



Early Childhood
IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS



Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network
Request for Applications for Community Network Lead Agencies

April 2016 - amended 4/25/16

 **DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION**
Louisiana Believes

John White, State Superintendent of Education

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCIES

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

A. Louisiana’s Early Childhood Community Networks

Louisiana is currently engaged in a multi-year effort to unify its early childhood system and improve kindergarten readiness. To address a fragmented early childhood system that prepares too few children for kindergarten, Louisiana’s legislature passed the Early Childhood Care and Education Act of 2012. This legislation seeks to have every child on track for success in school by charging the State’s Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to unify publicly funded preschool, Head Start and child care programs into a Statewide early childhood network and to empower families by ensuring easy access to high-quality early learning options for their children.

To implement this law, the Louisiana Department of Education, under the leadership of BESE, established a plan to create local early childhood networks comprised of child care, Head Start, publicly funded private preschools, and public school pre-kindergarten under a unified system of early learning and development standards, expectations for adult/child interactions, and accessible enrollment. These local networks are expected to serve all publicly funded at-risk children from birth to age five, implement innovative approaches to increasing the quality of programs and improve access for families. There are currently 64 early childhood care and education Community Networks in Louisiana and each functions as a consortium of early learning providers. The State coordinates this system of early childhood care and education Community Networks by designating a Lead Agency for each community to conduct administrative functions and coordinate essential activities, specifically observations and enrollment. The Lead Agency also serves as fiscal agent and administrative coordinator.

B. Expectations for Lead Agencies

Through this Request for Applications, the Department is seeking to identify and fund Lead Agencies for the two-year period beginning July 1, 2016, continuing through June 30, 2018. Satisfactory execution of responsibilities during year 1 (2016-17) is a requirement for continuing Lead Agency designation and funding for year 2 (2017-18).

Lead Agencies must:

- 1. Conduct administrative functions for the Community Network**
- 2. Coordinate CLASS observations, assure that accurate observations are conducted for the all Toddler and PreK classrooms and that feedback is provided to all participating programs**
- 3. Coordinate the birth-to-age-five enrollment and the State funding application for the Community Network**

Detailed expectations for each of the requirements specified above are outlined in the Lead Agency Assurances that must be initialed, signed and submitted as part of the application.

The Department will guide and assist Lead Agencies with developing written plans and procedures for these responsibilities and expectations. To ensure appropriate use of funding, the Department will periodically audit Lead Agencies to determine if adequate implementation is occurring and to provide technical assistance.

A state agency, a local public school system, a non-profit or for-profit corporation having an educational or social services mission including but not limited to a nonprofit corporation of a philanthropic or policy nature, a Louisiana public postsecondary institution, or a nonprofit corporation established by the governing authority of a parish or municipality is eligible to apply. The Department anticipates that most current Lead Agencies will seek to continue their designation. However, this is an opportunity for roles to shift and a different agency to fill this role based on community interest and need. Existing multi-parish networks may choose to reconfigure, and others may form. In addition, communities may decide to create a new organization such as a non-profit consortium to represent all program partners. **Any current Lead Agency that does not intend to apply for continued designation should notify kaye.eichler@la.gov by Friday, April 15, 2016.**

C. Funding

In recognition of the expectations presented above, Lead Agency funding for 2016-2017 will be provided at a rate of \$500 per Toddler and PreK classroom. This rate, which represents a 25% increase per classroom from the prior Lead Agency funding rate, is based on analysis of how funding was allocated and expended in 2015-2016. For purposes of consistency and equity, the same classroom count of all Toddler and PreK classrooms in publicly-funded programs used for 2015-2016 funding was applied to the 2016-2017 funding formula.

Lead Agencies must use the funding to carry out the responsibilities listed above. Each Lead Agency has discretion over how it uses its funding to support and carry-out its responsibilities. To guide Lead Agencies, the State has set recommendations for use of the funds on estimated costs associated with each function.

