

## Grow Your Own Early Childhood and Family Educators Grant

### Questions and answers for the RFP to develop a diverse early education workforce

1. The RFP states that the grant term is four years and that \$344,000 is available to fund grants during Fiscal Year 2026. Is this the total amount available across all four years of the grant? Or will additional funds be available in subsequent years?
  - **Answer:** \$344,000 is the total amount to be awarded this year and distributed throughout the four-year grant period (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2030). Programs can choose to spend the money over 1-4 years. The state currently has ongoing funding for this grant and will be doing additional competitive grant rounds yearly.
2. How often does this RFP come out?
  - **Answer:** There is ongoing funding for this grant and subsequent grant rounds will be offered yearly.
3. Can we apply for Round 2 if we received funding for Round 1? Could you please clarify whether previously funded institutions/grantees are eligible to apply again under a new partnership structure or not.
  - **Answer:** Yes, you will have to demonstrate the need for additional funding.
4. Is it possible for one grant contract to overlap the other?
  - **Answer:** Yes, see question three.
5. Do we have to have a partnership with a university, or can we just provide tuition support?
  - **Answer:** You do not need to have a formal partnership in place. Tuition scholarships can be payments made directly to training programs.
6. How are some of these stipends different from TEACH scholarships through child care aware MN, when working in a program, and can get support for higher education that way?
  - **Answer:** GYO EC&FE grantees can support participants who are accessing TEACH scholarships to provide funding for the costs that are not covered by the TEACH scholarship and/or to

provide additional support through stipends to support the participant to successfully complete their education program.

7. In choosing the length of the grant term is the idea to identify a cohort of trainees who move through an entire multi-year degree program or is it sufficient to support different groups of interns annually who take courses and advance toward certification but who do not necessarily finish degrees during the grant period.
  - **Answer:** There is not a required way to structure the support for participants. You may have participants who are working on different degrees or credentials and may be at different stages of their program. There are benefits to supporting a cohort of participants and applicants are encouraged to think about innovative ways to support the needs of their participants.
8. Are indirect costs allowed in the budget?
  - **Answer:** No, this grant will not cover indirect costs.
9. Would you consider partial funding requests if you cannot fund the full request?
  - **Answer:** Yes, the state reserves the right to offer grant amounts that differ from the applicant's request or the maximum grant amount identified.
10. Do the education programs supported by the grant need to be teaching license programs? Do they need to be postsecondary degree bearing programs? For example, we have a local community college that has an early childhood learning certificate program.
  - **Answer:** It does not have to be a teaching license program. It does need to be an early childhood educator preparation program that leads to an individual earning the credential or degree needed to enter or advance in the early childhood education workforce. An early learning certificate program that supports an individual in entering or advancing in the early education workforce would be acceptable.
11. How should the RFP be submitted? ("Separate sections labeled with tabs")
  - **Answer:** Please submit one document for each part of the RFP:
    - **Proposal Content:** (Page 4, section 3.1) – This narrative part of the RFP should contain all proposal components listed on page 4 in sec 3.1 – Please label each section within the document with "headings" (headings = tabs) and submit as a PDF.
    - For "**Required Statements and Forms,**" please indicate which forms are being submitted with your proposal, if applicable. Please attach the forms as part of the PDF if you are able, or submit them separately if you cannot include them in the proposal content.
    - **Workplan** – This can be one document and should show a workplan for each year you have requested funding. Please submit as a PDF.
    - **Budget:** The budget is submitted as a spreadsheet (XLS) document.

12. When looking at the **Documentation to Establish Financial Stability Form** (DHS-7896), are we correct in thinking that while we need to complete the form and submit with our application, we do not need to submit the indicated financial documentation at this time (990 or audited financial statement)?

- **Answer:** Correct. If awarded a grant you will then be asked to submit the documentation if applicable to your funded grant amount.

13. The budget guideline states that at least 80% of grant money must be used for student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences. Are wraparound supports included within the 80% limit?

- **Answer:** Wraparound supports delivered through stipends paid directly to the participant would be included in the 80% funding requirement.

14. Can ESL be integrated into the program model? We serve immigrants and refugees - ESL is critical to workforce development, can funds be used to support that?

- **Answer:** ESL courses/training can be integrated into the program model by demonstrating how the courses/training will lead to an individual earning the credential or degree needed to enter or advance in the early childhood education workforce.

15. Can the funds be used on professional development days training?

- **Answer:** If the professional development opportunity is directly tied to participants earning a credential or degree needed to enter or advance in the early childhood education workforce, then expenses that are necessary and reasonable are allowable. Necessary means it is important to the success of providing the professional development opportunity. Reasonable means you pay a fair market price for the item or services.

