

**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION (OSSE)**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**FY25 Quality Improvement Network (QIN) Hub Grant**

**Request for Application (RFA) Release Date:**

**June 7, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.**

**Pre-Application Meeting (Webinar):**

**June 18, 2024, at 1 p.m.**

**Application Submission Deadline:**

**July 23, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.**

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

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

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## **SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Background Information**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the state education agency for the District of Columbia “the District,” lead agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C, houses DC’s Head Start State Collaboration Office and convenes the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council (SECDCC). As DC’s state education agency, OSSE’s mission is to set high standards, build educator and system capacity to meet those standards, expand educational opportunities for all learners with a focus on those underserved and hold everyone – including ourselves – accountable for results.

OSSE’s functions are guided by a three-year strategic plan<sup>1</sup>, which unites the agency and stakeholders around a clear theory of action for restoration that moves beyond recovery from Coronavirus (COVID-19) and addresses historical inequities for learners. OSSE’s strategic plan includes seven impact priorities:

1. **Start Early:** Ensure early learners have access to vibrant and quality early learning environments and are prepared for their K-12 education.
2. **Advance Excellence:** Ensure all DC students have the opportunity to excel by setting high standards, providing robust supports for educators and holding schools and school systems accountable.
3. **Achieve Equitable Outcomes for All Students:** Allocate resources to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education every day in order to remedy historical inequities in student experiences and outcomes.
4. **Build Futures:** Ensure DC learners have access to robust and sustainable pathways to a fulfilling career and life by reimagining high school and providing relevant and accessible postsecondary programming.
5. **Foster Student and Staff Well-Being:** Unapologetically support the physical, mental and social-emotional health of students and staff by promoting safe, welcoming, healthy and joyful learning environments.
6. **Cultivate Team:** Build a thriving team by ensuring staff feel welcome and connected, are able to grow continuously and act as stewards of OSSE’s vision and mission.
7. **Reimagine Systems:** Improve internal systems and processes so that OSSE staff are better equipped and ready to provide high-quality services to students, families, educators and schools.

Within OSSE, the Division of Early Learning (DEL) provides leadership and coordination to ensure that all District of Columbia children, from birth to kindergarten entrance, have access to high-quality early childhood development programs and are well prepared for school. Under the “Start Early” strategic priority, OSSE/DEL seek to ensure all early learners have access to vibrant and quality early learning environments and engage stakeholders (including families and other District agencies) in developing a clear vision and corresponding action plan to measure and improve early learning outcomes for children by: (1) preserving child care seats through recovery; (2) increasing long-term supply, quality and affordability of child care; (3) investing in the early learning workforce; (4) aligning stakeholders on the birth to 8 vision; and (5) supporting early learners with disabilities and developmental delays. OSSE’s

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<sup>1</sup> [OSSE’s Strategic Plan](#)

vision is to ensure DC learners, of all ages and backgrounds, are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue and thrive on the life path of their choice.

In support of the Start Early strategic priority, OSSE oversees the Quality Improvement Network (QIN), an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) program, serving more than 500 children and families across DC. OSSE is soliciting applications from organizations to serve as hubs to support child development facilities, also referred to as child care partners (CCPs), with the implementation of Early Head Start (EHS), adherence to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)<sup>2</sup>, ensuring ongoing compliance with DC's child care licensing regulations and other activities to advance the Start Early strategic priority and increase the number of infants, toddlers and their families benefitting from continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services.

### **1.1.1 Release for Application**

The release date of the RFA is June 7, 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 June 18, 2024, at 1 p.m., as well as EGMS training on June 18, 2024. To attend the pre-application webinar, please register by email to Samantha Young at [Samantha.Young1@dc.gov](mailto:Samantha.Young1@dc.gov) no later than June 14, 2024.

