

**FY26 Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund
Large Grant Round
Questions and Answers**

COMMBUYS Posting:

[FY26 EEOST Capital Fund Grant](#)

Bid Number: BD-26-1037-1CEN0-C0000-123449

To submit an EEOST FY26 Pre-Application - Large Grant, use the following link:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/ChildrensInvestmentFund1/EEOSTFY26PreApplicationLargeGrant>

Information Session Recordings:

View a recording of the 1/6/26 information session [here](#)

Information Session Slides:

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

Information on all grant rounds, including the EEOST small grants, is on the EEC website here:

[Early Education and Out-of-School Time Capital Grants | Mass.gov](#)

For questions, please contact the Children's Investment Fund team at eeost.lg@cif-ma.org or EEC at jose.mendez@mass.gov or ellen.song@mass.gov.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Q1. Are family child care programs eligible for this funding?

A1. Unfortunately, family child care providers do not qualify for this funding since the legislation states that only nonprofit center-based programs could be eligible for the EEOST Capital Fund.

Q2. Are FCC Systems eligible to apply?

A2. Unfortunately, no; FCC systems are not eligible to apply.

Q3. Are license-exempt organizations eligible to apply?

A3. Organizations providing **only** license-exempt care are not eligible to apply. Only organizations currently providing EEC-licensed care are eligible, unless the organization is applying as part of a partnership with an eligible organization providing EEC-licensed care.

Q4. Are centers that are for-profit eligible to apply for this grant?

A4. The EEOST large grant program is intended to support non-profit centers, although there are some circumstances in which a non-profit can partner with a for-profit.

Q5. Can you define how a non-profit and for-profit organization can partner to apply?

A5. The EEOST main Applicant must be the childcare provider, and in the vast majority of cases, the childcare provider is the non-profit entity. There is an allowance for a partnership comprised of a non-profit and for-profit entity, but the non-profit must have the controlling interest. Unfortunately, for-profit childcare providers are not eligible to apply on their own for the EEOST grant. The partnership documents would need to explain the financial and operational relationship between the

two entities and not be a casual or occasional relationship.

**Q6. In the case of a partnership, must both non-profit and profit be licensed early education centers?
Or could a for-profit daycare center partner with a cultural non-profit organization?**

A6. Both entities don't necessarily need to be EEC-licensed (although one of them does) – but reach out to EEC and CIF to discuss the specific situation with your center.

Q7. What's the definition of "large group"?

A7. This refers to the EEC licensing definition of a "large group and school-age" license.

Q8. I am a family child care provider who wants to open a center-based program. Am I eligible to apply to help me open the center?

A8. No, unfortunately, you would not be able to apply. The EEOST Guidelines state, “An Eligible Organization must, at the time of Application, have a valid license from EEC and provide center-based early care and education or out-of-school time care for low-income families.” Your organization would already need to hold the center-based license and be a 501c3 nonprofit organization currently in operation at the time of submitting the EEOST pre-application on February 5, 2026, to be eligible to apply.

Q9. Is this funding only for programs with existing EEC licenses or could the funding be used to open a new center? Our agency has multiple licensed centers that meet the conditions of the grant, but if we had a new building that is not yet licensed, would this new building qualify for funds to increase capacity?

A9. 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 an executed site control document, which can be a lease, deed, purchase and sale agreement, option agreement, or an agreement with a public entity. If your organization is not currently licensed for center-based care, you would not be eligible to apply to open a new site.

PAST, CURRENT AND FUTURE EEOST ROUNDS

Q10. Does applying to the large grant round preclude an org from applying to the small grant as well?

A10. An Applicant can apply to both the large and small rounds for either the same, or different sites.

Q11. Will EEOST grantees of a small grant in the past five years (FY21, FY22, FY23, FY24, FY25) be eligible to apply to the large capital grants cycle for the same site?

A11. Yes, you can apply to the FY26 EEOST large grant round for the same site awarded a small grant in any prior year.

Q12. We received an EEOST grant prior to FY2021 for a site and wish to apply again for a different phase of work at the same site. Would we be eligible to apply?

A12. No; organizations that received an EEOST grant in the years FY2014 – FY2020 (up to \$1,000,000) or a large grant (more than \$500,000) in either FY2024 or FY2025 are not eligible to apply for an additional EEOST large grant for the same site.

Q13. Can we apply for the same project that was partially funded in the recent small grant round?

