



A Comprehensive Approach to
Enhancing Early Care and Education

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

FOR

EASTERN REGION

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL

SERVICES PROGRAM CONTRACTORS

June 24, 2026

REVISED
July 9, 2026

*** Due by 5:00 PM, JULY 17, 2026***

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
EASTERN REGION CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL
SERVICES PROGRAM CONTRACTORS
FY27-FY29**

Early Years is soliciting applications from existing Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies and other organizations within the new CCR&R Eastern Region to serve as *Eastern Region CCR&R Services Program* Contractors. Early Years recognizes that this work represents a departure from previous activities and structure of the child care resource and referral system. As partners, we are open to input and negotiations to ensure that families and providers receive the best possible services.

Early Years will be accepting applications for six Territories. **Contractors will not be allowed to subcontract.** This RFA is for a 3-year funding cycle. Eligible agencies can apply to serve one or more of the Territories listed below in their application. Only one application is required to apply for multiple Territories. The chart below shows the counties and estimated FY27 allocation for each Territory.

Territory	Counties	Estimated FY27 Allocation
Territory 1	Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans	\$99,844.00
Territory 2	Beaufort, Craven, Hyde, Pamlico, Tyrell, Washington	\$93,829.00
Territory 3	Carteret, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pitt	\$287,502.00
Territory 4	Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Pender, Sampson	\$288,705.00
Territory 5	Harnett, Johnston, Wayne	\$264,646.00
Territory 6	Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Warren, Wilson	\$147,961.00

I. INTRODUCTION

Child care plays a critical role in supporting children’s development, family stability, and community well-being. CCR&R agencies serve as an essential bridge connecting families, child care providers, and community resources. They help families find safe, affordable, and high-quality child care while also supporting providers through training, technical assistance, and access to other professional resources. By strengthening the child care workforce and guiding families through complex child care systems and available resources, CCR&R agencies improve the overall quality and accessibility of early childhood education. As a result, children benefit from nurturing learning environments, families gain reliable support for balancing work and caregiving responsibilities, and providers receive the tools needed to deliver and maintain high-quality care. The services offered through CCR&R ultimately contribute to stronger families, more effective child care programs, and healthier communities. Through the *CCR&R Services Program* these services will be available to all 38 counties in the Eastern Region.

II. BACKGROUND

Early Years is a high-impact, mission-driven nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening North Carolina’s early care and education system through workforce development, program quality improvement, and comprehensive child care resource and referral services (CCR&R). Its mission is: *Early Years leads efforts to strengthen accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education by providing support for families, communities and the workforce* and its vision is: *For all children to benefit from affordable, high-quality early care and education, which lays the foundation for successful life outcomes.*

Early Years began in 1974 as two independent organizations: the Durham Day Care Council (DDCC) in Durham County and Day Care Services Association (DCSA) in Orange County. Together, these organizations laid the foundation for North Carolina’s early childhood infrastructure. The DDCC, the state’s first CCR&R agency, led innovations in technical assistance and provider training, while DCSA focused on expanding access through child care scholarships, nutrition support, and early care workforce research, including the first county and statewide studies of the early childhood workforce. In 1999, after recognizing the need for coordinated and consolidated efforts, the two organizations merged to become Child Care Services Association (CCSA). On November 1, 2024, CCSA became Early Years.

For more than 50 years, Early Years has been committed to increasing the supply and sustainability of high-quality child care programs; strengthening the early childhood workforce through education, compensation, and career pathways; providing accessible, accurate, and timely consumer education and referral services; and delivering responsive, evidence-based technical assistance to improve program quality and business practices. Additionally, Early Years has successfully managed large-scale regional and statewide initiatives aligned with CCR&R priorities, including but not limited to TEACH® Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, Child Care WAGES® Salary Supplement Program, and the Birth-to-Three Quality Initiative.

As the *Eastern Region CCR&R Program Services* Contractor, Early Years will be responsible for

- Seeking and distributing funding from the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (NC DCDEE) to *Eastern Region CCR&R Program Services Territories*;
- Managing contracts and overseeing service delivery for *Eastern Region CCR&R Program Services*;
- Providing information and resources, professional development and technical assistance to Contractors; and
- Providing leadership and coordination in CCR&R and early care and education systems-change efforts.