#### **Pre-application meeting (June 18, 1 p.m.– 2:30 p.m.):**

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 279 497 213 731 Passcode: dZv4cq

Join with a video conferencing device [octo@m.webex.com](mailto:octo@m.webex.com)

Video Conference ID: 116 646 841 9 [Alternate VTC instructions](#)

Or call in (audio only) [+1 202-594-9550,,232202256#](tel:+12025949550232202256)

United States, Washington DC Phone Conference ID: 232 202 256#

#### **Technical training on OSSE's grant management system (June 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.):**

Applicants are encouraged to attend the EGMS training to prepare applicants to submit grant applications. Attendees will gain understanding on how to access and log into EGMS and who should have access at their organization. To RSVP email Samantha Young at [Samantha.young1@dc.gov](mailto:Samantha.young1@dc.gov)

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 252 805 345 039 Passcode: FBbx99

Join with a video conferencing device [octo@m.webex.com](mailto:octo@m.webex.com)

Video Conference ID: 114 407 843 6 [Alternate VTC instructions](#)

Or call in (audio only) [+1 202-594-9550,,801802992#](tel:+12025949550801802992)

United States, Washington DC Phone Conference ID: 801 802 992#

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<sup>2</sup> [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#)

### **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 July 23, 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:

Lysa Torres  
Program Manager  
Division of Early Learning  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
1050 First Street NE, Sixth Floor  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 285-3518  
[Lysa.Torres@dc.gov](mailto:Lysa.Torres@dc.gov)

## **1.2 General Information**

### **1.2.1 Introduction**

In 2015, OSSE was awarded an initial Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grant to bring together EHS and child care through layered funding to provide comprehensive and continuous services to infants, toddlers and their families with low incomes and those who meet other EHS categorical eligibility and priority populations (i.e., children in foster care, families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)). The EHS-CCP grant catalyzed the development of the QIN, which the District of Columbia Council formally authorized through passage of the “Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015.”<sup>3</sup>

In 2020, OSSE contracted Child Trends to conduct a District-wide community needs assessment, which provided a thorough understanding of who District residents are, the needs of Head Start (HS) and EHS participants (both present and potential) and child care staff in the District. The 2020 report concluded that families continue to struggle to find affordable secure and stable housing. Families also reported a shortage of mental health providers who accept patients using Medicaid and serve the EHS ages of birth to 3. Lastly, the assessment noted that teachers reported challenges with substance abuse in the homes of children they serve, particularly since the District’s implementation of Initiative 71, which legalized personal use of marijuana, in 2015. Since the community needs assessment was completed, the COVID-19 public health emergency exacerbated issues and created new challenges for the EHS community in the District and nationally. Earlier this year, the QIN hub, in partnership with OSSE, contracted Child Trends to supplement the previous report to better understand the needs of the EHS community during COVID-19 recovery. The addendum focused on the effects of COVID-19 on EHS and: 1) sheds light on

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<sup>3</sup> [Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015](#)

how families and EHS staff have been affected; 2) illustrates how EHS programs responded to support families and staff; and 3) provides considerations for EHS operations. Findings were organized into three key themes:

1. **Trust and community building:** EHS is a trusted entity among families because of the care, education and support received during the COVID-19 pandemic. Building trusting relationships was highlighted as important and fundamental to meeting the needs of families.
2. **Resource connection:** Families experienced economic hardships including reduction in work hours, lost jobs or wages and increased cost of living, which prevent them from meeting their basic needs. Supplemental benefits offered throughout the District allowed families to address these challenges. Families expressed the need for continued supports to mitigate the rising cost of food. Support offered by their child care facilities, such as food, clothing, diapers, formula, personal protective equipment, etc., served as a critical resource. In addition to these much-needed material supports, child care facilities also played a critical role in connecting families to other assistance and resources such as employment, housing and mental health supports.
3. **Health and well-being:** COVID-19 exacerbated existing challenges, such as financial hardship, community violence, interpersonal violence (e.g., domestic and mental abuse), housing instability and homelessness. Families and educators struggle balancing multiple demands and lack the resources to support their health and well-being. Furthermore, families and educators are experiencing an increase in community violence and trauma resulting in increased mental health concerns and feelings of anxiety.

The addendum concluded that EHS continues to be a critical resource for families and the services provided during COVID-19 were deemed important by families and educators.

