



Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Request for Applications (RFA)

August 2019

Introduction

Program serving Child Care Works eligible infants and toddlers via contracted slots

Alternative to traditional voucher system

Piloted in FY 18-19 with 14 providers/ 116 slots

Competitive application process

\$15 M in 2019-2020 budget to expand program to serve more eligible children



▶ Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program

Duration of eligibility for children served lasts until child is eligible transition into pre-kindergarten program; *applicants will be asked to coordinate PA Pre-K Counts prioritization to assure that a child who remains eligible for PA PKC at their third birthday will transition into the PA PKC program*

No co-payments or fees of any kind will be charged to families while the child is enrolled in the pilot

Preparation

Use the ***Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program Request for Application (RFA) Guidance*** and ***Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program Policies, Guidance and Clarification*** documents to prepare the RFA

▶ Application Process

Project Contact: Megan Penson, M.Ed.

Infant Toddler Program Supervisor

Mailing Address:

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➤ Application Process

All questions regarding this competitive RFA process should be directed to the Project Contact ONLY, by sending an email to RA-PAPreKCounts@pa.gov.

Questions must be submitted by August 30, 2019 at 3:00 PM

➤ Application Submission

Applicants must submit two copies of the RFA-one emailed copy AND one paper copy with an original signature by the due date

- Emailed copy must be sent to: [RA-
PAPreKCounts@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PAPreKCounts@pa.gov)
- Paper copy with original signature must be postmarked by the RFA due date and mailed to the Program Supervisor at the PA Key

➤ Application Deadline

**All applications must be submitted by
September 9, 2019 at 3:00 PM**

Applications submitted after this date and
time **will not** be accepted or reviewed.

➤ Scope and Use of Funds

Funding is contingent upon availability of funds to the Early Learning Resource Centers to support the program

Apply for the level of funding necessary to support the scope of project activities

Applicants are eligible to apply for only one grant per fiscal year (October 1 through September 30)

Funds can be used for “startup” materials and activities

▶ Application Review and Rubric

The application consists of a narrative section **ONLY**.
Budget information will be negotiated after final award.

Narrative Sections

- General Information
- Contact Information
- Grant Structure
- Program Description/Work Statement
- Program Assurances

➤ Application Review, Application and Rubric

Applications that are **complete**, and **submitted on time by an eligible applicant** will be reviewed by a team of readers determined by the Pennsylvania Key.

The overall application is worth up to 225 points.

Applications will be awarded ratings based on the applicant's ability:

- To provide concise and detailed responses that address the proposed question,
- To adhere to the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program requirements in the responses, and
- To adhere to the application instructions.



General Information

Section Maximum Points= 5 points.

Failure to fully complete the General Information section completely and accurately will result in the disqualification of the proposal. *Please take special care in providing information that aligns with the legal name of the applying entity.*

Legal Name

Legal name of the applicant agency:

This is the name and address that an agency uses on its federal W-9 form. It is used when registering for the agency's federal ID number.

The correct legal name and address must be provided where requested in order to process an application. Failure to do so will result in significant delays in providing funding.

The application also asks for a "Doing Business As" name (if different from the legal name).

MPI

The supplied MPI number **MUST** align with the legal name and address provided in the application.

All Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program applicants will need a Master Provider Index (MPI) number if the application is successful.

The number is requested as part of the application process to ensure timely contracting for successful applications.

MPI numbers are used by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to identify legal entities and service locations that participate in any of its programs.

▶ Tax ID/ Federal ID

This is the number that an agency uses on its federal W-9 form.

Number should align with the legal name and address provided in this application.

Address of Applicant Agency

Fully complete the chart with street address, city, state, zip code, and county of the applying lead agency.

The address provided should align with that of the legal entity applying for funding.

