NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)

FY 2022 STATE COORDINATING ENTITY (SCE) SERVICES FOR THE MARYLAND CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTER NETWORK (MCCRCN)

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 212101

Deadline:
February 5, 2021
No later than 5:00 p.m. EST

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

Name of Grant Program:
FY 2022 State Coordinating Entity (SCE) Services for the Maryland Child Care Resource Centers Network (MCCRCN)

Authorization:
Introduced as House Bill 932 (2005) and as a Legislative Mandate **Chapter 585, Acts of 2005**

Dissemination:
November 13, 2021

Deadline:
February 5, 2021
No later than 5:00 pm EST

A. Purpose:
The purpose of this solicitation is to retain services from a non-profit organization with significant experience providing:

A. Consumer education for parents, families and child care educators;

B. Professional development services for child care educators and technical assistance to improve the quality of child care services; and

C. Capacity building to improve the quality of programs.

The grantee shall act as the Statewide Coordinating Entity (SCE) overseeing operations of the regional Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs), together these Centers make up the Maryland Child Care Resource Center Network (MCCRCN).

The SCE shall ensure that required components are addressed as follows:

1. Statewide services shall include consumer education for parents, families, child care educators, providers serving infants and toddlers, professional development, and support for improving child care quality.

2. Services shall be available for the thirteen (13) Child Care Licensing Regions of the State: (http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing/regional-licensing-offices);

3. Utilize past data to determine funding for sub-grantees. Data shall include:

   a. Child Care Scholarship Data (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-subsidy-data-office-child-care);

   b. Licensing Statistics (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/licensing-statistics-office-child-care); and

c. Past performance data, to include the number of programs, families, and providers serviced.

4. Each CCRC shall:
   a. Be easily accessible by parents, families and providers;

   b. Include meeting space available for Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) use; and

   c. Include reasonable parking accommodations.

5. Provide grant management, training, technical assistance, support, monitoring, and evaluation of services to the MCCRCN. The primary goal of the CCRCs is to address the needs of parents and families seeking consumer education, quality early care and education programs, and to improve capacity building for child care professionals and licensed child care programs. This includes:
   a. Strategic management support as well as leadership development for licensed child care center staff and registered family child care providers that participate in child care quality initiative programs to include the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program; Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund; Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund; Child Care Quality Incentive Grant Program; Maryland Accreditation; and Maryland EXCELS, the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS);
   b. Training and technical assistance to parents and families. This includes collaborating with other agencies; and
   c. Referral services for child care programs.

B. State Staff and Roles

In addition to the Procurement Officer and Contract Monitor, the State will provide:

A. Grant Manager

1) The State will provide a Grant Manager who will be responsible for overseeing the grant, managing deliverables, providing technical assistance, and reviewing and approving invoices.

C. Other State Responsibilities

A. The State is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and test data to facilitate the Contractor's performance of the work, and will provide such additional assistance and services as is specifically set forth.

D. Staff and Roles and Responsibilities

The Contractor shall provide all the necessary personnel, tools, equipment, and resources required to successfully provide consumer education, professional development, and technical assistance for parents, families, caregivers and child care educators. The Contractor shall provide the following key personnel to manage and support the project: Program Manager and Database Specialist.

A. Program Manager

1) The contractor will provide a Program Manager who will:

a) Be responsible for:

i) Overseeing the grant,

ii) Managing deliverables,

iii) Providing technical assistance to each CCRCs,

iv) Reviewing, approving and submitting invoices.

b) Be available for face to face and virtual site monitoring visits,

c) **Conduct** onsite support, professional development and capacity building to each CCRC. This must include:

i) A minimum of two (2) professional development days for the CCRCs, and

ii) Conducting monthly regional CCRC meetings,

d) Conduct specialized training to the CCRCs,

e) **Be a**vailable to attend meetings at MSDE,

f) Collaborate with child care partners to support the CCRCs, and

g) Develop partnerships to support the CCRCs.

E. **Required Components:**
Proposals shall contain the following to be considered for funding:

Statewide services by the SCE and the MCCRCN are specified below and shall be provided in the three areas as follows:

1. **Consumer Information**

A. The SCE and each MCCRCN shall provide resources and information to parents, families and providers through:
   i. A website, social media, and other apps located at each CCRC that is accessible to the public;

   ii. On site resource services located at the CCRC site;

   iii. Resource and information telephone services located at each CCRC that is accessible to parents and caregivers, including those with disabilities or needing dual language and multi-language learner support, via a 1-800 telephone line and listed on each CCRC's website;

These services **must** meet the following **performance levels**:

A. Parents, families and providers **must** be able to print program and resource information directly from the website;
   a. Information shall include how to access:
      1. Division of Early Childhood (DEC) programs, to include but not limited to:
         i. The Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program (http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-subsidy-program);

         ii. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/office-child-care/credentialing-branch/child-care-credential-program);

iii. Maryland Accreditation (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/maryland-excels/maryland-accreditation);

iv. Maryland EXCELS (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/maryland-excels);

v. Licensing Branch (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing);

vi. Judy Centers (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-centers);

vii. Family Support Center Network (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/family-support-center-network); and

viii. Child Care Referral Program.

B. The SCE and each MCCRCN shall:

a. Collaborate and develop partnerships with other agencies that will provide resource information to be utilized by the CCRC to support parents, families and child care educators. Partnerships shall include, but not limited to:

1. Maryland Child and Adult Care Food Program;
2. Maryland Department of Health;
3. Maryland Department of Mental Health;
4. Maryland Department of Health and Human Services;
5. Maryland Disabilities Law Center;
6. ADA Information Center;
7. Child Care Law Center;
8. Child Care Resource and Referral;
9. PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs – World of Care;
10. PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs – Therapeutic Nursery;

11. The Maryland Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project; Child Care Plus;

12. Maryland Learning Links;

13. Center for Inclusive Child Care;

14. Abilities Network;

15. The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness;

16. The ARC of Prince George's County;

17. The ARC of Montgomery County;

18. -All Maryland State Department of Education Recognized Associations;

19. Community Action Agencies;

20. School Representatives working with teen Parents (Identify the correct name);

21. Early Childhood Advisory Council; and

22. Office of Child Care Advisory Council.

b. Develop, conduct, and analyze a needs assessment at the beginning of the fiscal year;

c. Develop, conduct, and analyze a satisfaction survey at the end of the fiscal year;

d. Facilitate **an annual conference** in partnership with local child care associations regarding child development and the accessibility, availability, and quality of child care resources;

e. Provide publications at conferences, seminars and meetings for parents, families, providers and the public regarding child development and the accessibility and availability of parent/family resources;

f. All program materials, including, but not limited to, fliers, monthly calendars, newsletters, brochures, digital communication (-blasts), stationary, website, and press releases used or sent by the SCE or CCRC shall include the Maryland State Department of Education logo. The logos are to be placed as provided and not modified or distorted in any way;

g. All materials, information, publications, and the like, produced under this grant and at the direction of MSDE are considered work for hire and as such become the property of MSDE and shall be treated as such;

h. All materials, information and publications set forth for public dissemination shall have the vendor's name clearly displayed on each page and state, "This publication was produced as a work for hire for the benefit of, and with funds from, the Maryland State Department of Education;" **and**

i. Any existing products, if revised or issued as second editions, should include the copyright symbol at the bottom of the Board page (©[Year] Maryland State Department of Education.).

