyze funding and ensure that both the Hub and the SFCCNs are sufficiently resourced and functioning efficiently, given the available funding.

- **Cost Standards:** Respondents’ budget and planned expenditures for this RFP must comply with the cost standards published by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. The cost standards are available online at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/POSCostStandards101816pdf.pdf?la=en>

As this contracted is 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 contractor about allowable expenditures.

In addition to required compliance with the published cost standards, respondents are advised that a responsive budget must limit annual administrative costs to 10% of the total budget. State or federal funding, by activity, will be determined at point of contracting for final determination of administrative cap.

Per OPM Cost Allocation guidelines, unused/unexpended State funding at the end of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 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 contractors to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery and policy based on learning what works. Just as the Hub will work in close collaboration with the individual SFCCNs to manage their performance, the awarded contractor should expect to partner extensively with the OEC staff in its own continuous learning and improvement processes.

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

- Frequent, regular meetings between OEC and the Hub focused on project planning; assessing strategy and progress towards system goals; assessing network satisfaction rates; understanding disparities and disproportionalities between SFCCNs; and advancing greater adoption of shared services among SFCCNs and their members;
- Timely submission of progress updates and fiscal reports; and
- Open lines of communication to proactively address challenges and course correct.

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

## **E. PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

There are three levels of performance measures that will be regularly analyzed throughout the lifetime of this contract. The first, as noted in earlier parts of the RFP, is the performance of SFCCNs in direct service delivery. The second is the performance of the Hub in managing the overall SFCCN system. While the contractor selected as the Hub will be responsible for managing the performance of the SFCCNs, the OEC staff will direct evaluations of the Hub's performance.

The third performance measure is a performance-based rate card. The OEC uses rate cards as an innovative procurement tool to define a list of key metrics that underscore the goals of a project or contract. When these key metrics are achieved, a payment is provided as a financial incentive to continue to advance the goals of the project. The rate card metrics will be included in measuring outcomes for the SFCCNs. The OEC intends for the Hub to align its support for SFCCNs with these metrics to ensure that SFCCNs have the best possible chance of meeting key metrics.

Examples of the metrics that the Hub may use to analyze SFCCNs performance were listed on pages 15 - 16 of this RFP. The table below highlights outcomes of interest that the OEC may examine during the course of this contract to understand the Hub's 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 Hub to collaboratively refine and define additional important performance metrics.

Desired Outcome	Potential Metric	Potential Data Source
SFCCNs feel supported in their ability to work directly with FCC providers and are actively working towards a unified vision for the SFCCN system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service satisfaction rates</li> <li>• Network perception rates</li> </ul>	Network surveys
Service offerings and developmental opportunities are consistent across SFCCNs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # and type of services offered by network</li> <li>• Service utilization rates</li> </ul>	Service inventory
Network membership grows equitably across regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership demographics by network</li> </ul>	Membership database
FCC providers are successfully joining the Birth to Five system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of member FCC providers participating receiving state funding</li> <li>• # of member FCC providers receiving NAFCC accreditation</li> <li>• # of member FCC providers achieving Elevate Member+ status</li> </ul>	Workforce Registry, OEC Elevate database, NAFCC, and OEC ECE Reporter
More FCC provider slots are available for infants and toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of infant/toddler served by FCC providers</li> <li>• # of infant/toddler slots</li> </ul>	Network surveys
As a result of the provision of in-language services, more FCC providers are successfully engaging with the SFCCN system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of translation requests</li> <li>• Service utilization rate for translated services</li> <li>• Service satisfaction rates for translated services</li> </ul>	Network surveys Service inventory

