



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION (OSSE)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

FY25 DC LEADING EDUCATORS TOWARD ADVANCED DEGREES (DC LEAD) PROGRAM

RFA Release Date:

May 22, 2024 (12 p.m.)

Application Submission Deadline:

July 8, 2024 (3 p.m.)

Pre-Application Webinar (Strongly Encouraged)

May 29, 2024 (10 a.m.)

Mandatory Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline:

June 12, 2024 (5 p.m.)

LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED OR CONSIDERED FOR AN AWARD

Please allow additional time for any issues you may experience, as well as the consistency check to run, prior to submission.

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SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Background Information

In December 2016, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) adopted child care licensing regulations that increased the minimum education requirements for the child development workforce, which required center directors to hold a bachelor's degree with coursework in early childhood education (EC), and teachers and expanded home caregivers to hold an associate degree in ECE or a closely related field. Through the DC Leading Educators toward Advance Degrees (DC LEAD) program, OSSE provides a scholarship opportunity to support early childhood educators in meeting the education requirements by covering the cost of tuition, fees and books as scholars pursue an associate or bachelor's degree in ECE or a closely related field at a partner institution of higher education (IHE). Through this scholarship opportunity, DC LEAD aims to support increased teacher capacity and staff retention by enabling teachers, expanded home providers and directors to obtain required credentials and equipping them the to support high-quality early childhood education and pursue further growth as leaders in ECE beyond the scholarship program.

1.1.1 Release for Application

The release date of the RFA is Wednesday, May 22, 2024 (12 p.m.). The RFA is available through the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS).

1.1.2 Pre-Application Webinar

Interested applicants are encouraged to participate in the pre-application webinar on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 10 a.m. To attend the pre-application webinar, please register [here](#) by Tuesday, May 28 2024.

1.1.3 Submission of Application

The application must be submitted using EGMS. A completed application with attachments is required upon submission. OSSE/DEL will not forward incomplete applications to the review panel.

1.1.4 Application Deadline

Applications are due no later than Monday, July 8, 2024 (3 p.m.). Applications must be submitted through EGMS. Late applications will not be accepted. Once an application is submitted, it cannot be revised.

1.1.5 Program Contact

Applicants are advised that the authorized contact person for matters concerning this RFA is:

Regina Wesley
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Division of Early Learning

1050 First St. NE, Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 455-1721
Email Address: Regina.Wesley@dc.gov

1.2 General Information

1.2.1 Introduction

OSSE's Division of Early Learning (DEL) is offering support for the implementation of the DC LEAD program. The DC LEAD program provides scholarships to eligible child care staff who attend partner IHEs and follow an ECE program of study (POS) leading to conferral of an associate or bachelor's degree in ECE or a closely related field to meet the minimum education requirements for their staff type.

OSSE conducted a perceived barriers study in 2018 that found that 60 percent of teachers without degrees have some college experience but did not complete the program up to degree conferment. The most significant barrier perceived across all survey respondents is the cost of college tuition and books. Other significant barriers included lack of child care while attending courses, work schedule, energy for coursework and time for coursework.

According to a study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in 2020, institutional and non-academic barriers are a prevalent challenge faced by adult learners generally.¹ Institutional barriers present as challenges navigating postsecondary education systems, such as enrollment, financial aid and other processes. Non-academic barriers refer to obstacles such as physical and mental health struggles, transportation difficulties, self-doubt and a feeling of disconnect from the college community. These factors can impact not just access to higher education but also successful completion of the chosen degree program.²

A 2023 College Pulse survey of 1,500 US college students on barriers to academic life found that 60 percent of students experience enrollment challenges and difficulties navigating the course catalog.³ Students who cannot enroll with ease or face technology challenges to registering for courses and are likely to drop-out.⁴

As of December 2023, teachers in DC child development centers and DC expanded home caregivers are required to have at minimum an associate degree in ECE, an associate degree in any field with at least 12 credit hours in ECE or 60 hours of college coursework with at least 12 credit hours in ECE. Center directors are required to have at minimum a bachelor's degree in ECE or a bachelors' degree in any field with at least 12-credit hours in ECE. Participation in the DC LEAD program will enable DC child care teachers, expanded home caregivers and directors to complete associate or bachelor's degree in ECE or a closely related field, as required by OSSE licensing regulations.

¹ [Campus Technology, 2023](#)

² [Campus Technology, 2023](#)

³ [Barriers to Academic Success, 2023](#)

⁴ [Barriers to Academic Success, 2023](#)

OSSE anticipates that scholars participating in this program will emerge as educators who understand research-based best practices that support young children’s development. The successful grantee(s) will work with OSSE/DEL and partner IHEs to provide members of the DC child care workforce with opportunities to access rigorous coursework to earn college credit while continuing their work in DC child development facilities, furthering their career development and improving the quality of learning experiences provided to DC’s youngest learners. In service of this goal, OSSE anticipates that the DC LEAD Program grantee(s) will partner with no fewer than seven local and/or online IHEs.

