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***REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL***

***Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund***

***(ECEIF)***

***October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015***

***Submission Deadline: August 14, 2014***

Contact: Lisa Eads, Program Coordinator

 Early Childhood and Public Service Technologies

 (919) 807-7133 or eadsl@nccommunitycolleges.edu

## NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

200 W. JONES STREET 5016 MAIL SERVICE CENTER

RALEIGH, NC 27603-1379 RALEIGH, NC 27699-5016**Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund**

***Proposal Submission Due Date***

***August 14, 2014***

**INTRODUCTION**

The North Carolina Community College System seeks to improve Early Childhood Education (ECE) through the Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund (ECEIF), which was developed through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant that was awarded to the State of North Carolina. The ECEIF was designed to provide opportunities for North Carolina community colleges to increase access to and the quality of ECE programs. It is expected that one (1) grant of $58,000 will be made for projects that will conclude by September 30, 2015. Projects that conclude sooner that September 30, 2015 are allowable.

The ECEIF provides an opportunity to improve early education in North Carolina’s community colleges by funding the efforts to better prepare aspiring and in-service ECE teachers by increasing access to programs and increasing high quality training experiences. The project seeks to solicit proposals and initiate contracts with individual community colleges to identify barriers to ECE student success, evaluate strategies to alleviate these barriers, pilot the strategies, and disseminate the results to other colleges for replication.

In keeping with the System’s strategic planning initiative, **SuccessNC** the System Office priorities are focused on bringing more college-ready students into high-quality educational and workforce training programs that will allow them to be well prepared. These priorities are centered on **SuccessNC’s** guiding goals: **Improve Student Success, Increase Student** **Access,** and **Ensure Program Excellence.**

Across the nation and around the world, efforts to improve early childhood policies and practices typically emphasize quality of implementation, professional skills development, and expanded **Student Access** to services and instruction. These vitally important objectives are promoted through a broad array of activities and offer a critical foundation for **Improved Student Success**. The mission of the ECEIF is to build on current innovative efforts, mobilize knowledge, and **Ensure Program Excellence**.

For the purpose of this Request for Proposal, the ECEIF will address the need for curriculum alignment. **Four important content areas are identified as priorities for attention**:

* *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*;
* Formative Assessment Tools;
* Program of Study; and
* Professional Development for ECE faculty.

Priority will be given to projects developed through and in partnership with multiple NCCCS institutions. Proposals that include multiple NCCCS institutions must identify a lead college that will also serve as the fiscal agent.

**ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

Examples of allowable project aspects include, but are not limited to, the following.

**Curriculum Alignment**

Since the 2006-2008 Curriculum Improvement Project for Early Childhood Education, led by Forsyth Technical Community College, significant developments, in North Carolina and nationwide, necessitate the need to ensure that community college curricula appropriately prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed for their field.

*North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* (Foundations)**—**NCDCDEE revised its “guide for teaching” in childcare settings, *Foundations* was updated in 2013. Ensuring that all ECE students are trained in the use of the revised *Foundations* is vital to the success of ECE teachers and staff. The need to align courses to the information in *Foundations* is clear. *Foundations* is available for free download at <http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/providers/pv_infant_toddler_foundations.asp>.

Formative Assessment Tools--Statewide, Formative Assessment Tools are helping in the identification of appropriate strategies for educating children through educational planning designed to address individual children’s needs. NCDCDEE defines a Formative Assessment Tool as the following.

*A systematic ongoing procedure to document, monitor and evaluate children’s progress, and plan appropriate learning experiences by:*

* *Observing, documenting and evaluating all children’s development, knowledge, skills, behaviors, strengths, needs and interests in all areas defined in* North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*;*
* *Providing opportunity for communication and collaboration with families, teachers, and service providers regarding children’s interests, development, and learning;*
* *Providing data that teachers can use to systematically plan and evaluate learning experiences and teaching practices based on documentation of the learning and development of a diverse group of children.*

Multiple Preschool Formative Assessment Tools are approved for immediate use in North Carolina and the need for childcare workers to successfully utilize these assessments will directly impact each child’s education. Although assessment courses are typically part of university-level ECE curricula, community college ECE students will be better prepared to educate North Carolina’s children if the skills needed to successfully implement Formative Assessment Tools are **embedded** across the community college ECE courses. The result of embedding these skills is anticipated to benefit children through improved and increased use of Formative Assessment Tools in childcare settings and improved preparation for community college graduates who enter university ECE programs.

