

Request for Application Guide

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

PROJECT TITLE:

2022-23 ECEAP Expansion

APPLICATION DUE DATE:

December 15, 2021 by 4 p.m. to dcyf.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov

EXPECTED TIME PERIOD FOR CONTRACT*:

July 1, 2022 – July 10, 2023

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

This Request for Application is open to those applicants that satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein.

*Contract start date is subject to change



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definitions

Applicant: An organization submitting an Application in order to attain a contract with DCYF.

Application: A formal offer submitted in response to this solicitation.

B-3 ECEAP: Washington’s comprehensive birth to three program for low-income children, and children with specific risk factors, also known as Early ECEAP.

Contractor: An organization whose Application is approved by DCYF and is awarded a fully executed, written contract for ECEAP services.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF): The agency of the state of Washington issuing this Request for Applications (RFA).

Early Achievers: Washington’s tiered quality rating and improvement system which helps early learning settings offer high-quality care.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP): Washington’s state-funded comprehensive pre-kindergarten program for low-income children, and children with specific risk factors.

ECEAP Comprehensive Services: Individual, child and family centered services including education, health coordination, and family engagement services.

Early Learning Facilities (ELF) program: Funding opportunity through Washington State Department of Commerce to help ECEAP contractors and WCCC providers expand, remodel, purchase or construct early learning facilities and classrooms necessary to support early learning opportunities for children from low-income households.

Family Support Services: Relationship-based family partnerships. A contractor must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being. Using Mobility Mentoring®, ECEAP staff collaborate with families to build partnerships that engage families in many levels of program activities and support the development of each enrolled child’s whole family.

- **Mobility Mentoring®:** ECEAP’s family engagement approach that uses coaching methods rooted in the latest brain science. Mobility Mentoring® aims to overcome the extreme stresses of poverty by improving focus, planning, and decision-making. It is designed to help people set and achieve future-oriented goals, despite the immediate challenges and weight of poverty.
 - EMPATH

Head Start: Federal comprehensive birth-to-three and pre-kindergarten programs for low-income children and children with specific risk factors. This definition also includes Early Head Start, American-Indian/Alaska Native Head Start and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start.

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Request for Application (RFA): A formal document in which DCYF pre-identifies a service and a specific method for Applicants.

Service Area Agreement (SAA): A required formal written agreement between neighboring Head Start grantees, ECEAP contractors and Tribal Early Learning Programs. SAAs serve to:

- Establish clear service area boundaries for recruitment and enrollment of eligible children and families in neighboring areas.
- Support policies and procedures for working collaboratively.
- Reduce duplication of services.
- Leverage funding through efficient use of state (and federal) resources and;
- Ensure responsiveness to family need.
- *Service Area Agreements are required by the ECEAP Contract, in addition to this Application's Exhibit C.*

Tribal Early Learning Program: Comprehensive early learning program slots (birth to age 5) administered and funded by a tribal sovereign nations in Washington State.

1.2. Purpose and Background

Since 1985, ECEAP has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing comprehensive nutrition, health, education and family support services to Washington's most at-risk young children. Research demonstrates ECEAP positively impacts kindergarten readiness with benefits that persist through grade school. Washington State's ECEAP Expansion law, including changes from the 2021 Fair Start Act states that "Funding shall continue to be phased in each year until full statewide implementation of the early learning program is achieved in the 2026-27 school year, at which time any eligible child shall be entitled to be enrolled in the program."

For 2022-23, the State Legislature has allocated a total of **750 new slots**:

- **600 School Day**
- **150 Working Day**

There may be additional Part Day slots available to award as well. This would happen through current ECEAP Contractor Applicants exchanging existing Part Day slots for School Day or Working Day slots, a process called slot exchange.

In the event that DCYF is not able to allocate slots requested by successful applicants in this RFA, the intention is to award those slots in the following year as funding is available.

ECEAP expansion is guided by the following principles:

- **Racial Equity:** Washington State is committed to closing opportunity gaps and eliminating race as a predictor of success.

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- **90 Percent Goal:** Washington State is committed to ensuring that 90 percent of children are ready for kindergarten with both race and income no longer predictors of success. For more information, please visit the [Education Goals](#) section of the DCYF website.
- **Statewide ECEAP Access:** As determined by the Washington State Legislature, by the 2026-2027 school year, all children who are eligible for ECEAP and whose families choose to participate will be entitled to enroll in ECEAP. By this date, there must be sufficient sites and coordination among ECEAP contractors to assure family access to ECEAP, with options that meet a variety of family choices, needs and circumstances.

