

## Reviewer Rubric

### Competitive – State Fiscal Year 2025 – Early Childhood Curriculum Alignment Grant

#### Executive Summary - 10 points

##### We asked the applicants to:

This component of the application should briefly describe the project as it aligns with the purpose of this funding. The summary should identify the following:

- Need for the funding
- Population(s) that will benefit
- Primary project goals and activities that are measurable and attainable and align with the purpose of funding
- Expected outcomes/products/outputs/benefits

#### Scoring Guidance – “Executive Summary”

##### Unacceptable (0 Points)

Applicant does not include a response to the executive summary section.

##### Below Average (1-3 Points)

The narrative does not respond adequately to the criteria; the response does not meaningfully, completely, or thoughtfully address the criteria; too many questions remain

##### Average (4-5 Points)

The response provided some detail, but very limited in specificity and depth that would demonstrate the capacity to deliver on the objectives and desired outcomes of the project; response does not indicate a thoughtful and planned approach; many clarifications are necessary

##### Good (6-8 Points)

The narrative mostly responds to all questions and criteria for this section and provides an adequate response; some of the narrative could be more detailed, complete, and clear; minor clarifications may be needed, but I would consider offering this applicant a grant

##### Excellent (9-10 Points)

The response clearly addresses all criteria; I feel confident this applicant will be successful in administering their proposal

## Capacity of the Applicant – 25 points

### We asked the applicants to:

Describe your organization’s capacity for and commitment to administering the project successfully. Identify the following:

- The primary project staff (employees) funded with the grant and their role in this project.
- All non-grant-funded staff and what their contributing role is in the project.
- Your intent to subcontract with outside professionals using the grant funds the services to be performed, and the qualifications expected of the subcontractors. How will you document the selection process used and follow applicable procurement practices?
- What methods will you use to ensure your approaches are inclusive and identify strategies you will use to successfully recruit participants from partnering IHE.
- External partners (not paid subcontractors) that may contribute to the project; identify their contribution, including the Identified partner institutes of higher education who will participate in the regional collaborative.
- Summarize you plan/process for distributing funds needed to compensate participants for their time, travel, and other investments.

## Scoring Guidance – “Capacity of the Applicant Organization or Entity”

### Unacceptable (0 Points)

Applicant does not address capacity of the applicant organization or entity in this section or anywhere in the application.

### Below Average (1-6 Points)

Applicant does address capacity in general, but the narrative does not respond in detail to the criteria; the response does not meaningfully, completely, or thoughtfully address the criteria; too many questions remain.

### Average (7-12 Points)

The response provided some detail, but very limited in specificity and depth that would demonstrate the capacity to deliver on the objectives and desired outcomes of the project; response does not indicate a thoughtful and planned approach; many clarifications are necessary.

### Good (13-19 Points)

The narrative mostly responds to all questions and criteria for this section and provides an adequate response; some of the narrative could be more detailed, complete, and clear; minor clarifications may be needed, but I would consider offering this applicant a grant.

### Excellent (20-25 Points)

- The response clearly addresses all criteria; I feel confident this applicant will be successful in administering their proposal.
- Applicant clearly identifies any necessary staff and/or subcontractors and external partners needed for their application proposal/activities.
- Budget aligns as needed with persons listed under this section.

## Diversity and Equity –10 points

### We asked the applicants to:

Describe your agency's diversity and equity inclusion efforts. Include the following:

- Identification of underserved populations.
- Describe how this program will be used to bring equity to your region.

## Scoring Guidance – “Diversity and Equity”

### Unacceptable (0 Points)

- Applicant does not address equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in this section or anywhere in the application.

### Below Average (1-3 Points)

- Applicant does address equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, but the narrative does not respond adequately to the criteria; the response does not meaningfully, completely, or thoughtfully address the criteria; too many questions remain
- *Or* applicant addresses 3-4 bullet points but there is minimal or no connection between the community(ies) they chose to focus on in their application

### Average (4-5 Points)

- The response provided some detail, but very limited in specificity and depth that would demonstrate the capacity to deliver on the objectives and desired outcomes of the project; response does not indicate a thoughtful and planned approach; many clarifications are necessary

### Good (6-8 Points)

- The narrative mostly responds to all questions and criteria for this section and provides an adequate response; some of the narrative could be more detailed, complete, and clear; minor clarifications may be needed, but I would consider offering this applicant a grant

### Excellent (9-10 Points)

- The response clearly addresses all criteria; I feel confident this applicant will be successful in administering their proposal

# Project Goals, Activities, Strategies, Outcomes, and Estimated Timelines – 30 points

## We asked the applicants to:

Please create a workplan utilizing SMART goals. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time bound. In this work plan, SMART goals are made Specific with activities or strategies. SMART goals are Measurable with data points, have Attainable outcomes, are Relevant to a benefiting party, and are Time bound with an estimated timeline. They also are assigned to a specific role responsible for the goal.

Outline as many SMART goals needed to achieve the expected outcomes and that align with the purpose of this grant opportunity for the relevant benefiting parties/population(s) expected to benefit from the work plan. To the extent practicable, the goals must be aligned to the state of [Minnesota's Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness \(CACR\)](#) (formerly known as the World's Best Workforce) and the federally required [Every Student Succeeds Act accountability systems](#).