Recommended Use of Funds

Function	Percent of Funding	Estimated Per Classroom Amount
CLASS Observations	70%	\$350
Coordinated Enrollment	10%	\$50
Administration	15%	\$75
Materials & Supplies/Misc.	5%	\$25

Note: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are responsible for providing Type III centers with training and coaching to support their specific needs associated with quality adult-child interactions.

The Department proposes to allocate funds according to the schedule shown in Appendix A. Payments will be made on an expense reimbursement basis and will be contingent upon the successful completion of milestones. Annual milestone due dates are:

- October 1 - All CLASS Observations for Fall are scheduled in the online system**
- October 31 - Child Count as of 10/1 is reported to the State**
- December 1 - Coordinated Funding Request is submitted to the State**
- December 15 – 100% Fall CLASS observations completed and results entered in system**
- February 1 – Coordinated Enrollment Plan is submitted to the State**
- February 1 – All CLASS Observations for Spring are scheduled in the online system**
- February 28 – Child Count as of 2/1 is reported to the State**
- May 15 – 100% Spring CLASS Observations completed and results entered in the system**

Note: When the milestone dates fall on Saturday or Sunday, the due date will be the following Monday.

Lead Agencies will be recommended to BESE for approval in June 2016 and the Year One funding cycle will begin July 1, 2016. Lead Agencies must sign a set of fiscal assurances to receive the allocation. Lead Agencies will submit detailed budgets for approval after being notified of selection. Generally, funds may be used for staff or professional services to ensure that CLASS observations, enrollment and other expectations for Lead Agencies are completed. Funding cannot be used to increase slots within programs, for construction or facility remodeling, nor for expenses such as furniture, food or refreshments. Indirect costs are not allowed. Funds unexpended at the end of each fiscal year will revert to the State.

SECTION II – APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. How to Apply

The Lead Agency application has four parts and all are included in the Application Template. Complete the template, scan with any attachments and submit as one document. The Word version of the application template may be obtained by contacting kaye.eichler@la.gov.

Part 1 – Community Network Lead Agency Applicant Profile

Complete the Community Network Lead Agency Applicant Profile making sure that all required program partners are listed.

Part 2 – Community Network Lead Agency Applicant Assurances

Complete the Community Network Lead Agency Assurances. These assurances must be signed by the chief administrator of the applying organization.

Part 3 – Notification for Program Partners

Lead Agency applicants must notify all program partners in writing of their intent to apply for Lead Agency designation. One sample copy of this notice must be included with the application along with the list of mailing addresses or email addresses to which the notice

was sent. Though not required, letters from program partners may be submitted as evidence that the applicant has support from local early childhood providers.

Part 4 – Rationale and Evidence for Designation as Lead Agency

Use this section to briefly describe why your organization is suited to serve as Lead Agency for the local Community Network. Include in the description accomplishments any relative accomplishments such as community building among providers, using CLASS to support teachers and improve programs for children, and supporting families with community-wide coordinated enrollment. Limit the response to 500 words or less.

Part 5 – Program Partner Signatures

Use the template provided to obtain Program Partner signatures to submit with the application by May 16, 2016 or separately by noon on June 10, 2016.

B. Application Deadline and Important Dates

Scan the template with any attachments and submit as one document. **An electronic copy of the application file must be sent via email to kaye.eichler@la.gov by 5:30 PM on Monday, May 16, 2016.** In general, applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed. However, the Department reserves the right to review and/or fund an application submitted after the deadline when late submission is due to an emergency. Additionally, the Department reserves the right to request additional information or revisions from any applicant.

April 18, 2016	Informational webinar at 12:00 pm https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/leadagencyrfa/
April 25, 2016	Deadline for submitting RFA questions to kaye.eichler@la.gov . Subject line should read “RFA Questions”
May 2, 2016	RFA Questions and Answers will be posted to the LDE website.
May 16, 2016	Applications due by 5:30 pm
June 10, 2016	Program Partner Signatures due by 12:00 noon to kaye.eichler@la.gov if not submitted with the application
June 21-22, 2016	Lead Agencies allocations are submitted to BESE for approval

C. Selection Process

The Department will review all applications for completeness and will determine whether the applicant has the capacity to fulfill Lead Agency responsibilities. If applicable, past performance with carrying out Lead Agency responsibilities will also be considered. Applicants should anticipate that telephone or in-person interviews may be conducted as part of the selection process.