Program of Study--The NCCCS has partnered with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Department of Labor to develop and implement Career Pathways across Career and Technical Education programs. Key components of this initiative will include, but are not limited to the following:

* Career Development—student support services that aid students in understanding careers, in relationship to their abilities, skills, and interests; the activities necessary to be qualified for the career, and the length of time needed to meet career goals.
* Program of Study— a rigorous sequence of technical and academic courses designed to prepare individuals for their career.
* Work Based Learning—required supervised field work that provides on-the-job-training, extends the impact of classroom training, and prepares students for employment after the attainment of academic credentials.
* Employer Engagement—regular input influencing educational offerings from employers who hire ECE students.
* Credentials—educational benchmarks, validated by an educational entity and accepted by industry as evidence that the student can perform the activities required to meet an industry standard. Credentials are often “stackable; i.e., a student who passes EDU 119, with a “C” or better, is eligible to apply for the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential, which enables the student to work in a childcare center; however, more coursework and credentials may be needed to achieve the student’s career goals (i.e. additional certifications, Director’s Credential, associate’s degree, etc.).

ECE programs already incorporate Career Development through regular advisement of students by ECE faculty, Work Based Learning through practicum and other field experiences, Employer Engagement through advisory groups, and Credentials through a graduated system of certification. The pathway component least addressed by ECE is the **Program of Study**.

A project that develops, implements, and disseminates **Programs of Study** that clearly map for students the sequence of skills, education and credentials needed to meet the student’s career goals will assist the student by eliminating duplicative coursework and will decrease the overall cost of education for ECE students. Programs of Study will include secondary, community college, and university courses; however, not all students, based on current educational attainment and career goals, will need courses from each level.

Professional Development for ECE Faculty--Revision to the ECE courses and resources will clearly impact instructor training offered by community colleges. The project must include professional development activities designed to disseminate ECEIF project activities and training needed to replicate best practices at other NCCCS institutions.

**UNALLOWABLE COSTS**

The following is a list of costs that **may not** be paid with ECEIF grant funds. The list is not exhaustive. Funds **may not** be used for:

* Student- related costs;
* Administrative costs;
* Equipment;
* Stipends;
* Certification benefiting only individual faculty;
* Refreshments (e.g., food, drinks, paper products);
* Conferences;
* Memberships;
* Faculty/staff resource libraries and collections; and
* Foreign travel.

**PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

To receive grant funding, the proposal must follow the guidelines and requirements included in this document. The proposal should provide a straightforward and concise description of activities planned to satisfy the requirements of this Request for Proposal. Emphasis should be placed on completeness and clarity of content. All information requested must be submitted.

Each proposal must include the following:

1. **Certification Page** (Attachment A)
2. **Proposed Budget** (Attachment B)
3. **One-page executive summary** of the project
4. **Narrative description** of the proposed project.

The narrative should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages (using a 12 point font and 1” margins all around) and should address each of the categories outlined in the Proposal Development Categories section below.

**Note**: These same categories serve as the review criteria for assessing and selecting Early Childhood Education Innovation projects to be funded. All review criteria/categories, including the 100-point distribution used for the review, are explained below. The Proposal Review form (Attachment C) is provided as a reference.

**A. Need for the Project (15 Points)**

I. What is the magnitude or severity of the problem addressed by the project? Specifically, how will this projects address the Curriculum alignment needs for ECE, particularly related to the identified priorities--

* + *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*;
	+ Formative Assessment Tools
	+ Program of Study; and
	+ Professional Development for ECE faculty?

**B. Significance of the Project (20 Points)**

* 1. How great is this project’s potential for having statewide significance?
	2. Does the proposed project involve the development or demonstration of new strategies that build upon, or are alternatives to, existing strategies?
	3. What is the potential replicability of the project, including its potential for implementation at other North Carolina community colleges?

**C. Quality of Project Design (30 Points)**

1. To what extent is the design of the proposed project appropriate to, and will successfully address, the program priorities.
* Curriculum Alignment;
* Career Pathways—Programs of Study; and
* Professional Development for ECE Faculty.
1. To what extent does the proposed design include a thorough, high-quality review of the literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives?
2. To what extent is the project designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the grant period?