1.2.2 Target Population

The DC LEAD program targets prospective scholarship applicants who meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Employed in a child development facility licensed by OSSE and work a minimum of 25 hours per week;
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Enter into a participation agreement with their employing child development facility;⁵
- Submit a DC LEAD scholarship application with supporting documentation (e.g., IHE admissions letter, transcript for transfer credits, etc.); and
- Commit to remaining employed in a licensed child development facility in DC throughout the DC LEAD scholarship agreement year.

1.2.3 Purpose of Funds

The goal of the DC LEAD program is to provide the District’s early childhood educators with the knowledge, skills and credentials to work with DC’s youngest learners and increase the number of well-prepared early childhood professionals in the District. The program provides ongoing, comprehensive support to the current ECE workforce that promotes professional development, staff retention and career growth in ECE. Upon program completion, scholars will have earned either an associate or bachelor’s degree in ECE or a closely related field as required to meet the based on staff type pursuant to [Chapter 1 \(Child Development Facilities: Licensing\) of Title 5-A DCMR](#). OSSE/DEL is soliciting applications from eligible applicants, including non-profit, for-profit and faith-based community-based organizations, to distribute scholarships, provide technical assistance to DC LEAD applicants and scholars and design supports for all scholars, including tutoring and mentoring services, book reimbursement, travel incentives, enrollment incentives and other supports identified by the grantee(s) to facilitate successful completion of an ECE POS by participating scholars.

1.2.4. Eligibility

⁵ Child development facilities may elect to enter into a child development facility agreement with DC LEAD. The agreement facilitates employer/employee guidelines for receipt of stipend and stipend disbursement. The stipend shall be awarded to DC LEAD scholars by their employer at the end of the of the program agreement year, upon successful completion of 9-12 credit hours, following the signing of the DC LEAD program’s child development facility agreement.

OSSE/DEL will accept applications from eligible applicants, including non-profit, for-profit, faith-based community based-organizations and postsecondary education institutions that can demonstrate expertise in ECE, knowledge of existing scholarship programs in DC and previous experience providing financial management and monitoring of scholarships or other awards provided to the local community. Applicants are encouraged to propose bold and innovative strategies to achieve the objectives of the RFA.

1.2.5 Source of Funds

The funds are being made available through District of Columbia local funds and through federal funds made available through and authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, effective Nov. 19, 2014 (P.L. 113-186; 42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.).

The local funds are made available through the District of Columbia local funds are through D.C. Code § 38-2602(b)(32).

OSSE maintains the right to adjust the grant award and amount based on funding availability. This RFA does not commit OSSE to make an award.

1.2.6 Award Period

The total award period is five-year awards, beginning Oct. 1, 2024, or on the date of the award if awards are made after Oct. 1, and ending on Sept. 30, 2029, contingent upon availability of funds and compliance with grant award terms and conditions. Each budget period will be one year, with the first period beginning Oct. 1, 2024, or on the date of the award if awards are made after Oct. 1 and ending Sept. 30, 2025. A continuation application must be submitted annually. Awards in continuation years are contingent upon the availability of funds and compliance with grant award terms and conditions.

1.2.7 Funds Available

The total funding available for delivering the DC LEAD program is up to \$4.5 million per year for each of the five years of the grant. OSSE/DEL reserves the right to issue more than one award for this funding opportunity. OSSE/DEL maintains the right to adjust the grant award and amount based on funding availability.

Successful applicants may be awarded amounts less than requested.

1.2.8 Permissible Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds shall only be used to support activities delineated in Section 1.3.1. General Grantee Responsibilities Overview, Section 1.3.2 Additional Grantee Responsibilities and the grant budget included in the applicant's submission. Applicants must budget to use at least 80 percent of the grant award for scholarships.

1.2.9 Grant Award Notice and Payments

In order to be awarded a grant, organizations must establish eligibility by submitting an application to OSSE in accordance with the relevant program statute(s) and this RFA. Once OSSE has fully approved the application and issued an official Grant Award Notification (GAN), grantee(s) may then receive payment for allowable expenditures for which obligation was made during the grant period. OSSE has implemented both an advance and reimbursement process for grantee(s) based on this funding opportunity. The grant recipient(s) shall receive advance payments for allowable and relevant services (e.g., tuition and fees, scholar incentives and cost of other services that overlap between two fiscal years). Reimbursable program costs must be paid by the grantee(s) to the payee prior to requesting reimbursement; it is not sufficient for costs merely to be incurred. Compliance with programmatic and fiscal implementation and reporting will be considered in paying advance or reimbursement requests. To receive advances and reimbursements for grant program expenditures, grantee(s) must complete and submit the applicable advance or reimbursement workbook(s) electronically.

