2015

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issued By:
Department of Human Services
Division of Family Development
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Purpose of Funding:

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family Development (DFD), provides resources and supports to address the child care needs of families and support providers and programs servicing families that need early care and education services. With the implementation of Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and recent award of a Race to the Top federal grant, NJ is: broadening awareness of the components of quality and is helping to benchmark quality for consumers; providing additional incentives and resources to programs and is creating a stronger infrastructure to support and sustain the quality of programs, regardless of the setting.

DFD is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of awarding up to four contracts for the provision of technical assistance, to support the early care and education programs and providers participating in Grow NJ Kids (New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System) to continuously improve their programs, and collaborate with other key quality partners. The focus of this RFP is to provide comprehensive technical assistance services for systemic improvement to help programs and providers achieve and meet Grow NJ Kids standards.

For purposes of the RFP, the term Program used in this document refers to child care and preschool programs enrolled in Grow NJ Kids, and the term Providers refers to Family Child Care Providers enrolled in Grow NJ Kids.

Background:

In April 2013, NJ DHS in partnership with other state agencies (Department(s) of Education, Children and Families, and Health), piloted a quality rating and improvement system called Grow NJ Kids in four New Jersey counties, serving approximately fifty-seven (57) early childhood programs. In January 2014, New Jersey was awarded the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. The NJ Department of Education is the lead department for the grant, but all four state departments mentioned above are partners. The RTT-ELC award has allowed NJ to expand Grow NJ Kids statewide. To support the expansion of Grow NJ Kids, the state is creating up to four (4) regional technical assistance centers that will serve to help support and strengthen the quality of Grow NJ Kids programs.

Core functions of the RTT-ELC are to build a comprehensive Early Care and Education System, align early learning standards and implement an accountable and transparent quality improvement system (Grow NJ Kids). The Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, along with its collaborative partners, has a unique opportunity to bolster, fully support and help programs successfully improve the quality of their programs. New Jersey is one (1) of thirty-nine (39) states that has implemented a research based QRIS to improve and communicate the level of quality across early care and education to support and strengthen early learning programs, and provide families with an easy way to recognize high quality programs and providers.

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Project Goal:

The overall goal of the RFP is to implement a statewide comprehensive Technical Assistance System to support the implementation of Grow NJ Kids. Grow NJ Kids is a critical component of New Jersey's Early Care and Education System designed to increase the quality of the early care and education system for all children in New Jersey and to communicate effectively to parents regarding the services their children are receiving.

Technical Assistance System must have regional TA Centers in the Northern, Northeastern (Essex and Hudson), Central, and Southern territories to ensure that programs and providers have easy access to TA services. Each TA center must have adequate and qualified staff to meet the needs and goals of this RFP.

Technical assistance staff members will work with Grow NJ Kids Programs across all sectors of early care and education (i.e., Family Child Care, Head Start, Child Care, District funded Preschool) to help them reach their quality goals, enhance health and safety standards, implement early learning guidelines, and promote consumer education about quality.

In addition to providing technical assistance services, the project entails coordination and collaboration with other key stakeholders, as well as identifying and sharing research-based promising practices to address early childhood-related, cross-sector system issues and to identify knowledge gaps and best practices

Amount and Source Funding:

The Regional Grow NJ Kids Technical Assistance Centers will be divided regionally into four (4) regions: North, Northeast, Central and South. An applicant can submit a proposal for one (1) or more regions. Funding of $7.6 million is being made available through DHS/DFD, for this Request for Proposal. Details of the regions and funding allocations are summarized in Attachment N.

No funding match is required; however, Applicants will need to identify any other sources of funding, both in-kind and monetary, that will be used. Agencies may not fund any costs incurred for the planning or preparing a proposal in response to this RFP from current DHS/DFD contracts.

Continued funding for the contracts resulting from this RFP are subject to the availability of State funding. Contract awards are subject to change at time of contract renewal or during a contract period based on prior expenditure trends and other factors. It is anticipated that these funds will be subject to the RFP process again in five years.

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Contract Period:

The initial contract period is August 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, with the ability to extend annually for up to four additional one-year periods. The actual contract beginning and end dates are contingent upon the contract being fully executed and signed by all appropriate parties (DHS/DFD and Grant Recipient). The Department reserves the right not to issue a contract for a second year under certain circumstances, such as, but not limited to, the unsatisfactory work of the selected vendor, failure to meet agreed upon minimum standards, or the failure to submit required documentation within requested timeframes.

Eligible Applicant:

Eligible applicants must be a fiscally viable for-profit or non-profit organization or public governmental entity that can demonstrate the ability to administer and deliver the services required under this RFP. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a history of providing effective and outcome proven technical assistance to early care and education programs, experience in the field of family engagement, curriculum, assessment and evaluation implementation and working with child care and family child care programs.

Eligible applicants include those that are not involved in any current or planned regulatory capacity of the early care and education programs targeted for services in this RFP.

Applicants from private, non-public entities must demonstrate that they are incorporated through the New Jersey Department of State and provide documentation of their current non-profit status under Federal 501(c) (3) regulations, as applicable.