1.3. Objectives and Scope of Work

Objectives

Through this RFA process, DCYF will award multiple contracts to allocate 2022-2023 ECEAP expansion slots to organizations:

- Able to provide the full infrastructure for high-quality ECEAP services;
- That are in alignment with the DCYF [Sample ECEAP Client Service Contract](#), including the 2021-22 [ECEAP Performance Standards](#).

Contracts awarded as a result of this process are contingent upon the continued availability of funding. These contracts are client service contracts.

Contract Information: Applicants should be aware that contracts executed as a result of this RFA may have a different look and some new requirements. The [Sample ECEAP Contract](#) embedded in this Application is the contract in place for 2021-2022.

Please note: Organizations, including licensed child care centers and family child care homes, interested in providing **less than 75 preschool slots or only part of ECEAP services**, such as a preschool classroom experience, should coordinate with a current or prospective ECEAP contractor in their vicinity to discuss the possibility of becoming an ECEAP subcontractor working under that ECEAP contractor.

If becoming a subcontractor is the best fit for your organization, please either:

- Email dcyf.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov for contact information of existing ECEAP contractors in your community or;
- View the [ECEAP Directors Roster](#).

Organizations seeking a subcontractor relationship with an ECEAP contractor should not complete this Application.

DCYF is interested in Applications to increase ECEAP slots within the boundaries of high-priority school districts as defined in the 2020-21 [ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study](#), which is anticipated to be revised by mid-December 2021. Applicants may use the ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study as a tool to support expansion planning around topics such as, how many slots the community could

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potentially sustain. For the latest version of the Saturation Study, check the website here:
<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/eceap/2020-21ECEAP-HS-SaturationStudy.pdf>

In order to support a mixed delivery system, DCYF encourages Applications from public and private organizations that can directly provide or subcontract for ECEAP classes in schools, community-based settings or licensed child care settings. DCYF also encourages Applications from organizations that can provide services to rural, remote and tribal communities and to children impacted by the child welfare system.

Scope of Work

Organizations that are funded as Contractors through this RFA must demonstrate capacity to provide program planning, management and oversight to lead all components of ECEAP services. Having adequate funding and staffing to provide this ECEAP infrastructure requires a **combined minimum** of approximately 75 ECEAP, B-3 ECEAP, Head Start and/or tribally-funded preschool slots for children.

Successful ECEAP contractors must demonstrate that they can develop and maintain culturally-competent systems for:

- Program planning and service system design for education; health services coordination; family engagement, leadership development and support; and nutrition services in alignment with all ECEAP contractual requirements, including the ECEAP Performance Standards.
- Human resource policies and plans to recruit, select, train and support staff who meet ECEAP qualifications, and to maintain the qualifications of all ECEAP staff in MERIT (Washington’s Professional Development Registry).
- Ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement of ECEAP services, including supporting sites to attain Early Achievers ratings of Level 4 or 5.
- Implementation of Creative Curriculum 6th Edition or High Scope or approved alternative research-based curricula to fidelity.
- Health screening, health coordination, developmental screening and quarterly child development assessment.
- Family engagement and early learning classroom activities that reflect family beliefs, culture, language and child-rearing practices.
- Implementation of the Mobility Mentoring® approach to family support.
- Marketing, recruitment and enrollment of potential ECEAP families.
- Administration, regular entry of information and use of the Early Learning Management System (ELMS) and other databases.
- Secure and confidential recordkeeping and reporting to DCYF.
- Fiscal management of ECEAP funds according to contractual requirements.
- Community assessment of needs for ECEAP services.
- Facility development/management.
- Adequate funding passed through to subcontractors, if applicable.
- Transportation (optional) to enhance access for vulnerable children.

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Sites where ECEAP children attend preschool must obtain a child care license unless the site is operated directly by an ECEAP Contractor or subcontractor that is a governmental organization. For this purpose, school districts, educational service districts, tribes and city and county governments are government organizations. **During the 2022-23 school year, DCYF anticipates assisting ECEAP school district sites to be in alignment with any policies or decisions around school district licensing regulations and processes.**

Slot Models and Expectations: DCYF intends to award slots for children for comprehensive ECEAP health, nutrition, family support, and preschool education services for these ECEAP models:

- **School Day ECEAP** with a minimum of 1,000 classroom hours per year, an average of 5.5 to 6.5 hours per class session, over at least 30 calendar weeks. Classes may be four or five days per week throughout the school year.
- **Working Day ECEAP** with a minimum of 2,370 classroom hours per year, at least 10 hours per day, five days per week, year-round.
- **Part Day ECEAP** with a minimum of 360 classroom hours per year, three hours per class session over at least 30 calendar weeks.