1.2.10 General Terms and Conditions

- a. Funding for this award is contingent upon continued funding from the grantor. The RFA does not commit OSSE/DEL to make an award.
- b. OSSE/DEL reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if OSSE determines it is in the best interest of the agency to do so. OSSE/DEL shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. OSSE/DEL may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable regulation or requirement.
- c. OSSE/DEL reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA or to rescind the RFA.
- d. OSSE/DEL shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicants agree that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- e. OSSE/DEL may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- f. OSSE/DEL may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- g. OSSE/DEL shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub grant; all applicable federal and District regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee(s) will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE/DEL; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee(s).
- h. If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

1.3 Program Scope

1.3.1 General Grantee Responsibilities Overview

The grantee(s) shall provide an overall vision of how the DC LEAD program will affect positive change and growth for the DC early childhood education community and early learning workforce.

The grantee(s) will be responsible for marketing the program to prospective applicants, conducting outreach activities for recruiting highly motivated child care professionals, ensuring that identified prospective applicants meet the eligibility requirements, maintaining and managing the DC LEAD interest form and completing the preliminary steps for scholars' admissions and registration at a partner IHE. The grantee(s) will be expected to award 80 percent of the grant award to scholarships during the grant period.

Based on funding availability, the grantee(s) will provide DC LEAD scholarships to existing DC LEAD scholars and eligible child care professionals to meet the minimum education requirements for their staff type. Scholarships shall be provided based on the scholarship agreement and funding availability. The grantee(s) must:

- a. During an initial year of the grant, work with the IHEs in which the scholars are enrolled to facilitate successful completion of an ECE POS by participating scholars;
- b. Provide DC LEAD scholars with: 1) textbooks and informational materials related to instruction and coursework required to complete their enrolled course(s) through a direct payment or reimbursement process; and 2) pay all DC LEAD scholars' tuition and any additional fees related to instruction and coursework (except student health premiums offered by the IHE in which DC LEAD scholars must waive unless they elect to purchase it themselves);
- c. Provide support to all DC LEAD scholars including tutoring services related to courses in the POS and counseling to ensure scholar success in the IHE;
- d. For all DC LEAD scholars who lose employment while participating in the DC LEAD program, facilitate connections employment opportunities in child development facilities licensed by OSSE, which may include initiating support through the DC Child Care Connections (DC CCC), the Districts' Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program as well as other innovative approaches identified by the grantee;
- e. Facilitate a technology loan program for DC LEAD scholars who need assistance in acquiring the necessary technology to complete their coursework in the program;
- f. Provide technology support for DC LEAD scholars, including training and information on available technology resources;
- g. Facilitate data collection and tracking on DC LEAD scholars regarding progress, completion and graduation, employment and continuing postsecondary education over time;
- h. Provide OSSE/DEL direct access to the data management system(s) used by the grantee(s);
- i. Meet with OSSE/DEL at least bi-weekly to share information and review reports related to the status of grant activities;
- j. Participate in the monthly IHE meeting to ensure that internal DC LEAD processes are supporting the intent of the IHE partnership agreements and scholarship systems are compatible, comparative and seamlessly provided;
- k. Implement foreign credential translation and evaluation support for the Districts' early learning workforce by paying for foreign credential translation and/or evaluation services required for admission to an IHE to meet OSSE minimum education requirements;
- l. Create and document formal agreements with no fewer than seven local and/or online IHEs that facilitate course/degree articulation, tuition negotiations, ensure that the courses offered are accessible to working adults, increase opportunities, review and refine ECE POS and create a POS map for completing coursework. Partnership agreements with IHEs must be established,

- kept on file and updated prior to finalizing new agreements with partner IHEs;⁶
- m. Create and document an incentive program for DC LEAD scholars for successful enrollment, registration and completion of 3-9 credits per semester.
 - n. Create and document a program of stipends to address barriers' to scholars' successful completion of a postsecondary POS leading to an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood, including at a minimum, travel stipends to assist scholars enrolled in in-person coursework in traveling to and from the IHE they attend; grantees may propose additional stipends to address other common barriers, contingent on funding availability and approval by OSSE/DEL prior to implementation.

The grantee(s) shall only enroll scholars into the DC LEAD program who meet the following requirements:

- a. Employed in a child development facility licensed by OSSE and work a minimum of 25 hours per week;
- b. Have a high school diploma or equivalent;
- c. Enter into a participation agreement with their employing child development facility;⁷
- d. Submit a DC LEAD scholarship application; and
- e. Commit to remaining employed in a licensed child development facility in DC throughout the DC LEAD scholarship agreement year.

The grantee(s) must present a plan and timeline that describes how DC LEAD applicants will be considered, accepted and how the grantee(s) will develop and maintain a list of interested applicants if all available funding has been dedicated.

Additionally, grantee(s) must present a plan and timeline for the development and implementation of the DC LEAD program's tutoring and mentoring supports.