Early Years will Partner with NC DCDEE and the Western Region and South Central Region CCR&R Program Service Contractors to:

- support a strong statewide child care resource and referral system and
- ensure that families, childcare providers and communities have access to high quality CCR&R services.

III. CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS & TERM

As an *Eastern CCR&R Services Program* Contractor, the selected agency will be responsible for delivering services in the Territory to ensure that following *CCR&R Services Program* goals and outcomes are accomplished. As noted above, Early Years recognizes that this work represents a departure from previous activities and structure of the child care resource and referral system. As partners, we are open to input and negotiations to ensure that families and providers receive the best possible services.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Provide technical assistance and training to early care and education programs and early educators according to NC's technical assistance framework: North Carolina's Professional Development Framework for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), utilizing:
 - a) TA specialists, coaches, trainers
 - b) Pathways to the Stars QRIS
 - c) Assessment Tools
 - d) Evidenced-based PD content
- 2) Enroll directors/owners in professional learning communities (PLC) cohorts centered around growing the management skills for current and aspiring directors and administrators by:
 - a) Delivering cohort-based learning to current and aspiring directors and administrators from across the Territory

- b) Supporting peer learning and networking
 - c) Building director capacity for continuous quality improvement (CQI) leadership
 - d) Administering pre/post assessments
- 3) Provide outreach activities in every county within the Territory to promote the centralized referral services hub and provide information about child care choices, quality indicators, the North Carolina rated license system and other resources for families to learn about services and receive the information they need to make informed child care choices and support their child's healthy development, including, but not limited to:
 - a) Conducting targeted community outreach including, but not limited to attending community events, resource fairs, family engagement activities, and partner meetings
 - b) Promoting information about Child Care Referral Central, the centralized referral service hub at Early Years
 - c) Providing consumer education resources
 - d) Connecting families to subsidy and wraparound supports
 - e) Researching, identifying and providing comprehensive, up-to-date information about family community resources within each county in the Territory to Early Years, ensuring that this information remains current and accurate throughout the contract period.
 - f) Document participants served (as defined) and their access to high quality ECE information
- 4) Evaluate CCR&R Services Program participants and use this performance information for continuous quality enhancement.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- 1) Percentage of early care and education programs receiving technical assistance and training, as outlined in the Pathways to Continuous Quality Teach Practices (PCQTP) framework, will achieve fidelity to PCQTP. Target 80%
- 2) Percentage of early care and education directors participating in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) are better equipped to manage their programs as evidenced by scores of 80% or higher on content-based assessment scores. Target 75%
- 3) Percentage of families with children birth-12 years old with access to information on high quality ECE programs in the county in which they reside. Target 80%

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Agencies selected to serve as Contractors will be contractually held to the following performance requirements:

- 1) Submit a line-item budget with detailed narrative and FTE sheet and a plan for the distribution of resources within the Territory to be served;
- 2) Submit Financial Status Reports by the tenth (10th) of the month, unless otherwise requested Early Years;
- 3) Submit mid-year and annual programmatic reports outlining progress made towards meeting and/or exceeding outputs and/or outcomes.
- 4) Adhere to *CCR&R Services Program* delivery protocols and expectations, as developed;
- 5) Ensure that staff providing CCR&R technical assistance/coaching and/or training have at least a Level 11 EEC and have their Technical Assistance Endorsement (TAE) and/or Professional Development Endorsement (PDE) within 12 months.
- 6) Share information and coordinate with other organizations providing services to children, families and early care and education programs within the Territory;
- 7) Meet with Early Years staff quarterly to provide updates on activities, key accomplishments, and challenges/barriers to meeting program goals.
- 8) Notify Early Years staff within one week of a change in key CCR&R staff to ensure continued communication;
- 9) Ensure technical assistance participant evaluations are done at the end of each technical assistance process and report this information to Early Years as directed.
- 10) Ensure training participant evaluations are completed after each training and report this information to Early Years as directed.
- 11) Ensure families served through outreach events are documented and report this information to Early Years as directed.
- 12) For all early care and education program activities, track and report the following data (data collection subject to change per federal reporting requirements):
 - a) Program setting (Family Child Care Home or Center-based), job title (teacher, director, etc.), participant's age, education, and years of ages birth to three experiences of all participants receiving any services through this initiative.
 - b) Age of and number of children served by
 - c) County services are provided
 - d) Education and years of service for all participants
 - e) Other data as requested by the Division.