C. Each CCRC shall collaborate with the Child Care Referral Program to provide information and referral services to parents and families, including guidelines for finding quality early care and education programs administered through:
   a. A website, social media, and other approved apps that is accessible to the public; and,
   b. Resource and referral telephone counseling services located at each CCRC that is accessible to parents and caregivers, including those with disabilities or needing language support, via a 1-800 telephone line and listed on the Network, CCRC and Child Care Referral Program website.
   c. These services shall meet the following performance levels:
      1. The ability of parents to print program information directly from the website;
      2. One (1) full time Child Care Family Referral Specialist located at each CCRC to deliver resource and referral telephone counseling services:
         i. Provide to parents/caregivers written information on at least five (5) child care programs that provide counseling services and how further information may be accessed, if needed;
         ii. The provision of information, on the web and during counseling sessions to minimally include the status of the program on Maryland EXCELS (participation, publication, and at what level); programs with Additional Achievements through MD EXCELS (Asthma Friendly Child Care, Health and Wellness, and programs that completed the Program Administrative Scale/Business Administrative Scale); Accreditation; and on accessing the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program (http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care- subsidy-program);
         iii. Parents/caregivers will be assisted in accessing options for addressing inclusive placements for children with disabilities, children's special health care needs, parent/caregivers who work non- traditional schedules, and emergency placements in case of disruption of child care services. This includes accessibility of those services beyond regular office hours by sharing information on programs and providing written information to parents/caregivers on possible placements;
      3. Each CCRC shall develop, conduct, and analyze a satisfaction survey annually of child care consumers using information and referral services;

D. Each CCRC shall provide contact information for the CCRC Director, Trainer, Technical Assistance Specialist and Child Care Family Referral Specialist delineated by region.

Contact information must include:
1. Name;
2. Title;
3. Address;
4. Phone; and
5. Email.

The MSDE will:
1. Provide the following publications/resource materials and/or links to be included in all regional conferences, seminars, meetings and CCRC's:

    a. Maryland Child Care Credential Program;
    b. Training Voucher & Reimbursement Program;
    c. Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund;
    d. Child Care Quality Incentive Grant;
    e. Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund;
    f. Maryland EXCELS;
    g. Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program;
    h. Licensing;
    i. Accreditation;
    j. Early Learning Assessment (LEA);
    k. Judy Center Early Learning PCCSCs;
    l. Pre-K Expansions Grants;
    m. Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils;
    n. Early Childhood Mental Health; and
    o. Ready for Kindergarten Assessment System.

2. Refer programs requiring technical assistance to the SCE and CCRC's as needed.

2. Professional Development

A. The SCE and the MCCRCN shall provide training, professional development and technical assistance (TA) to build capacity for improving the skills of child care professionals to deliver quality, research-based early learning opportunities to all children, including those from low-income families, children with disabilities, Dual Language Learners, and children with developmental or mental health needs.

1. SCE and the MCCRCN shall deliver:
    a. Training and TA to new trainers (trainers that have been training for five (5) years or less). Training shall include (but is not limited to):
        i. Proposal writing;
        ii. Presentation skills;
        iii. Training regulation and compliance guidance; and
        iv. Guidance for new trainers.

    b. Monthly training on specific topics in each core of knowledge area, in collaboration with MSDE and other CCRC's that support parents, families and child care professionals.

2. SCE and the MCCRCN shall:
    a. Develop new training and make revisions to previously approved training, if applicable.
        i. CCRCs shall:
            1. Use the Maryland Child Care Resource Center Network (MCCRCN) training approval number, unless trainings were developed with the use of independent funding;
            2. Develop a minimum of 3 new trainings annually; and
            3. Revise or update previously approved trainings that are older than four (4) years.

    b. Offer monthly trainings to support the following programs:
        i. Maryland Child Care Credential Programs;
        ii. Quality Initiative Programs;
        iii. Accreditation;
        iv. Child Care Scholarship; and
        v. Licensing.

    c. Offer the 45-hour Coaching and Mentoring training quarterly.
        i. Each CCRCs shall:
            1. Deliver a hybrid model of coaching and mentoring; and
            2. Train at least 25 child care professionals annually.

    d. Offer Pre-service Training, to include:
        i. 45-hour pre-service Training/Methods and Materials for Infant Toddler;
        ii. 45-hour pre-service Training/Methods and Materials for Preschool;
        iii. 45-hour pre-service Training/Methods and Materials for School Age; and
        iv. 45-hour pre-service Training/Child Growth and Development (birth - 12).

B. The SCE and the MCCRCN shall improve child care services for infants and toddlers (birth through three years of age) through specialized training and TA for infant and toddler care professionals through infant-toddler specialists by applying the Healthy Beginnings Guidelines.

    1. Specialized training and TA shall include:
        a. Zero to Three: Critical Competencies for Infant and Toddlers; and
        b. Communities of Practice;

    2. Professional development offerings shall be based on the Core of Knowledge categories and be updated regularly (at least annually). SCE and the MCCRCN shall:

        a. Include subject matter for parents and families of children birth to eight and how to engage the families in the education of their child;
        b. Include *Standards for Implementing Quality Early Childhood Programs and Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Learning Pedagogy, Birth to Age 8*, as applicable; and
        c. Follow the *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*.

3. Professional development opportunities shall include development on all domains of learning defined in the R4K Framework and Early Learning Standards in collaboration with MSDE;

4. The SCE shall:
   a. Submit all training workshop packets to the Office of Child Care in the MSDE Division of Early Childhood for approval; this includes all Conferences and Professional Development Institutes. Training workshop packets shall follow proposal due dates listed on the MSDE website (http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/trainers);

   b. Submit all training workshop packets using the MCCRCN training approval number;

   c. Publicize all MSDE approved trainings and professional development to the online Maryland Child Care Training Calendar;

   d. Avoid duplicating training or professional development opportunities that are offered by other training organizations. (e.g., community colleges and training organizations);

   e. Include training required under Code of Maryland Regulations 07.04.02 and that the training and trainers shall meet continuing training and education requirements from the Office of Child Care;

   f. Offer trainings in specified topics based on needs and upcoming initiatives in collaboration with MSDE**;**

   g. Present training opportunities in varied formats, such as on-line, hybrid format, and on evenings and weekends;

   h. Report on and include post assessments for all trainings;

   i. Report on and include evaluation of training services; and

   j. Report on and include a training needs assessment.

      A. The SCE shall develop/maintain an online Maryland Child Care Training Calendar that is posted and regularly updated on the grantee’s website. The Calendar shall list professional development opportunities for early childhood and school age child care that are approved by the Office of Child Care in the MSDE Division of Early Childhood. The MSDE training approval link is provided on the MSDE website at: http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/trainers.

B. An interactive, secure **website**, accessible to trainers and the public. The website must include:

1. **Trainer portal login capability.**

   Trainer portal login must include:

   a) Training Approval Number;

   b) Username (email address); and

   c) Password (Encrypted and secure use).

2. **Trainer Profile for new approved trainer(s) and training organizations.**

   Trainer profile must include:

   a) The creation of a profile based on the following criteria (profiles should be available for view by providers):
      1. Trainer's first and last name or organization name;
      2. Contact information:
         i. Email address;
         ii. Website (if applicable); and
         iii. Phone number (optional).
      3. Training approval number(s) based on the following criteria:
         i. Up to 10 alphanumeric characters; and
         ii. Expiration date.
      4. County must include:
         i. County where the trainer/organization is based; and
         ii. County(s) where the training will be offered.
      5. All approved training. Approved training must include:
         i. Course Type:
            a. Core of Knowledge (COK) (multiple COK domains may be selected);
            b. Pre-Service (multiple courses may be selected);
            c. Continued Training;
            d. Office of Child Care -licensing required training (multiple courses may be selected); and
            e. Other.
      6. New/approved training. Training must include:
         i. Trainer contact information:
            a. Name (required);
            b. Phone (optional); and/or
            c. Email (optional).
         ii. Course Title;
         iii. Course Id Number;
         iv. Description;

v. Prerequisite(s);
vi. Number of hours;
vii. COK;
viii. Continued Training;
ix. Pre-service;
x. Office of Child Care -licensing required training; and
xi. Other.