## III. Proposal Submission Overview

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### 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 will 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 or Number
  - Legal Name
  - FEIN
  - Street Address
  - Town/City/State/Zip
  - Contact Person
  - Title
  - Phone Number
  - E-Mail Address
  - Authorized Official
  - Title
  - 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 two (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 ½
- 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 Title	% of Total	What would a top score look like?
Organizational Strengths	15%	The ideal respondent... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates sustained commitment to, and credibility in, the early childhood field and a strong understanding of FCC providers, with a history of thought leadership and innovation, as well as an experienced staff and a governing board that has subject-matter expertise specific to FCC providers.</li> <li>• Has the ability to leverage its own capacity/infrastructure to provide training, coaching, and other support services to the SFCCN system, as demonstrated through a strong staffing plan with personnel who individually or cumulatively possess the range of skills related to both the operational side of running FCC provider businesses and the pedagogical side of child development.</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>• Articulates a process for identifying both state-wide and regional needs to simultaneously build a more cohesive state SFCCN system and tend to the unique needs of individual SFCCNs</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has prior experience managing state contracts and working collaboratively with public sector partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Humility, Equity, and Linguistic Competence</b>	<b>5%</b>	<p>The ideal respondent...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>Demonstrates the ability to provide services to a culturally and linguistically diverse set of communities, as evidenced by examples of how they have expanded their own services through translation, hiring staff that can provide culturally and linguistically tailored services, and working in partnership with other organizations to provide co-programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitative Leadership</b>	<b>30%</b>	<p>The ideal respondent...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates experience and ability to engage, interact with, and manage multiple stakeholders.</li> <li>Demonstrates experience and ability to breakthrough institutional inertia, build a collective sense, and move partners forward along a shared strategic vision.</li> <li>Demonstrates experience and ability to balance three components of productive collaboration: a group process that brings out the best in participating network organizations; builds trusting and respectful relationships among participants; and produces shared and measurable mission-critical performance and results.</li> <li>Values openness, transparency, and a willingness to collaborate.</li> </ul>
<b>IT, Data, Evaluation, and Performance Management</b>	<b>25%</b>	<p>The ideal respondent...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has prior experience developing and measuring key metrics and utilizing</li> </ul>

		<p>data to generate performance outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 statues, regulations, and policies and can secure all confidential information.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Profile</b>	<b>10%</b>	<p>The ideal respondent...</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>15%</b>	<p>The ideal budget and staffing plans...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a reasonable, cost-effective use of funds, with the total monetary “ask” within or under budget, and the majority of funds going to network</li> </ul>

		<p>subcontracts and core network activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect a strategic commitment to the overall goals of developing the SFCCN in the way that monetary, in-kind, and staffing resources are allocated.</li> <li>• Include resumes of key staff and/or draft job descriptions of staff that need to be hired.</li> </ul>
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**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) calendar days of receiving notification from the OEC, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered “day one” of the ten (10) calendar days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contacts and request a meeting with the OEC to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The OEC will schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) business days of the request. The OEC will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.
- 7. Appeal Process.** Pursuant to General Statutes § 4e-36 (a), any bidder or proposer on a state contract may contest the solicitation or award of a contract to a subcommittee of the State Contracting Standards Board. Such contest shall be submitted, in writing, not later than fourteen days after such bidder or proposer knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to such contest and shall be limited to the procedural elements of the solicitation or award process, or claims of an unauthorized or unwarranted, noncompetitive selection process.
- 8. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the OEC’s contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on State Contracting Portal and the OEC website.

## IV. Required Proposal Submission Outline

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- 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**
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### A. Cover Sheet

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

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

*Legal Name* is defined as the name of private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality submitting the proposal. *Contact Person* is defined as the individual who can provide additional information about the proposal or who has immediate responsibility for the proposal. *Authorized Official* is defined as the individual empowered to submit a binding offer on behalf of the 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 referred to in section D and then placed in section E. The OEC Evaluation Committee will not read answers longer than 35 pages in the main proposal section.

### **Organizational Strengths**

- 1. Mission & History:** Provide your organization's mission statement, a brief organizational history, and a description of core programs.
- 2. Organizational Expertise in Early Childhood Education:** Describe your organization's experience and expertise in early childhood education, highlighting knowledge of infant/toddler development and FCC providers in particular.
- 3. Familiarity with Early Childhood Education Delivery System:** Describe your organization's involvement with the early childhood education system, including public policy and workforce issues, program quality, licensing and various performance standards, funding streams (including Care4Kids vouchers, Head Start, School Readiness, USDA Child and Adult Food Program, etc.), early intervention and family engagement.
- 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 the early childhood space. 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. Strategic Rationale:** Describe the strategic rationale for your organization to step into the Hub role at this point in your history and explain the relevance of your organization's programmatic and operational activities to the proposed Hub role in the SFCC network system.
- 6. Statewide and Regional Support:** Describe any past or current projects your organization has worked on related to statewide and/or regional early care and education issues in Connecticut. How would you go about deepening your knowledge of statewide and regional issues? What innovative approaches would you take to providing equitable resources to all providers statewide, while allowing individual SFCCNs the flexibility to support specific providers' regional needs?
- 7. Capacity Building:** Share an example of a current or prior project where your organization supported capacity building for another organization (or cohort of organizations). What was the goal of the project? How did you identify the coaching and technical assistance needs of the recipient organization? How did you incorporate knowledge transfer and sustainability into your coaching or technical assistance provisions? 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 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:** The Hub must be flexible and innovative in order to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities that could impact FCC providers. Tell us about a scenario where your organization had to make major adjustments to a partnership or program to address a new challenge or opportunity that was not originally envisioned at the start. How did you collaborate with your external partners or clients to redesign the program and better address their needs? What innovations were proposed and implemented? How did you put your equity and cultural humility framework into practice when navigating through these changes? How might you apply the lessons learned from this experience when operating the Hub?