The grantee(s) must present a plan that describes their capacity to provide DC LEAD scholars training on the observation tools used in licensed child development facilities in DC, which includes:

- a. Describing their capacity to train DC LEAD scholars using DC's observation tools:
 - a. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Pre-K and
 - b. Environment Rating Scales (ERS), which include the Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (ITERS-3) and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (FCCERS-3); or
- b. Describing a partnership with an entity or organization with established and documented capacity in providing CLASS Pre-K, ITERS-3 and FCCERS-3 training.

⁶ Seeking additional IHE partners is recommended to increase opportunities offered to the District's early learning workforce provided that the partner IHE is either licensed by the District of Columbia Higher Education Licensure Commission (HELCO) or has received authorization to operate (i.e., via a reciprocity agreement through the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)).

⁷ Child development facilities may elect to enter into a child development facility agreement with DC LEAD. The agreement facilitates employer/employee guidelines for receipt of stipend and stipend disbursement. The stipend shall be awarded to DC LEAD scholars by their employer at the end of the of the program agreement year, upon successful completion of 9-12 credit hours, following the signing of the DC LEAD program's child development facility agreement.

1.3.2 Additional Grantee Responsibilities

Grantee(s) will also be required to:

1. Develop a timely and responsive monetary award payment process to pay the full amount of individual scholars' tuition and fees at partnering OSSE-approved IHEs;
2. Develop a system to manage timely disbursement of payments and incentives;
3. Submit any proposed printed materials or materials acquired from outside sources for OSSE's/DEL's review and approval prior to their use and dissemination under this grant;
4. Ensure that a diverse group of potential applicants are informed about the DC LEAD program in culturally compatible and linguistically diverse ways, including translation of DC LEAD program information and materials into Spanish and Amharic and other languages of the populations served as determined necessary by the grantee and OSSE;
5. Provide OSSE/DEL with translated materials produced by a certified translation and interpretation vendor;
6. Report to OSSE/DEL on distribution and reach of materials, including translated materials, to the target communities;
7. Participate in OSSE/DEL required training;
8. Work with the OSSE/DEL program manager and provide information, such as positive outcome stories, information about special events, issues/concerns, etc. during the regularly scheduled meetings and as requested;
9. Based on the need and population to be served, ensure that culturally sensitive activities are utilized and that staff reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the intended beneficiary population for this programs; and
10. Adhere to Section 1.3.6 Reporting Requirements

1.3.3. OSSE/DEL Responsibilities

OSSE/DEL will utilize several monitoring strategies to ensure fidelity of program implementation and for continuous improvement and technical support purposes. These strategies include, but are not limited to, collection of program and scholar performance data and review of financial reports. The grantee(s) will be required to report information in a manner consistent with OSSE's database management information system requirements, which will be clarified with the grantee(s) upon grant award. The grantee(s) will be required, at minimum, to submit monthly reports and an annual report to the program manager. The format for reporting will be prescribed by OSSE/DEL and will be required to facilitate prompt review of the grantee(s)'s accomplishments in support of payment by OSSE to the grantee(s). The reports will outline progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the program and recommend steps for continuous improvement which may include detailed, as well as aggregate reporting of accomplishments.

Monthly program reports will be due the fifth day of the of the month after the reporting month. Annual report will be due 15 days following the end of the fiscal year.

All information in monitoring reports will be subject to verification and OSSE/DEL may require additional information from the grantee(s).

1.3.4 Performance Standard Quality Assurance

OSSE/DEL expects that the grantee(s) performance will result in measurable improvements in DC LEAD program administration that leads to measurable progress in recruiting, enrolling and supporting early childhood educators to successfully complete degrees and credentials, which will be reported in the program performance reports by the grantee(s) at a minimum 12 monthly reports and an annual report in alignment with the OSSE's fiscal year. In addition, the grantee(s) will be required to meet performance standards based on approved program goals and objectives. OSSE will monitor that the grantee(s):

- a. Submit a work plan and an evaluation and data collection plan in EGMS within 30 days from the date of execution of this award to the OSSE/DEL program manager.⁸
- b. Implement policies and procedures to ensure the accuracy of data collection and the reporting of all program activities in accordance with protocols established by OSSE and any other grantor agency (federal regulations) as applicable.
- c. Ensure participation in evaluation of the project by appropriate internal staff and/or external evaluators. These evaluation activities may include, but are not limited to, site visits, community surveys or other data collection activities.
- d. Achieve the performance measures in the following Performance Standards and Measures section during the grant period.