If the applicant is a for-profit entity, the applicant must obtain a business registration certificate from the New Jersey Department of the Treasury prior to the time the contract is awarded. For-profit organizations may obtain this certificate at:
   http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/revenue/busregcert.shtml

Applicants must currently meet or be able to meet the terms and conditions of the Department of Human Services (DHS) contracting rules and regulations as set forth in the Standard Language Document (SLD), the Contract Reimbursement Manual (CRM), and the Contract Policy and Information Manual (CPIM). Contract recipients are required to comply with the Affirmative Action Requirements of Public Law 1975, c. 124 (N.J.A.C. 17:27) and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (P.L. 101-336). Applicants must review DHS' contracting rules and regulations, as defined in the Contract Reimbursement Manual, and the Contract Policy and Information Manual. Applicants may review and download the DHS contract rules and regulations including the CRM and CPIM from: http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ocpm/home/resources/manuals/index.html).

Through a written proposal, the Applicant must demonstrate the capacity to coordinate, develop and carry out the administrative, fiscal and service delivery elements of the specific TA detailed in this RFP. An Applicant may initiate subcontracts for specific responsibilities. The selected Applicant shall be responsible to DHS/DFD for the acts and omissions of all subcontractors or

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agents and of persons directly or indirectly employed by such subcontractors and for the acts and omissions of persons directly employed by the selected Applicant submitting the proposal.

Service Locations:

Applicants must maintain a fully functional administrative office within the region(s) capable of handling all technical assistance services required in this contract, or be able to demonstrate that a permanent, fully functional administrative entity will be established for the purpose of carrying out the administration and operation of these services within 30 days' prior to the contract implementation date.

Conflict Of Interest

A contract <u>will not</u> be awarded to an Applicant that owns and/or operates a child care facility that is registered or licensed by the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF), Office of Licensing (OOL).

A member of an Applicant's Board of Directors, an Officer, staff member or any other person in a position of trust, shall not use his or her position, or knowledge gained from that position of trust, in such a manner that a conflict arises between his or her personal, familial or financial interests and the interests of the DHS or its contracted Provider Agency. No contracted Applicant shall own, operate or have an interest in any supplier of goods or services to the Applicant, or any organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving the Applicant.

No Applicant Board Member, Officer, staff member, or any other person in a position of trust nor any member of his or her immediate family shall have any personal, familial or financial interest in, or substantial obligation to, any supplier of goods or services, or any other organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving the Applicant unless it has been determined by the Board of Directors and approved by DHS/DFD, based on the full disclosure of facts and circumstances, that such interest does not give rise to a direct conflict of interest or the substantial appearance of a conflict of interest. A position of trust may include Applicant staff members, Officers, Governing Board Members, legal advisors, agents, consultants or benefactors. See DHS' <u>Contract Reimbursement Manual</u>, Glossary of Terms, for definition of "Conflict of Interest" at:
http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ocpm/home/resources/manuals/index.html.

Any Board Member aware of a potential conflict of interest with respect to any matter coming before the Board of Directors shall disclose such potential conflict to the Board. If it is determined that a conflict exists, the Board Member shall recuse himself or herself from any discussion or vote in connection with the matter involving a conflict.

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Scope of Work

In alignment with best practices and national models, the Technical Assistance (TA) service model must be designed as an integrated TA system to support programs across all early childhood settings, including Family Child Care Providers. The ultimate goal of a coordinated and integrated TA system is to ensure that early childhood practitioners are highly effective in supporting the development and learning of every child serviced in programs participating in Grow NJ Kids.

The Selected Applicant(s) will be responsible for administering statewide comprehensive TA services to all eligible programs and providers to help them continuously improve and meet Grow NJ Kids quality standards. Grow NJ Kids is a systematic approach to improve and communicate the level of quality across early care and education programs using research based quality indicators to enhance, support and strengthen early learning programs.

TA services must be provided in multiple formats including webinars, phone calls, email, an interactive website portal, along with on-site visits and regional meetings.

The TA services will be focused on Grow NJ Kids' five quality standards major categories: Safe and Healthy Learning Environment; Curriculum and Learning Environment; Family and Community Engagement; Workforce/Professional Development; and Program Administration and Management.

The Selected Applicant(s) will coordinate and collaborate with partners from Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies-(CCR&Rs), school districts, The Early Learning Training Academy (ELTA) and Head Start, and other key quality provider entities as deemed appropriate.

Administrative and Staffing Requirements and Standards

The successful applicant(s) must be able to assemble a TA team with a broad scope of expertise to support, mentor and coach Program Directors and Administrators, and Family Child Care Providers as they move through the Grow NJ Kids quality rating and improvement system; as well as other key partners and service coordinators.

The successful applicant(s) will be required to have a mix of expertise to successfully undertake the range of content areas outlined in Grow NJ Kids and responsibilities to collaboratively promote and support its implementation with other key stakeholders. In addition, TAS must have at a minimum a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related field.