▶ Applicant Provider Verification

To meet application eligibility for the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Programs must:

- Hold a regular certification of compliance issued by the Department of Human Services,
- Be in good standing with STARS and hold at minimum a STAR 3 designation,
- Currently serve Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts children at the applying program, and
- Currently serve or could serve infants and toddlers.
- Verifications will occur. **ONLY** applications in which **ALL** assurances are verified will be considered for funding.

➤ Applicant Provider Type Verification

Assurance 1: The program holds a regular Certificate of Compliance issued by Department of Human Services

Assurance 2: The program is in good standing with STARS and hold a minimum STAR 3 designation

▶ Applicant Provider Type Verification

Assurance 3: The applying agency is a current PKC lead agency, partner agency, or a location that currently serves Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts students

Assurance 4: The program currently serves infants and toddlers or could serve infants and toddlers

Summary of Grant Request

Points are awarded for “Summary of Grant Request” information that is consistent with the information provided within the rest of the application.

5 points available

Summary of Grant Request

Funding requested

This the amount of funding requested to implement the proposed model. Please respond using whole numbers only. To calculate, multiply the requested cost per child by the number of slots requested.

Number of slots requested

Include the total number of full day slots being requested. Slots are defined Full Day, Full Week Equivalent. Programs have the option to fill a slot with full day and half day enrollments (as defined by CCW), and with full or part week enrollments, however full day, full week should be prioritized for Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding. A slot will be considered fully enrolled when the FTE reaches the equivalent of full day/full week.

Summary of Grant Request

Provider Private Pay Cost per Child

Applicants are asked to include current private pay cost per child infant rate information. This is the annual cost per child private pay rate families would be charged for infant care.

Requested Cost per Child

Applicants are also asked to calculate the requested cost per child. To determine this amount, applicants should divide the total funding request by the requested number of slots. If this cost is significantly different than the private pay rate for infant care, applicants must provide narrative justification of the difference. Once applications are scored, negotiations of cost per child may occur.

Summary of Grant Request

Description of Differences between Provider Private Pay Cost per Child and the Requested Cost per Child

Applicants should include a narrative response justifying/explaining any difference between the provider's annual pay cost per child and the requested cost per child. Applicants should be specific in their provided description regarding the reason why any difference exists. If no difference exists, applicants should simply state, "no difference exists." The requested cost per child for Infant Toddler Contracted Slots may be negotiated.

Providers should consider all current income sources (i.e. child care subsidy rates, STARS add on, etc.) when calculating the requested cost per child. Cost per child for Infant Toddler Contracted Slots will be negotiated if awarded to provide a consistent cost per child across ELRC regions.

Summary of Grant Request

Number of Classrooms Requested

Include the total number of classrooms requested.

Classrooms must be staffed at a ratio of 1:4 regardless of children's ages

Maximum group size shall be 2 teachers to 8 children

Contact Information

Section Maximum Points= 0 points.

Failure to fully complete the Contact Information section will result in the disqualification of the proposal.

Please fully complete all requested information. If individuals function in more than one role, please repeat information when necessary.

If an applicant is successful in their proposal, grant documents must be physically signed and dated by an individual authorized to sign contracts.

Grant Structure

Section Maximum Points= 0 points.

Failure to fully complete the Grant Structure section will result in the disqualification of the proposal. All requested information should be provided for EACH proposed location where ITCS will be served.

Program Description/ Work Statement

Each question must be answered completely with enough detail to understand exactly what is being proposed and responses should be in compliance with ***Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program Policies, Guidance and Clarification*** to receive the maximum number of points.

Program History

Section Maximum Points= 20 points.

Awarded for detailed response demonstrating a strong program history of service to infants and toddlers with a focus on providing quality services.

5000 character limit per question response



Program History

Question 1: Discuss the program's history of serving infant-toddler children and any other past or current participation in infant and toddler quality initiatives.

OCDEL is interested in funding programs with a strong history of offering quality infant-toddler services. As such, applications should respond with details about currently operating infant-toddler programs that show commitment to quality.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Section Maximum Points= 40 points.