C. Trainer Profile for existing approved trainer(s) and training organizations. The trainer profile must include:

1. Reviewing and/or editing existing training and adding new approved training(s);

a) Reviewing, editing and adding training(s) must include:

1. Course title;
2. Course Id number;
3. Description;
4. Prerequisite;
5. Number of hours;
6. COK areas;
7. Continued training;
8. Pre-service;
9. Office of Child Care -licensing required training; and
10. Other

b) The SCE must provide trainers with an option to save training to the list of existing training. This must include:

1. Review and update saved training**s**; and
2. Confirm saved training.

c) The SCE must provide trainers with an option to publish/advertise saved training. This must include:

1. Start date;
2. End date;
3. Start time;
4. End time;
5. Option to repeat training;
6. Training delivery. Training delivery must include:
   a. Face-to-face. Face-to-face must include:
      i. Address line 1;
      ii. Address line 2 (optional);
      iii. City; and

iv. Zip code.

b. Virtual (webinar). Virtual must include:
   i. Web link;
   ii. Meeting ID;
   iii. Passcode:
   iv. Dial in number (option(s));
   v. Dial by location number(s) and city(s);
   vi. Dial by location password; and
   vii. Find your local number web link.

c. Online (self-paced). Online must include:
   i. Web link;
   ii. Contact number; and
   iii. Technical Assistance contact information.

d. Active training registration link and/ or trainer website; and
e. Confirmation of saved published/advertised information.

d) The SCE must provide trainers with the option to review, update and approve published/advertised training. This must include:

1. Confirmation of saved training;
2. Training that was previously entered and not published/advertised;
3. Editing options for training not published/advertised;
4. Review and approved options for training not published/advertised;
5. Confirmation of published/advertised training;
6. Removal of published/advertised training from the Training Calendar when end date has been reached;
7. Saving published/advertised training to trainer profile when end date has been reached; and
8. Adding published/advertised training to history. This must include:
7. Start and end dates; and
8. Store history (for up to 5 years).

e) The SCE must make the trainer profile available for review, edit and update by the trainer/training organization.

B. **Provider portal. Must include:**

1. Login capability.
2. Basic Search Feature

   Must include searches based on the following criteria:

   a. Statewide, Region, or County. County must include a list of all Maryland counties. Multiple regions and counties may be selected.

   b. Trainer, training organization or both;

   c. Approved trainings delineated by course type, to include:

      1. Core of knowledge (COK) area. Multiple COK areas may be selected. COK to include:

         i. Child Development;
         ii. Curriculum;
         iii. Health, Safety,
         iv. Nutrition;
         v. Special Needs;
         vi. Professionalism; and
         vii. Community.

      2. Pre-service course. Multiple Pre-service courses may be selected. Pre-service courses must include:

         i. 45-hour Child Development Birth - 12;
         ii. 45-hour Infant Toddler;
         iii. 45-hour Pre-School;
         iv. 45-hour School Age; and
         v. 45-hour Directors Course.

      3. Continued training:

         Office of Child Care licensing required training. Multiple training**s** may be selected. Office of Child Care -licensing required training must include:

         i. SIDS;
         ii. Breast Feeding;
         iii. Basic Health and Safety;
         iv. 9-hour Communication Course;
         v. Medication Administration;
         vi. ADA;
         vii. 24 Hour Family Child Care Courses;
         viii. First Aid and CPR; and
         ix. Emergency Preparedness.

4. Other.

1. Month and/or Hours of Availability; and
2. Face-to-face, virtual, and/or online.

- **Search History**
  1. All user search history is maintained for 180 days; and.
  2. Search history is accessible by each user for searches conducted over the past 180 days.
- **Map Display**
  1. A "Start Address" is entered by the user;
  2. A map is displayed after the user's search is complete; and
  3. The map depicts the location of the user's street address and the location of the search results.
- **Search Results**
  1. List of results appear on the right side of the website page;
  2. Map is displayed with locations identified on the left side of the website page;
  3. Once results are provided to the user, the user will be able to hover over a result and view;
     - Trainer and/or Training Organization Name;
     - Trainer and/or Training Organization Telephone Number;
     - Trainer and/or Training Organization Email Address;
     - Training Registration Information; and
     - Distance (in miles) from the "Start Address" to the Training.
- **"Email" Button (emails the list of results to the website user)**
  1. Email address entry; and
  2. Once the button is selected, an email is automatically sent to the email address with the results attached.
- **"Print" Button (allows the website user to print the results)**
  1. Once the button is selected, the print options are enabled.
- **"Save" Button (allows the website user to save the results)**
  1. Once the button is selected, the results are saved to the specified location.
- **"Live Chat" Feature (allows the website user to chat with trainer or Training Organization about the results)**
  1. The user's "name" must be provided; and

        2. Include a "Comment" area where the user can add comments or questions.
    - **Removal/Addition of Trainers and/or Training Organizations:**
        1. The SCE shall immediately remove (within 30 minutes or less) any and all trainer(s)/training organization(s) that have been placed in a "Suspended" status by MSDE.
            - Removal must occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365/366 days a year.
        2. The SCE shall add (within 24 hours) any and all trainers/training organizations that have been approved by MSDE.
    - **"FAQs" Frequently Asked Questions Link**
        1. Common questions and answers are listed on a pdf document that is accessible through a link on the website; and
        2. Several versions of the FAQ pdf document must be uploaded as questions and answers are added to it over time.
    - **Website Available in Multiple Languages**
        1. Add a feature which allows the user to select a flag/language and translate the entire website into the specified language.
    - **ADA Compliant Website**
        1. Speech enabled software which reads to the user; and
        2. Provides improved visual access which increases the fonts/pictures for the user.
- The SCE must provide technical support to trainers, training organizations and Providers. Technical support must include:
    - Technical support phone number, email address and live chat options.
    - Live technical support must be provided between 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday.

2. The SCE and each CCRC shall:
   A. Send at least one (1) representative to all MSDE Quarterly Training meetings; and

   B. Require ~~**that**~~ all new trainers associated with the MCCRCN **to** attend the MSDE Training Orientation.

3. The MSDE shall provide:
   A. Existing Approved Course Associated by trainer, to include course:
      - Course ID number;
      - Title;
      - Trainer/training organization contact information;
      - COK area;
      - COK hours;
      - Description; and

        - Prerequisite.

3. Capacity Building for Improving Quality of Programs

The SCE shall:

- Direct the CCRCs to assist licensed child care professionals in utilizing State and/or local resources, including the Maryland Accreditation, the Accreditation Support Fund, the Maryland Child Care Credential Program, Training Voucher and Reimbursement programs, Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund, Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund, Child Care Quality Incentive Grant Program, Maryland EXCELS, and Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program.

  CCRCs shall:

  - Deliver telephone consultations, TA group sessions, and TA individual sessions:
    - At the CCRC office;
    - On site at provider locations; or
    - At other identified locations, including virtual learning communities.

  - Manage and maintain "case files" on each parent, family and provider served; and

  - Providing capacity building and support for family child care homes, child care centers, and public prekindergarten programs.

