Overview:

The Division of Early Learning (DEL), within the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), is soliciting applications from organizations interested in developing and implementing a plan for the operation and long-term sustainability of a shared service business alliance for child development homes and expanded homes in the District of Columbia. The goal of the shared service alliance is to enable providers to focus on children rather than devoting time to many of the other operational and administrative functions that could be performed more effectively and efficiently by people with specific administrative and operational expertise.

OSSE held the pre-application meeting for this grant on May 5, 2017. This FAQ document was developed to respond to the questions received during the meeting.

For additional information about the grant, please click here for the request for applications (RFA). For additional information about the FAQ document, please contact Rebecca Shaw, DEL’s director of operations and management, at Rebecca.Shaw@dc.gov.

General Application:

1. When is the grant application due?

   The grant application is due on May 22, 2017 at 3 p.m. and the deadline cannot be extended. For more information on the grant application process, please see Page 4, section 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 of the RFA.

2. Will an application be accepted if it is late?

   As indicated on Page 4, section 1.1.4 of the RFA, applications submitted after 3 p.m. on May 22, 2017 will not be accepted. It is recommended that applicants begin submitting their application a few hours before the 3 p.m. deadline so they will be able to contact the help desk if they experience any issues submitting their application in the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS).
3. Would experience with child care operations qualify a candidate for the Shared Service Business Alliance Grant?

A variety of experiences and roles will be considered. As requested in the RFA, previous experience in the areas of business operations and/or human resources is highly preferred. Additional information on eligibility can be found on Page 6, section 1.2.3 of the RFA.

4. Can home providers apply for this grant or is this a conflict of interest?

As stated on Page 6, section 1.2.3 of the RFA, OSSE will accept applications from eligible applicants, to include not-for-profit, for-profit, and faith-based organizations. Eligible applicants must hold a District of Columbia business license to operate in the District. Eligible applicants must have experience in organizational development, systems design and capacity, business operations, financial management principles, management of small and medium enterprises, education and/or human services, and human resources management. Home providers may not apply for this grant if they wish to access services through the shared service business alliance, as it would benefit the home provider personally and would be a conflict of interest. Any prospective applicant should be mindful of any potential conflict of interest. Additional information related to conflicts of interest can be found on Page 10, section 1.4.3 of the RFA.

5. How is the awardee(s) of the grant selected?

A panel of expert reviewers that may be DC government employees, but not OSSE employees, will score the completed application in accordance to the scoring rubric. OSSE will make a final decision in terms of who receives the grant. For full details on the award process, please reference Page 11-13, section 1.5 of the RFA.

6. When will the grantee(s) be announced?

Currently, we hope to announce the grantee(s) on Friday, June 23, 2017, but this timeline is subject to change.

7. Is there a question and answer period prior to submitting the application?

All questions can be emailed to Rebecca Shaw, DEL’s director of operations and management, at Rebecca.Shaw@dc.gov. The FAQ will also be posted on the OSSE website.

8. When is the shared service business alliance expected to begin operating?

Based on the approved business plan, the grantee(s) must launch the shared service business alliance within 12 months from the award date (RFA Page 9, section 1.3.1). Each individual applicant will propose a business model and timeline with the option of including up to one year for planning. Additional information on the shared service business plan can be found on Page 8-9, section 1.3 in the RFA.
9. **Is a shared service business alliance similar to a franchise?**

This depends on the model that the applicant proposes. There are various models throughout the United States. OSSE is not endorsing one specific model, but is seeking proposals that meet the contextual needs of the District. Applicants are asked to conduct research and propose the model that will meet the needs of the District.

10. **Is there a number of home child care facilities that must be a part of the shared service business alliance?**

There is no set number of homes or expanded homes designated in the grant proposal, but OSSE expects that the applicant will identify the number of homes and expanded homes that they anticipate participating in their proposed shared service business alliance. Letters of support from family home and expanded home providers can be submitted as supporting documentation. More information can be found on Pages 11-12, section 1.5.2.4 and 1.5.2.5 of the RFA regarding organizational knowledge and market demand.