A13. Yes, you can apply for the same project that was partially funded in another EEOST small grant round; however, the additional project cost must be at least \$500,000 in new expenses. Your project may benefit from reapplying for additional funds through the FY26 EEOST small grant round through MassDevelopment.

Q14. Does the competitive priority related to previously awarded EEOST grantees apply if an Applicant was awarded a small EEOST grant? Or is this considered less competitive?

A14. A project may be deemed less competitive if it has already received a prior EEOST grant. There are preference points for organizations that have not received a prior EEOST grant, but since EEOST is such a scarce resource, a repeat project may not be seen as competitive as a new project. Your project may benefit from applying for additional funds through the FY26 EEOST small grant round through MassDevelopment.

ACQUIRING A SITE/OPENING A NEW CENTER

Q15. Can the grant be used to purchase an additional space or a new site?

A15. If the provider already is providing either ECE or OST care under an existing EEOST license, then yes, the large EEOST grant can request funds towards acquisition costs, meaning the purchase of, or the leasing expense of, new space. To be eligible for EEOST reimbursement, site acquisition costs must occur either in the future, or within two years prior to the date of the pre-application, and the pre-application needs to contain evidence of site control. This can include an executed Purchase and Sale agreement, deed, option agreement or an agreement with a public entity.

Q16. For Acquisition of Real Property, can an Option to Purchase document be dependent on grant approval?

A16. The short answer is no; an Applicant can propose using the EEOST funds to reimburse the cost of acquiring the property, but keep in the mind the following: the timeline for EEOST review period and award announcements stretches until at least September 2026, and then if the project is funded you would need to meet the grant conditions and close on the grant. Often, that means that the earliest grantees can access the funds is within 6-9 months after the award, which is 2027.

Q17. Can I use the EEOST grant as a down payment to acquire a site?

A17. The EEOST grant reimburses expenses, so an EEOST grantee would have already needed to have paid to acquire the site in order to attribute the EEOST grant towards the down payment and other project costs. You wouldn't be able to use the EEOST funds to serve directly as payment for a down payment to the seller. If you had a bridge or other short term loan that you used to fund the down payment, then YES, the EEOST funds could be used to repay that debt, but it would be at some point in the future.

Q18. Can we apply to purchase a building that we are currently leasing if we have an Executed Option to Purchase without including renovation work?

A18. The EEOST grant funds can be used to acquire a site, but the project will be less competitive if it does not include renovation or other improvements to the site. Most buildings will need some form of improvements to serve effectively as a childcare program, or to address any substandard

conditions within the building or grounds.

Q19. For leased facilities, what documentation is most important at the pre-application stage to demonstrate sufficient site control?

A19. The pre-application will need to include a current lease executed by both the property owner and the tenant that extends at least as long as the EEOST review period (beyond the time when announcements are made in the fall of 2026), documentation from the property owner that they support the proposed improvements, and a document confirming that, if the project is funded, the landlord will grant a lease that is at least 15 years, or 25 years if owned by a municipality or other public entity.

Q20. Can a draft lease and executed Letter Of Interest suffice for the pre-application or is an executed lease required?

A20. A draft lease and LOI is sufficient at the time of the pre-application, as long as it documents the conditions by which the Applicant and property owner will execute the lease, and the timeline to do so.

Q21. How should purchase options or planned ownership transfers be reflected in the application?

A21. The application materials should include countersigned agreements that indicate a timeline, process, price, conditions, and other factors relating to the transfer of property, and have an expiration date that extends beyond the point when announcements are anticipated in the fall of 2026.

Q22. What if you have an adjoining parcel of land that may be gifted by the city and you want to develop that piece of land?

A22. That would be an eligible project as long as the application materials contained a memorandum of understanding or other documentation that documents the gift of the land to the Applicant.

Q23. We are purchasing a site for \$1.2M; can we request \$1,000,000 in EEOST?

A23. Yes, provided the following considerations. The EEOST requested grant amount cannot be the sole source of funding for the project. You would need to report that you have additional sources identified to support the project cost. There is no match requirement in terms of the dollar amount.

Ideally, the project budget will extend beyond acquisition costs to include additional scope, including build-out/construction costs, costs to create an outdoor play area, etc. If you have already acquired the property and are not including construction/renovation in your EEOST application, your project may be seen as less competitive because it means you would have had the funds in hand to purchase the property already, thereby reducing the need for additional funding from the EEOST program to complete the financing for the project.