    CCRC capacity building and support strategies shall include:

    - Giving priority to those programs/providers located in communities that serve a high number of vulnerable children;

    - Assess each program to determine the level and frequency of TA offered;

    - Assisting child care providers with completing and submitting Maryland Credential applications, including but not limited to providing the fax, mail, and scan information;

    - Collaborating with the MSDE Quality Assurance Specialists, Judy Centers, and others working to improve the quality of early care and education in Maryland;

    - Written agreement for providers to participate in training and intensive coaching;

    - Written plan, with each program/provider that includes action steps to increase higher participation in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program within the written plan;

    - A standardized rubric to measure if the identified criteria has been met or not met within a specified time period for each participating program/provider. The standardized rubric shall be utilized during the development of written plans and Technical Assistance (TA) visits;

    - A Checklist which includes barriers that prevent success with the Child Care Credential Program, Accreditation and Child Care Quality Incentive and Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant Fund Programs. The Checklist shall be utilized during the development of written plans and during follow-up visits; and

    - A Professional Development Plan to increase the credential levels of staff. CCRCs shall utilize the Professional Development Plan during the development of written plans and during follow-up visits.

- Direct the CCRCs on how to implement the Results Based Accountability process to evaluate the effectiveness of all capacity building efforts such as utilizing the Maryland Knowledge and Competencies Self-Assessment tool.

- Conduct monitoring review activities for each MCCRCN. Must include:
  - A minimum of two (2) automated grant risk assessments annually. The SCE shall:
    - Deliver automated grant risk assessments during the 1st and 3rd quarters of the State fiscal year; and
    - Utilize Risk Assessment/Monitoring Tools that are pre-approved by MSDE.

  - A minimum of two (2) on-site programmatic and fiscal monitoring visits annually. The SCE shall:
    - Deliver on-site programmatic and fiscal monitoring visits during the 1st and 3rd quarters of the State fiscal year;
    - Document monitoring outcomes and findings utilizing Risk Assessment/Monitoring Tools, that are pre-approved by MSDE; and
    - Document findings and finding resolution timelines utilizing Risk Assessment/Monitoring Tools, that are pre-approved by MSDE. The SCE shall include a minimum of two (2) follow-up visits to:
      - Remedy identified findings and issues with sub-grantee; and
      - Reassess and update monitoring priorities.

- Host a minimum of 18 face-to-face capacity building opportunities, to include, at a minimum:
  - Six (6) director's meetings delivered bi-monthly;
  - Two (2) strategic management meetings annually; and
  - Four (4) leadership development meetings delivered quarterly.

- The SCE's Program and Finance Manager shall attend the Maryland Governor's Annual Grants Conference.

- The SCE shall direct the CCRCs on how to implement the Results Based Accountability process to evaluate the effectiveness of all capacity building efforts such as utilizing the Maryland Knowledge and Competencies Self-Assessment tool

Training Requirements

4. The SCE and MCCRCN shall:
   A. Observe each MCCRCN trainer and associated trainers annually;

   B. Deliver MSDE approved trainings (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/trainers/resources-trainers); and

C. Follow the administrative responsibilities listed in MSDE's training manual.

5. SCE and MCCRCN trainers, trainings and professional development activities must meet the initial and continuing training and education requirements from the Office of Child Care (https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/trainers/resources-trainers); and

6. CCRC's shall deliver trainings and professional development sessions to a minimum class size of five (5) participants.

Transition in Activities/Services:
Ensure the following:

- The Grantee shall create and manage a project schedule for transition-in activities;

- The grantee will undertake a process within 90 days to select organizations in each of the 13 licensing regions to operate child care resource centers. The selection is subject to approval by MSDE;

- If any area within a region remains unserved by a sub-contractor, the SCE shall be responsible for developing interest and capacity for providing resource and referral services in unserved area;

- Establish a website that is accessible to the public and listed on CCRC and MCCRCN websites;

- The Grantee shall establish a toll-free number for resource and information services that is located at one consumer service site that is accessible, answering provider calls, and perform all necessary setup activities to begin accepting calls from parents, families and child care educators, as described in requirements within this RFP. The toll-free number shall be listed on the Network website;

- The Grantee shall direct all sub-grantees to establish a resource and information services toll-free number that is:

    - Located at the CCRC;
    - Accessible;
    - Used to answer parent, family and child care educator calls; and
    - Listed on the CCRC and MCCRCN websites.

- The Grantee shall lead transition weekly meetings with the Grantor Project Manager;

- The Grantee shall provide a calendar of events for transition activities; and

- The Grantee shall hold a transition-in wrap-up meeting to confirm all transition activities are complete. The Grantor will indicate when transition-in activities are considered complete.

Transition Out Activities/services:
Ensure the following:

- Work with MSDE and the new grantee to identify all transition activities;
- Return to MSDE all publications funded by the grant;
- Provide scripts and other help desk training materials to MSDE;
- Return to MSDE data submitted through the Maryland Child Care Training Calendar;
- Return to MSDE reports funded by the grant; and
- Return to MSDE equipment purchased by the grants.

Procurement:
Conflict of Interest Standards

- Grantees and sub-grantees shall disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to MSDE; and
- Grantees and sub grantees shall timely disclose in writing to MSDE any violation of state or federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations affecting the grant award.

Employ Certain Economies in Purchasing

- Grantee shall maintain procedures that avoid the purchase of unnecessary or duplicative items (2CFR.200.318(D));

Data Ownership and Access:

- Data, databases and derived data products created, collected, manipulated, or directly purchased as part of this solicitation are the property of the State. The Office of Child Care is considered the custodian of the data and shall determine the use, access, distribution and other conditions based on appropriate State statutes and regulations; and
- The Contractor shall not use any information collected in connection with the services furnished under the Contract for any purpose other than fulfilling such services.

Equipment Ownership and Access:

- Equipment collected, manipulated, or directly purchased as part of this solicitation are the property of the State. The Office of Child Care is considered the custodian of the equipment and shall determine the use, access, distribution and other conditions based on appropriate State statutes and regulations; and
- The Contractor shall not use any information collected in connection with the services furnished under the Contract for any purpose other than fulfilling such services.

Priorities:
Priority will be given to proposals that incorporate one or more of the following:

- An agency/organization with significant experience in managing child care information and referral services for parents, implementing professional development services for child care educators, and providing technical assistance to improve the quality of child care services.

Eligible Applicants:
A not for profit community-based agency/organization which has the capacity to provide a child care information and referral system as well as professional development, technical assistance and training services.

Proposal Review:
The review of proposals will be a four-part process.
1) Written applications will be prescreened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all prescreen requirements will not be read.
2) A review committee established by the MSDE will evaluate written applications. The committee will be composed of representatives from outside agencies and MSDE personnel. Reviewers will comment upon the proposals and assign numerical scores.
3) Applicants may be scheduled for an oral presentation as determined by the review committee.
4) Final approval for awards will be determined by the MSDE's Division of Business Services.

MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

Award Notifications:
Notification of awards will be sent by email on Thursday, March 4, 2021

Length of Grant:
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 (with option to renew or submit a plan of operation annually for three years through June 30, 2025). Upon the end of the third year, MSDE reserves the right to renew the grant for two additional years through June 30, 2027.

Estimated Number of Grants:
It is estimated that only one (1) grant will be awarded.

Estimated Average Grant Amount:
Based upon approval of proposed budget.

Cost Considerations:
Applicants shall develop budgets that comply with the federal cost principles under EDGAR. Any resulting award will include a budget that is consistent with these requirements.

All costs must be:
1. Necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award;
2. Allowable to the award;
3. Consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to federally financed and other activities of MSDE; and
4. Adequately documented.