Performance Standards and Measures

- a. Develop robust partnerships to support program delivery
The grantee(s) will:
 - i. Recruit and establish relationships with OSSE-approved IHEs;
 - ii. Create and document formal agreements with OSSE-approved IHEs; and
 - iii. Partner with other OSSE grantees, entities or organizations specializing in DC observation tools, (i.e., CLASS Pre-K and ERS).
- b. Recruit Scholarship Recipients and Employers
The grantee(s) will:
 - i. Work with OSSE/DEL to develop eligibility requirements for scholarship recipients, IHE and employers;
 - ii. Market and promote scholarships and recruit qualified applicants through various methods including but not limited to the following:
 1. Create a website and webpage, which must contain a mechanism for tracking pageviews and number of unique visitors;
 2. Develop text for use on grantee partners' websites, newsletters and blogs;
 3. Hold community meetings and workshops; and
 4. Document and report on these engagements via the monthly and annual reports;
 - iii. Ensure that a diverse group of qualified applicants are informed about the scholarship program in culturally compatible and linguistically diverse ways. Translate all program materials as required by the District of Columbia Language Access Act of 2004.

⁸ The work plan entered in EGMS must include project activities, milestones, responsible parties and timelines for all program activities. The evaluation and data collection plan must include details to monitor and evaluate the delivery of all services as well as program-specific measurable objectives, methodologies and expected outcomes.

c. Provide Technical Assistance and Support to applicants

The grantee(s) will:

- i. Provide technical assistance to applicants from the initial application process through degree completion;
- ii. Develop a system to manage timely disbursement of payments to scholars, partnering employers and IHEs;
- iii. Provide ongoing technical assistance, counseling and mentoring that actively engages and guides scholars and partnering employers for the purpose of retaining and supporting scholarship applicants;
- iv. Develop retention policies that highlight available supports, resources and practices in accordance with this grant to retain scholars in the program until they complete a POS to earn the required credential for their staff type, based on funding availability;
- v. Engage scholars in additional supportive activities including, but not limited to, cohort meetings, written and verbal communication and referrals to agencies and organizations that meet a range of scholar needs;
- vi. Ensure that applicants receive information about Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Pell grants and are supported in applying for additional resources that support tuition costs;
- vii. Create an online directory of IHEs that potential applicants can use to review comparative data on existing course offerings, average tuition costs, supports, services and other information about available options;
- viii. Facilitate the purchase, disbursement, contractual agreement and oversight of a technology loan program for DC LEAD scholars who need it; and
- ix. Create and document a stipend agreement between DC LEAD scholars and their partnering employers. The agreement should facilitate employer/employee guidelines for receipt of stipend and stipend disbursement. The stipend shall be awarded to DC LEAD scholars by their employer at the end of the of the program agreement year, upon successful completion of 9-12 credit hours, following the signing of the DC LEAD program's child development facility agreement.

d. Compile Data on Program Implementation

The grantee(s) will:

- i. Develop and strengthen the necessary grant specific payment and data tracking systems in order to track scholarship recipients' progress, retention, incentives and other related data using a monthly reporting mechanism for program reporting;
- ii. Collect data that will provide an initial baseline measure and develop a tracking system to manage intake, review, processing and awarding of scholarships and incentives to providers and employers;
- iii. Submit information to OSSE/DEL monthly including, but not limited to, the number of applications received; the amount of scholarship dollars committed; the number and types of incentives provided; the number of scholars enrolled in coursework, in aggregate and by credit hours enrolled, and applicant characteristics including demographic information, staff type and motivations for applying; and
- iv. Support and track scholars from the initial application process through degree completion using monthly and annual data.

e. Evaluation

The grantee(s) will:

- i. Administer surveys to employers, program scholars and IHEs annually to identify

program strengths and challenges and to elicit suggestions regarding the best ways to offer meaningful incentives, provide ongoing support and improve program operations based on feedback received; and

- ii. Use survey data to make programmatic improvements.
- f. Additional Support
- The grantee(s) will:
- i. Seek additional funds from corporations and foundations through grant applications and relationships.
 - a. Share information with OSSE/DEL regarding additional funding received.

1.3.5. Confidentiality of Records

Except as otherwise required by local or federal law, no grantee shall use or reveal any research, statistical or personally identifiable information (PII) for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with this grant program. Such information and any copy of such information shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the consent of the person furnishing such information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit or judicial, legislative or administrative proceeding.

The applicant must demonstrate an ability to maintain the confidentiality of PII information and to report the information specified below to OSSE. Awarded applicants may also be required to enter into a data sharing agreement with OSSE. Specifically, the applicant must agree to and abide by the following conditions:

- a. PII and any other records received from OSSE shall be kept confidential and shall not be open to public inspection, nor shall their contents or existence be disclosed to the public. Such records may not be divulged to unauthorized persons.
- b. In the event that data is disclosed to an unauthorized individual or otherwise used for an unauthorized purpose, the applicant must report such incident to OSSE at Gwen.Rubinstein@dc.gov and osse.datasharing@dc.gov.
- c. All project staff and volunteers shall sign a confidentiality statement and complete an OSSE-administered training on data confidentiality prior to engaging in grant related activities.
- d. When no longer needed for their original purpose but no earlier than the document retention period specified in Section 1.4.1, the grantee(s) will destroy records consistent with OSSE's requirements for data destruction. The grantee(s) shall confirm in writing to OSSE its compliance within five business days of destroying the data. The written notification shall be sent to Gwen.Rubinstein@dc.gov and osse.datasharing@dc.gov.
- e. All records regarding children receiving services from program participants shall be subject to the confidentiality requirements of OSSE and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and applicable regulations as appropriate.