Expertise in but not to be limited to:

- Content Knowledge: An understanding of cross sector programs standards and requirements, current initiatives, key players and relationships in the state
- Planning Expertise: Ability to develop a logical, sound plan that adequately and efficiently addresses the DHS's needs, including monitoring implementation and attainment of desired outcomes
- Process Expertise: Ability to plan, coordinate, conduct and facilitate meetings and conference calls and to employ technology appropriately; and
- Topical Expertise: Knowledge of Grow NJ Kids content, the ability to interpret and provide technical assistance to support plan activities.

Staff expertise and knowledge of the following:

- Infant/toddler -Understanding of the Birth to Three Early Learning guidelines, knowledge of the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale and infant toddler curricula,
- Preschool classroom expertise-Understanding of NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, preschool curricula, Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, and Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale,
- Early childhood program management expertise, familiar with best business practices and/ or the Program Administration Scale,
- Family engagement expertise-familiarity of Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (self-assessment, improvement planning, protective factors survey), home visiting, and parent representation on community councils,
- Staff should have knowledge of developmental screenings, working with children with special needs and inclusion practices, intervention strategies for children with challenging behaviors, national health and safety standards, nutrition and special diets, and higher level early childhood curriculum expertise.

Collaborative Service Model and Technical Assistance Requirements:

Technical Assistance is a critical component of the Grow NJ Kids quality improvement system and a key strategy to help improve quality in early care programs and Family Child Care settings. Aligning TA services, within Grow NJ Kids, along with other quality activities are essential to the success of programs meeting Grow NJ Kids and higher standards; especially because providers enrolled in Grow NJ Kids are diverse, have individual needs and will be entering the process in different stages of implementation.

Grow NJ Enrollment and Coordination Process

Prior to obtaining targeted technical assistance services, programs and providers will first go through an enrollment, orientation and Grow NJ Kids readiness assessment with the Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.

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Programs must first enroll in Grow NJ Kids by registering on PINJ and submitting an enrollment form.

All programs enrolled in Grow NJ Kids will go through the orientation process and will be assigned a Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) from the CCR&R, who will work closely with the TA Center.

The CCR&R Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) will provide Directors' Orientation Trainings. Once the program completes the Directors' Orientation Training, the QIS will then refer the program to the Technical Assistance Center. During this process the QIS is assessing the programs' readiness to participate in Grow NJ Kids.

After the completion of orientation and assessing program readiness for Grow NJ Kids, the QIS will coordinate with the TA center to begin the TA process. Recognizing the diversity of providers, a Tiered TA approach will be utilized to meet programs where they are to provide individualized and targeted TA services.

Tiered Technical Assistance:

Tier A - Technical Assistance programs require intensive support and will need regular technical assistance and coaching up to 12 months. Programs that fall in this tier will lack documentation of curriculum implementation, have low self-assessed scores on the Program Administration Scale and the environmental rating scale. In addition, this may be the program's first introduction to self-assessment and quality improvement planning. Staff in programs in this tier will need almost, if not all, the trainings listed in the Grow NJ Kids standards in level 2 of the Workforce/Professional Development Category.

Tier A programs will need technical assistance on: environmental rating scale completion, curriculum, performance-based assessment, the NJ Early Learning Guidelines, developmental screenings, Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, among other things.

Tier B - Technical Assistance programs, the mid-tier level will require technical assistance for up to 9 months. Program that are in this tier will be working on refining their curriculum implementation, selecting a performance based assessment, working on implementing developmental screening, completing the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool, and may have some staff with CDAs or degreed professionals. Programs in this tier will have received training and are incorporating the NJ Early Learning Guidelines. Staff should have received training on the topics found in the Grow NJ Kids standards in level 2 of the Workforce/Professional Development Category. Programs would have an average self-assessment score on the Program Administration Scale of 3 and environmental rating scale average score of a 4.

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The Tier B programs will need technical assistance for: environmental rating scales, implementation of curriculum, performance-based assessment, developmental screening, Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework and Home Visits, among other things.

Tier C – Technical Assistance programs is the least intensive tier and will require technical assistance for up to 6 months. Programs in this tier will be working on meeting four or five stars on the Grow NJ Kids Rating Scale. Programs in this tier will be working on fully implementing a research-based curriculum for a year or more, implementation of a performance-based assessment, program is ready to assess curriculum fidelity, implementing developmental screening on all children, offers the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey to parents, teaching staff have had college level course work, approximately half have at least a CDA, self-assessed Program Administration Scale Score of 4 or 5 and environmental rating scale score of a 5.

Tier C programs will need a technical assistance in CLASS assessment feedback, implementing curriculum and performance based assessment to fidelity, and implementing the Pyramid Model (Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning-CSEFEL) including Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool-TPOT and/or The Pyramid Infant Toddler observation Scale TPITOS assessment for each classroom.

Each regional technical assistance center will provide the following services:

The Technical Assistance Specialists (TASs) in each region will provide an overview of the Grow NJ Kids standards and self-assessment to participating programs and/or providers. The TAS will complete an initial site visit with each program within the first thirty (30) days of their referral to the Technical Assistance Center.

