



MASSACHUSETTS  
**Department of  
Early Education and Care**

## **FY25 Early Education and Care Provider Capital Grant (EEPCPG) for For-Profits: Questions and Answers**

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### **COMMBUYS Posting**

#### [FY25 EEPCPG Grant](#)

Bid #: BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108135

To submit an application, use the following link:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/ChildrensInvestmentFund1/EEPCGFY25ApplicationSmallGrants>

#### **Information Session Recordings:**

View a recording of the information session [here](#)

#### **Information Session Slides:**

View a copy of the information session slides [here](#)

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Q1: Are non-profit centers eligible to apply for this grant?**

A1: No; applicants to the EECPCG program must be for-profit. However, non-profit centers are currently eligible for the EECST small grant opportunity. Please [use this link](#) to review the posting on COMMBUYS (Bid # BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108055).

### **Q2: Are family child care providers eligible to apply for this grant?**

A2: No, this grant is for non-profit centers. Family Child Care providers were eligible this summer to apply for a [capital grant program managed by MassDevelopment](#). The deadline for the first round has passed but there is a second round planned for 2025.

### **Q3: The commercial building houses the childcare center and the residence of the owner. Would this disqualify the applicant?**

A3: No, not necessarily. The applicant must own or lease the child care center space and must propose improvements to the EEC-licensed space, not the residence.

### **Q4: My question is about my project price. The budget for my renovations is around \$140,000. Is this the correct program to apply?**

A4: Applicants must apply for a minimum of \$200,000, so your renovation costs must be at least \$200,000.

### **Q5: We received our EEC licensed last month. Am I able to apply?**

A5: You may apply as long as you have an active EEC license, even if it is a newer license. However, you must have been operating other sites as a licensed provider for at least three years. You must submit one year of your most recent tax returns with the application, but you are asked if you have financial information for the last three years. If you are a brand-new provider with a new license, you would not be able to apply.

### **Q6: Is a new program eligible with only one year tax report? My program will be open for two years on January 3, 2025.**

A6: You must have been operating as a licensed provider for at least three years. You are asked to submit one year of your most recent tax returns with the application, but you are asked if you have financial information for the last three years.

### **Q7: Can a program have a sole owner to be eligible for the grant?**

A7: Yes, you can be a sole proprietor to be eligible for the grant.

### **Q8: Is there a requirement for how long the business has been an LLC?**

A8: You must have been operating as an EEC-licensed program for at least three years and have financial information for the past three years, although you are only asked to provide the last one year of your tax returns, audit, or Uniform Financial Report (UFR).

### **Q9: An existing organization wanting to open a new site is eligible for this grant?**

A9: Yes, if the existing organization has at least one licensed site currently and wishes to open a new site, they are eligible as long as they meet all additional requirements.

**Q10: What does the 30:1 salary ratio mean?**

A10: Applicant organizations with a ratio between the highest and lowest salaried employees of greater than 30 to 1 are not eligible for consideration. As an example, if an organization's lowest-paid employee is \$30,000, their highest-paid employee cannot make more than 30 times that, or \$900,000. Please note that "salary" is defined as including stock options and other ancillary financial benefits.

## **PUBLIC SUBSIDIES/ LOW-INCOME DETERMINATION**

**Q11: I am very interested in applying; however, we do not have 50% of our children on vouchers. Does that take us out of the process?**

A11: EECPCG eligibility guidelines require that at least 50% of the children enrolled are eligible to receive public subsidies. "Public subsidies" is a broader definition beyond just EEC vouchers/contracted slots. The 50% low-income threshold is not just for those families receiving EEC and Head Start subsidies. Other types of public subsidies may also be counted, which are listed in the ["Application Spreadsheets"](#) (Tab 3) as follows:

**Children (family) receiving another public subsidy including:**

- Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) Benefits
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- In Section 8 housing or on the waitlist for Section 8 housing subsidy
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- MassHealth / Medicaid and/or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Family claiming Earned Income Tax Credit
- Homeless Families
- On the waitlist for an EEC subsidy or for Head Start

**Q12: Is the 50% in low-income through vouchers only, or can it also be for in-center financial assistance as well?**

A12: Children who receive scholarships at your organization are not necessarily considered "low-income." In order to be counted towards the 50% threshold, their families must be receiving some sort of "public subsidy" as listed in the prior question, Q11.