Up to 20 points awarded for described collaborative relationships with Early Intervention, based upon quality of response

Up to 20 points awarded for described collaborative relationships with Head Start, based upon quality of response

5000 character limit per question response

Partnerships and Collaboration

Question 1: Describe collaborations with Early Intervention (both infant/toddler and preschool). Detail the programs' inclusion policies and practices. How will EI, and other behavioral and/or mental health agencies be utilized to support inclusion, and to reduce or eliminate expulsion.

Applicants should review the following in developing a response to this question: OCDEL Policy Statement on Inclusion and OCDEL Policy Statement on Suspension and Expulsion



Partnerships and Collaboration

Question 2: Describe collaborations with Early Head Start, including the strategy for promoting Early Head Start enrollment for children meeting 100% of FPL. If there is a formal MOU in place with Early Head Start, please attach to this application. Describe the planning process with Early Head Start as preparations were made for this application process. If a planning meeting was held, provide the date and the contact.

In order to maximize funding resources and assure a systematic approach to the early learning services provided within communities, pilot providers must commit to avoid enrolling children into programming who are already being served in an Early Head Start program or who are eligible to participate in Early Head Start. The purpose of this requirement is to avoid impact on enrollments in Early Head Start such that federal resources would be supplanted.

Program Implementation

Section Maximum Points= 120 points.

Up to 20 points for each of the six questions in this section, based on the quality of the response and ability to demonstrate that children receive high-quality services
5000 character limit per question response

Program Implementation

Question 1: Classroom Capacity Building/ yes/no response and text response

Will the program open new infant, toddler, or mixed aged classrooms/space to implement this initiative?

Applicants will select either “yes” or “no.”

Describe the number and configuration of all requested classrooms and indicate which classrooms/spaces will be new ones.

OCDEL is interested in building statewide capacity to serve infants and toddlers in quality settings. Applicants committing to opening new infant, toddler, and/or mixed aged spaces will receive 20 priority points. Applicants may respond in narrative form or may include a chart.

Program Implementation

Question 2: Continuity of Care/ text response

Describe the program's approach to assure continuity of care. How will classrooms be structured to assure children build positive and long-term relationships with their caregivers and with other children?

Relationships are at the heart of high-quality infant-toddler care. It is the trusting relationship infants and toddlers establish that build the foundation for all later development. Applicants should describe the model(s) that will be used to structure classrooms to assure children can build strong relationships. Although not required, applicants should consider innovative classroom structure such as mixed age grouping, where children of different ages are grouped together for longer periods of time (i.e. multiple years) or looping, where the same teacher(s) remain with a group of children for multiple years.

Program Implementation

Question 3: Curriculum/ text response

Describe the programs' curriculum model. Describe the ways in which the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards will be used. Describe the program's approach to engaging infants and toddlers in learning experiences that will focus on the unique developmental needs of this age group.

Infants and Toddlers have unique development needs. Applicants should describe the program's curriculum model, and the ways in which this model meets these unique needs. Applicants should the [Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood](#) in crafting a response to this question.

Program Implementation

Question 4: Family Engagement/ text response

Describe the program's family engagement approach. In your response, explicit connections to each area of The Pennsylvania Partnership for Learning Standards should be made.

Family engagement is an important element that contributes to the overall success of a program and the children receiving services. Family engagement extends beyond point-in-time events, and requires vigilant planning, and an understanding of the diverse situations of each family. Applicants should use the *Pennsylvania Partnership for Learning Standards* found within the [Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood](#) in crafting a response to this question.

Program Implementation

Question 5: Comprehensive Services/ text response

Describe the program's approach to assuring the needs of the whole child are addressed in the program model. How will the program assess the needs of the children, and follow up on identified needs? What types of comprehensive services does the program offer? What types of comprehensive services are available through coordination with other agencies?