The TASs will assist programs with completing the Grow NJ Kids self-assessment tool. The self-assessment period should take approximately 3-4 months. During this time, TASs will assist programs in identifying standards that need improvement upon and reviewing evidence of standards that are being met.

As programs progress through the self-assessment process, TASs act as the coach for directors' through the environmental rating scale process and helping them identify strengths and areas for growth.

After completing the self-assessment, programs enrolled will move into the Quality Improvement Planning Process. This process takes approximately 1- 3months for programs to complete.

During this time, TASs will work with programs to develop and prioritize goals and determine which enhancement grant requests will be made. Programs will be able to request enhancement

grants based on their quality improvement plan. Furthermore, submission of the enhancement grant requests and reassessment of the program's readiness for an official rating occurs.

Implementing the action steps of the quality improvement plan will be the longest to execute, approximately 6 months and ongoing.

During this phase of the Grow NJ Kids process, programs will be working with their TASs to identify professional development opportunities through the CCR&Rs and the Early Learning Training Academy. In addition, a more targeted technical assistance approach will occur based on the quality improvement plan.

Data Management:

Interested applicants will be required to adhere to the identified performance measures and reporting requirements. All data will be tracked using Professional Impact of NJ Registry (PINJ). Any data collected or maintained through the implementation of the proposed program shall remain the property of DHS. Applicants are further advised that any and all information obtained during such evaluation must be kept confidential in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. The State of New Jersey reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use any work or materials developed with State or federal funding under a Department funded contract or subcontract. The State of New Jersey also reserves the right to authorize others to reproduce, publish or otherwise use any work or materials developed under a contract or subcontract.

Additional Responsibilities:

Candidates must assist Grow NJ Kids sites in building integrated quality child care programs and systems that help the program in movement through the Grow NJ Kids System:

- Complete a Technical Assistance needs' assessment annually and develops a technical assistance plan based upon the results;

- Report quarterly technical assistance common needs, trends, best practices, latest research, data from the program improvement plan, and feedback from the learning communities of those programs participating in Grow NJ Kids;

- Collect and maintain an inventory of best practices being utilized/implemented throughout the region in the five categories (Safe, Healthy Learning Environments, Curriculum and Learning Environment, Family and Community Engagement, Workforce/Professional Development and Program Administration and Management) of the system;

- Arrange peer-to-peer meetings between programs in Grow NJ Kids. The purpose of these meetings is to mentor the Program Directors and Family Child Care Providers in a

targeted area to achieve an identified goal that needs to be accomplished to move through the Grow NJ Kids System. The peer to peer can be in the form of face to face, telephone or on-site observation;

- Conduct bi-annual meetings based upon common needs/challenges so that programs can learn from each other while also developing an increased norm of consistent practice programs. This is an opportunity to keep programs that have been rated involved with the Grow NJ Kids process.

- Create technical assistance tools/resource kits to support program planning, movement of programs through the various levels of Grow NJ Kids and strategic decision making. Kits must contain materials such as sample policies, daily child observation forms, parent communication forms, information on research based developmental screening tools, etc.;

- Collect and analyze Strengthening Families Protective Factors data in the Family and Community Engagement category for the purpose of assisting in program planning, evaluation and targeting resources;

- Develop a Coaching Assessment Protocol that consists of observation of the Technical Assistance Specialists and a mechanism for director feedback. Feedback from directors should be obtained at each milestone (self-assessment, quality improvement planning, and implementation of quality improvement phase) of the TA relationship;

- Conduct onsite visits with program staff to review and approve the program improvement plan, identify program strengths, resources, barriers, needs, and assess a program's rating readiness. The visit should also involve the review of documentation demonstrating compliance with the standard for completeness;

- The Technical Assistance staff will help to facilitate ongoing relationships with Central Intake, County Councils for Young Children and Grow NJ Kids programs in the applicable communities;

- Coach programs in approaching the implementation of the Strengthening Families self-assessment and protective factor tools.

- Assist providers with identifying community resources and/or materials that can be provided to parents. The resources should include at a minimum school based resources and direct service resources that promote child/family safety, health and stability; and

- Facilitate one community-wide family engagement activity for early care and education programs.

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Collaboration activities with other agencies:

The successful Applicant(s) will be required to work collaboratively with other TA agencies/organizations and partners of the Grow NJ Kids to leverage resources to assist in the implementation of Grow NJ Kids**.**

Department of Children and Families (DCF) - The New Jersey Department of Children and Families is the state's first comprehensive agency dedicated to ensuring the safety, well-being and success of children, youth, families and communities. The following collaboration activities must occur between the selected agency(s) and DCF:

Verify with Office of Licensing (OOL) list of programs submitting for participation into Grow NJ Kids are in good standing status.

Participate in local county councils for the purpose of bringing resources and information to programs participating in Grow NJ Kids.

Identify central intake hubs in county for the purpose of sharing resource information with Grow NJ Kids programs and families. Coordination and referral procedures should also be shared with programs and families.

Collaborate and partner with staff of Parent Linking Programs and School-based Youth Services Programs statewide to participate in Grow NJ Kids and enhance their family engagement activities.