**Q13: To clarify the low-income standards, if individuals are eligible (i.e. below 85% of the median income) but are not receiving benefits, do those individuals count towards the 50% threshold?**

A13: The individuals need to be receiving benefits, not just be eligible for benefits. The exception is if a family is on the waitlist for an EEC subsidy/Head Start or Section 8 housing but are not currently receiving those benefits.

**Q14: If a childcare center accepts vouchers, however does not have many children enrolled from the voucher system, but is aware of the population served having need/access to other forms of state assistance, would this program be applicable for the grant?**

A14: If you conduct a survey of the families you serve and confirm the number of families who are receiving the public subsidies listed in Q11, children in those families can count towards the 50% threshold.

**Q15: For surveying the parents, does it have to contain their personal information, or can it be anonymous?**

A15: The survey information can be confidential. Children's Investment Fund and EEC will not ask for the actual survey results or any identifying information. However, for your own purposes, you will want to avoid the survey being completely anonymous because you will have to find out how many families who are currently not receiving EEC financial assistance are receiving other public subsidies, and match them to the number of their children you serve.

**Q16: For the 50% voucher families, is it based on capacity or currently enrolled children?**

A16: This threshold is based on currently enrolled children.

**Q17: Will there be other grants for programs that don't meet the 50% threshold currently?**

A17: There are not currently any other capital grants for for-profit centers that do not meet that threshold.

## **SITE CONTROL**

**Q18: I have an existing large group center which I will be applying for and I also have a second location that is still under construction. Would I be able to apply for this second location?**

A18: Yes, it sounds like you can apply for the new center if you are already operating a licensed center and if at least half of the enrollment in that first center is comprised of children from low-income families. Another note is that the new second location cannot be 100% complete by the time that you apply to the grant (deadline is Dec 12) and you must have ownership of the second location. The new center should plan to serve low-income children (to meet that 50% threshold).

**Q19: If the project requires the purchase of real estate for part of the project expansion, can those costs be included?**

A19: This grant cannot pay for the purchase of real estate. It can only be used for the renovations associated with a new space.

**Q20: Are we allowed to purchase the building or property during the 5-year grant period?**

A20: If you apply with a lease but decide to purchase the property during the 5-year grant term, yes, that is allowable.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Q21: How do I apply?**

A21: [COMMBUYS](#) is the Commonwealth's online procurement system. All competitive grants or contracts are required by law to be posted on COMMBUYS. It is the official source for any procurement documentation; any documentation posted elsewhere may not be the official version. The specific bid link for the FY25 EECPCG small grants round is below:

[FY25 EECPCG Capital Fund Small Grant](#)

BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108135

The documents posted on COMMBUYS will help you prepare for the online submission. To submit an application, please use the following link:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/ChildrensInvestmentFund1/EECPGFY25ApplicationSmallGrants>

Submissions are due by 11:59PM on Thursday, December 12, 2024. All attachments will be uploaded online. Any emailed or mailed submissions will not be accepted.

**Q22: Should you submit 20 individual photos along with the pdf/word doc with all included or just the pdf/word doc?**

A22: We encourage you to upload only one PDF/Word document with all photos included, so that it is only one file on our end.

**Q23: How many years of financials must you produce?**

A23: We ask for your latest tax return (2023) and then internal financial statements covering the period of January 1, 2024 and September 30, 2024 (or later if available).

**Q24: How do I answer the financial questions and profit and loss for a new site that is not open yet?**

A24: Applicants should submit financial information for the entire organization, which would include all current sites.

**Q25: Is the voucher agreement N/A if you are a contracted provider?**

A25: For organizations holding a voucher agreement with a CCR&R: Please submit the most recent Internal Control Questionnaire and obtain a copy of the risk assessment from the CCR&R. This is not applicable for contracted providers.

**Q26: What is considered in the preferences category? Could you list the seven preferences?**

A26: Preferences for the FY25 round include:

1. A balanced geographic plan that includes projects in different parts of the state such as Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape and the Islands. and Central Massachusetts;
2. Facilities where the number of families receiving public subsidy is 80% or more of the total child care enrollment as of the date of the EECPCG application;
3. Serving children designated by EEC as having a priority need (children of homeless families, children involved with DCF, and children of young parents);
4. Projects addressing accessibility for individuals with special needs;
5. Location within a Gateway City;
6. Solicitation and/or participation of businesses certified by state Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) and participants in the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) as part of the project team
7. Applications will also be scored according to the project site's Social Vulnerability Index score.