Fund Use
Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant may not be funded through the award. Generally, a direct cost is one that is incurred specifically for one activity. Indirect costs are of a more general nature and are incurred for the benefit of several activities. Once a grantee makes an

election and treats a given cost as direct or indirect, that treatment must be applied consistently and may not change during the fiscal year. Sub grantees are never required to charge indirect costs. A sub grantee may conclude that the amount it would recover would be immaterial and not worth the effort needed to obtain it. Guidelines for determining direct and indirect costs are provided in Federal CFR part 200.413 – 414.

Direct costs can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective. Typical direct costs chargeable to awards are:

A. Compensation of employees for the time devoted and identified specifically to the performance of those awards;
B. Cost of materials acquired, consumed, or expended specifically for the purpose of those awards;
C. Contracts specifically for the purpose of those award;
D. Purchase of independent evaluation services at no more than 5% of the fund request;
E. Equipment and other approved capital expenditures; and
F. Travel expenses incurred specifically to carry out the award.

Indirect cost (Facilities & Administration) accepted will be one of the following:

A. Local school system (LSS) – must use MSDE approved indirect cost rate for the respective district;
B. A subrecipient with an approved federal indirect cost rate should be used except institutions of higher education research rate are not accepted and capped at 15%; or
C. A sub-recipient who has never had a negotiated federal indirect cost rate will be provided an indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC).

Funds may not be used for:

A. Supplanting existing funding;
B. Capital Improvement; or
C. Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), Section 427:

Each application must develop and describe the steps such applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

Reporting Requirements:

In accordance with the grant application instructions and forms from the MSDE Grant Administrator, the grantee must provide the following report(s):

A. **Interim Invoice Report-** at monthly intervals, an invoice pertaining to grant activity by each of the 13 CCRCs shall be submitted to the Grant Administrator. The invoice shall reflect expenditures from the previous month of activity; and, shall be submitted during the following month on or before the fifteenth day of that month (or the next business day). The cost of all items in the invoice shall be specified in an approved line item; and, each line item shall be associated to one of the following funding sources:

a. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Infant and Toddler;

b. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Quality; or

c. Other (State and Federal).

B. **Interim Progress Report-**at quarterly intervals (MSDE C-1-25-C form shall be the cover document) providing information depicting a composite of all activities of each CCRC. The report shall be formatted to include separate reporting of CCRC services with attachments of standardized progress reports depicting activities reported by the CCRC. The Interim Progress Report shall reflect activity from months within the previous *state fiscal cycle. Also, the report shall be submitted during the month following that fiscal cycle on or before the fifteenth day of that month.

C. Consultant Log- at quarterly intervals (if applicable). A copy of MSDE's form with supporting documentation shall accompany the Interim Progress Report. The consultant form shall also have attachments of receipts and relevant data pertaining to cost of activity from the consultant working to support programmatic activity.

D. **Final Progress Report-** (MSDE C-1-25-D form) concluding CCRC services and activities. The final report shall be submitted within 60 days of the grant end date (on or before Tuesday, August 31, 2021). The Final Progress Report shall summarize all grant activity for the grant period beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.

E. **Single Audit and Internal Control Report-** the most current annual financial, Single Audit and Internal Control Report performed by an external public accounting firm shall be submitted with this application.

F. **Annual Financial Report (AFR) -** the AFR report shall be submitted within 60 days of the grant end date (on or before August 31, 2021). The AFR shall summarize all grant activity for the grant period beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021.

G. **Final Evaluation Report-**encompassing all funding cycles, within 60 days of the end of the grant period (on or before August 31, 2021) using the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to determine results for families and for training and technical assistance participants.

***The State Fiscal Cycle is as follows**:

1st quarter: July-September
2nd quarter: October-December
3rd quarter: January-March
4th quarter: April-June

Additional Reporting Requirements:

1. The SCE shall report to the grant administrator at the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) with regard to how the services consisting of program management and monitoring as well as fiscal management for the MCCRN are being provided. In addition, invoicing with supporting data must be provided indicating how the grant funds are being expended for the CCRCs and the SCE. Funding sources must be identified and separately reported in accordance with grant administrator instructions.

2. The SCE shall provide statewide coordination, consolidation, and reporting of child care resource data and information. Reports must be produced annually, or upon request, on the available supply of qualified early care and education services for children birth through five years of age, child care services for school age children, and child care services for children with disabilities or special health care needs. The report must also include a description of the demand for those services by families and employers; an annual census of all regulated providers in Maryland to determine the market rate for child care scholarship; the child capacity of regulated facilities: and provider compensation information.

3. Training:
   The SCE shall provide data on all training conducted on each title. Reports must be produced quarterly, or upon request from MSDE. Report shall include:
   i. Number of participants who successfully completed and passed;
   ii. Number of participants who failed;
   iii. Number of participants who received incompletes;
   iv. Number of clock hours for each title;
   v. Post assessments; and
   vi. Post assessment analysis for each training and title.

4. Results Based Accountability System:
   A. The SCE shall implement and refine a results based accountability system, that includes relevant performance indicators also reliable and valid performance measures for tracking the impact of the services as follows:
      i. Resource and information services for families, including consumer education;
      ii. Professional development; and,
      iii. Capacity building for improving the quality of programs (i.e. coaching, strategic management, and leadership development).

   B. The SCE and each CCRC shall report on Consumer Education, to include:
      i. Resource and information to parents, families and child care educators. Must include:
         1. Website, social media, and other apps located at each CCRC that are accessible to the public;
         2. On site resources located at the CCRC site;
         3. Resource and information telephone services located at each CCRC that is accessible to parents and caregivers, including those with disabilities or needing dual language and multi-language learner support; and
         4. Printed program and resource information provided to parents, families and child care educators.
      ii. Collaborations and partnerships delineated by region and shall include:
         1. Name of collaborator and partners;
         2. Description of the collaborations and partnerships; and
         3. Number of parents, families and child care educators requesting and receiving consumer education.
      iii. Descriptions and quantities of consumer education resources provided to parents, families and child care educators;
      iv. Needs assessments analysis;
      v. Satisfaction survey analysis;

vi. Annual conferences, seminars and meetings for parents, families, providers and the public;

vii. Resource room usage, delineated by region, monthly, quarterly and annually. Must include:
1. Number of visitors;
2. Number of Family Child Care Providers;
3. Number of Center Staff; and
4. Number of other.

viii. Contact information for each CCRC Director, Trainer and Technical Assistance Specialist delineated by region. Contact information must include:
1. Name;
2. Title;
3. Address;
4. Phone; and
5. Email.

C. The SCE and each CCRC shall report on Professional Development, to include:

i. Training, TA and professional development data delineated by region, and monthly, quarterly and annual totals.
Must include:
1. Number of workshops;
2. Number of participants;
3. Demographic categories;
4. Target audience;
5. Attendees by type;
6. Core of knowledge hours, delineated by type;
7. Training topics;
8. Collaborations;
9. Name and Description of workshops;
10. Post assessment analysis;
11. New Training Workshops;
12. Revised Training Workshops; and
13. Format.

- E-Learning data delineated by region, and monthly, quarterly and annual totals. Must include:
  - Workshops purchased; and
  - Unique participants.
- SCE and CCRC staff attendance at quarterly MSDE training meetings; and MSDE training orientation.
- Maryland Child Care Training Calendar, to include:
  - Expiration dates delineated by list of training approval numbers scheduled to expire in 30, 60, and 90 days;
    Trainers / Training Organizations actively advertising on the Maryland Child Care Training Calendar, to include the name and number of:
    - Approved trainers/training organizations;
    - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) that have created a profile;
    - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) that have approved training listed under their profile;

            - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) actively advertising via the Maryland Child Care Training Calendar;
            - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) that are not actively advertising via the Maryland Child Care Training Calendar;
            - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) that have not created a profile; and
            - Trainer(s)/training organization(s) that do not have approved training listed under their profile.
        - Issues/problems/complaints and resolution;
        - Number of provider searches delineated by:
            - Face to face;
            - Virtual; and
            - Online.

