**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**RFA SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFA NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202306144 First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program Pilot Site Grant Funding Opportunity |
| **RFA ISSUED BY:** | Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | August 7, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | August 15, 2023 |
| **APPLICATION DUE DATE:** | August 24, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **APPLICATIONS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. Can some of the grant funds be used to hire staff for the Community Contractor to manage/coordinate the project?
2. Would the Community Contractor be allowed to subcontract these tasks to a third party?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. Yes.
2. Yes. In the event subcontractors are used, the Community Contractor must provide oversight and be accountable for all deliverables related to the site’s goals as well as fiscal oversight.
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| **2** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. What is the expected activity of the Community Coalition members?
2. Is the Community Coalition more of an advisory board?
3. If so, how often is the Community Coalition required to meet?
4. If more active participation is required, what are the requirements?
5. With the point system that counts how many community organizations are involved, what level of involvement is necessary for them to count?
6. For example, we have a number of organizations whose populations will be benefitted by the services of our project. Is an established relationship and reciprocal referral process enough to count them? If not, what is required?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. The Community Coalition members should serve as advocates and community representation through formal meetings throughout the implementation of the First4ME Pilot.
2. Community Coalition members provide community representation and guidance to the Community Contractor in order to communicate First4ME activities and impact to the community, as well as aid in coordination efforts at the local level.
3. There is no frequency requirement for meetings provided; and
4. There are no specific requirements outside of attending coalition meetings. Communities may infuse additional requirements to meet program needs.
5. A current relationship must be in place in order to count towards community organizations.
6. Yes, this relationship would count towards the community organization number.
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| **3** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| B.5.d. “Ensure intentional partnership and communication is facilitated between CCPsand early elementary educators through SAU relationships.” | 1. Partnership and communication: Does it suffice to establish a relationship with the SAU, arrange who we will communicate with in their organization, share our data with them, and collect their data (such as kindergarten readiness and end-of-year kindergarten evaluations)?
2. If that isn’t sufficient, could you please elaborate on what is expected here?
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. Yes, an established relationship with a communication plan and point of contact with a SAU will be considered. The SAU’s leadership must provide a letter of support with the First4ME application that includes board approval.
2. N/A
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| **4** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. What is an “adequate coach to CCP ratio”?
2. Can Community Coaches be employed by the CCP?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. There is no set ratio.
2. No, the Community Coach must be hired or contracted by the Community Contractor.
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| **5** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. Does each separate licensed childcare site count as a separate CCP?
2. In our project, the CCP is one company, who is licensing multiple small facility locations. Each location will have its own independent license, just as if they were owned by different entities.
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| **Answer** |
| 1. Yes.
2. In the example given, each location counts as a separate CCP.
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| **6** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | Can a contracted CCP provide the home visiting services if all requirements are met? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |

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| **7** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | “Home visitor services, including group socialization activities that include a Child and the Child's parent… Services must focus on the parent-Child relationship”1. Does “group socialization” refer to the group as the family unit in one household, such as the mother, father, and three children participating in a group activity in their home? Or does it refer to socializing with other parents and children involved in the program?
2. Does the group socialization activity have to be in-home?
3. Do the child and the child’s parent need to be in the same room at the same time, or can we have the children socializing in one room and the parents socializing in another?
4. How often are home visits required for each participant?
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. Group socialization refers to activities that are offered that include other parents and children involved in the program.
2. No, group socialization must be offered at a neutral community location.
3. The socialization group can be structured to meet the goals of the activity. Both scenarios are acceptable as long as adequate supervision of children is provided
4. At least twelve (12) home visits per year are required for each participant.
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| **8** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | Is it acceptable for a CCP to use the state child care startup and expansion grants in conjunction with participation in this program? |
| **Answer** |
| Yes, the infrastructure grant program and First4ME are separate programs and can be utilized concurrently.  |

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| **9** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. Does a new community needs assessment need to be performed specifically for this project, or may we collect data from recent and relevant needs assessments that have been conducted by other organizations?
2. May we submit community needs assessments conducted by other organizations as a whole document, if the majority of the information is relevant, or should we pull data points from various assessments into one assessment document for our application?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. No, Applicants may use data from recent and relevant sources. Please provide all sources within the application.
2. Yes, Applicants must clearly indicate the relevant portions within the application and needs assessments.
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| **10** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. Are the linguistically supportive services dependent on the language demographic for the community served? 97.1% of Knox County speaks English as their first language.
2. Would having a contracted language educational organization who is available to assist when needed, meet this requirement?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. Yes.
2. Yes.
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| **11** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| B.6.b.  | 1. What is a “Department-approved process” for determining participant eligibility?
2. 6.b.i. Does this mean ALL participants have to be children at risk?
3. Or just that they need to be included?
4. Are there restrictions on which families/children can be program participants?
5. For example, do they need to be under a certain income level, within a certain age group, defined as “at-risk”, etc.? Or does it suffice to have these populations *included*?
6. Is it necessary to give enrollment priority to at-risk populations?
7. Is it required to provide disability services?
8. If disability services are available, is there a certain portion of participants that must be accepted with disability? Or can we just have a contracted relationship with a disability services provider so that we are able to send a referral to them if their services are needed by a participant?
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| **Answer** |
| 1. A process developed and implemented by the awarded Applicants and approved by the Department. Refer to Part IV. Participation Enrollment Provision within the Application Form (Appendix C).
2. No.
3. Yes. Refer to the “at risk” category determinations in [22 M.R.S. Ch. 1065 §3931](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3931.pdf).
4. Any family with a child ages birth to under six (6) not enrolled in kindergarten and enrolled at one of the qualifying child care settings may enroll in this program.
5. Yes.
6. Disability services shall be provided by referral if the community organization does not provide the services.
7. There is no specific portion of Participants that must be accepted with a disability. Disability services may be referred out to an appropriate organization or agency.
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| **12** | **RFA Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Not provided | 1. Are the subcontracted service providers, such as the CCP, Home Visitors, linguistic support, etc. allowed to charge fees for services?
2. B.6.a. “Provide the Project services to Participants, CCPs, and SAUs at no cost,” and “The community contractor cannot charge for services”: which services? Does this refer to the administration of the project, collecting data, coordinating contracts, etc.?
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. Yes, subcontracted services provided on behalf of First 4 ME related activities or administration of the project may be reimbursed by the awarded Bidder for those services.
2. Any service provided by the Community Contract as part of the First 4 ME program may not be charged to Participants, CCPs, or SAUs. All project deliverables shall be reimbursed through a contract with the Department
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