SITE CONTROL

Q24. Can you clarify the dates needed for the purchase and sale agreement for eligible projects? For example, if a program has a purchase and sale agreement with a closing date in 2026, but expects to begin construction into 2027 utilizing this funding, is that allowable?

A24. Yes, that would be allowable. The pre-application and application should include documentation that demonstrates site control from the time of the pre-application through the estimated date that EEOST awards are issued, through the end of September 2026- the EEOST review period. If the organization plans to acquire the site within that window, please include a purchase and sale agreement that extends beyond that time period but indicates a timeline for when the Applicant intends to purchase the property. That way, you are covered should you purchase the property before the EEOST review period is over.

Q25. Would a Purchase and Sale Agreement be sufficient to demonstrate site control for the pre-application?

A25. Yes, if it were signed by both parties and explains exactly what the terms, conditions and timeline will be to acquire the site.

Q26. Do you need to have site control at the time of the application?

A26. Yes, you must have site control for the site where the EEOST project will occur. You must submit a copy of the executed lease, deed, purchase and sale agreement, option agreement, or an agreement with a public entity with your application.

Q27. If we lease, how long does our lease need to be?

A27. The lease term should be at least 15 years from the anticipated project completion date, unless the site is leased from a municipality or other public entity, in which case, it would be 25 years.

SITES

Q28. Would a nonprofit that is leasing from a college be able to apply or the nonprofit that is fundraising for the college be able to apply?

A28. Yes, if the non-profit were a separate 501(c)3 organization from the college, with its own audited financials, they could apply. The lease term would need to be at least 15 years from the date of the project's completion. From your question, it's not clear if the non-profit fundraising for the college is also the licensed childcare provider, as the entity with the EEC license must be the lead Applicant. Please email us at eeost.lg@cif-ma.org to if you have further questions.

Q29. How is a "site" defined?

A29. A "site" typically means one building and one EEC license with a single street address. Contact eeost.lg@cif-ma.org if you have two licenses under what you consider the same program.

Q30. We don't have an umbrella license—we have a license for each of our sites and are applying for a license for a new site. What should we submit for the license requirement, given that we are proposing a move?

A30. If the EEOST project entails opening or relocating to a new site, the organization applying for EEOST does not need to provide a license for the new site. This can be indicated by checking the “N/A” box within the application.

PUBLIC SUBSIDIES/ LOW- INCOME DETERMINATION/ENROLLMENT

Q31. We have both licensed programming and drop-in programming. How do we report the enrollment data?

A31. Sites should count only the licensed program enrollment.

Q32. I am very interested in applying; however, our current center does not meet the 50% threshold of children on vouchers. We intend to meet that threshold with our new center. Are we eligible to apply?

A32. EEOST eligibility guidelines require that at least 50% of the children enrolled are eligible to receive public subsidies. In order to apply for the EEOST grant, the program needs to serve at least 50% affordable slots at the time of the application. This is defined by children who receive either EEC or Head Start subsidies, or whose families utilize any one of the following income-based other public subsidies.

If the proposed project is a new center for the provider agency, the provider is eligible to apply if their current enrollment across all their sites meets or exceeds the 50% threshold at the time of the application. This also includes the other 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 and Excel 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

Q33. Would children enrolled in a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) slot count towards the 50% requirement?

A33. No, Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs (UPK) do not count as a form of public subsidy for this purpose.

Q34. How do I demonstrate that 50% of our families receive public subsidy? Do programs typically ask parents in a survey? Or is there another way?

A34. We recommend that providers collect this information from all families whose children are enrolled in the program by using an anonymous survey to ask if they have received any public subsidies listed in the EEOST Application Spreadsheets. EEC and CIF will not ask for a copy of the survey, income verification, or responses as part of the application. We ask that you only keep the information for your records.

Q35. To be eligible, you share that, for a new facility, more than 50% of those served organization-wide must be eligible for public subsidies. Just clarifying that that only pertains to our Early Learning Centers, as opposed to all that we do as an organization, is that correct?

A35. Yes, only the children enrolled in the Out of School Time and Early Childhood Education programs licensed by EEC need to meet the 50% affordability requirement.

Q36. If a family has two children enrolled in our program, how is that counted?

A36. Each child represents a slot, so you can count those two children as two enrolled slots.

Q37. If a program has part-time slots, how would the program reflect that on the enrollment charts?

A37. Please count one part-time slot as one slot. In other words, part-time slots should be counted the same as full-time slots.