APPENDIX A

Community Network	Classrooms	2015-2016 Lead Agency Funding	2016-2017 Lead Agency Funding
Acadia	81	\$32,400	\$40,500
Allen	32	\$12,800	\$16,000
Ascension	114	\$45,600	\$57,000
Assumption	21	\$8,400	\$10,500
Avoyelles	61	\$24,400	\$30,500
Beauregard	36	\$14,400	\$18,000
Bienville	23	\$9,200	\$11,500
Bogalusa City	20	\$8,000	\$10,000
Bossier	126	\$50,400	\$63,000
Caddo	383	\$153,200	\$191,500
Calcasieu	287	\$114,800	\$143,500
Caldwell	13	\$5,200	\$6,500
Cameron	9	\$3,600	\$4,500
Catahoula/Tensas	12	\$4,800	\$6,000
Central Community	45	\$18,000	\$22,500
Concordia	25	\$10,000	\$12,500
DeSoto	27	\$10,800	\$13,500
East Baton Rouge/Baker	684	\$273,600	\$342,000
East Carroll	14	\$5,600	\$7,000
Evangeline	39	\$15,600	\$19,500
Franklin	39	\$15,600	\$19,500
Grant	12	\$4,800	\$6,000
Iberia	141	\$56,400	\$70,500
Iberville	44	\$17,600	\$22,000
Jackson	20	\$8,000	\$10,000
Jefferson Davis	31	\$12,400	\$15,500
Jefferson	489	\$195,600	\$244,500
Lafayette	284	\$113,600	\$142,000
Lafourche	109	\$43,600	\$54,500
LaSalle	11	\$4,400	\$5,500
Lincoln	67	\$26,800	\$33,500
Livingston	136	\$54,400	\$68,000
Madison	19	\$7,600	\$9,500
Morehouse	45	\$18,000	\$22,500
Natchitoches	83	\$33,200	\$41,500

Community Network	Classrooms	2015-2016 Lead Agency Funding	2016-2017 Lead Agency Funding
Orleans	492	\$196,800	\$246,000
Ouachita	270	\$108,000	\$135,000
Plaquemines	25	\$10,000	\$12,500
Pointe Coupee	49	\$19,600	\$24,500
Rapides	281	\$112,400	\$140,500
Red River	13	\$5,200	\$6,500
Richland	29	\$11,600	\$14,500
Sabine	22	\$8,800	\$11,000
St. Bernard	61	\$24,400	\$30,500
St. Charles	73	\$29,200	\$36,500
St. Helena/East Feliciana	41	\$16,400	\$20,500
St. James	32	\$12,800	\$16,000
St. John	47	\$18,800	\$23,500
St. Landry	151	\$60,400	\$75,500
St. Martin	84	\$33,600	\$42,000
St. Mary	65	\$26,000	\$32,500
St. Tammany	259	\$103,600	\$129,500
Tangipahoa	200	\$80,000	\$100,000
Terrebonne	141	\$56,400	\$70,500
Union	19	\$7,600	\$9,500
Vermillion	67	\$26,800	\$33,500
Vernon	58	\$23,200	\$29,000
Washington	42	\$16,800	\$21,000
Webster/Claiborne	52	\$20,800	\$26,000
West Baton Rouge	42	\$16,800	\$21,000
West Carroll	11	\$4,400	\$5,500
West Feliciana	20	\$8,000	\$10,000
Winn	14	\$5,600	\$7,000
Zachary	31	\$12,400	\$15,500
TOTALS	6273	\$2,509,200	\$3,136,500