**Q27: Do you receive the 25 preference points if you meet at least one criteria? If not, what is the metric?**

A27: Each preference point is assigned either 2 or 3 points, therefore applicants may get some, all, or none of the preference points.

**Q28: Please explain the CDC acronym re: SVI.**

A28: The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a measure that refers to demographic and socioeconomic factors at the community level. It is a rating that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created. The SVI rating of the site address where you propose the work will determine the number of SVI preference points you will receive.

**Q29: If only a limited number can be awarded, is it fair to award one agency more than one grant?**

A29: The Children's Investment Fund and EEC recognize that many organizations have multiple sites in need of capital funding and wants to allow any and all eligible sites the opportunity for a grant.

**Q30: What are the deciding factors if more than the fundable amount of grants have high scores?**

A30: The Children's Investment Fund and EEC score all applications based on a detailed scoring rubric. Awards are made according to the top scorers, how much they request, and how much is available to grant. It is possible for an application to receive a competitive score but not be funded because of the limited amount of funding available.

**Q31: Is it evenly awarded throughout the state? Are there parts of the state that meet a higher point then other parts of the state?**

A31: Awards are made throughout all regions of the state. The EECPCG program will give additional preference points this year to projects in Central Massachusetts, Southeastern

Massachusetts, and the Cape and the Islands because these are areas that are currently underrepresented by the grant awards.

**Q32: Are the grants awarded on a first come, first served basis? Is there something else you look for to be awarded?**

A32: The Children’s Investment Fund and EEC use a scoring rubric to rate applications based on the following criteria:

- Accurate presentation and documentation of project costs
- Readiness and feasibility
- Financial stability
- Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) adjustment
- Preferences

All applications are scored and awarded at the same time and not on a rolling basis.

**Q33: Can we apply for multiple projects such as: rooftop play area/security cameras/HVAC upgrades?**

A33: Yes, one site can apply to have multiple facility improvement projects, and projects that respond to more than one EEOST priority area, addressed within a single EEOST application, as long as all projects take place at the same licensed site.

You may apply for multiple sites, but you will need to fill out a separate application for each site.

**Q34: Can funds be used for renovation/construction outside, as in the parking area?**

A34: Yes, parking repaving and updating is an eligible use for the grant.

**Q35: Are transportation capital expenditures allowable (vehicles, safety/security features such as cameras)?**

A35: Transportation vehicles are not an eligible expenditure. However, safety/security features such as cameras to be installed at your center are eligible.

**Q36: If our project is useable but not 100% complete, are we eligible to apply? We have plans to install five fixtures which we had to put on hold due to the inflation costs of doing the project.**

A36: It sounds like your project is essentially complete, with the exception of the five fixtures. Please contact Children’s Investment Fund at [EECPG@cif-ma.org](mailto:EECPG@cif-ma.org) to talk further about this.

## **DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

**Q37: Is there a specific requirement for using Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)-certified team members? If not, what is the additional scoring metric for this, if any?**

A38: There is no requirement to use vendors [certified through the state's Supplier Diversity Office](#). However, your application would receive preference points if you engage a member on your team who is certified by the SDO or if you receive an estimate from a contractor who is certified by the SDO.

**Q38: Is there a place to account for the childcare business itself being a woman owned business, or other relevant criteria for preference points, or does this only apply to additional consultants and teams involved?**

A38: The SDO preference points apply only to the consultants and external team members involved, not to the applicant organization itself.

**Q39: Is the grant writer considered a consultant?**

A39: If the grant writer is not a staff member of your organization, you can list them as a consultant.

**Q40: Is a consultant the same as the general contractor?**

A40: Many projects use external consultants such as an architect, engineer, or project manager. Your General Contractor is part of your project team as well but is typically not called a consultant.

**Q41: Can the construction manager or project manager be the same person as the architect of choice?**

A41: Ideally a project manager is not affiliated with your architect or with your general contractor, so that they can fully represent your best interests. However, you may choose to have your architect take on the project manager or construction manager role and that is allowable.

**Q42: If you are planning a playground renovation and other stand-alone emergency repairs. Would this require a "construction manager"?**

A42: Most projects, including the one you describe, would benefit from a construction manager. You may hire someone for this purpose, use an internal staff person such as a facilities director, or designate someone else to be a construction manager. Once you are awarded, your Children's Investment Fund project lead can talk through this with you.

**Q43: Can the construction manager be a family member who has a general contractor license?**

A43: Yes, that is allowable.

