

## FY25 Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund for Non-Profits: Small Grant Round Questions and Answers

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### COMMBUYS Posting

#### [FY25 EEOST Capital Fund Small Grant](#)

Bid #: BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108055

To submit an application, use the following link:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/ChildrensInvestmentFund1/EEOSTFY25ApplicationSmallGrant>

#### **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 for-profit centers eligible to apply for this grant?**

A1: No; applicants to the EECST Capital Fund must be non-profit. However, for-profit centers are currently eligible for the EECPCG grant opportunity. Please [use this link](#) to review the posting on COMMBUYS (Bid # BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108135).

### **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: Can you have your license for less than a year to qualify?**

A3: 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, because you must submit one year of your most recent audited financials with the application. If you are a brand-new provider with a new license and you do not have a year of audited financials, you would not be able to apply.

### **Q4: We are a center that recently reopened; we were closed for a while. We have audited financials since we had to continue to file every year. We currently have our provisional license and am waiting for renewal of the real license. Just confirming we will qualify.**

A4: You cannot apply with a provisional license. You are eligible to apply only if you have a full license from EEC.

### **Q5: How do we know if we are a Chapter 180 corporation?**

A5: We suggest you look at the top of your Articles of Organization; it should be noted there. You can also search for your organization on the [MA Secretary's website](#) and check your organizational documents.

### **Q6: We are licensed with the Dept. of Early Education and Care as a Group Program, providing year-round residential education and care to ages 8-21, supporting individuals with complex disabilities. Are we eligible?**

A6: No, you would not be eligible as a residential program. The grant is only for early education "large group and school age" providers serving young children.

### **Q7: What is the age range for out-of-school programs included in this grant? Are after school programs for high schoolers considered?**

A7: This grant is intended to serve children under the age of 14, through EEC's "large group and school age" licensing, so programs serving high school age children are not eligible.

### **Q8: We are a 501c3 MA nonprofit that is renovating a former school and childcare will be part of our programming, specifically to support small businesses in the incubator space in the**

**building. We have a potential EEC-certified childcare vendor who will use the space once it's been renovated. Are we eligible to apply?**

A8: The applicant to an EEOST grant must be an EEC-licensed early education provider. You can partner with this entity, but a non-profit early education organization would have to be identified, serve as the main applicant, and have a 51% controlling interest in the partnership.

**Q9: Can a nonprofit apply for infrastructure improvements with a secured for-profit vendor agreement?**

A9: You are allowed to work with for-profit contractors to do the renovation work that you propose. If you are asking about a for-profit partner, for-profit organizations may be able to apply in partnership with a non-profit entity as long as the non-profit has at least a 51% controlling interest in the partnership entity/joint venture applying for the grant.

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

**Q10: 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?**

A10: EEOST 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

**Q11: If our participants receive full scholarships from a private donor, how would that be calculated?**

A11: 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, Q10.

**Q12: Is Chart 2 on Tab 3 of the Application Spreadsheets (for the income qualification) required or optional, if our program already meets the 80% or above low-income on the first page?**

A12: If you exceed the 50% threshold with EEC financial assistance alone, then you do not need to fill out Chart 2 on Tab 3 or survey your families for additional information.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Q13: How do I apply?**

A13: [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 EEOST small grants round is below:

[FY25 EEOST Capital Fund Small Grant](#)

Bid #: BD-25-1037-1CEN0-C0000-108055

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/EEOSTFY25ApplicationSmallGrant>

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.

**Q14: If the agency is part of a consolidated entity, how should a balance sheet be prepared?**

A14: Please submit internal financials for the consolidated entity as well as the EEC-licensed program/site, if available.

## **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS/ MULTIPLE PROJECTS**

**Q15: Can organizations submit applications that cover multiple different projects? For example, if we have a \$100,000 outdoor play space project and a \$100,000 indoor accessibility improvement project, could we submit an application for \$200,000 in EEOST funds to cover both projects, or can we only submit for a single project?**

A15: 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.

**Q16: The language says fundable projects are "improvements." Can you confirm that smaller, discrete, installation/construction costs for aspects of a larger new construction cost are also**

**eligible? For example, for the construction of a new early education center, can we apply for funding for the HVAC aspect of the project or the playground installation for the new facility?**

A16: Yes, these projects would be eligible.

**Q17: How is a 'complex project' defined? Do non-complex projects need a development team?**

A17: Most successful EEOST applicants work with an architect to help them with their project, at a minimum, but it depends on the extent of the work. An architect can help you assess what compliance requirements are in place and define the full scope of work so that you can get a comprehensive cost estimate. If you are applying for just a roof, or just an HVAC unit replacement, you may not need an architect (but you may need an HVAC engineer, for example). Please reach out to us at [EEOST@cif-ma.org](mailto:EEOST@cif-ma.org) if you would like to talk further about your project.