Nationwide, EHS-CCPs enhance developmental services and supports for infants and toddlers and their families with low incomes and those who meet categorical eligibility and priority populations by providing strong relationship-based experiences and preparing children and families for the transition into HS and preschool. The long-term outcomes of EHS-CCPs, such as the QIN, include but are not limited to:<sup>4</sup>

1. Sustained, mutually respectful and collaborative EHS-CCP.
2. A more highly educated and fully qualified workforce to provide high-quality infant/toddler care and education.
3. Increased community supply of high-quality early learning environments and infant/toddler care and education.
4. Well-aligned early childhood policies, regulations, resources and quality improvement support at national, state and local levels.
5. Improved family and child well-being and progress toward school readiness as defined in Attachment E.

By combining the strengths of child care and EHS programs, EHS-CCPs create new opportunities to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers and their families.

As an EHS-CCP program, the QIN aims to prepare children to be ready for school by supporting families as their child's first teacher and equipping child development facilities with the tools they need to

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<sup>4</sup> Long Term Outcomes of Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships<sup>4</sup>

maintain or improve the quality of early learning experiences provided. The mission of the QIN is to positively change the future trajectory of DC's youngest learners, in partnership and collaboration with families and community, by providing an umbrella of services to support their journey towards turning dreams into accomplished goals. The direction of the QIN is driven by three program goals and accompanying objectives outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: QIN Program Goals and Measurable Objectives**

Program Goals	Measurable Objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide children with the foundation they need to be ready for school.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and encourage learning through play.</li> <li>2. Build a community with knowledge of child development and developmentally appropriate practice.</li> <li>3. Support families of all kinds as their child’s first teacher.</li> <li>4. Facilitate child transitions through collaboration with community and receiving schools.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Nurture well-being and cultivate a thriving community.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a culture of wellness, considerate of varying experiences in the QIN community.</li> <li>2. Equip the QIN community with the tools needed to achieve well-being and promote self-care.</li> <li>3. Strengthen resilience across the QIN community.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Lead positive system improvements for children and families across DC.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in continuous quality improvement and course correction.</li> <li>2. Enhance and streamline service delivery across social service programs.</li> <li>3. Address barriers (e.g., employment, housing, community violence) preventing the QIN community from achieving and/or maintaining well-being through ongoing engagement of DC initiatives aimed at addressing these barriers.</li> </ol>

### 1.2.2 Target Population

The QIN program seeks to serve, through a hub or hubs, infants and toddlers up to the age of 36 months and their families with low incomes, who are DC residents seeking child care within one of participating CCPs located in Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and meet the EHS or categorical eligibility requirements as outlined in the program’s priority selection criteria.



### **1.2.3 Purpose of Funds**

OSSE is soliciting applications from organizations, institutions and agencies interested in serving as a hub with the capacity to provide supports and services that meet the HSPPS, support achieving the QIN program goals and advance OSSE's Start Early strategic priority.

These services shall be delivered to QIN CCPs and educators supporting EHS-eligible children from birth through the age of 36 months, or until the child is eligible to enroll in a pre-K program through DC's mixed delivery system. Services are to be delivered through a District-wide hub responsible for EHS services in all Wards of the District either directly or through contractual agreements with other organizations. Applicants may propose to provide services to children, families and CCPs via one of three hub models:

1. Child development centers and child development homes/expanded child development homes (i.e., family child care);
2. Child development centers only; or
3. Child development homes/expanded child development homes only.

### **1.2.4 Eligibility**

OSSE/DEL will accept applications from eligible applicants, including non-profit, for-profit and faith-based organizations that can demonstrate expertise in: (1) early childhood education; (2) EHS; (3) financial management; (4) quality assurance; (5) ongoing monitoring of program deliverables; as well as (6) previous experience providing supports related to education and child development, health, family engagement, transition services, disability services, program management and quality improvement and human resources, including within the District's mixed delivery early care and education system.

Applicants are encouraged to propose bold and innovate strategies to achieve the objectives of the RFA.