Kean University, Professional Impact New Jersey (PINJ)- Professional Impact NJ promotes and coordinates systems for the educational development of early childhood and primary education, family child care, and afterschool program professionals. The center advocates for policies and standards that result in high-quality care and education for the children and families of New Jersey. PINJ is the data system that collects and stores data related to the early childhood workforce. The data system will be the mechanism to collect and track technical assistance data for Grow NJ Kids. The following collaboration activities must occur between the selected agency(s) and PINJ:

Collaborate with PINJ to host locally accessible computer labs for staff of participating programs that require more direct hands on assistance with enrolling in the registry. The labs should not exceed two (2) hours in duration and should provide an overview of the registry and technical assistance on how to become a member.

Collaborate with Professional Impact New Jersey (PINJ) to collect, review and analyze the monthly technical assistance reports completed by the Technical Assistance Specialist and use the data to develop a plan to address identified trends and needs.

TASs must register in the early childhood registry (PINJ).

Support programs participating in Grow NJ Kids with enrolling and updating regularly appropriate staff in the registry.

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Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R) - The resource and referral agencies are the entities that have been contracted with the state to administer the child care subsidy program locally. Applicants will be expected to coordinate with county Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies around activities for the Grow NJ Kids Quality Rating Improvement System. The following collaboration activities must occur between the selected agency(s) and CCR&Rs):

Partner with resource and referral agencies to outreach to programs on the benefits of participating in Grow NJ Kids.

Partner with the resource and referral agencies to develop a universal referral process for programs and family child care providers to refer to Grow NJ Kids.

Rutgers University, School for Effective Teaching, Early Learning and Development Training Academy (ELTA) - The training academy created through funding from Race to the Top, will provide targeted training opportunities that reflect the components of Grow NJ Kids. The following collaboration activities must occur:

Collaborate with the training academy to address the training needs of the Technical Assistance Specialists and the programs/providers.

Attend trainings as required sponsored through the Training Academy on mentoring, coaching and consultation strategies.

William Paterson University- William Patterson University is the entity that has been awarded the state contract to conduct ratings of all programs participating in Grow NJ Kids. The following collaboration activities must occur between the selected agency(s) and William Paterson University:

Partner with William Paterson to determining program readiness to be rated.

In addition, obtain summary data of the findings from rating visits to identify any potential TA needs of the Quality Improvement Specialist that should be addressed.

Reporting:

The purpose of reports is to review the quality and evaluate performance in meeting projected targets. In addition, reports are management tools which inform the need for program performance reviews and technical assistance. Below is the list of the minimum required reports and performance outcome measures; additional reports will be requested by DHS-DFD as needed.

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Quarterly Program Reports:

Program quarterly reports will include information on enrollments, level of service, site visit completion, Self-Assessments, and Summary of Action Plans developed in partnership with programs Technical Assistance, common needs, trends, best practices, latest research, data from the program improvement plan and topics of those programs participating in Grow NJ Kids.

Summary of the baseline data collected during the initial site visits completed.

Bi-Annual Performance Outcome Measures:

Please see Attachment O for details on the performance outcomes that are required to be submitted bi-annually.

Measures include, but are not limited to:
- Increase in Environmental Rating Scale Score
- Curriculum Implementation
- Programs moving through tiers
- Increase in the number of credentialed/degreed professionals
- Number of programs which completed a Quality Improvement Plan

Annual Reports:
- Complete a Technical Assistance needs assessment and develop technical assistance plan based upon the results.

- The applicant will conduct a satisfaction survey of the sites on Grow NJ Kids technical assistance and training. The results and plan for improvement will be provided to DHS/DFD as part of the applicant's Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQI).

Evaluation Activities for Grow NJ Kids Programs:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, ongoing and cyclical evaluation and monitoring of the accomplishment of benchmarks and activities is required. Corrections and fine-tuning of the program will be made as needed.

All DHS/DFD funded Grow NJ Kids programs and grantees must participate in the statewide evaluation and validity research study being conducted by Rutgers University. NJ Department of

Education (DOE) is the lead state agency for the federal research evaluation and DHS/DFD will collaborate with DOE to determine the evaluation support activities.

The Applicant must obtain prior written approval from DHS/DFD before engaging in any research or evaluation projects that will affect Grow NJ Kids programs. All research projects are subject to DHS/DFD review, policies and procedures regarding research evaluation.

Proposal Selection and Evaluation Criteria:

A review team will review and evaluate each proposal. The review team will consist of staff members of the DFD, DHS, and may include representatives of other state/local agencies and organizations.

Proposals will be rated based on the narrative information provided as outlined in the Program Narrative Requirements section of this RFP. Applicants are eligible to receive a maximum point score of 100 points for proposal content. Proposals receiving an average numerical rating of 65 or less will not be considered for funding.

After the team review is complete, a list of recommended proposals will be submitted to the Director of the Division of Family Development and the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services for final approval. During the selection process, additional information may be requested.