READINESS TO APPLY AND EEOST TIMELINE

Q38. We are planning to begin building a new building in September/October of 2026 that includes a large Pre-K and OST Programs. The project will probably take 2-3 years to complete so is this the time to apply?

A38. Yes, if the project is advanced enough to start construction within a year of the potential EEOST award (September 2027) and be completed within two years (September 2028). Feel free to reach out to eeost.lg@cif-ma.org to discuss.

Q39. Will cost estimates based on schematic drawings be accepted for a project in the beginning stages of planning?

A39. Yes, however your project may be less competitive than other projects that have estimates based on drawings at the Design Development or later stages.

Q40. We are in the very beginning stages of a project. Should we apply?

A40. The EEOST award is typically the last source of funding that organizations receive when assembling their financing—not the first—so EEOST generally does not fund projects that are in the very early stages. However, it also does not fund projects that have started construction, so most projects are somewhere between the conceptual and the construction phases.

Q41. Just want clarification, we have already engaged an architect and started some of the work such as demolition. The work will not be done. Would we be able to use the funds to cover these costs?

A41. Consultant and project costs incurred after a year prior to the re-application, or February 5, 2025, are eligible to be covered by the grant.

Q42. How does EEOST define “construction start”?

A42. For EEOST purposes, construction start would include any site work, demolition, or construction work within the building or on the site.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DOCUMENTS

A43. How do I access the application materials?

A43. [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 FY26 EEOST large grants round is below:

[FY26 EEOST Capital Fund Grant](#)

Bid Number: BD-26-1037-1CEN0-C0000-123449

Please note that applications will be submitted directly via Cognito Forms, not through COMMBUYS, using this link:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/ChildrensInvestmentFund1/EEOSTFY26PreApplicationLargeGrant>

Cognito Forms allows you to upload/drag attachments and enter text directly into the pre-application and application forms.

Q44. Will there be another application next year at this time?

A44. This funding comes through the state's capital budget. The Healey-Driscoll Administration is very supportive of the EEOST Capital Fund. EEC anticipates that there will be a yearly authorization of funding at least through FY29, so we anticipate another grant round for next year (FY27).

Q45. Are organizations without audits eligible to apply? We are owned by a church and are not required to have an audit.

A45. The Applicant organization must have audited financial statements for the prior three fiscal years. This is a requirement of the EEOST program.

Q46. Could we receive an award for less than what we proposed in our application and budget?

A46. Yes, it is possible to be awarded a different EEOST grant amount from the amount requested within the application.

MORTGAGE AND LAND USE RESTRICTION

Q47. We own our property. What does it mean that EEOST will have a mortgage on the property for the term of the Land Use Restriction?

A47. The land use restriction indicates that the provider will continue to operate the ECE or OST program serving at least 50% affordable slots throughout the term of the grant. The mortgage in this context means that the EEOST Capital Fund would have an interest in the property for the length of the restriction, in this case, for 25 years.

The mortgage would be subordinate to other debt on the property and is not intended to be repaid; it exists to ensure that should the project or organization encounter an act of default, such as foreclosure or closing the program, that the EEOST program could step in and help resolve the challenge, to preserve the childcare.

Q48. We lease our property. Will the EEOST program still have a mortgage on the property for the term of the Land Use Restriction?

A48. If a property is leased, EEOST would have a leasehold agreement, not a mortgage, for the term of the grant, 15 years, unless the building is leased from a public owner, such as a municipality. In that case, it would be 25 years.

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 either fifteen or twenty-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. What are the compliance requirements for the term of the grant?

A50. All grantees will need to complete an annual certification that shares recent financials as well as current enrollment numbers. Should the percentage of affordable slots fall below 50% in any given year, the EEOST program would work with your team to understand what factors are impacting enrollment and create a strategy for increasing the percentage of affordable slots back to 50%.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS/ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Q51. We have several pieces of work we are fundraising for (roof, windows, heating system, classroom renovations). We would apply to EEOST mostly for the classroom renovations. Do we need to provide information on the entire scope or only the project for which we want EEOST to support?

A51. We want to see the whole scope of your needs, as well as what your specific EEOST request entails. It is acceptable to take a pro-rata share from the entire building renovations (the roof and windows costs, for example) and apply a portion of those costs to EEOST.

Q52. We are looking to repair a swimming pool at a site where we provide child care. Could that be an eligible project? How do you determine that?