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

**APPLICATION PART 1:
COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCY APPLICANT PROFILE AND ASSURANCES**

Lead Agency Applicant Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

Primary Contact Name: _____

Primary Contact Title: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ - _____

Email: _____

Network Name: _____

Geographic parish (s): _____

List all Program Partners:

Childcare Partner(s):

Early Head Start Grantee Partner(s):

Head Start Grantee Partner(s):

Charter Partner(s):

NSECD Partner(s):

Public PreK Partner(s):

Early Steps Regional Partner:

APPLICATION PART 2: COMMUNITY NETWORK LEAD AGENCY APPLICANT ASSURANCES

My organization will comply with all provisions of BESE Bulletin 140 – Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Network and all guidelines and requirements prescribed by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE), Early Childhood Office for serving as Lead Agency and that my organization will:

CONDUCT ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Ensure that all required program partners are engaged including:
 - One or more school districts; all early childhood programs within the district(s) will be included, and in communities where more than 10% of schools are governed by the Recovery School District (RSD), the RSD must be a partner and include all early childhood classrooms; and
 - Programs that feed into the identified school district’s PreK and Kindergarten programs (e.g., Head Start and Early Head Start, all school-based early childhood programs including charter schools, Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Program sites, EarlySteps, and Type III child care providers. *Note: All licensed Type III early learning centers are required to participate in the State’s accountability system and the local coordinated enrollment system.*
- Engage Community Partners who want to support early care and education in the community.
- Serve as fiscal agent for this Community Network.
- Maintain records and documentation for this Community Network and make such available to representatives of the State when requested.
- Designate an individual to serve as the primary Point of Contact between the Community Network and the State.
- Send a representative to all State-sponsored meetings for Lead Agencies.
- Disseminate communication from the Louisiana Department of Education Early Childhood Office to all Community Network program partners when requested.
- Ensure that all sites in this Community Network have a site code assigned by the State.
- Facilitate and reconcile on an ongoing basis an accurate accounting in the *GOLD*® online system of all classrooms at publicly funded sites in the Community Network that contain children from age birth to age five.
- Verify through the Department’s verification process Community Network-level data that has been collected and reported to the Department for the Community Network Performance Profile.
- Conduct meetings for all Community Network program partners a minimum of once each quarter. *Note: Best practice is once each month.*

COORDINATE CLASS OBSERVATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Identify all sites and all classrooms to be observed with the *CLASS* Toddler and *CLASS* PreK tools.
- Develop a written process to verify that all of the Community Network's sites and all Toddler and PreK classrooms at each site are correctly recorded in the *CLASS* System.
- Develop a written plan and schedule to ensure that all Toddler and PreK classrooms in publicly funded programs and child care centers with a Type III license in the Community Network are accurately observed twice each year by *CLASS* reliable observers.
- Ensure that all local observations entered into the *CLASS* System are conducted according to the publisher's standardized procedures.
- Shadow score a minimum of 10% of the local Fall observations and 10% of the local Spring observations.
- Ensure that every local observer is shadow scored at least once.
- Develop and implement a written process to monitor and compare the results of all local observers for the purpose of ensuring accurate observations.

Note:

- Local observers with Fall observation results that differ from third party results by more than one point across the majority of domains compared will not be allowed to observe in the Spring for the accountability system. Lead Agencies should monitor observer accuracy to maintain adequate observer capacity.*
- For local observation scores, high scores, low scores, and concerning patterns will trigger additional third party observations to ensure accuracy.*
- Maintain an adequate number of local reliable observers.
- Conduct a minimum of one observation calibration activity each semester and ensure that all observers participate in at least one observation calibration activity each semester.
- Collaborate with all program partners to establish and implement written procedures that minimize potential conflict of interest between local observers and the personnel in the classrooms they are assigned to observe.
- Ensure that observation information and results are entered into the *CLASS* System accurately and in accordance with established timelines.
- Request corrections for the observation data in the *CLASS* System in accordance with the procedures and timelines established by the State.
- Establish and implement a written process and timeline to ensure that written results and feedback from each local observation are reported to sites within 10 operational days.
- Collect and maintain records of all observations in an accountability reporting period for a period of three years. The three-year retention period begins on June 30th of the accountability reporting period during which the observations were conducted. If programs conduct their own observations, assure that copies of the original score sheets are obtained and maintained in Lead Agency files.