Proposal Selection Criteria:

- Ability to meet the service requirements and performance specifications as indicated in this RFP;
- Experience of the Applicant in providing child care and related services to eligible families;
- Experience of the Applicant in developing collaborative relationships;
- Effectiveness of the total program design;
- Realistic and attainable program goals and objectives;
- Compliance with the criteria and intent contained in the RFP; and
- Practicality and soundness of the proposed budget as it relates to the total program design and the goals described in the Applicant's proposal.

Proposal Narrative Submission Requirements:

A. **Applicant Organization**

Provide a brief and concise summary of the Technical Assistance Center applicant's background and experience in implementing this or related types of services and qualification to act as the lead for this program. The written summary should include at a minimum:

- Describe the agency's history, mission and record of accomplishments in working in collaboration with the Department of Human Services and/or related departments, i.e., Child and Families, Health, or Education;

- Summarize the agency's administrative and organizational capacity to establish and implement sound administrative practices and successfully carry out the proposed program;
- Demonstrate the organization's commitment to cultural competency and diversity (Law against Discrimination, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1et seq.);
- Describe the applicant's background and experience in implementing this or related types of services. Describe why your agency is the most appropriate and best qualified to implement this program in the target service area;
- Attach a one-page copy of the agency's organizational chart showing the location of the proposed project and its links in the organization; and
- If the agency operates other technical assistance programs, demonstrate the effectiveness of these by indicating: a) current capacity, b) current percent (%) of capacity; and c) any other pertinent technical assistance data.

B. Target Community Needs Assessment:

The need for QRIS in NJ has already been established as part of the RTT-ELC application. For this section the applicant should provide a brief profile (in narrative and/or table format) of the target region. Include a description of key cities/communities, and sub-populations—parents age, child age categories (birth to age 8), race, ethnicity, immigrant families, migrant families, languages spoken, and other characteristics relevant to your county/community. Utilize local resources and/or the following data sources to complete this section:

- U.S. Census
  http://quickfacts.census.gov
- NJ Dept. of Health
  http://www4.state.nj.us/dhss-shad/query/result/birth/BirthBirthCnty/Count.html
- NJ Kids County (2014)
  http://acnj.org/downloads/2014_04_24_kidscount_statereport.pdf

Applicants are encouraged to draw from other recent county/local needs assessments and reports, e.g., Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC), that are relevant to the target population—infant/toddler and preschool children, child care, Head Start, and district preschool programs.

C. Current commitment to cultural competency and diversity:

Describe the organization's demonstrated commitment to cultural competency and diversity. Identify accessible culturally responsive services and supports. These shall include, but are not limited to, affiliations with informal or natural helping networks such as language services, neighborhood and civic associations, faith based organizations, and recreational programs determined to be appropriate.

Staff must be culturally competent and responsive, with training and experience necessary to manage the complex needs of programs and families in the community across systems. Explain how the provider is currently working toward a cultural competency plan that describes actions

your agency will take to ensure that policies, materials, environment, recruitment, hiring, promotion, training and Board membership reflect the community or the intended recipients of the services you provide and promote the cultural competency of the organization.

D. Delivery of Services

In this section, the Applicant is to provide an overview of how the services will be implemented and the timeframes involved.

1. Staffing:

Based on data provided in Attachment (N), applicants must determine staff structure to meet the needs of the programs participating in Grow NJ Kids. Applicants should describe how they will define caseload for each Technical Assistance Specialist and how many staff will be hired to meet the needs of the program.

In addition, describe how you will recruit staff. How do you assure staff is appropriately trained and qualified? How do you assure they will conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner in a wide variety of early care and education settings?

Attachment N provides the details of programs expected to be served each year by county for each region. This is to assist candidates to determine staffing. The programs of focus are the CCDF funded programs. However, applicants should also address how they will partner with all program types. In addition, staffing should be reflected of the Technical Assistance Providers Standards and Core Competencies.

2. Retention:

Describe your agency's strategy for maintaining programs' involvement with Grow NJ Kids system. What will be the agency's approach to conducting a technical assistance needs assessment and ensuring that all entities participating in the system (Head Start, child care, school district) will be involved?

For each phase of the process (as described in the service model overview):

Describe your agency's plan to provide a comprehensive approach to providing technical assistance and coaching services for each of the tiers (i.e., number of onsite visits, communities of practice, webinars, quarterly calls and other supportive TA services. The description must also include how the applicant will ensure that programs are ready to be "Rated" before the request for Rating Visit is made.   What do you anticipate to be the challenges with implementation?

How will each activity be evaluated?

E. Collaboration Activities:

Explain your agency's plan to partner with the agencies described above for assisting in the implementation of Grow NJ activities. In addition, describe your plan to collaborate with Professional Impact New Jersey on the collection of the monthly technical assistance reports and the computer labs.

Describe how the Applicant will coordinate with the community County Councils for Young Children and Central Intake Hubs to ensure an efficient delivery of quality child care supportive services.

How will your agency identify and collect best practices for the inventory database?

F. Data Collection and Management:

Describe how the Applicant will provide support on analyzing data from the SFI Protective Factors Survey to inform activities and decisions regarding Family and Community Engagement. Identify and describe any unique capabilities of your agency in delivering this service.