Meeting the needs of the whole child is an important component of high-quality infant and toddler care. Applicants should describe how infants and toddlers are assessed to identify potential needs, and the ways in which the program follow up on the results of assessment. Applicants should also describe any comprehensive services that are either provided by the program or coordinated with outside agencies that directly benefit the children and/or the families being served. Comprehensive services discussed might include mental or behavioral health services, vision screenings, hearing screenings, and /or any other relevant services.

Program Implementation

Question 6: Transition/ text response

Explain your program's transition efforts. How will transitions be coordinated for children as they transition between classrooms? How will transitions be coordinated for the children/families who enter and exit your program to and from other early learning programs? Detail the approach/coordination with Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts that will assure children enrolled in the infant-toddler pilot will be prioritized for transition into the PA PKC program.

Applicants should provide a detailed response which includes information on how families, children, and other agencies are involved in all levels of the transition process. A goal of this program is to assure children have a smooth transition into the PA PKC program (in instances where they remain eligible for that program). Applicants should assure coordination with the PA PKC lead and describe in detail the ways in which toddlers enrolled in the pilot will be prioritized for PA PKC.

Staffing

- **Section Maximum Points=40 points.**
- Up to 20 points based upon the quality of the response
- Up to 20 based upon the described qualifications of staff

5000 character limit

Staffing

Question 1: Staffing/ text response

Classrooms should be staffed with teachers and assistant teachers who are trained to provide high-quality learning experiences for infants and toddlers. Staff in the Infant/Toddler pilot classrooms must hold a minimum of a CDA, however applicants with staff holding an infant-toddler CDA and/or infant-toddler related qualifications higher than a CDA will receive priority points for this application.

Classrooms must be staffed at a ratio of 1:4 regardless of children's ages. Maximum group size shall be 2 teachers to 8 children.

Do you currently have staff to fill these positions and/or a plan to recruit staff? If you responded, YES, list the staff along with their current level of qualifications of both lead and assistant teachers.

For both YES and NO responses, describe how qualified lead and assistant teachers will be recruited and retained.

Staffing

Staffing recruitment and retention are critical to ensuring the quality of programming. While recruitment allows for the acquisition of distinctive teachers, retention helps maintain classroom and program consistency. The applicant's response should detail both recruitment and retention strategies and should include information regarding the provision for salaries and benefits to entice applicants and retain qualified staff.

Staff with specified training in the development of infants and toddlers are best suited to provide high quality environments. Although not currently required for this program, staff qualifications including infant-toddler specialization will be prioritized as part of this application process. Therefore, in addition to the 20 points for providing a detailed response regarding recruitment and retention of teachers, up to an additional 20 points will be awarded based upon the qualifications of already hired staff. Applicants are asked to list staff along with their current qualifications. OCDEL will reserve the right to verify any staff qualifications listed within the application before awarding funding.

Program Assurances

- **Section Maximum Points=0 points.**
- Failure to fully complete the Program Assurances in the affirmative will result in disqualification of the proposal.

Funding Distribution and Notification

- The application score will be used to make funding decisions.
- In addition, FY 2018-19 Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Pilot participating providers who continue to meet eligibility criteria and have submitted an application will receive funding priority.
- Applicants will be notified by the PA Key on the anticipated date of October 7, 2019

Time Period

- Funding will be available for program expenses upon selection, approval and the effective date of the grant agreement in the first year of fiscal funding
- Subsequent years, based on the availability of funding, will be available July 1 through June 30th.

▶ Reporting and Monitoring

- Successful applicants will submit reports including, but not limited to, enrollment and attendance reports to OCDEL
- Grantees will receive periodic site visits to monitor and learn about program operations, and identify model programs and practices.
- Visits may include formal assessments for purpose of program evaluation and CQI

Contact/Mission

For more information on the Infant Toddler Contracted Slots RFA please visit [ITCS How to Apply](#)

The mission of the department is to academically prepare children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. The department seeks to ensure that the technical support, resources and opportunities are in place for all students, whether children or adults, to receive a high quality education.