B. The SCE and each CCRC shall report on capacity building, to include:
    - Telephone consultation and TA session data delineated by region, and monthly, quarterly and annual totals. Must include:
        - Location;
        - Number of participants;
        - Target audience;
        - Attendees by type;
        - Consultation and TA topics;
        - Collaborations;
        - Name and description of workshops;
        - Post assessment analysis;
        - Format;
        - Written agreements;
        - Written plans;
        - Standardized rubric, must include:
            - Number of providers that met goals; and
            - Number of providers that did not meet goals.
        - Checklists utilized during the development of written plans and follow-up visits; and
        - Professional development plans utilized during the development of written plans and follow-up visits.

C. The SCE shall consider past performance and other non-cost evaluation factor in all procurements.

- The SCE shall provide regional coordination, consolidation, and reporting of monitoring review activities, data and information.

- The CCRC shall provide regional coordination, consolidation, and reporting of child care resource data and information. Reports must be produced annually, or upon request, on the available supply of qualified early care and education services for children birth through five years of age, child care services for school age children, and child care services for children with disabilities or special health care needs. The report must also include a description of the demand for those services by parents, families and employers; an annual census of all regulated providers in Maryland to determine the market rate for child care scholarship; the child capacity of regulated facilities: and provider compensation information.

- The CCRC shall provide data on all training conducted on each title. Reports must be produced annually, or upon request from MSDE. Report shall include:

    A. Post assessment results;
    B. Number of participants who successfully completed and passed;
    C. Number of participants who failed;
    D. Number of participants who received incompletes; and
    E. Number of clock hours for each title.

- The CCRC shall provide data on all providers that maintained or increase in levels in Maryland Child Care Credential program. Reports shall include:
    A. Number of participant's who successfully increased their Maryland Child Care Credential level; and
    B. Number of participant's who did not increase their Maryland Child Care Credential level.

- The CCRC shall provide data on all programs that maintained or increased in levels in Maryland EXCELS and programs that achieve accreditation. Reports shall include:

    A. Number of programs who successfully achieved accreditation; and
    B. Number of programs who have not achieved accreditation.

- The CCRC shall implement and refine a results based accountability system, that includes relevant performance indicators also reliable and valid performance measures for tracking the impact of the services as follows:

    A. Resource and information services for families, including consumer education;
    B. Professional development; and
    C. Capacity building for improving the quality of programs (i.e. coaching, strategic management, and leadership development).
    D. Resource and information services for families, including consumer education.

Shared Drive:
- The SCE and each CCRC shall maintain a Google Cloud Platform account; and
- The SCE shall utilize Google Cloud Platform Services as a shared drive to submit reports to MSDE.

In addition, grantees and sub grantees will host at least four (4) site visits per funding cycle. MSDE reserves the right to conduct an unannounced site visit to any CCRC at any time, attend CCRC meetings, training, and technical meetings, and CCRC event(s).

Proposals must contain the following information, assembled in the order indicated:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet.
2. Project Abstract.
3. Table of Contents.
4. Project Narrative (15-page limit).
   - 4.1. Extent of Need.
   - 4.2. Goals, Objectives, and Milestones.
   - 4.3. Plan of Operation.
   - 4.4. Evaluation and Dissemination Plan.
   - 4.5. Management Plan/Key Personnel.
     - 4.5.1. Management Worksheet.
     - 4.5.2. Project Time Line.
   - 4.6. Integration with Education Reform.
   - 4.7. Future Plans.
5. Budget Narrative.
   - 5.1. Line Item Listing of Budgetary Expenses.
   - 5.2. Itemized Budget Form.
6. Appendices. Do not append any required sections indicated above. Appendices are included below.
   - 6.1. Works Cited
   - 6.2. Letters of commitment from all project partners and principals of participating schools (as appropriate).
   - 6.3. Résumés of Key Personnel.
   - 6.4. Signed assurances.

Submission Requirements:

- All pages of the project narrative must use one-inch margins and be numbered according to the prescribed numbering convention. (See "Table of Contents" section)
- The project statement that appears on the cover sheet must not exceed 100 words.
- The abstract must not exceed one page.
- Narrative must use line spacing of at least 1.5, and a type size of 12-point font. Charts may use single spacing and a type size of 10-point font.
- All copies of the proposal should be on standard size (8½" x 11") paper of regular weight.
- The prescribed cover sheet must be the first page of the proposal.
- The original cover sheet must be signed in blue ink. Copies of the cover sheet must not be color photocopied.
- Application package **excluding** proposal cover sheet, table of contents, budget narrative, itemized budget form, signed assurances and appendices must not exceed [PAGE LIMIT] pages.
- All tables and charts must follow prescribed formats.

An electronic copy in Microsoft Word format, must be submitted to:

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood, Credentialing Branch
200 West Baltimore Street, 10th Floor Baltimore, MD 21201-2595
Attention: **Jacqueline Woodruff**

Electronic copy should be sent by email to **Jacqueline.Woodruff@Maryland.Gov**.

Program Contacts:

Jacqueline Woodruff, MBA
MSDE Grants Manager
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street
10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone 410-767- 8961
Fax 410-333-6226

Technical Assistance:

A technical assistance meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2020 (1:00 pm - 3:00 pm)

Meeting ID
meet.google.com/fsb-hisu-jui

Phone Numbers
(US)+1 901-249-1291
PIN: 243 588 685#

NON DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 6th Floor Baltimore,
Maryland 21201-2595
410-767-0426 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Proposal must have a Proposal Cover Sheet. No other page may cover the proposal cover sheet. The subsequent information must be clearly stated in the following order:

- Name of applicant;
- Title of project;
- The words **“FY2021 The Maryland Child Care Resource Centers Network (MCCRCN)”**;
- Name of contact person;
- Address of contact person;
- Telephone, fax, and email address of contact person;
- Project partners;
- Amount requested;
- Project statement (100-word limit); and
- Dated signature of Superintendent of Schools/Head of Grantee Agency.

The Proposal Cover Sheet should be printed on plain white paper and contain neither graphics nor additional information. The Cover Sheet should be signed by the Superintendent of Schools.

The project statement should briefly describe the project’s outcome(s) and strategies (i.e., what the project will do, and how it will be accomplished). Do not exceed the 100-word limit. This statement will be used in press releases, board exhibits, etc.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

1-page limit

In the Project Abstract introduce the project to the reader. It should be factual, brief, and focused on the organization’s efforts. Do not assume the reader is familiar with the proposed project.