A52. An eligible project is any capital improvement project that will benefit the EEC-licensed programs at the site. This includes all ECE/OST licensed classrooms, indoor and outdoor play areas, building systems and infrastructure, and aspects of the building or grounds that are used by the licensed programs, including a pool. However, the project cost must be at least \$500,000 and projects that improve more than just a single element of the building, such as a swimming pool, will be more competitive.

Q53. Are outdoor playground spaces eligible?

A53. Absolutely, yes.

Q54. Can auxiliary spaces (director's office, kitchen, storage) be included in what is considered ECE/OST space?

A54. Yes, all the spaces that support and are utilized by the EEC-licensed program space can be included. For other interior spaces like performing arts rooms, as long as the space is EEC-licensed for OST programming, you may include it.

PROJECT PHASES

Q55. Our project entails the construction of a multi-use building that will contain childcare on the ground floor and housing units on the upper stories. We have started site work, and plan to start the core and shell of the building early this spring. Would this project be eligible to apply for EEOST at this time?

A55. Yes, if the childcare component is not completed within the review period, which starts at the time of the EEOST pre-application in February and continues through award announcements in September. Ideally, the EEOST review team will be able to provide feedback on the project that will help to inform and improve the project outcomes, which is challenging when construction is to be completed soon after the award.

PROJECT TEAM

Q56. If we have a staff member in our facilities department, can we hire another facilities staff person to support that employee's existing duties and compensate our current staff member for the additional duties of managing the EEOST project? Or do we need to hire another person to serve this role (even if the staff member may be equipped to perform the role of EEOST project manager, but it is not in their current scope of work.)

A56. Yes, you can use your existing facilities staff person as the EEOST project manager and incorporate project overhead into your sources and uses budget as an expense. The project overhead is limited to 5-7% of the project cost and can reimburse staff members for their time on the project.

Q57. Should all members of our consultant team be engaged at least three months before the pre-application due date?

A57. Yes, core members of the project team should already be engaged. We do not expect you to necessarily have engaged a construction project manager or general contractor, for example, but we would expect you to have begun working with an architect, project manager and/or development consultant. These are complex projects, and you will need the time to explore the feasibility of the project, complete assessments, engage engineers, and develop the plans. You will also need to present an estimate at the time of the pre-application.

Q58. Many individuals on our project team are board members. We have not hired a project manager yet and only planned to when the project starts. Is it ok to engage board members?

A58. It depends. The key is that board members cannot financially benefit from the project. If an attorney on your board is donating time pro bono, that is ok, but it would be considered a conflict of interest if a relative or member of your board is involved and financially compensated for the project.

CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGETS/SOURCES AND USES

Q59. Is there a minimum amount to apply for? For example, if the project cost is \$1M, we apply for about \$500K or less or more?

A59. The EEOST requested amount must be between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000; the requested amount, alongside the other proposed uses in the project, should equal the proposed total development cost of the project. Most projects utilize a combination of debt, internal equity, fundraising, and other public sources, such as local, state or federal funding.

Q60. Is there a requirement for how much in other funding sources must be allocated to the project?

A60. There is no strict "matching funds" requirement amount.

Q61. When submitting our financials for the grant, the application asks how much capital or funds/lines of credit we have accessible if needed for the project. Do we need to be able to demonstrate that we have enough funds to complete the whole project?

A61. No, you would not need to demonstrate that you have all funds in hand to complete the project at the time of the application. However, your project would score more highly in the readiness and feasibility sections if you were to demonstrate that you have already secured, or are in the process of securing, either interim or permanent financing in the project, including a bridge or construction loan, to bridge any sources that you do not yet have in hand. For example, do you have a line of credit you could access to fund interim expenses until pledges are repaid? Do you have a construction loan to be repaid once the project is complete? If so, what sources will repay those interim loans? Describe your plans to secure additional sources until the project is completed.

Q62. Can I apply if I am planning a capital campaign and don't have all the funds secured?

A62. Yes, you can. Be sure to explain the fundraising goals in the application materials, including what you have raised to date, when you expect the pledges will be paid, and how you plan to bridge that funding if it will not yet be committed and in hand by the time you start construction. This also goes for other funding that is not yet in hand, like grants, tax credits, and other sources of funding. Projects will be scored on financial feasibility, so identifying a way to bridge any funding not yet in hand when construction will start is important.

Q63. For the pre-application, do you need the Sources and Uses budget for our larger project as well as for just the licensed child care portion?