Applicants should indicate the types of slots that best meet their capacity and their community needs. Applicants are not required to offer all three models. To be allocated slots through this RFA, Applicants must be able to do all of the following:

- Plan services;
- Hire staff;
- Attend trainings;
- Recruit children;
- Be licensed; or
- Attend an orientation and take initial steps to *become* a licensed child care site (if not a government organization). This must occur between when the Applicant submits a viable ECEAP application and July 1, 2023, or when funding is allocated by the legislature. Additional technical assistance will be provided if the Application meets minimum thresholds.

Slot Exchange: Existing ECEAP Contractors should use this Application if they want to request School Day or Working Day slots while giving up Part Day slots.

Starting Dates: Preference will be given to Applicants that can start Working Day classes by July 1, 2023, and Part Day and School Day classes by Sept. 30, 2023.

The annual rate per slot may be reduced for any Working Day slots that do not start by July 1 and any Part Day or School Day slots that do not start by September 30.

Funded Slot Rates: Rates will be determined by the state Legislature and may vary based on region and Early Achievers rating. Contractors receive monthly payments upon invoice, based on completion of payment points. For reference, the state-wide **average 2021-22 school year rates** were:

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- \$9,193 per slot for Part Day.
- \$12,375 per slot for School Day.
- \$18,950 per slot for Working Day.

There are no additional payments for startup costs. DCYF will not allow contractors to schedule a late start and use the saved funds for equipment and materials.

There are no funds available through this RFA for capital expenditures such as facilities. For more information on the Community Capital Facilities—Early Learning Program, please visit:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/early-learning-program/>.

1.4. Minimum Qualifications and Requirements

In order for an Application to be reviewed and scored, an Applicant must:

- Be licensed to do business in the state of Washington.
- Plan to serve a **minimum of 75 slots**, including existing ECEAP slots, B-3 ECEAP, Head Start slots, tribally-funded preschool slots and slots requested through this application.
Exception: Current ECEAP contractors are exempt from this requirement.
Exception: Tribal sovereign nations' application may also be considered if slot totals are under 75 slots.
- Submit a completed Application in accordance with the RFA.

If an Applicant is a current ECEAP Subcontractor, the Applicant must:

- Notify their ECEAP Contractor of their intent to apply.*
- Attach a copy of this notification with this Application. See Exhibit C: Coordination with Neighboring Organizations.

*An organization may not be both an ECEAP contractor and an ECEAP subcontractor simultaneously. Former subcontractors may be required to return or pay for equipment purchased through a Contractor.

1.5. Period of Performance

Any contract or amendment to an existing ECEAP contract that may result from this RFA is expected to begin on July 1, 2022. Contracted services resulting from this RFA shall be at the sole discretion of DCYF.

2. Application Information

2.1. RFA Coordinators

The RFA Coordinators are the sole point of contact in DCYF for this RFA. All communication between an Applicant and DCYF shall be in writing with the RFA Coordinators listed below. DCYF may disqualify any Applicant who communicates to anyone besides the RFA Coordinator.

- RFA Coordinators: Jennifer Anderson, Nicole Lor
- Email Address: dcyf.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov

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DCYF considers all oral communications unofficial and non-binding on DCYF. Applicants should rely only on written statements issued by the RFA Coordinator.

2.2. Estimated Schedule of RFA Activities

RFA Released	November 1, 2021
Recorded Webinars/Office Hours (Recommended) Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the recorded webinar as many times as you like. Q&A will take place during open office hours or through email. 	<u>Recorded Webinar for all Applicants:</u> Office Hours for all Applicants (click on day to attend): <u>11/19/2021, 1 - 2:30 p.m.</u> <u>11/29/2021, 8:30 - 10 a.m.</u> Tribal Nations <u>12/6/2021, 8:30 - 10 a.m.</u>
Submit Questions Regarding RFA Process (Optional)	No later than December 8, 2021 by 4 p.m.
Questions and Answers (Q&A) Published on ECEAP Website	Q&As will be published on the following days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov. 15, 2021 Nov. 29, 2021 Dec. 10, 2021
Applications Due (Required)	December 15, 2021 by 4 p.m.
Review Period	December 16 through February 1, 2022
Announce Successful Applicants	February 4, 2022
Contract Effective Date	July 1, 2022

2.3. Questions about the RFA Process

DCYF will take questions through the ECEAP inbox (dcyf.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov) and during scheduled Expansion office hours through 4 p.m. Dec. 8, 2021. Questions and answers (Q&A) will be published according to the Estimated Schedule of RFA Activities.