Describe the agency's outreach efforts and communication efforts for the Technical Assistance Center.

How will services provided to the Grow NJ Kids programs be evaluated?

G. Timeline:

In table format, outline the action steps and timeline for program implementation. Include all administrative and core program planning activities initiated and implemented from the time the grant is awarded through the end of the grant period, e.g., hiring, orientation, training, participant recruitment, onset of services, etc.

H. Budget Narrative

The Department will consider the cost efficiency of the proposed budget as it relates to the anticipated level of services. Therefore, applicants must clearly indicate how this funding will be used to meet the project goals and/or requirements. In addition to the required Budget forms (Attachment I), provide a budget narrative for the total annual costs of the proposed project.

The budget should be reasonable and reflect the scope of responsibilities required to accomplish the goals of this project. The budget should reflect the 11month contract and program operating schedule.

All costs associated with the completion of the project must be delineated and the budget narrative must clearly articulate budget items including a description of miscellaneous expenses and other costs. *Note: charges for G &A expense may not exceed 10% of the total direct service costs of the project. Start-up costs may be available for new agencies.*

2015 Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

Proposal Content Requirements:

Applicants must submit **one (1) signed original and six (6) copies** of the completed proposal package.

Failure to submit a signed original and the required number of copies will result in the proposal not being disqualified and not considered for funding. Note: It is suggested that a blue ink pen be used for all required signatures.

Applicants seeking to serve more than one region must submit <u>a separate and distinct proposal for each region to be served.</u> If an agency is awarded a contract for more than one region, there will be a separate DFD contract for each region. An Applicant agency that expects to realize reduced indirect costs as a result of serving multiple regions should explain and document this in the proposal.

   A. All proposals submitted for consideration must be fastened securely and include **all** of the following items in the order indicated:

 Proposal/authorization cover sheet (Attachment A)

   Check list (Attachment B)

   Narrative

All narrative information must not exceed 50 pages, one-sided and singled spaced. The narrative must include all information described in the proposal narrative requirement section. The font size for the written narrative must not be lower than 12 point size font in Times New Roman font.

B.   Required Documents

ATTACHMENT A	Proposal/Authorization Cover Sheet
ATTACHMENT B	Request for Proposals Checklist
ATTACHMENT C	Statement of Assurances
ATTACHMENT D	Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion
ATTACHMENT E	EO-189 Addendum to Request for Proposal for Social Service and Training Contacts – Conflict of Interest
ATTACHMENT F	Executive Order 129 Certification Source Disclosure Form
ATTACHMENT G	PL2005, C51 Pay-to-Play Certification and Disclosure Instructions Form
ATTACHMENTS P & H	Ownership Disclosure and Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran
ATTACHMENT I1-I4	Budget Information Summary

C. Other required documents

- Copy of the Applicant's organization chart
- Copy of the most recent organization-wide audit report or financial statement
- Copy of the Applicant Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy List of the Board of Directors, Officers and their terms **(as applicable)**
- Resumes and or/job descriptions
- NJ Business Registration
- Charitable registration status **(non-profits only)**
- Applicant's Certificate of Incorporation
- Collaboration agreements as appropriate

RFP TIMETABLE

Timeframes for completion of the RFP process are as follows:

April 7, 2015	Public Notice of Availability of funds published on the DHS website
April 20, 2015	Deadline Date for Pre-Registration for the Mandatory Technical Assistance Conference
April 21, 2015	MANDATORY Technical Assistance Conference
May 12, 2015	Deadline for Receipt of Grant Proposals (No later than 4:00 PM)
On or After: June 30, 2015	Notification of Grant Awards (Subject to Funding Availability)
August 1, 2015	Contract Begins (Subject to Funding Availability)

Mandatory Technical Bidders' Conference:

The DFD will conduct a Technical Assistance Conference that will provide clarifying information about this RFP and related proposal procedures.

Attendance at the conference is **MANDATORY.** A representative of your Agency must attend and sign in at the conference. Proposals submitted by any Agency or organization not officially represented at the conference will be considered disqualified for funding consideration at time of proposal receipt. At the conference, persons attending who are representing more than one agency/organization must sign-in separately for each agency/organization represented.

The Technical Assistance Conference will provide potential Applicants an opportunity to ask any and all pertinent questions regarding this RFP and receive technical information regarding this RFP from DFD representatives.

2015 Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

NOTE: No further technical assistance on the programmatic aspects of this RFP will be provided after the Technical Assistance Conference is held.

Applicants are to pre-register for the Technical Assistance Conference no later than April 20, 2015 by calling at the Office of Policy and Standards Development (OPSD) at (609)588-2290 or by Fax at (609)588-7240. **Each Applicant will be limited to three (3) representatives at the conference.**

If pre-registering by phone, please leave a message on the OPSD voicemail that includes your name, agency affiliation, address, telephone number and the number of attendees (maximum of 3 persons). In addition, please advise if special accommodations for someone with a physical disability will be required.