Eligible organizations to serve as the hub(s) must have a track record, experience and capacity to:

- Serve children, families and CCPs located in Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- Leverage community partnerships or other funding sources to deliver program services.
- Establish collaborative relationships and partnerships to facilitate and coordinate access to services that are responsive to the needs and goals of the QIN community, including with other community agencies and community resources to maximize support and avoid duplication of effort.
- Provide technical assistance and training to child development centers and/or child development homes/expanded child development homes.
- Provide supports and services to underserved populations.
- Support OSSE in meeting the Start Early strategic priority.
- Serve as a federal recipient of funds, including current or former status as a recipient or sub-recipient of EHS or HS funds or other federal grants.

### **1.2.5 Source of Funds**

The funds are being made available through District of Columbia local funds and federal funds.

Federal funds are made available through and authorized by the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-134; 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.).

Local funds are made available through and authorized by the Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015 (D.C. Code § 4-415) and 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**

All grants under this RFA will be five-year awards (total award period), beginning on Oct. 1, 2024 and ending on Sept. 30, 2029, contingent upon availability of funds and successful completion of continuation applications after each budget period. Each budget period will be one year, with the first period beginning Oct. 1, 2024 and ending Sept. 30, 2025. A continuation application must be submitted annually. Receipt of funding for each budget period is contingent upon:

- Availability of funds;
- Recipient's implementation and/or operation of the program as submitted in the application;
- Recipient's demonstration that substantial progress has been made toward meeting the objectives set forth in the approved application, based on ongoing monitoring and review of the recipient's reports;
- Compliance with District and federal laws, regulations and guidance; and
- Appropriate expenditure of funds throughout the grant award period.

### **1.2.7 Funds Available**

The total funding available for implementing the QIN program is up to \$4,356,640 per year for each of the five years of the grant. OSSE plans to make one to five awards.

While OSSE has not predetermined the specified amount of funding per service area, as defined by the HSPPS, applicants should consider their own community partnerships and other funding sources to maximize the use of available funds under this grant.

OSSE/DEL reserves the right to issue more than one award or less than five awards for this funding opportunity to meet the needs of the program in its entirety and 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 are encouraged to propose innovative ideas to approach staffing, resources and activities to minimize the administrative cost and maximize benefits provided directly to the QIN community. Applicants must budget to use at least five percent of the grant award for family engagement supports and services to benefit children and families (e.g., diapers and wipes, participation incentives, stipends etc.)

### **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. This grant award is reimbursement-based. 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 reimbursement requests. To receive reimbursements for grant program expenditures, grantee(s) must complete and submit the applicable 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 agrees 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 they will affect positive change and growth for the children, families and CCPs within the QIN community and demonstrate how the proposed approach will ensure the implementation of EHS to fidelity, achieve the QIN program goals and facilitate collaboration with OSSE and other stakeholders to meet grant objectives. The grantee(s) must:

- a. Develop and implement the delivery of family-centered services that meet the needs of children and families based on the community needs assessment and as defined by the HSPPS and outlined in Section 1.3.4 Performance Standards and Quality Assurance of this RFA.
- b. Implement and document the execution of the work plan and report program data including outcomes, successes, needs, barriers and challenges, through reports to OSSE/DEL as defined in Section 1.3.6 Reporting Requirements.
- c. Implement a coaching model based on best practice and research, using an on-site expert coaching model to provide coaching, professional development and technical assistance to all QIN teachers on environment rating scales (ERSs), school readiness, developmental and formative assessments, HSPPS, health and safety and other professional development topics as relevant and appropriate to support high-quality learning environments and interactions for participation children and families in advancement of QIN goals.
- d. Promote the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of children served by ensuring they meet or progress towards meeting widely held expectations as defined by Teaching Strategies GOLD, fostering school readiness by assessing and observing each child's development, conducting developmental and social emotional screenings, ensuring children meet the school readiness goals and supporting families as their child's first teacher through family engagement activities.
- e. Build positive and goal-oriented relationships with families through robust family engagement services. Ensure there is at least one full-time family engagement specialist per every 40 children enrolled.
- f. Ensure CCPs conduct two home visits per program year for each family enrolled.
- g. Provide high-quality health, oral health, mental health and nutrition services that are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate and that will support each child's growth and school readiness.
- h. Promote mental health, social and emotional well-being by collaborating with the Department of Behavioral Health Healthy Futures program to implement their infant and early childhood mental health consultation program.
- i. Ensure at least 10 percent of children served by the program are children with disabilities by recruiting and enrolling children who are eligible for services under IDEA, collaborating with Strong Start, DC's early intervention program to ensure children fully participate in all program activities and providing support to QIN families through a dedicated disabilities specialist.
- j. Ensure all CCPs meet full enrollment of their allocated slots by marketing and recruiting EHS-eligible families to the program both in the community and at each participating CCP. If a program falls below full enrollment, ensure that full enrollment is reached within 30 days.