16. Do you have to have a candidate already accepted into college if that is what you are budgeting for? If you are awarded and the candidate doesn't get into college or into the classes needed, can you switch to a different education plan after being awarded?

- **Answer:** Budget adjustments can be made during the life of the grant as needed in response to the needs of the participants being supported. Requests are made through a budget adjustment approval process and require a reasonable explanation for the needed change.

17. The grant period is four years, from July 1, 2026, until June 30, 2030. On page 16 of the RFP, it says to submit a workplan for SFY27 and SFY28. Should it be 1 work plan for each of the 4 years, or just those two years?

- **Answer:** Please submit a workplan for each year you are requesting funding. They can all be submitted within one workplan document.

18. Can funds be used to support required trainings for participants to open licensed child care centers? For example, hosting a free CPR/First Aid training course?
- **Answer:** If the professional development opportunity is directly tied to participants earning a credential or degree needed to enter or advance in the early childhood education workforce, then expenses that are necessary and reasonable are allowable. Necessary means it is important to the success of providing the professional development opportunity. Reasonable means you pay a fair market price for the item or services.
19. The new budget template includes a line for tuition reimbursement, but I wasn't sure whether the scholarships should be on that line. In previous years, there was a specific line for scholarships. Can you clarify?
- **Answer:** Please include the scholarships under "Other Expenditures" and provide detailed information.
20. When looking at the **Appendix C Budget Template:** Does the 80% requirement only include line item 389? Or what expenses can all be included in this statement? *Must use at least 80 percent of grant money for student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences.* Can required trainings (First Aid, CPR)? Background checks?
- **Answer:** The 80% does not need to be included in item 389 exclusively; you should use the budget code that best describes the expense. The 80% requirement includes expenses such as *student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences.* For additional examples see questions 14, 17, and 19. Please refer to the Budget Guidance document for specific information about budget expenses.
21. I am inquiring about the GYO ECE outcome requirements. Can you please clarify if the agency requires the applicant to achieve all the outcomes listed? Or may applicants select the ones that pertain to their programs from this list? The RFP states under target population:  
*Grant outcomes will include:*
- *Expanding the number of eligible educators in communities with a low number of qualified early childhood educators,*
  - *Expanding the number of eligible educators in programs unable to enroll children to capacity due to staff shortages,*
  - *Expanding the number of eligible educators to enable teachers and assistant teachers on a variance or out of field placements move into permanent teaching positions,*
  - *Expanding the number of eligible educators in a program so teachers and staff have appropriate breaktime or planning time, and*

- *Expanding the number of eligible educators in a program that reflect the culture, language, abilities, or backgrounds of the community the program serves.*
  - **Answer:** You are not required to achieve all the outcomes listed. Proposals should include outcomes and targeted populations that reflect the needs of their communities. You may include additional outcomes and targeted populations that pertain to your community that are not included in this list.
22. If our virtual CDA program serves participants throughout Minnesota, can we be eligible in both funding categories of the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota?
- **Answer:** Yes, including evidence in your proposal to support this statement would provide helpful context.
23. What responsibilities and roles have to be outlined in the partner letter to have an organization qualify as a partner for this grant opportunity?
- **Answer:** Partnerships should describe how the training helps individuals enter or advance in the early childhood workforce, including current workers and those interested in the field. For example, partnerships with workforce development agencies should explain how they help enable individuals to work in early childhood programs as a result of the training they receive.
24. We teach a CDA program that is free for participants. Could the staff expenses of training that program and working directly with participants to earn their CDA count towards the requirement that 80% of grant money must be used for student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences?
- **Answer:** The cost of the training would be considered part of the 80% of grant funds used for direct benefit to students.
25. If we accept participants to take part in our free CDA support program, would the total cost of our program per participant be scholarships that counted toward the 80% of grant money must be used for student stipends, tuition scholarships, or unique student teaching or field placement experiences?
- **Answer:** Staff costs associated with providing direct training to participants are allowed. Since the CDA program is free, please clarify what specific costs are being charged as the cost of program per participant vs. staff expenses for providing the training.
26. We hold a free CDA training support program. We build partnerships with child care centers and workforce development agencies that provide us with participants. We provide the curriculum, case management and support for participants to earn their CDA. Where would the costs of our program fit within the sample budget provided in the RFP?
- **Answer:** Staff salaries directly tied to supporting participants should be included in the staff salaries and wages and benefits sections of the budget, with detailed information provided in the narrative section.