The Project Abstract should cover the core aspects of the proposed project, while addressing the following questions:

- What is the problem?
- What populations, schools, or geographic areas will be served by the project?
- What are the goals and objectives of the project? (For brevity, these should be paraphrased.)
- What strategies are to be employed to address the problem?
- Who are the partners, and what are the roles of each?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

***1**-page limit*

The Table of Contents is an important aid for the reader. When writing the proposal and constructing the table of contents, use the following conventions:

- The Proposal Cover Sheet is not numbered but is considered to be page “i” (lower case, Roman numeral one);
- The Project Abstract is page “ii” (lower case, Roman numeral two);
- Do not list the Table of Contents as one of the pages in the table of contents;
- Table of Contents page(s) is/are numbered iii, iv, etc.;
- The extent of need is the first page of the project narrative and is numbered “1"; Subsequent pages are numbered consecutively;
- The Budget is numbered as follows: “B-1, B-2, B-3”; and
- Appendices are labeled “Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C “, etc.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

***2**-page limit* *100 points total*

The Project Narrative provides an opportunity to convince readers that the project is sound and deserves to be funded. The Project Narrative should encompass the entire life of the project. When writing the Project Narrative keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Be succinct and clear. Readers need to understand quickly and easily the components of the project and how they work together to address the stated needs.
- Do not assume the reader is familiar with the project; readers represent diverse backgrounds. Avoid jargon, and define all acronyms.
- Proofread the Narrative once it is complete. Check for style inconsistencies, redundancies, factual omissions, and unexplained assumptions. A good strategy is to let someone not familiar with the project read and critique the proposal before submitting it to MSDE.
- Be as detailed as possible. Use the entire page limit to explain the project. Use the Appendices to include information that may be important for the reader but will not fit within the Project Narrative. For clarity, it is important to reference in the body of the proposal any supplemental information included in the appendices.

Extent of Need

15 of 100 points

A compelling proposal will have a clearly-defined problem supported by a needs assessment.
A needs assessment is a systematic review of information collected from a variety of sources, analyzed to determine strengths and weaknesses, and prioritized for action in the proposal.

Below are some suggestions for the needs assessment.

- Clearly state the main problem in the first paragraph.
- Cite research supporting the need for the project.
- State what data were collected to confirm the existence of the problem, the sources of the data, and methods used to collect them.
- Present easily measured quantitative data. (e.g., test scores, absentee rates).
- Present qualitative data in support of quantitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups).
- Use multiple methods to document the problem (e.g., surveys, analysis of school records, previous studies, focus groups).
- Use multiple data sources (teachers, students, parents, etc.).
- Use national or state data to establish the problem's existence outside of the local area.
- Use local data to document the problem in the local area. Include relevant demographics and other statistics about each and every population to be served. Include all relevant data from the Maryland Report Card.
- State who is affected by the problem. State when and where the problem exists.
- Document the factors contributing to the problem.
- Document current or past efforts to address the problem.
- Show why those efforts failed or are inadequate to address the total need.
- Discuss the applicant's history or expertise in dealing with the problem.
- Discuss the consequences of not dealing with the problem.

Goals, Objectives, and Milestones

10 of 100 points

Goals, objectives, and milestones are all outcomes. Outcomes themselves are statements that tell how the project's target population would improve. Every outcome should describe a change in a target population. In addition, they set standards of progress towards alleviating the problems identified in the needs assessment. **Statements that describe strategies or management issues are not proper outcome statements.**

Outcome statements:

- **Identify the target population**. Who is the specific population the outcome addresses?
- **Are realistic**. Outcomes must be attainable. It is unrealistic to expect that all students will achieve 4.0 grade point averages. Unrealistic outcomes set the project up for failure and are "red-flags" for reviewers.
- **Are measurable**. Outcomes must demonstrate clear achievement. A good outcome statement references easily quantified indicators (e.g., test scores, absenteeism, grades, and promotion rates).
- **Have deadlines.** All outcome statements specify by when they are to be achieved.
- **Reference state, local, or school-defined baseline data or standards.** To determine if the goal is both reasonable and ambitious, include local baseline data for comparison.

A proposal should identify three kinds of outcomes: goals, objectives and milestones.

Goal

State the overall goal of the project. The goal should address the main problem identified at the beginning of the needs assessment. While there should be at least one goal, it is possible to have multiple goals; however, the more goals established the more complex the project becomes.

Goals must have long-term deadlines. If the project period covers multiple years, the goal should be set for the end of the project. If the project period is one year or less, the goal may have a deadline that extends beyond the project period.

Objectives

Objectives are the anticipated outcomes to be accomplished for each year of the project. Objectives must be directly related to a goal. Objectives may break the long-term goal into steps or address the factors contributing to the problem addressed by the goal.

It is imperative that objectives be established for every target population the project is designed to affect. For instance, if the project seeks to increase student achievement by training teachers, there must be objectives for both students and teachers.

Milestones

Ongoing evaluation is essential to the management of a project. Since goals and objectives are not evaluated until the end of the year, milestones must be established to measure progress during the year. Milestones should be evaluated during the year, either quarterly or semiannually.

Because milestones are intended to indicate progress towards an objective, each milestone must be related to an objective. Keep in mind that milestones are indicators of progress, and may not use the same measurement tool as the objective to which they are related. A project may take months before there is a significant impact on clients, or the rate of improvement may level off over time. Milestones should anticipate this and be gauged accordingly. Don’t set overly-ambitious milestones.

Plan of Operation

10 of 100 points

In the Plan of Operation discuss the strategies and activities to be used to accomplish the outcomes.

Strategies

Strategies are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to accomplish outcomes. Begin this section with a justification as to why the strategies were chosen and how they will help to achieve the outcomes. The justification should cite research to support the strategies. It is essential that the project include strategies for each outcome, and outcomes for each strategy.

Upon identifying the strategies, discuss how they will be adapted to fit the particular project. Who are the target clients, and how will they be affected by the project services? How many clients from each client group will ultimately be serviced by the project, both directly and indirectly? Explain how these numbers were derived.

Activities

Activities are specific steps taken to accomplish the project objectives, and involve direct service to clients (students, teachers, parents). Examples include: specific teacher in-services, parent nights, and mentoring sessions. They may take place on a single date (e.g., a field trip) or over a period of time (e.g., the use of an innovative curriculum).

Actions outlined in the management plan are **not** activities. While these actions are needed to facilitate direct service, they do not render direct service themselves. Examples include the purchasing of equipment, the hiring of staff, evaluation procedures, and steering committee meetings. Do **not** address the elements of the management plan in this section.

List the activities that the project will implement and relate each activity to a strategy. Activities should be grouped with respective strategies. Discuss how the activities relate to the respective strategies. Finally, identify which clients and how many will be serviced by each activity.

PLAN OF OPERATION

Please use a separate worksheet for each goal to be addressed with supporting objectives, strategies, activities and milestones. Extend the worksheet as necessary to accommodate the number of strategies or activities planned.

Need to be addressed:
Goal #1 (related to need):
Objective (marking progress toward Goal #1):
Strategy #1 (supporting Goal #1):
Activity #1 (supporting Strategy #1):
Activity #2 (supporting Strategy #1):
Activity #3 (supporting Strategy #1):
Activity #4 (supporting Strategy #1):
Milestones to document progress toward Goal #1):

Evaluation & Dissemination Plan

20 of 100 points

Grantees are required to submit annual evaluation reports and quarterly progress reports that are consistent with the project's goal and objective(s). Keep in mind that the final evaluation will consider the entire project, beginning to end. It should not be viewed as what is done after the project's completion, but as an integral element in the project's planning, design, and implementation. An effective ongoing plan that evaluates milestones quarterly lends to making informed decisions about needed changes.

Evaluation & Dissemination Narrative

The topics listed below provide the basis for review of the evaluation plan that should be addressed with specificity.