1.3.6. Reporting Requirements

The grantee(s) will be required to report information in a manner consistent with EGMS, OSSE's/DEL's online grant monitoring database. The monthly advance or reimbursement request shall be due no later than 10 business days after the end of each month during the funding period and shall be

submitted in EGMS. The grantee(s) will be required to submit, at minimum, 12 monthly and an annual financial and program reports to the program manager in alignment with OSSE's fiscal year. Program reports will provide data needed to monitor the status of activities. The reports will also outline progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the program and recommend steps for continuous improvement, which may include detailed, as well as aggregate reporting of accomplishments. The format for reporting will be prescribed by OSSE/DEL and will be required to facilitate prompt review of the grantee(s) accomplishments in support of payment. Monthly program reports will be due on the fifth day of the month after the reporting month. Annual reports will be due 15 days following the end of the fiscal year. Program reports will be submitted in an electronic format approved by the program manager.

1.4 General Provisions

1.4.1 Document Retention

Recipients of these funds are required to maintain complete documentation of grant activities including financial records, supporting documents, statistical records and all other records relevant to this award for a period of five years from the end date of the grant period to ensure that such documentation is available to authorized entities for review upon request.

1.4.2 Audits

OSSE and other respective jurisdictional administrative agencies of DC may audit the applicant's expenditure statements and source documentation any time or times, before the final payment and up to three years after the grant closes.

1.4.3 Conflict of Interest

The grantee shall ensure that no individual in a decision-making capacity will engage in any activity, including participation in the selection of a vendor, the administration of an award or an activity supported by award funds, if a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest would be involved.

A conflict of interest would arise when the individual, any member of the individual's immediate family, the individual's partner or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the aforementioned, has a financial or personal interest in the firm or organization selected for the contract.

1.4.4 Nondiscrimination in the Delivery of Services

The applicant shall comply with the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended (D.C. Official Code § 2-1401.01 *et seq.*), which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, source of income, disability, status as a victim of an interfamily offense or place of residence or business or credit information.

1.4.5 Staff Requirements

The grantee(s) must employ appropriately qualified staff and maintain documentation that its staff members, as well as any subcontractors, possess adequate training and competence to perform assigned duties. All staff are required to successfully pass required background checks. Grantee(s) must hire a program manager dedicated to overseeing the DC LEAD program.

Proposed staff assigned to the grant should be limited to administrators running the grant and carrying out the responsibilities outlined in Section 1.3.1, General Grantee Responsibilities Overview, and Section 1.3.2, Additional Grantee Responsibilities. Proposed individuals should be named in the application as described in Section 2.3, Staffing Plan. Resumes and an organizational chart should also be provided under Section 2.3 of the application.

In the event of staffing changes, an amendment to the approved application must be made, specifically in the staffing plan and detailed planned expenditures, salaries and benefits section.

1.5 Award Process

1.5.1 Review Panel

OSSE/DEL will make the funds available through a competitive process to identify organizations, institutions and agencies interested in offering the DC LEAD program to child care professionals in DC. Applications for this RFA that meet all eligibility and application requirements will be evaluated, scored and rated by an OSSE/DEL designated review panel.

OSSE/DEL will use external peer reviewers to review and score the applications for this RFA. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field or the subject matter. External peer reviewers may include employees of DC government who are not employed by OSSE. The final decision to fund applicant(s) for this RFA rest solely with OSSE/DEL. After reviewing the recommendations of the review panel and any other relevant information, OSSE/DEL shall decide which applicant(s) to fund.

1.5.2 Rubric

1.5.2.1 Overview

The purpose and content of each section is described below. Applicants should include all information necessary to adequately describe the proposed project. The scoring of the application is based on a 100-point scale, which includes Section 2.2. on the Evaluation and Data Collection. These criteria allow the external peer reviewers and OSSE staff to determine an applicant's justification of need for grant funds, the soundness of its proposed service delivery plan, the adequacy and reasonableness of proposed resources needed and demonstrated capability for managing the proposed program.