**Q18: If you already have an EEC-licensed facility and you are looking to build a second, new facility that will seek licensure once built, are you eligible?**

A18: Yes. An organization would need an EEC license for at least one center currently in operation to apply to fund renovations at a new site. Please note that you will need to demonstrate that you have site control for the new location, meaning that you must submit a copy of the lease or deed for the new site. If your organization is not currently licensed for center-based care at any site, you would not be eligible to apply to open a new site.

**Q19: Can we use this funding to furnish our school and not do any type of construction?**

A19: Technically you can apply for just furnishings, but your application may not be as competitive as other applicants who are proposing more long-lasting structural or system improvements to their buildings. The minimum grant request must be \$200,000, so that would be a lot of furniture to propose.

**Q20: What if it's complete before we hear about our award? So if it's complete by June 1, 2025, for example.**

A20: You can apply, as long as your project is not 100% complete by the time of the application deadline (December 12, 2024), but your project will not be as competitive if you are scheduled to complete the work before grant announcements in July 2025. The reason for this is that the EEOST review team may have some concerns and requirements for you to do before completing the project, and that would not be possible if you will be finished before the grant awards.

**Q21: We have multiple sites with only one getting the capital project work. Do we need to break out our budget and service numbers for only the site getting the work?**

A21: Some of the required documents pertain to your larger organization (such as audited financials, year-to-date financials, Articles of Organization). Anything related to your capital project work should be specific to your site. This includes the project budgets (Tabs 1 and 2 of the [Application Spreadsheets](#)) and enrollment at that site (Tab 3, Chart 1).

## **REIMBURSEMENT/TIMING**

**Q22: Can we get reimbursed for the grant before we have to pay for the construction work?**

A22: The EEOST 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 EEOST review team.

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**

**Q23: Are multiple quotes required to be submitted to document costs, or just one? Are we committing to use that provider once we submit a quote with the application?**

A23: 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.

**Q24: Will schematic designs be accepted for programs early in the planning process? Also, will a cost estimate based on schematic drawings be accepted?**

A24: Yes, you may upload schematic designs to your application; they do not have to be further developed at that time. A cost estimate based on those schematic designs is acceptable, preferably from a licensed contractor.

**Q25: Should HVAC improvement projects with substantial MassSave rebates only be included for the portion that is not covered by the rebate, or should the rebate be listed as additional funding?**

A25: Please include the total cost of the HVAC improvements and also note the MassSave rebate amount, so that we have a good sense of the costs.

**Q26: If we receive three quotes for our proposal and the cost for materials and supplies increases next spring/summer, can we adjust the original proposal amount?**

A26: Applicants submit an initial estimate with their application and then there is a 6+ month time in between before they learn whether they are awarded. Prices usually do increase during that time. We encourage that you build extra contingency into your proposed amount. We recommend at least a 10 – 15% construction contingency amount added to your budget. If you are awarded, your project budget can and will be adjusted based on updated costs.

## **DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

**Q27: Can a general contractor we hire serve as the project manager, or does the project manager need to be an internal person? Can you define what you mean by project manager?**

A27: Ideally you hire a project manager that is not affiliated with the general contractor, so that they can fully represent your best interests. You may use an internal staff person, such as a facilities director, as a project manager, but you may not directly pay for their salary as part of your project budget. If you do not have internal capacity, you would hire a consultant to take the role.

**Q28: We are planning HVAC work and have completed a capital needs assessment with an architect/engineer. Do we also need a Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing (MEP) assessment?**

A28: You do not need an MEP assessment or MEP plans in order to apply. If you are awarded, we may require you to develop them depending on the complexity of the HVAC work.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

**Q29: Is this a grant or a loan? Why are there repayment provisions?**

A29: 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.

**Q30: Can you explain the hazardous material testing and who needs to submit it beforehand? Are we scored on having one? Our building is ~30 years old and after lead and asbestos was used in buildings.**

A30: All projects that entail the disruption of surfaces or building materials that could potentially contain lead, asbestos or other hazardous materials will need to conduct a hazardous materials survey, but this is not required in order to apply. If awarded EEOST, you will be required to complete a hazardous materials assessment prior to closing on the grant. Even though your building may not be very old, there still may be some hazardous materials present.

**Q31: Can you define “benefit” from funds, when you say that no one from our organization can benefit from EEOST funding? Does this include salaries that are supported by the infrastructure?**

A31: You may not use the EEOST grant to pay for staff salaries. However, you can attribute a small portion of the grant as a “Developer Fee” to cover your overhead costs.

If you are awarded, you will be asked to certify that no staff person, officer or director, whether paid or unpaid, of your organization, or any family member, has no personal interest in any of the EEOST funds disbursed. For example, you could not hire your brother’s general contracting firm to do the renovation work at your center.

**Q32: I still have a question, even after this Q&A is posted. Who do I contact?**

A32: For technical assistance regarding the real estate development aspects of your project, the Children’s Investment Fund team can be reached at [EEOST@cif-ma.org](mailto:EEOST@cif-ma.org). For questions about the EEOST application or requirements, email Jose Mendez at [jose.mendez@mass.gov](mailto:jose.mendez@mass.gov).