**Q44: What is the definition of a "significant construction project"?**

A44: Most EECPCG projects are significant construction projects. Successful EECPCG applicants work with an architect to help them with their project, at a minimum, but it depends on the extent of the work. Please reach out to us at [EECPCG@cif-ma.org](mailto:EECPCG@cif-ma.org) if you would like to talk further about your project.

## **REIMBURSEMENT/TIMING**

### **Q45: When would the grant funds start being released?**

A45: The EECPCG program has a legal closing process for this grant, which is something the Children's Investment Fund team works with you on after you are awarded. An organization is reimbursed for expenses only after completing the grant closing process.

Typically, you will pay the contractor(s) directly and then apply for reimbursement. In order to be reimbursed, you will need to gather documentation, including all contracts, proposals, photos of the completed work, invoices, and proof of payment. Proof of payment can include copies of the check, electronic payment, or credit card receipt used to pay the contractors and vendors. These will be assembled into a requisition package and submitted to the EECPCG review team.

### **Q46: As the project is being worked on, how fast is the reimbursement as a percentage of the project is completed?**

A46: If you start construction soon after the grant closing, the timing of your requisitions can be managed so that your organization would be reimbursed soon after you incur the expenses.

## **BIDS/COST ESTIMATES**

### **Q47: Would an application receive more points if more than one quote per area is provided initially? Are three quotes required for all areas at some point?**

A47: You do not need to submit three bids with the application but would need to provide them if awarded the grant. For the application, you need at least one bid for each scope item. You do not need to commit to using the vendor who provided an estimate in order for you to apply.

Applications will not necessarily receive more points if more than one quote is provided initially, because typically the scope of work is not well defined at the time of the application. In other words, if you are funded, you will need to finalize the specifications for the work and update the three quotes anyway.

### **Q48: If I already have a contractor working on the project, do I still need to submit more than one contractor quote?**

A48: You may submit only one quote with the application. If you are funded you will still need to solicit at least three bids for the work, even if you have a preferred contractor.

## OTHER QUESTIONS

**Q49: Is this a grant or a loan? Why are there repayment provisions?**

A49: This is a grant, not a loan. There are repayment provisions because your project site is expected to continue operating early childhood and/or out-of-school time care for children from low-income families for five years. If your organization were to stop providing care or sell the building to another organization, for example, this could trigger repayment of the grant, as your organization would default on the terms of the grant agreement.

**Q50: Do you foresee this grant being offered again? It's a rare event for for-profit sites to be eligible to apply for a capital grant. Only five organizations were awarded funding last year across the state which is somewhat discouraging.**

A50: Funding for this program is subject to the Massachusetts state budget process and the Legislature. It is not known whether this funding will be offered again in the future.

**Q51: Could you clarify the time period of the grant? Page 10 of the program guide specifies that the grant term is 5 years, but the budget template does not require any annual estimates of expenditures.**

A51: The grant period is five years. The application does not ask for five-year budget projections or estimates because these awards are for capital funding, not operating funding.

**Q52: Can all grant funds be spent within the first year or two? Is there any need to allocate funds by year in the grant application?**

A52: Awardees will be expected to complete the grant closing and begin construction by March 31, 2026. Most awards will then be reimbursed for the funds in 2026. There is no need to allocate funds by year in the grant application because the funds are for capital projects, not operating expenditures.

**Q53: Is there any required or recommended "in kind" contribution expected of potential grantees?**

A53: There is no required or recommended in-kind contribution or matching funds needed.

**Q54: In the second part of the Excel spreadsheet, if all expenses are covered by EEC, should they be listed above but with total amount then applied to EEC?**

A54: If you are asking for an EECPCG grant to cover your entire capital project, you would list the EECPCG Capital Grant Program as the only source of funding. If there are other grants contributing to the capital project, such as from EEC, you can designate them on the right-hand side of the "Sources and Uses" budget on the second tab of the "[Application Spreadsheets](#)" Excel document posted on COMMBUYS.

**Q55: If I still have a question, even after this Q&A is posted, who do I contact?**

A55: For technical assistance regarding the real estate development aspects of your project, the Children's Investment Fund team can be reached at [EECPCG@cif-ma.org](mailto:EECPCG@cif-ma.org). For questions about the EECPCG application or requirements, email Jose Mendez at [jose.mendez@mass.gov](mailto:jose.mendez@mass.gov).