DCYF will email the written responses to each question to the party who submitted a question and will post all questions and answers on the ECEAP website <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap/expansion-of-services>. Questions submitted after Tuesday at 4 p.m. will be published with the next Q&A.

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2.4. Submission of Applications (Mandatory)

- 2.4.1. Completed applications must be submitted to dcyf.eceap@dcyf.wa.gov no later than 4 p.m., Dec. 15, 2021. See Exhibit F: Certification and Assurances for a completion checklist.
- 2.4.2. Allow sufficient time to ensure timely receipt of the Application by DCYF. Late or incomplete Applications will not be considered unless DCYF's email system is found to be at fault.
- 2.4.3. Submit Application sections as attachments to a single email. Exception: If the Applicant's email system will not submit all attachments in a single email, Applicants may send the Application in two emails.
- 2.4.4. For your email subject line, enter "ECEAP Expansion Application – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME."
- 2.4.5. Submit Application sections in Microsoft Word or Excel as directed. Do not use PDF except where allowed.
- 2.4.6. For Microsoft Word Application sections, use the provided fields in Exhibit A: Application form with preset fonts. For all other text, use Calibri 12 point font with 1-inch margins, single-spaced.
- 2.4.7. Do not exceed word limits expressed in Application instructions.
- 2.4.8. Do not submit materials other than those requested in this RFA including Application documents. Additional materials will not be reviewed. The evaluation for existing Contractors will include a review of DCYF monitoring data including ELMS data, submitted deliverables and observations from monitoring visits.
 - For some questions, existing ECEAP Contractors may choose whether to be evaluated only based on known performance, to submit responses requested of new applicants or both. The option of evaluation based on past performance is available so that existing ECEAP contractors do not have to send responses for topics already known to DCYF.
- 2.4.9. Answer each question fully. References to other sections for additional information are *not acceptable*. Each question will be reviewed on its own merits. Applicants should be thorough when responding to questions to ensure their expertise and experience is well conveyed.

2.5. Application Requirements (Mandatory)

A complete Application consists of the following attachments to the email described in Section 2.4:

- 2.5.1. Exhibit A: Application Form
 - Submit a complete Application Form in Microsoft Word format
 - Titled "Exhibit A: Application Form – – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME"
- 2.5.2. Exhibit B: Letters of Support and Collaboration
 - Required for new applicants only (not a current contractor), Applicants may submit in either Microsoft Word or PDF format

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- Titled “Exhibit B: Letters of Support and Collaboration – – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME”
- 2.5.3. Exhibit C: Coordination with Neighboring Organizations
- Submit in PDF format with signatures
 - Titled “Exhibit C: Coordination with Neighboring Organizations – – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME”
- 2.5.4. Exhibit D: Budget
- Required for new applicants only (not a current contractor), submit a complete Budget using the template provided in Microsoft Excel format
 - Titled “Exhibit D: Budget – – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME”
- 2.5.5. Exhibit E: Total ECEAP Slots and Proposed Sites
- Submit **both tabs** in Microsoft Excel format using the templates provided
 - Titled “Exhibit E: Proposed Sites – – YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME”
- 2.5.6. Exhibit F: Certifications and Assurances
- Submit completed scanned document in PDF format
 - Confirm it is signed by individual with authority to bind the organization to a contract

2.6. Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure

Materials submitted in response to this RFA shall become the property of DCYF. All Applications received shall remain confidential until the contract(s), if any, resulting from this RFA is signed by DCYF and the successful Contractor(s); thereafter, the Applications shall be deemed public record as defined in [RCW 42.17.250](#) to .340, “Public Records.”

Any information in the Application that the Applicant desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of [RCW 42.17.250](#) to .340 must be clearly designated. The page and the particular exception from disclosure upon which the Applicant is making the claim must be identified. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word “Confidential” printed on the lower right-hand corner of the page.

DCYF will consider an Applicant’s request for exemption from disclosure; however, DCYF will make a decision predicated upon [Chapter 42.17 RCW](#) and [Chapter 143-06 WAC](#). Marking the entire proposal exempt from disclosure will not be honored. The Applicant must be reasonable in designating information as confidential. If any information is marked as proprietary in the proposal, such information will not be disclosed until the affected proposer has been given an opportunity to seek a court injunction against the requested disclosure.

A charge will be made for copying and shipping of documents requested through public disclosure, as outlined in [RCW 42.56.070](#). No fee shall be charged for inspection of contract files, but 24 hours’ notice to the RFA Coordinator is required. All requests for information should be directed to the RFA Coordinator.