**D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (10 Points)**

1. To what extent are the methods of evaluation thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project?
2. To what extent will the evaluation provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings?

**E. Adequacy of Resources (20 Points)**

1. Are costs reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of the proposed project?
2. To what extent has each partner in the proposed project demonstrated commitment to the implementation and success of the project?
3. What is the potential for continued support of the project after grant funding ends, including the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support?

**General SUBMISSION Instructions**

**One original** and a **PDF** of the proposal should be submitted. Please do not place copies in notebooks or binders. All proposals should have page numbers and should be stapled for easier processing. We regret that we cannot accept faxed copies. The original and a PDF of the proposal should be sent to Lisa Eads, Program Coordinator**, by 5:00 p.m. on August 14, 2014.**

Submit your proposal package to: **Lisa Eads, Program Coordinator**

 **North Carolina Community College System**

 **5016 Mail Service Center**

 **Raleigh, NC 27699-5016**

 **Attn: Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund**

**eadsl@nccommunitycolleges.edu**

**GRANT PROPOSAL REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

Each proposal will be evaluated by a peer review committee. Following the reviews, the results will be statistically compiled to obtain the individual proposal score. The proposals will be rated using the Proposal Review Form (Attachment C) in the RFP.

**TIMELINE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Expected Result** |
| August 14, 2014 | Proposals Due to System Office | Electronic (PDF) and signed proposals received by System Office by 5:00 pm. |
| September 2014 | State Board of Community Colleges Review | Recommended proposals presented to SBCC for approval of allocations to colleges. |
| October 1, 2014 | Project Begins | New project begins. |
| September 30, 2015 | Project Ends | Project finished by this date.  |

Questions about the RFP process may be directed to Lisa Eads, Program Coordinator at

(919) 807-7133 - eadsl@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

**Attachment A**

**Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund (ECEIF)**

**CERTIFICATION PAGE**

**College:**   **Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Contact Person for the Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone:**  ( ) **Extension: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**E-mail Address:**  **Fax**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Institutional Certification:**

We have read and understand the requirements contained in the request for proposal and hereby make application for the funds. The proposal addresses needs identified in Early Childhood Education programs and is intended as a plan to address these needs. The project will be managed by a project director. The college will prepare post-project evaluation materials. Furthermore, all expenditures will be in compliance with the grant requirements.

**Project Director: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**President: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment B**

**Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund (ECEIF)**

**PROPOSED BUDGET**

|  |
| --- |
| **Community College Name:** |
|  **Description**  | **Cost** |
| Faculty Release Time (Itemize) |  |
| Travel and Subsistence (Itemize) |  |
| Supplies and Materials (List) |  |
| Contractual Services (Itemize) |  |
| Other (Specify) |  |
| **Total Budget** | **$** |

**Attachment C**

**Early Childhood Education Innovation Fund (ECEIF)**

**PROPOSAL REVIEW**

Community College Name:

Reviewer's Name:

**A. Need for the Project (15 Points)**

I. What is the magnitude or severity of the problem addressed by the project? Specifically, how will this projects address the curriculum alignment needs for ECE, particularly related to the identified priorities--

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	+ Formative Assessment Tools;
	+ Program of Study; and
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**B. Significance of the Project (20 Points)**

* 1. How great is this project’s potential for having statewide significance?
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1. To what extent does the proposed design include a thorough, high-quality review of the literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives?
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**E. Adequacy of Resources (20 Points)**

1. Are costs reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of the proposed project?
2. To what extent has each partner in the proposed project demonstrated commitment to the implementation and success of the project?
3. What is the potential for continued support of the project after grant funding ends, including the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support?

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT**: Please write an overall assessment of the merits of the project based on the review criteria – Need for the Project, Significance of the Project, Quality of the Project Design, Quality of the Project Evaluation, and Adequacy of Resources. Please critically analyze the project idea, judging its potential quality as an educational reform model useful in a variety of settings. Describe in detail the reasons for your judgment, identifying specific features of the proposal that contribute to your opinion.

**REVIEWER’S SIGNATURE**:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date