### **Cultural Humility, Equity, and Linguistic Competence**

- 1. Cultural Humility and Equity:** Describe your organization's framework to 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*?
- 2. Linguistic Competence:** Describe any ways your organization has intentionally worked to expand your services to ensure access to people who speak languages other than English. Examples of this could include surveying clients to identify language needs, hiring staff who can provide in-language services, partnering with other organizations to co-deliver services in other languages, and working with translators to make events and materials available in multiple languages.

### **Facilitative Leadership**

- 1. 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.)
- 2. Organizational Values:** In establishing a productive collaboration, the Hub will need to demonstrate openness, transparency, and collaboration. Describe how your organization puts these values into action in the programs that you operate.
- 3. Productive Collaboration:** The Hub will be required to build productive collaboration and partnerships with the regional SFCCNs and other early care and education stakeholders. 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.



- 4. 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?
- 5. Facilitative Leadership Case Study:** The Hub is responsible for promoting best practices to ensure a consistent level of services across all the SFCCNs. Imagine that you are the Hub and have found that two of the regional network operators serve geographies that are demographically similar, but one of the two SFCCNs is reporting much higher engagement with core services and referrals to external service providers. How would you identify the factors that explain the performance difference? What support would you provide to the network with lower engagement? How would you promote collaboration between the two SFCCNs, with the goal of furthering the overall system goals of statewide reach and a unified system that provides a consistent level of service quality across all regions?

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

- 1. Performance Management:** Describe the process your organization would take to develop a performance management framework that moves SFCCNs and the overall system towards OEC's desired outcomes. Describe your experience using outcome-oriented, innovative approaches, to achieve performance measures.
- 2. Data:** Describe your current IT infrastructure and data reporting capacity. 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 formalizing data security and privacy into organizational policy.
- 3. Data Case Study:** Suppose that in Year 2 of the project, the SFCCNs collectively identify supporting FCC providers in implementing high quality infant/toddler care as their top priority. As the Hub, explain how you would support the SFCCN through 1-1 engagements, CoPs, and other kinds of support. How would you work with the SFCCNs to develop meaningful outcomes metrics that help SFCCNs identify progress towards success and continually make improvements to their work to support FCC providers? How would you regularly report insights back to the SFCCNs to coach them towards advancing this goal?

### **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.

Budgets submitted in response to this RFP should reflect these spending priorities. The OEC will work closely with the selected contractor on a regular basis to analyze funding and ensure that both the Hub and the regional network operators are sufficiently resourced and functioning efficiently, given the available funding.

- 2. Staffing Plan:** As a required attachment, supply a staffing plan that includes the following:
  - A count of your organization's total employees;
  - A chart indicating where (within which business or program unit) the Hub's staff will be located organizationally;
  - A detailed explanation of the supervisory structure to be used to oversee the Hub's activities, including the FTE staffing to be devoted to the Hub;
  - A detailed explanation of how your organization continually works towards diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of your workforce. (This could include: plans to diversify your workforce so that it is representative of the communities you serve; increasing the number of multicultural and multilingual employees; leadership pipelines for staff from historically marginalized communities; incorporating antiracist and/or equity lens into staff development; developing decision-making and management structures that incorporate frontline staff and client voice, etc. *This should be specific to your organization and reflective of your unique goals.*)
- 3. Staff Qualifications:** Provide a brief summary of the qualifications and tenure of each key staff member who will be assigned to resource the Hub's activities. In the required attachments, also include resumes of key staff. If you plan to staff up, include draft job descriptions for anticipated hires and hiring timelines. (Please compile all resumes and job descriptions into one document, as opposed to sending separate files for each resume or description.)