2.7. Revisions to the RFA

DCYF reserves the right to modify this RFA at any time. In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFA, an amendment will be provided to all who receive the RFA. For this purpose, the published Applicant questions and DCYF answers and any other pertinent information shall be considered an addendum to the RFA. DCYF reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFA in whole or in part, prior to the execution of a contract.

2.8. Diversity Participation

DCYF strongly encourages the participation of minority and women-owned businesses, veteran-owned businesses and Washington small businesses as prime contractors or subcontractors.

No preference will be included in the evaluation of proposals, no minimum level of participation by these businesses shall be required as a condition of receiving an award and proposals will not be rejected or considered non-responsive on that basis.

3. Evaluation and Contract Award

3.1. Mandatory and Scored Explained

Items marked “Mandatory” must be included in order for the Application to be considered; however, these items are not awarded points. Items marked “Scored” are awarded points by the evaluation team.

3.2. Responsiveness

All Applications will be reviewed to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFA. The Applicant is specifically notified that failure to comply with any part of the RFA may result in rejection of the Application as non-responsive. DCYF reserves the right at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities.

3.3. Evaluation of Applications

Responsive Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the processes described herein. DCYF will designate evaluation teams that will score Exhibits A, B, C, D and E.

If minimum qualifications of an Application are met, evaluators will score the Application. To be a successful Applicant, the Application must receive a score of no less than 80 percent of the total available points in each of the following categories:

- Program Services
- Program Administration
- Budget and Financial Management
- Sites

Below are the minimum points a Successful Applicant must receive in each section of the Application, along with a summary of total points that can be awarded:

Program Services <i>Threshold for first consideration = 80 points</i>	Possible Points
Exhibit A 5A. Program planning and service system design	15
Exhibit A 5B. Monitoring and continuous improvement	15

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Exhibit A 5C. Early Achievers	10
Exhibit A 5D. Developmental screening and assessment	10
Exhibit A 5E. Marketing and recruitment	10
Exhibit A 5F. Human resources	10
Exhibit A 5G. Recordkeeping and reporting	10
Exhibit A 5H. Cultural relevance	10
Exhibit A 5I. Serving all eligible children	10
Total Points Available	100

Program Administration <i>Threshold for first consideration = 64 points</i>	Possible Points
Exhibit A 4. Sufficient total slots to support infrastructure	10
Exhibit A 5J. Family input into RFA process	10
Exhibit A 7A. Organizational chart	5
Exhibit A 7B. Key ECEAP roles	10
Exhibit A 7C. Lead teacher	5
Exhibit A 7D. Family support staff	5
Exhibit A 7E. Contracting capacity	5
Exhibit A 7F. Disclosure of improvement plans	10
Exhibit B: Letters of support and collaboration	20
Total Points Available	80

Budget and Financial Management <i>Threshold for first consideration = 40 points</i>	Possible Points
Exhibit D: Budget Template	20
Exhibit A Section 6: Fiscal Management	30
Total Points Available	50

Sites <i>Threshold for first consideration = 76 points</i>	Possible Points
Exhibit C: Coordination with Neighboring Organizations/Free from Service Area conflicts	30
Exhibit E 4. Facility status	20
Exhibit E 11-13. Total annual hours	10
Exhibit E 14. Early Achievers rating	10
Exhibit E 15. Subcontracting	20

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Exhibit E 16. Award from ELF	5
Total Points Available	95

DCYF reserves the right to award the contract to the Applicants whose Applications are deemed to be in the best interest of DCYF and the state of Washington. DCYF may choose to fund all or a portion of slots requested in Applications.

Awarding of Slots

DCYF will award slots in this order:

1. For applications **meeting all of the 80 percent thresholds**, DCYF will award:
 - Working Day slots at proposed sites that can start by July 1, 2022, as listed in the 2020-2021 ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study school district priority groupings.
 - School Day slots at proposed sites that can start by Sept. 30, 2022, in order of the 2020-2021 ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study school district priority groupings. This will include sites that requested Working Day, but stated they would accept School Day slots.
 - Part Day slots at proposed sites that can start by Sept. 30, 2022, in order of the 2020-2021 ECEAP and Head Start Saturation Study school district priority groupings. This will include sites that requested Working Day or School Day but stated they would accept Part Day slots.
2. In the event that there is a remainder of slots available for a district priority level, and more than one Applicant is eligible for the final group of slots, the slots will be awarded to the Applicant(s) proposed sites with the *highest total scores*.
3. In the event that there are funded expansion slots remaining after the process described above is completed, DCYF reserves the right to award remaining slots in the same priority order as described above to the Applicants with the next highest scores or the next proposed class start dates.