1.5.2.2 Executive Summary (Maximum: 10 points)

- Overview:** Briefly describe how the implementation of the DC LEAD program will affect positive change and growth for the child care workforce in the District. Applicants should establish a

vision for the implementation of the DC LEAD program, to include the application process for individuals seeking the scholarship, program requirements and the various partnerships that will provide support. (10 points)

1.5.2.3 Information about the Organization (Maximum: 10 points)

- Mission and Vision:** Provide the mission and vision statement of the organization, a description of its core programs and an explanation of the relevance of the organization's prior experience to the requirements of the grant. (2 points)
- Logic Model:** In an attachment, describe the planned activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes for the DC LEAD program. (3 points)
- Organizational Expertise in ECE:** Describe your organization's experience and expertise in ECE and previous experience providing financial management and monitoring of scholarships or other awards provided to the local community. Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of existing scholarship programs DC. (5 points)

1.5.2.4 Capacity to Implement the DC LEAD Program (Maximum: 60 points)

- Plan to Implement the DC LEAD Program:** Describe your plan to implement the DC LEAD program for members of the DC child care workforce working to advance their career in early childhood education. The plan should address all the aforementioned organizations', partnering institutions' and agencies' responsibilities (see 1.3.1 and 1.3.2) including, but not limited to: promotion of the program, with emphasis on the identification and recruitment of eligible applicants, including special targeted populations; eligibility determinations; issuance of awards; and academic support to enrolled scholars to ensure program success. (10 points)
- Program of Study Structure:** Describe existing programs and identify the recommended sequence of courses that each partner IHE offers. Outline how the DC LEAD program will support qualified applicants to successfully complete the degree program including resources and supports available to DC LEAD scholars based on their respective POS. Ensure that supports and resources will be integrated within the POS. The supports offered should result in earning an associate or bachelor's degree in ECE or a closely related field to meet the education requirement for the scholar's staff type without tuition cost to the scholar. (10 points)
- Workforce Development/Business Partnerships:** Demonstrate how the DC LEAD program will purposefully and intentionally document and organize available supports, including but not limited to flexible class scheduling, remediation support and workplace mentorship opportunities through community partners to support adult learners who have little to no college experience. (10 points)
- Data Collection and Evaluation Plan:** For each objective (listed in 2.1.1), describe how data will be collected to assess and evaluate the implementation of the grant responsibilities on a regular and ongoing basis. Include data collection methodology and frequency of collection. Describe the evaluation plan to regularly assess the outcomes of the organization's DC LEAD program.

Prepare and provide a system for monitoring scholar progress through the sequence of requirements leading to the earned degree, including but not limited to tracking successes, degrees awarded, demographic information, incentive distribution, enrollment status, employer participation, program participation, ongoing employment data and program retention and attrition as well as turnover (if scholars move to different child development facilities during the duration of the program). (10 points)

- Development of Work Plan:** List the critical milestones/tasks, staff responsible for the implementation of the milestones/tasks (or their roles if not already hired) and approximate timeline needed to address the requirements of this grant for the first year of the five-year grant. (10 points)
- Staffing Plan:** Describe the qualifications of the proposed staff to implement the DC LEAD program. Uploaded documents in the Staffing Plan section should also demonstrate these qualifications as well as describe staff responsibilities on the grant. The staffing plan should be supplemented by resumes, qualifications/credentials and position descriptions, including minimum requirements for proposed personnel that have not been identified, the process for recruitment and selection and the timeline for other support persons included in the budget. (10 points)

1.5.2.5 Capacity to Provide Additional Training on DC Observation Tools (Maximum: 5 points)

- Experience in Providing Professional Development using the CLASS Pre-K and ERS:** Describe the organization's knowledge and experience related to the observation tools used in DC and describe the staff's capacity and qualifications as it relates to providing training on CLASS Pre-K, ITERS-3 and FCCERS-3. Please highlight possible collaboration and partnerships with other entities to provide these trainings if the organization does not have staff in-house to perform this task. (5 points)

1.5.2.6 Detailed Planned Expenditures: Financial Management and Proposed Budget (Maximum: 15 points)

- Financial Management:** Describe the financial management and internal accounting procedures that will be used to ensure proper financial management of this cost reimbursable grant, including the fiscal controls designed for accountability and procedures to ensure proper spending of the grant funds according to approved budgets and applications. The applicant must agree to maintain its financial records in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (as defined by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants). (5 points)
- Proposed Budget:** Provide a proposed budget for the first year of the five-year grant and a narrative description of the use of grant funds to address the requirements of this grant. Indirect costs are allowable expenses in the proposed budget for eligible organizations but must be requested by contacting the Program Contact listed in Section 1.1.5. The standard indirect cost rate offered by OSSE/DEL is 10 percent unless the applicant has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with the federal government that allows them to budget a different rate. (10 points)

Section II: PROGRAM INFORMATION

2.1 Work Plan

Each applicant must submit a work plan for the first year of the five-year grant detailing project activities (i.e., specific milestones or tasks), indicating the alignment of the project activities with the objectives of the project, listing the staff responsible for performing each project activity and including an approximate timeline for accomplishing each project activity. Each objective listed in 2.1.1 must have at least three activities. Briefly describe the activities and indicate the party responsible for completing the activities. Each activity must show the month(s) and year(s) in which it will be performed.