- k. Collaborate with CCPs to create transition plans six months prior to children and families aging out of the program.
- l. Support families to ensure EHS-eligible children remain enrolled in the QIN through the age of 36 months, or until the child is eligible to enroll in a pre-K program through DC's mixed delivery system, to the extent possible.
- m. Support CCPs in maintaining compliance with OSSE's child care licensing regulations and the HSPPS by providing supplementary technical assistance and support, equipment, supplies, technology and materials needed to ensure continued delivery of high-quality program services.
- n. Formally partner with the DC Shared Services Business Alliance to provide administrative support and reduce burden on participating CCPs.
- o. Participate in reviews and assessments of the program, including monitoring reviews, audits, site visits and technical assistance visits.
- p. Conduct and/or participate in the evaluation of the program.
- q. Comply with all federal and local requirements of the program.
- r. Collaborate with OSSE and agency partners to coordinate, strategize and ensure effective service coordination and support for children and families enrolled in the program and participating CCPs.
- s. Collect and manage program data using a data management software application approved by the Office of Head Start.
- t. Ensure all staff have completed background checks and meet the required qualifications prior to hire.
- u. Provide diapers, wipes and formula for enrolled children during the program day.
- v. Distribute teacher stipends and participation incentives to families who meet the requirements of participation established by OSSE.
- w. Develop and maintain policies and procedures for the implementation of EHS and adherence to the HSPPS.

### **1.3.2 Additional Grantee Responsibilities**

1. Develop a system to manage timely disbursement of stipends and incentives;
2. Submit any proposed printed materials or electronic materials for OSSE's/DEL's review and approval prior to their use and dissemination under this grant;
3. Ensure the QIN's target demographic of children and families are informed about the program in culturally compatible and linguistically diverse ways, including ensuring availability of certified interpreters for meetings and translation of QIN program information and materials into Spanish, Amharic and other languages of the populations served by the CCPs, as determined necessary by the grantee and OSSE;
4. Provide OSSE/DEL with translated materials produced by a certified translation and interpretation vendor;
5. Report to OSSE/DEL on distribution and reach of materials, including translated materials, to the target communities;
6. Participate in OSSE/DEL required trainings;
7. 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;
8. 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 of this program; and
9. 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 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 weekly, monthly and quarterly quality improvement plans and annual reports 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.

Weekly program reports will be due at the end of each week, monthly program reports will be due the fifth day of the of the month after the reporting month, quarterly quality improvement plans will be due the 10th day of the month following the end of the quarter and the annual report will be due 15 calendar 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 Standards and Quality Assurance**

OSSE/DEL expects that the grantees' performance will result in measurable improvements in QIN program administration that lead to positive impacts for children, families and CCPs, which will be reported in the program performance reports by the grantee(s). In addition, the grantee(s) will be required to meet the HSPPS and approved program goals and objectives. OSSE will monitor that the grantee(s):

- a. Submit a final work plan, as well as a data collection and evaluation plan in EGMS within 30 days from the date of execution of this award to the OSSE/DEL program manager.<sup>5</sup>
- 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 program by 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 standards, which include but are not limited to those defined by OSSE/DEL and the HSPPS during the grant period and progress towards achieving the QIN's

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<sup>5</sup> 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 activities, methodologies and expected outcomes.

program goals.