COORDINATE BIRTH-TO-AGE-FIVE ENROLLMENT AND THE STATE FUNDING APPLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

- Count all publicly funded birth-to-age-five children currently being served in the Community Network as of October 1 and February 1 of each school year and report to the State as required.
- Engage all program partners to submit a coordinated enrollment plan to the State that is signed by all program partners.
- Collaborate with the regional Resource and Referral Agency (R&R) to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that delineates the relationship between the R&R's referral system and the Community Network's coordinated enrollment system.
- Provide all program partners the opportunity to participate in designing the enrollment information campaign that identifies the Community Network and/or all program partners.
- Provide all program partners in the Community Network the opportunity to plan and participate in enrollment events that are conducted for all program partners.
- Collaborate with all program partners to develop and implement a single preliminary eligibility determination process that informs families of the programs they are eligible to apply for.
- Inform all program partners of all program eligibility requirements so that appropriate referrals can be made.
- Collaborate with all program partners to use the same enrollment application across all programs in the Community Network, year round.
- Provide all program partners with the opportunity to be represented in designing, reviewing, and revising the application on an annual basis.
- Collaborate with all program partners and the regional Resource and Referral agency to ensure that access to the Community Network's enrollment application easy and that it is available year round for families interested in child care.
- Collaborate with all program partners to design and use a common coordinated application form that allows families to indicate/rank their preference for programs.
- Collaborate with all program partners to ensure that at-risk children are enrolled in programs based on family preference, as long as space is available.
- Collaborate with all program partners to develop and maintain a community-wide waitlist of unserved infant-to-age-five children whose families want publicly funded child care and education services are identified by maintaining a waitlist coordinated across all programs.
- Manage the *Tracking of Time Services (TOTS)* system as part of coordinating enrollment eligibility for child care and ensure that:
 - Families can scan their finger image during business hours five days a week unless explicit written permission is obtained from the State to do otherwise.
 - Trained staff is available to enroll families in *TOTS*.
 - Staff keeps all information related to client records and case files for child care assistance cases confidential as required by La. R.S. 46:56.

- Lead Agencies report any *TOTS* machine malfunctions to the State immediately.
- Coordinate and submit a community wide application to the State for early childhood public funding and:
 - Provide an opportunity for each program partner in the Community Network and for the general public to comment on the proposed funding request prior to submission to the State.
 - Document the public hearing process and include the documentation in the funding request.

By my signature below, I am indicating agreement with all of the aforementioned requirements.

Signature of Leader/Chief Administrator	Agency
Title	Email Address
Printed Name	Telephone Number

**APPLICATION PART 3:
COMMUNITY NETWORK PROGRAM PARTNER NOTIFICATION**

Lead Agency applicants must notify all program partners in writing of their intent to apply for Lead Agency designation. One sample copy of this notice must be included with the application along with the list of program partner mailing addresses or email addresses to which the notice was sent. Though not required, letters from program partners may be submitted as evidence that the applicant has support from local early childhood providers.

**APPLICATION PART 4:
RATIONALE AND EVIDENCE FOR LEAD AGENCY DESIGNATION**

Use this section to briefly describe why your organization is suited to serve as Lead Agency for the local Community Network. Include in the description any relative accomplishments such as community building among providers, using *CLASS* to support teachers and improve programs for children, and supporting families with community-wide coordinated enrollment. Limit the response to 500 words or less.

**APPLICATION PART 5:
PROGRAM PARTNER SIGNATURE PAGE**

Use the template provided to obtain Program Partner signatures to submit with the application by May 16, 2016 or separately by noon on June 10, 2016.