2.1.1 Objectives

The objectives for this grant are as follows:

- a. Provide eligible child care educators and directors with a robust college scholarship program that imparts the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively with and on behalf of children and families, support this population in meeting the degree and coursework requirements to earn an associate or bachelor's degree in ECE or a closely related field to meet the education requirement for their staff type and make informed decisions regarding potential higher education opportunities for their future;
- b. Work collaboratively with OSSE/DEL and child development facilities in DC to market and recruit potential applicants and retain scholars in the DC LEAD program; and
- c. Develop incentives and supports to address barriers to scholars' successful completion of their associate or bachelor's degree that equips them with the skills and knowledge to deliver high quality early learning experiences and interactions to children in child development facilities upon completion of the program, as well as to advance in their careers in early learning. Incentives and supports can include, but are not limited to bonuses, travel stipends, technology loan program, etc.

2.2 Evaluation and Data Collection Plan

For each objective, describe how data will be collected to assess and evaluate the implementation of the grant responsibilities on a regular and ongoing basis. Include data collection methodology and frequency of collection. Describe the evaluation plan to regularly assess the outcomes of the organization's DC LEAD program. Prepare and provide a system for monitoring scholar progress through the sequences of requirements leading to the earned degree, including tracking successes, degrees awarded and ongoing employment data. This data collection should also include program attrition information, as well as turnover (if scholars move to different child development facilities during the duration of the program).

2.3. Staffing Plan

The application must provide a staffing plan for all personnel who will be assigned to the project, including full-time (e.g., project manager) and part-time employees. The staffing plan must propose qualified individuals for all roles named in Section 1.4.5, Staff Requirements. The staffing plan should

be supplemented by resumes, qualifications/credentials and position descriptions, including minimum requirements for proposed personnel that have been identified, the process for recruitment and selection and the timeline for other support roles included in the budget.

In addition to the staffing plan as detailed above, the applicant should also include an organizational chart.

2.4 Other Attachments

2.4.1 W-9

Each applicant shall submit a completed W-9 form. If the applicant has submitted an updated W-9 to OSSE/DEL within the past year, the applicant shall provide the date of this submission.

2.4.2 Attestation of Priority Areas (See Attachment A)

2.4.3 Assurances (See Attachment B)

2.4.4 Applicant Acknowledgement of Compliance with Applicable District and Federal Status and Regulations (See Attachment C)

2.4.5 Resumes and/or Qualifications of Key Staff

2.4.6 Audited financial statements for the past three years

2.4.7 Documentation of organizational status (e.g., Tax Exemption Letter)

2.4.8 Conflict of Interest Policy

2.4.9 Separation of Duties Policy

2.4.10 Organizational Chart

2.4.11 Logic Model

2.4.12 Partnership Agreement

OSSE requires each grantee(s) to create and follow a partnership agreement with its expected IHE partners.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Attestation of Priority Areas

Attachment B: Assurances

Attachment C: Notice of Intent to Apply Form

LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED OR CONSIDERED FOR AN AWARD

Attachment A: Attestation of Priority Areas

**ATTESTATION OF PRIORITY AREAS
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
DC LEAD Program**

- In accordance with the Child Care Development Fund Act of 2014, priority for the DC LEAD program will be given to organizations, agencies and institutions that: 1) focus on quality comprehensive early childhood programs; 2) child care services; 3) child development; 4) family and community resources; and 5) adult education and training for the purposes of professional development in the field of early childhood.

Please have an authorized representative of the applicant organization sign and attest to the organization's status in regard to the mission statement that reflects the agencies priority areas as justification that supports the application.

Administrator Name: _____

Title: _____

Administrator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attachment B: Assurances

**ASSURANCES
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
DC LEAD Program**

FY2025

The duly authorized officer of the applicant, the truth of which is sworn or attested to by the applicant and signed in the presence of a notary public, must sign this document.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Name of Applicant Organization: _____

Address of Applicant Organization: _____

Telephone Number of Applicant Organization: _____

Email Address of Named Person Above: _____

We hereby attest the following:

1. We will ensure that the facilities under our organization's ownership, lease or supervision, which shall be utilized in the accomplishment of the project are compliant with all District statutes, codes and regulations;
2. We know and understand that awarded funds shall be used to support the organization's functions and activities needed to address the requirements of this grant. The funds may not be transferred outside of or within the organization, for any unrelated purpose; and
3. We will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly with whom they have family, business or other ties.

Authorized Representative Signature and Title

Date

Notary

Date

Attachment C: Notice of Intent to Apply Form

Official Intent to Apply Notification

(Due June 12, 2024)

To: OSSE Division of Early Learning
Regina.Wesley@dc.gov

From: _____
(Organization Name)

RE: Intent to Apply for FY25 DC Leading Educators Toward Advanced Degrees (DC Lead)
Program Grant

Organization Name: _____

Organization Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Contact Person Telephone: _____

Contact Person Email: _____

I understand that the deadline to apply for the grant is 3 p.m. on Monday, July 8, 2024, and that late applications will not be reviewed.

Signature: _____
(Organization Official)

Date: _____