### **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](mailto:Gwen.Rubinstein@dc.gov) and [osse.datasharing@dc.gov](mailto: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](mailto:Gwen.Rubinstein@dc.gov) and [osse.datasharing@dc.gov](mailto: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 financial information in a manner consistent with EGMS, OSSE's online grant monitoring database. The monthly 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. In addition to financial report requirements, the grantee(s) will be required to submit, at minimum, 52 weekly child care vacancy reports, four quarterly hub quality improvement plans, 12 monthly reports and an annual financial and program report 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 or homelessness status.

### **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) at a minimum, must hire a dedicated program manager to oversee the QIN, family engagement specialists to maintain a 1:40 caseload and provide family engagement services, coaches to provide education and child development services (with a defined dosage of coaching ours per educator per week), a health specialist to provide health program services, a disabilities specialist to provide support for children with



disabilities and their families and a fiscal specialist to manage grant funds. All staff supporting the project must meet the education requirements based on their position as outlined in the HSPPS.

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, organizational chart and position descriptions that detail specific and unique responsibilities of each role 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 serving as a hub responsible for the implementation of the QIN within participating CCPs. 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 2.1 Work Plan and Section 2.2 Data Collection and Evaluation Plan. 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**

- Overview:** Briefly describe how the applicant organization and its proposed hub model (i.e., both child development centers and child development home/expanded child development home, centers only, child development home/expanded child development home only) will effect positive change and growth for the children, families and participating CCPs. Applicants should establish a vision for the implementation of the QIN.

### 1.5.2.3 Information about the Organization (Maximum: 10 points)

- Mission and History:** 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)
- Organizational Expertise:** Describe your organization’s experience and expertise and that of any partners, related to early childhood, providing technical assistance to the demographic of the proposed program model, implementing EHS/HS, supporting federally funded programs in the community, working with and providing supports and services to children and families with low incomes and those who are categorical eligible or a part of priority populations and of diverse backgrounds, cultures and languages. (5 points)
- Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Describe how your organization will foster and maintain collaborative relationships with OSSE, as well as with and between other partners, including but not limited to, other DC agencies, such as the Child and Family Services Agency, DBH, DC Health, Department of Human Services, District of Columbia Public Schools, public charter schools and other relevant public and private agencies that serve the intended beneficiary population for this grant. (3 points)

### 1.5.2.4 Capacity to Implement the QIN (Maximum: 50 points)

- Hub Model:** Identify the proposed hub model (i.e., both child development centers and child development homes/expanded child development homes, centers only, child development homes/expanded child development homes only) for which you are applying and your organization’s related experience. (5 points)
- Logic Model:** In an attachment, describe the planned activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes for the QIN. (5 points)
- Plan to Implement the QIN:** Describe your plan to serve as the hub for the QIN and implement EHS to fidelity within the proposed hub model. The plan should address all the aforementioned responsibilities and program objectives outlined in Sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.4. To the extent that the proposed model involves child development homes/expanded child development homes, applicants should demonstrate approaches tailored to the intended CCP population. To the extent that the proposed model includes both child development homes/expanded child development homes and child development centers, applicants should describe how their approach towards implementation of the program will differentiate services and supports to the varied needs of child development homes/expanded child development homes and centers. (20 points)
- Organization and Staffing Structure:** Describe your proposed organizational structure, staffing plan—including partnerships—with associated services to be delivered, dosage hours and structure of oversight and monitoring. (10 points)
- Networks and Partnerships:** List and describe existing partnerships with public and/or private entities that serve the District’s residents and whose expertise complements your organization’s

capacity and will assist in delivering and/or expanding the program services provided by the QIN. (10 points)

**1.5.2.5 Experience Providing Professional Development Using DC Observation Tools (Maximum: 5 points)**

- 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 the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ITERS-3) and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (FCCERS-3), as relevant to the hub model proposed (i.e., ITERS-3 if only supporting centers, FCCERS-3 if only supporting child development child development homes/expanded child development homes or both if proposing to support both). 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 (Maximum: 10 points)**

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) that comply with the HSPPS, 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, associated with the goals listed in Table 1, Section 1.2.1 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. (10 points)

#### **2.1.1 Goals**

The goals for the QIN are to:

1. Provide children with the foundation they need to be ready for school.
2. Nurture well-being and cultivate a thriving community.
3. Lead positive system improvements for children and families across DC.