- **Evaluation Questions**: What questions will the evaluation seek to answer, based on the project's goal and objectives, implementation plan, and anticipated consequences? Examine the relationship between the expected outcomes, efforts, and what is important to evaluate.
- **Evaluation Strategy**: What approach will be taken to find answers to the evaluation questions? What criteria will be used to assess lessons learned from the project? What populations will be included in the evaluation?
- **Data**: The type of data and method of data collection will depend upon the nature of the program, the questions, and the evaluation strategy. What measurement instruments will be used? How will the baseline be established? There should be a combination of quantitative and qualitative data identified. How will project staff collect data from the various sites and organizations involved in the project? When considering data collection techniques, ensure that the resources are sufficient to use the proposed data collection techniques.
- **Evaluator(s)**: Specify the individuals or groups who will conduct the evaluation. What are the qualifications of each? What are the responsibilities of key personnel?
- **Budgeting of resources and staffing for evaluation:** The application's budget should reflect sufficient funds to carry out a thorough and useful evaluation.
- **Dissemination:** Details on how the evaluation results will be disseminated to major stakeholders and individuals interested in the project. Information, requirements and dissemination methods differ from stakeholder to stakeholder. Will information be posted on the Internet? Will presentations be made at important national conferences to present lessons from the project? How and when will demonstrations of the project be provided? Descriptions of the types of reports and other by products developed during the course of the project may be made available.

Management Plan/Key Personnel

25 of 100 points

Where many projects fail is in the management. Submit a detailed and time-specific management plan with pre-assigned responsibilities so as to avoid the following common errors:

- Failure to submit required reports.
- Failure to regularly monitor performance of the project during implementation.
- Failure to start the project on time.
- Failure to keep adequate project documentation.
- Failure to assure continuity and quality of the project in light of personnel turnover.
- Changing without approval from MSDE the overall project from that described in the grant proposal.
- Submission of biased or incomplete project evaluation data.
- Having no approved project fiscal procedure in place.
- Disposal of project supplies, equipment, or other assets in unauthorized ways.
- Budget deviations due to unauthorized transfers from one budget category to another.
- Failure to manage inherent conflicts of policies, perspectives, and philosophies between project’s host agency and the funder.
- Failure to form partnerships in which all members recognize and fulfill clearly-defined roles, responsibilities, and contributions to the project.
- Failure to complete the project in a timely fashion.

Present a clear discussion of partners, respective roles in the project, the benefits each expects to receive, and the specific contributions each will make to the project (financial, equipment, personnel, or other resources). It is essential that partner commitments be documented. Append letters of commitment from each, describing roles and quantifying contributions. Never assume that reviewers will automatically be familiar with a proposed partner, what that partner is capable of or willing to commit to the project, or why the partner is joining in on the project.

The project should have a steering committee to govern the project. Duties of the steering committee include establishing major program policies, reviewing quarterly evaluation reports, and making recommendations for programmatic change. Steering committee members should represent the major stakeholders in the project. (e.g., representatives from project partners, parents, principals, Board of Education). Steering committees that are too large are often non-productive. Project directors act as advisors to the committee. The duties, members and meeting dates of the committee should be identified in this section of the project proposal.

List the staff or personnel involved in the project’s implementation. Detail individual qualifications? Append résumés of key personnel. How much of the Project Director’s time is devoted to this project? Are there sufficient staff hours devoted to the project to ensure proper implementation? What plans are in place to ensure the project will continue if there are problems with staff turnover?

Management Plan Worksheet

The Management Plan supports the implementation plan but does not contain direct service activities. Direct service activities belong in the Plan of Operation. Examples of management actions are hiring staff, ordering equipment, developing curricula, and holding steering committee meetings. None of these actions render direct service itself, but enables direct service activities to take place.

List on the Management Plan Worksheet, in chronological order, all major management actions necessary to implement the project during the first year of funding. Worksheets for subsequent years will be included in the action plans for those years. Assign an approximate date for each action. If the action is ongoing, indicate the range of dates over which it will be implemented. A well-considered management plan assigns responsibility for action to a management team member. Indicate on the worksheet the individual(s) responsible for accomplishing each action.

Requirements made by the funder, MSDE, should also be included in the management plan. These include the annual financial report, submission of progress reports to MSDE, and the final evaluation. The final report will serve as the final evaluation.

Management Plan Worksheet

Action Description	**Date**	**Person Responsible**
Brief Description #1	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Brief Description #2	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Brief Description #3	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Funder's Requirements		
Quarterly Report #1 Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Quarterly Report #2 Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Quarterly Report #3 Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Final Evaluation Process	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Financial Report Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Annual Evaluation Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*

Project Timeline

The Project timeline is a Gantt chart with columns representing the months of the funding cycle. It should contain three sections: management, implementation, and evaluation.

Activity	Date
Hire Project Director	Date
Teacher Training	Date
Submit Mid-Year Evaluation	Date X

Integration with Education Reform

5 of 100 points

If a project is to be successful, it must be aligned with the goals, efforts and plans of Federal, State, and local governments. This section illustrates how the project is part of overall education reform.

This section should address the following questions:

- How does this project help meet the goals and objectives of the School Improvement Team plan?
- How does this project fit into the local school systems' (LSS) master plan?
- How does this project help meet State educational standards (e.g., MD College and Career Readiness Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, etc.)?
- How does this project help meet national education goals or fit into national initiatives?
- Does the project coordinate efforts with other projects currently underway?
- Are there plans for future projects that will coordinate with this one?
- Will resources be shared to increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?

Future Plans

5 of 100 points

Describe plans for continuing the project beyond the funding cycle. How will it be sustained after funding ends? How will the project's partnerships be sustained?

Budget Narrative

10 of 100 points

The project's budget should detail every year of the project in a separate itemized budget for each year. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year.

Begin the budget with a narrative, justifying any line item expenses that are not obvious from the project narrative. Explain how line item costs were estimated, if the rationale is not obvious. Show how the budget is cost effective.

Immediately following the justification, include a line-item description using the format in the example below. Group line items according to the following categories: *Salaries & Wages*, *Contracted Services*, *Supplies & Materials*, *Other Charges*, *Equipment*, and *Transfers*. Total each category.

Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. For example, "meeting expenses" can be broken down into room rental, photocopying and refreshments. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible.

Clearly show the requested funds and in-kind contributions for each line item if applicable. Indicate the source of the in-kind contribution. Both requested and in-kind funds must be reasonable with current market prices.

Show how the expenses were calculated for each line item. Reviewers will use this information to determine if the budget is reasonable and cost-effective.

Use the format indicated by the following excerpt from a sample Budget Narrative.

Itemized Budget

The itemized budget form (C-1-25) can be accessed through this link (http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/Grants/GrantFormsRev072418.xls?Web=1) and must be submitted with the application. If difficulties are encountered in categorizing the budget, consult with the appropriate financial agent. The form must be signed by both the district's Budget Officer and the Superintendent or designee.

APPENDICES

The following Appendices must be included but not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other Appendices as deemed necessary.

Works Cited

Use a standard format such as MLA or Chicago Manual of Style. Be consistent.

Letters of Commitment

Letters of commitment are required from all project partners, school principals, and local school systems participating in the project. A good letter should contain the following:

- A statement acknowledging and supporting the goal and objectives of the project;
- The participant's expected gains from the project;
- The expertise, resources and financial contributions the participant is making towards the project. Financial contributions (in-kind and cash) should be quantified;
- A clear statement detailing the responsibilities of the partners; and
- A clear statement that the partners intend to continue the partnership beyond the grant period.

Letters of commitment should be addressed to the Superintendent, Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., or head of the grantee agency acting as the lead agency. Letters should not be addressed to the MSDE. All letters should be included in the proposal and not sent directly to the MSDE. Any letters sent directly to the MSDE cannot be appended to the proposal.

Resumes of Key Personnel

Include a one-page resume for each person playing a key role in the project. Only information relevant to the project should be included in the resume.

Signed Assurances

Please carefully read and complete the Recipient Assurances page, http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/Grants/GrantRecipientAssurances.pdf, which must be signed and dated by the Superintendent of the school system or the head of the grantee agency.