### Goal 1:

**Activity or Strategy:**

**Measurement:**

**Attainable Outcome:**

**Relevant Benefiting Party:**

**Estimated Timeline:**

**Person Responsible for Activity:**

### Goal 2:

**Activity or Strategy:**

**Measurement:**

**Attainable Outcome:**

**Relevant Benefiting Party:**

**Estimated Timeline:**

**Person Responsible for Activity:**

## Scoring Guidance – “Project Goals, Activities, Strategies, Outcomes, and Estimated Timelines”

### Unacceptable (0 Points)

Applicant does not address project goals, activities, strategies, outcomes and estimated timelines in this section or anywhere in the application.

### Below Average (1-7 Points)

The narrative doesn't appear to reflect relevant activities, or the timeline doesn't align with the grant period. The response is vague and incomplete. The applicant's narrative does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the project. The sections of the above five-part template are not present in the response.

### Average (8-15 Points)

Response provides some detail on their outcomes, activities, etc. for most of the deliverables but is very limited in specificity and depth needed to demonstrate the commitment and capacity to deliver on the

objectives and desired outcomes of the project. Several clarifications are necessary. There is at least one clear project outcome, goal, activity, etc. using the above five-part template.

**Good (16-22 Points)**

The narrative for the most part outlines relevant activities and reflects the applicant's understanding of the project purpose and readiness. More information could have been provided to strengthen their narrative. Some minor clarifications may be needed but would consider this applicant for funding. Multiple project outcomes, goals, activities, are provided and most contain all five-parts of the template.

**Excellent (23-30 Points)**

- The narrative responds clearly, completely, thoughtfully and realistically. The response demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose and activities and readiness. I feel confident this applicant will be successful in administering their project. There are multiple project outcomes, goals, activities, etc., and each one contains all five-parts of the template provided above.
- The outcomes, goals and activities, etc. shared are demonstrated somehow to meet the unique needs of the applicant described in the statement of needs section of the grant application. (must be present for 30 points).

## Evaluation Plan – 15 points

The State is committed to funding services that produce a measurable result, outcome and/or product for the targeted population identified in your application and the people of Minnesota. Evaluations help demonstrate a project's effectiveness and information for future improvements. Evaluations use quantitative data and qualitative data, and sometimes, interviews. Grantees must have a plan to collect data to measure the effectiveness of the strategies outlined in the grant application.

Describe your evaluation plan. An evaluation plan will:

- Pose questions for the evaluation to answer
- Describe process and method for data collection
- Describe who will conduct the evaluation or evaluations (employed staff or subcontractors)

## Scoring Guidance – Evaluation Plan

### Unacceptable (0 Points)

The narrative response is very vague and does not demonstrate that the applicant understands the data that will need to be collected and does not describe how they will collect the data. The response isn't clear or complete.

### Below Average (1-4 Points)

The narrative response is present, but lacks significant detail. Does not adequately demonstrate the applicants understand of the data that needs to be collected, nor describe the methods involved in collecting the data.

### Average (5-8 Points)

The narrative demonstrates some strategy for collecting relevant information but could be more clear and complete.

### Good (9-12 Points)

The narrative demonstrates a good understanding of the data to be collected and some information on the method of collection.

### Excellent (13-15 Points)

The narrative clearly and strongly responds to the criteria for this section.

## Excel Budget with Descriptions – 10 points

### We asked the applicants to:

Complete the Excel budget, specify the grant amount requested, detail all “*necessary and reasonable*” expenditures anticipated during the project period that align with the project goals and activities, and use the budget codes available.

**Necessary** means it is important to the success of the project. **Reasonable** means you are paying fair market price for the item or services.

The narrative must address the following:

- There is sufficient narrative description for budget line-item entries.
- Reviewers are able to determine if the budget aligns with the project activities and primary purpose of the funding.
- The budget estimates for employee and proposed contractor services appear to correspond with reasonable approximations of the activities to be performed.
- The budget planned expenses appear necessary and reasonable for the success and purpose of the project.
- If funding will be used to provide meals or other food items it would be budgeted under Line Item 490 “Food-Necessary for success of approved grant projects (PD or training grants), and must be reasonable based on fair market prices, not for School lunch or refreshment programs for students.”

## Scoring Guidance – Excel Budget with Description

### Unacceptable (0 Points)

No budget submitted

### Below Average (1-3 Points)

Justification narratives are not provided for most budget items and/or the budget items do not align with the project plan and timeline. It is not possible to determine whether the proposed expenditures are necessary and reasonable.

### Average (4-5 Points)

Justification narratives for some budget items are provided and some appear to be reasonable, necessary, allocable and eligible/allowable. However, narratives for some don't seem complete or strong enough to determine reasonableness or necessity.

### Good (6-8 Points)

Justification narratives are provided for most budget items and most seem necessary and reasonable. Descriptions could have been more clear and complete. Some minor clarifications may be needed.

### Excellent (9-10 Points)

Justification narratives are provided for all budget items and all items appear to be reasonable, necessary, allocable and eligible/allowable. Descriptions are clear. I see no need for clarifications.

## Overall Perspective

Based on your overall review of the application and the scores you assigned, please Select a funding recommendation. (Column U in the spreadsheet) You will have one of three choices:

1. **Not Recommended** - If you select Not Recommended, we expect to see a low score and corresponding comments that describe the substantive weaknesses in the application.
2. **Recommended with Clarification(s)** - If selected, please specify what clarifications program staff should seek prior to awarding the grant.
3. **Recommended without Clarifications**

**NOTE:** Please keep your copies of the grant applications, if printed. Bring them to the review discussion meeting. We will collect all your documentation after the discussion.

**NOTE:** MDE will review recommendations and scores before making a final funding decision. Clarifications may be necessary from reviewers or applicants. All MDE decisions are final.