### **2.2 Data Collection and Evaluation Plan (Maximum: 10 points)**

For each project activity in the workplan, 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 implementation of the QIN. Prepare and provide a system for monitoring progress made towards achieving program goals and impact of program activities on children, families and CCPs. (10 points)

### **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 with detailed and unique responsibilities, including minimum requirements for proposed personnel who have not been identified, the process for recruitment and selection and the timeline for other support roles included in the budget.

All staff must meet the minimum education requirements as described in the HSPPS.

### **2.4 Other Requirements**

#### **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 Resumes and/or Qualifications of Key Staff**

**2.4.5 Audited financial statements for the past three years**

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

**2.4.7 Conflict of Interest Policy**

**2.4.8 Separation of Duties Policy**

**2.4.9 Organizational Chart**

**2.4.10 Logic Model**

**2.4.11 Partnership Agreement**

OSSE requires each grantee(s) to adhere to, support and enforce the three-way child care partnership agreement, signed at the beginning of each five-year project period, between OSSE, the grantee and each CCP. The child care partnership agreement sets forth the terms and understanding between all parties and establishes a collaborative partnership between all parties.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Attestation of Priority Areas

Attachment B: Assurances

Attachment C: School Readiness Goals

**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  
QIN Program**

- In accordance with the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and the Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015, priority for the QIN hub(s) will be given to organizations, agencies and institutions with experience and a focus on: (1) early childhood education; (2) EHS; (3) financial management capabilities; (4) quality assurance practices; (5) ongoing monitoring of program deliverables; as well as (6) previous experience providing supports related to education and child development, health, family engagement, transition services, disability services, program management and quality improvement and human resources, including within the District’s mixed delivery early care and education system.

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**  
**FY 2025QIN Program**

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: School Readiness Goals

### School Readiness Goals

<b>Approaches to Learning</b> is about how children learn to perceive and process information. Skills in this area of development are related to thinking: remembering, problem solving and decision-making.
a. Children will approach knowledge acquisition and tasks with openness and curiosity.
b. Children will show persistence as they approach tasks flexibly.
c. Children will show cooperation and participate constructively in group situations and balance the needs and rights of self and others.
<b>Social-Emotional Development</b> is at the core of children’s learning because it affects all other areas of development. As children grow socially and emotionally, they are learning self-regulation skills that are crucial to developing executive function skills.
a. Children will regulate emotions and behaviors including managing feelings, following limits and expectations and taking care of their own needs appropriately.
b. Children will establish and sustain positive relationships with adults and peers.
c. Children will develop a strong sense of self and belonging to family and community.
<b>Communication, Language and Literacy Development</b> involves learning to understand others and to use language to communicate. This area also reflects the growing emphasis on exposing young children to both informational texts and literature from an early age.
a. Children will demonstrate understanding of increasingly complex language and use it to express self.
b. Children will demonstrate an understanding of print concepts and printed materials read aloud.
c. Children will discriminate the sounds of language and communicate in their home language.
d. Children will demonstrate phonological awareness, have knowledge of the alphabet, comprehend and respond to books and text and use emergent reading and writing skills.
<b>Cognition and General Knowledge</b> involves connecting prior experiences with new knowledge to lay a foundation for children to understand and function in the world around them.
a. Children will actively explore their environment to discover what objects and people do, how things work and how to make things happen.
b. Children will begin to learn math concepts, including developing a sense of numbers and quantities, spatial awareness and classification.
c. Children will observe, describe and demonstrate basic scientific concepts and reasoning.
d. Children will use symbols and images to represent something not present.
<b>Perception, Motor and Physical Development</b> involves developing competence in physical development and coordination of the whole child. Children who feel good about themselves physically are often more successful in their work in school.
a. Children will use perceptual information to guide actions in exploring objects, experiences and interactions.
b. Children will develop strength and coordination of gross motor and fine motor movement in order to participate in daily routines and activities.
c. Children will use sensory information and body awareness to understand and adjust their movements in their environment.
d. Children will identify and practice healthy and safe habits.