The technical assistance conference is scheduled as follows:

<div align="center">

Department of Human Services
Division of Family Development
Quakerbridge Plaza, Building 6
Quakerbridge Road
Mercerville, New Jersey 08619

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

2:00 – 4:00 pm

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Directions to the Technical Assistance Conference site are provided as **Attachment K** to this RFP.

NOTE: In the event of an official closing of State Offices (e.g., due to an official "State of Emergency", such as bad weather conditions), the Technical Assistance Conference will be rescheduled. Announcements concerning the closure of State Offices are broadcast on radio stations throughout the State. The rescheduled date will be faxed, phoned or mailed to anyone who has pre-registered for the conference.

2015 Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

Application Process:

Eligible Applicants interested in applying for funding must submit a complete proposal package, which consists of **one signed original and six (6) copies** of the proposal document and all support materials which must be received by the OPSD **no later than 4:00 P.M. on May 12, 2015.** Email or facsimile proposals/documents will not be accepted. Applicants opting to apply for funding to serve multiple regions must submit a separate and distinct proposal package for each region to be served. Proposal packages may be **mailed or hand delivered** as follows:

US Mail Delivery:

Office of Policy and Standards Development (OPSD)
Department of Human Services
PO Box 716
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0716

or

Hand Delivery or
Commercial Courier/Mail Service:

Office of Policy and Standards Development (OPSD)
NJ Division of Family Development
Quakerbridge Plaza, Building 3*
Quakerbridge Road
Mercerville, New Jersey 08619

*Building 3 is the only location that will be recognized for Hand Deliveries or Commercial Courier/Mail Service.

Directions to Quakerbridge Plaza for proposal hand deliveries are contained in **Attachment J**.

When submitting a proposal package, it is critical that the Applicant note the following:

- Faxed documents/information will not be accepted at any time.
- Applicants are responsible for mailing and delivering proposals well in advance to ensure that the proposals are received on or before the deadline.
- Postmarks and other similar documents do not establish receipt of a proposal.
- Proposals that do not meet the criteria stated in the RFP or not received by the time and date specified in the RFP, are deemed late and will not be evaluated.
- Any documents that arrive under separate cover will not be included as part of the proposal package.

2015 Technical Assistance Request for Proposals

Notification of acceptance or rejection of award:

Applicants will be notified of their proposal award status on or after June 30, 2015. All grant awards will be contingent upon subsequent contract negotiations.

The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals when it is in the Department's best interest to do so. The Department's best interests include, but are not limited to, loss of funding, inability of the Applicant to provide adequate services, indication of misrepresentation of information, and/or non-compliance with State and Federal laws and regulations and any existing Department contracts and procedures.

Contract Negotiations:

The Provider Agency may not subcontract any of the services that it has committed to perform or provide pursuant to this Contract without the prior written approval of the Department. Such consent to subcontract shall not relieve the Provider Agency of its full responsibilities under this Contract. Consent to the subcontracting of any part of the services shall not be construed to be an approval of said subcontract or of any of its terms, but shall operate only as an approval of the Provider Agency's request for the making of a subcontract between the Provider Agency and its chosen subcontractor. The Provider Agency shall be responsible for all services performed by the subcontractor and all such services shall conform to the provisions of this Contract.

If a Provider Agency receives DHS approval to subcontract, it must ensure that subcontractors comply with all applicable federal, State and local laws, rules and regulations, including the Department's Standard Language Document and the Department's Contract Policy and Information Manual and Contract Reimbursement Manual. The subcontract shall not be in conflict or less restrictive than any of the Department of Human Services' policies or procedures. The Provider shall outline in the Annex A of the Department Contract a description of how the Provider intends to monitor any subcontract it signs to ensure compliance with the Departmental Contract.

Upon award notification, DHS/DFD will negotiate a contract with the selected Applicant(s) and proceed with the process of preparing and finalizing formal contract(s) with the selected Applicant(s), as appropriate. New entities that are awarded contracts maybe allocated start-up resources that are considered appropriate and reasonable.

Funding and issuance of this proposed contract is contingent upon the availability of sufficient resources in the SFY 2016 DHS/DFD budget. DFD shall have no legal responsibility for payment unless and until funds are made available to DFD from the Legislature and incorporated in the DFD budget for this purpose.

The Department assumes no responsibility or liability for the costs incurred by an Applicant for the planning or preparing of a proposal in response to this RFP.

The Department reserves the right not to issue a grant for any of the subsequent years after the first term of the contract under certain circumstances, such as, but not limited to, the unsatisfactory work of the grant recipient, failure to meet agreed upon performance benchmarks, or the failure to submit required documentation in the timeframes requested.

Appeal Process:

An appeal will not be heard based on a challenge to the evaluation of a proposal.

An appeal of the selection process will be heard only if it is alleged that the Division has violated a provision of its contracting manual in the awarding of a grant. Applicants requesting an appeal based on a statutory or regulatory violation must submit a written request stating the alleged violation to the Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, Office of the Director, PO Box 716, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0716, no later than ten (10) calendar days following the date of a non-award notification.