A63. Within the pre-application and application, present two capital budgets – one that demonstrates the sources and uses for the entire project, including all work proposed within the building, and separately, one with sources and uses for just the licensed child care component. Be sure to specify the square footage within the entire project, as well as the amount of square footage dedicated to only the licensed child care component. The EEOST review team will look at the entire project in terms of costs, committed sources of funding, zoning and other considerations to determine the feasibility of the licensed child care component.

Q64. Our organization has submitted several grant applications this spring that we won't hear word on until after the application deadline. Is it acceptable to submit these funder commitment letters after the grant deadline?

A64. If you are invited to submit a full application, the only opportunity Applicants have to update the EEOST review team will be at the site visit that takes place in June or July 2026. At that time, Applicants will be able to share news of funding commitments, revised budget projections and other updates to the project. The EEOST review teams cannot accept paper or electronic copies of documents to take with them, but these documents can be presented for discussion at the site visit. Following the site visit, there is no further communication with the EEOST review team until announcements are made through the Governor's office. Please be as detailed and specific as possible in the full application regarding what funding sources have not yet been fully committed and are still pending.

Q65. Can the funding commitment letter state that the agency has a line of credit available for a loan from a banking relationship? Does this need an exact figure?

A65. The EOST application requests that Applicants provide a commitment letter or letter of interest from all proposed sources. If the organization is proposing debt as part of the permanent financing for the project, then the letter should state the terms of the debt, and repayment according to those terms should be reflected in the operating budget submitted within the application. A line of credit should not be used to serve as permanent debt in the project, as its terms are variable and difficult to predict over time. A line of credit could be used as interim bridge financing for other funding that is in progress, such as a capital campaign.

Q66. Can FF&E costs be included in the cost estimates submitted?

A66. Yes, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment are eligible uses of the grant. However, the project would also need to entail substantial capital work as well.

REIMBURSEMENT/ TIMING

Q67: How would a grantee provide evidence of expenses to get reimbursed? How quickly would we be able to access the funding?

A67: The EOST program has a legal closing process for this grant, and the Children's Investment Fund team will work with you following the award. An organization is reimbursed for expenses only after completing the grant closing process. 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 EOST review team. The EOST construction reviewer will review this package and ensure all documentation is in place. Children's Investment Fund would then submit the requisition to its finance department and disburse the EOST funding through a wire transfer.

Q68: Is it ok if we begin construction before being notified if we are awarded the grant? We are under construction currently and are expected to be complete by later in 2026.

A68: Most grantees wait until hearing about the grant before starting construction, but others move ahead before learning if the project has been funded, though at their own risk. The risk of starting construction prior to learning if the project has been funded is that the organization may not receive EOST funding, therefore creating a gap in the proposed financing strategy, or the EOST award may contain conditions that would require change orders, modifications to the project, or consider some of the project's costs to be ineligible for EOST reimbursement once construction is complete.

Q69: The timing between the submission of estimates in the grant application and the actual start of work can be longer than 6 months and it's possible that costs will have increased by then. What is your experience/recommendation on how to address this?

A69: Applicants submit an initial estimate with their pre-application and updated pricing at the time of the site visit in June or July. Prices are likely to increase prior to the time of the awards and when the project is ready to proceed to closing on the financing and construction start. To account for this, include a 10 – 15% construction contingency in the budget.

BIDS/COST ESTIMATES

Q70: Are you required to have three bids for each component of work?

A70: At the time of the pre-application and application, you should have recent estimates for the entire project. If selected for an EOST grant, you will need to obtain at least three bids for the

construction scope to demonstrate that you received the benefit of competitive pricing. You do not need to submit multiple bids with the application, although if your team has them, submitting them with the application will strengthen the application. If aspects of the work are already completed at the time of the application and you did not secure three bids, indicate within the application how you selected the contractor(s). The EEOST construction review team may require you to later obtain an independent estimate or certification for the cost of the labor/installation.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Q77. I still have a question. Who do I contact?

A77. For technical assistance regarding the real estate development aspects of your project, the Children's Investment Fund team can be reached at eeost.lg@cif-ma.org. For questions about the EOST application or requirements, email jose.mendez@mass.gov or ellen.song@mass.gov.

Q78: May you provide examples of successfully funded projects?

A78. Yes, A list of previously funded projects is available on EEC's website here:
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/early-education-and-out-of-school-time-capital-grant-awards>