### **Transition Plan**

- 1. This question is unscored.** If you are currently an SFCCN contracted to the current Hub, please explain how you would competitively procure for a replacement SFCCN and transition services to the selected operator if awarded the Hub contract.

## **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
- 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.

## **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. Sign and return Appendix B.

## V. Mandatory Provisions

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### A. POS/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 POS:*

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 POS contract. A sample of Part I is available from the OEC's Official Contact upon request.

Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the POS contract. Part II is available on OPM's website at: [http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/standard\\_contract](http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/standard_contract)

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.** In the event that 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 reserves the right to 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, C.G.S. § 4a-81. Consulting Agreements**

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

- 4. Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at [https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec\\_form\\_11\\_notice\\_only.pdf](https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf)

- 5. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252.** Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:

- (1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and key personnel, who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, to (i) any public official or State employee of the State agency or quasi- public agency soliciting bids or proposals for State contracts, who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or requests for proposals for State contracts or the negotiation or award of State contracts, or (ii) any public official or State employee of any other State agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such State agency or quasi-public agency;
- (2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and



(3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.

Any bidder or 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
CCDF	Child Care Development Fund
CCMS	Child Care Management Software
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
CoP	Community of Practice
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
FCC	Family Child Care Provider
SFCCN	Staffed Family Child Care Network(s)
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
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
RFP	Request for Proposal
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
SFCCN	Staffed Family Child Care Network(s)
U.S.	United States

- **Community of Practice:** groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.<sup>7</sup>
- **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.
- **External Service Providers:** External service providers include local and state resources, such as those funded by OEC: Pyramid, Sparkler, business supports, retirement and health care navigators, etc. These agencies provide expert assistance to FCC providers in specific areas of need such as technology, infant mental health, child and adult food program participation and other specific areas of need.
- **Facilitative Leadership:** a style of leadership that emphasizes teamwork and collaboration to achieve mission-critical goals.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Wenger-Trayner, E & B. (2015). <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

<sup>8</sup> Interaction Institute for Social Change. Retrieved at: <https://interactioninstitute.org/> on 27 May 2021.

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- **Network Operator:** the entity, often a nonprofit organization or school-based organization, that operates, organizes, and coordinates services for family child care providers in a specified region.
  - **Proposer:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the OEC in response to this RFP.
  - **Prospective Proposer:** a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the OEC 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 OEC in response to this RFP.
  - **Shared Services:** a framework (organizational structure) that enables center- and home-based ECE providers to establish systems that can sustain high-quality teaching and learning (pedagogical leadership) while at the same time making sure all necessary fiscal and administrative tasks are performed (business leadership).<sup>9</sup>
  - **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

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<sup>9</sup> Stoney, L. [Merage - Shared Services final.indd \(squarespace.com\)](#)

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## 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. The Respondent will seek prior approval from the OEC before making any changes to the location of services.
- d. Neither the Respondent or any official of the organization nor any subcontractor or the Respondent or any official of the subcontractor organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with the State of CT or the Federal Government.
- e. Neither the Respondent or any official of the organization nor any subcontractor or the Respondent or any official of the subcontractor's organization has received any notices of debarment or suspension from contracting with other states within the United States.

Legal Name of Organization:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signatory

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## 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.		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Optional Pre-bid conference	August 2, 2024; 10:30 am ET
2	Optional Letter of Intent Due	August 5, 2024; 5 pm ET
3	Deadline for Questions	August 23, 2024; 5 pm ET
4	Proposals Due	September 4, 2024; 5 pm ET

### **Registration Link for Pre-bid Conference:**

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_flZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_flZ6PbxvRGqICTg53ZS4nQ)

### **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 or Number
  - Legal Name
  - FEIN
  - Street Address
  - Town/City/State/Zip
  - Contact Person
  - Title
  - Phone Number
  - E-Mail Address
  - Authorized Official
  - Title
  - Signature
- Table of Contents**
- Executive Summary:** high-level summary of proposal and cost, 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 provided OEC budget template, including budget narrative and cost schedules for planned subcontractors if applicable.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**
- Statement of Assurances**

**Formatting Checklist**

- Is the proposal formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 (letter-sized) paper?
- Is the main body of the proposal within the page limit?
- Is the proposal in 12-point, Times New Roman font?
- Does the proposal format follow normal (1 inch) margins and 1 ½ line spacing?
- Does the 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)?