11. **When considering program assurance, what is the expectation for reporting that program standards are being met?**

There will be a reporting system for the grantee(s) to provide regular updates on the established and agreed upon standards with OSSE. These standards will be measurable and submitted to OSSE on a quarterly basis. Reporting requirements can be found on Pages 9-10, section 1.3.5 of the RFA.

12. **How can the shared service business alliance help maintain enrollment or aid in fundraising?**

The shared service business alliance will establish contractual authority with home and expanded home providers to ensure obligations are being met and that there is mutual understanding between the shared service business alliance and the provider. This means that providers agree to allow the shared service business alliance to support maintaining enrollment and assisting in fundraising. Therefore, the relationship established between the shared service business alliance and providers will include a partnership around operational tasks such as enrollment, staffing, and fundraising activities as needed by the providers the alliance supports.

13. **Is there an example of a regulation or policy that could be waived under Section 1.5.2.5, Process to Develop and Implement the Shared Service Business Alliance, Financial Feasibility Analysis, Page 12 in the RFA?**

5A DCMR § 106 provides OSSE with authority to grant waivers for any licensing provision that does not jeopardize the health, safety, or welfare of children or staff. All new and existing facilities may apply for a waiver as set forth in 5A DCMR § 106. An example of a regulation that could potentially be waived is staff qualifications. The regulations provide a waiver option for directors and teachers that have been in this type of position consecutively for the past 10 years.
14. Do you need to be a Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) or registered business?

You are not required to be a CBE, but you do need to have a District business license and submit all required documentation outlined in the grant. Please visit the following link for additional information regarding business licensing requirements: https://dcra.dc.gov/service/about-business-licensing.

15. For inquiries on OSSE’s Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS) and submitting the application, who do we call?

For assistance with EGMS, call the Help Desk at (202) 719-6500 or email OSSE.Callcenter@dc.gov.

16. Where can I get more information about shared services?

For more information, please visit: www.opportunities-exchange.org.

**Funding and Budget:**

17. What is the total grant award period for this RFA? Will the award period fund planning, preparation, and implementation?

The total funding available for developing and implementing a plan for the operation and sustainability of a shared service business alliance for homes and expanded homes is up to $500,000 per fiscal year for fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019, contingent upon availability of funds (RFA Page 7, section 1.2.6). OSSE plans to issue up to two awards from this RFA. Determinations regarding the number of competitive grants to be awarded will be based on the quality and number of applications received and available funding. Successful applicants may be awarded amounts less than requested.

Please see Table 1 that includes the timeline for each budget period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Award date – Sept. 30, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2017 – Sept. 30, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 2018 – Sept. 30, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Is the budget to be submitted for each year or for all three years?

For the current application, the budget from June 2017 through Sept. 30, 2017 must be provided. The budget for each subsequent year will be submitted with the continuation application prior to the next fiscal year, which will begin Oct. 1, 2017 and Oct. 1, 2018 respectively.
19. **Does the budget have to be for $500,000?**

No, the maximum amount of the budget is $500,000, but OSSE will make the determination in terms of the total award amount.

20. **Can adjustments be made to the grantee’s budget after it has already been submitted and approved?**

Once a grantee(s) is awarded the grant, the OSSE team will meet with the grantee(s) and discuss making potential modifications to the grantee’s originally proposed budget. Depending on the amount awarded, modifications may be required.

21. **Is this grant funded with local or federal dollars?**

This grant is supported with local funding. Additional information on the source of funding can be found on Page 6, section 1.2.4 of the RFA.

22. **Do grantees need to have documentation for all items purchased with the grant funding?**

The grantee should have the appropriate documentation (i.e., invoice, receipts, etc.) for items that need reimbursement.

23. **Can for-profit organizations charge indirect costs on this grant or would these costs be reimbursable?**

OSSE does not allow for-profit organizations to charge indirect costs against awarded grants.