The award of contract will be effective for three years from the date of award, July 1, 2026. The estimated FY27 allocations are listed above.

IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Priority will be given to current CCR&R Agencies. All agencies submitting *Eastern Region CCR&R Services Program Territory* applications must meet the following **eligibility criteria**:

- 1) Be a public entity or a private, 501(c)(3)/tax exempt non-profit agency;
- 2) Be based in a county within the Territory (preferred, not required);
- 3) Have a governing board and/or advisory committee (for public agencies);
- 4) Have a financial audit that was conducted within the past 12 months that resulted in no more than 2 findings; and
- 5) Prior experience providing CCR&R services (professional development, technical assistance, data collection, data analysis/reporting, and/or public/community education)

Successful applicants will also demonstrate:

- 1) A successful history collaborating with large diverse groups such as parents, child care providers, institutions of higher education, community agencies, legislators, media, the faith community, and public officials;
- 2) Experience using appropriate technology and information management systems to collect and track service data and generate reports;
- 3) Administrative and fiscal capacity to manage funds and track results;
- 4) A demonstrated ability to access public and private funds and be willing to seek funds to expand the project;
- 5) Employment of qualified staff; and
- 6) Assurance there is no conflict of interest in providing services under this RFA.

V. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit an electronic copy of the complete application, which must include the following items:

- 1) Cover sheet with complete agency contact information (see attached)
- 2) Narrative response to Application Questions (no more than **10 pages** in length, excluding requested attachments)
- 3) Attachments:
 - ✓ Board of Directors list, including affiliations of members
 - ✓ Resumés of Key Personnel (*see Application Question 5a*)
 - ✓ Agency Organizational Chart (*see Application Question 5c*)
 - ✓ 501(C)(3) determination letter for Agency
 - ✓ Financial Statement for last fiscal year (indicate whether it is an audited statement or not) and most recent Audit
- 4) Line-Item Budget with detailed budget narrative and FTE sheet:

- Using the documents provided, complete and submit a line-item budget for the three-year contract period.
- Complete the FTE sheets first. They will auto-populate salary and fringe amounts in the Line-Item Budget

Send application materials to:

Denise Squier, denises@earlyyearsnc.org
and
Mary Martin, marym@earlyyearsnc.org

Applications must be received by 5:00 PM, July 17, 2026.

VI. SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Upon receipt of all applications, each application will be evaluated by Early Years staff to determine which applications meet all minimum eligibility criteria as set forth in this Request for Applications (RFA).

Every eligible application will be reviewed and scored by a RFA Selection Committee. Selection Committee members may include representatives from Early Years, the Division of Child Development and Early Education, and additional representatives from outside community or public agencies familiar with the CCR&R system.

After an initial review by the RFA Selection Committee, applicants may be asked additional follow-up or clarifying questions about their application. Applicants will have a short timeframe in which to provide a response to these questions. Upon receipt of these responses, the RFA Selection Committee will conduct a meeting to determine final application scores and identify the successful applicants that will be named as *Eastern Region CCR&R Services Program* Contractors.

Estimated Timeline

July 2nd Pre-Application Webinar (Optional) – Early Years will provide an overview of the RFA and an opportunity for Q&A. Please click the link to join the session:

Topic: Early Years NC CCR&R Eastern Region Subcontractor RFA Pre-Application Webinar

Time: Jul 2, 2026 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://earlyyearsnc-org.zoom.us/j/83805501362>

Meeting ID: 838 0550 1362

One tap mobile
+16465588656,,83805501362# US (New York)

July 17 th	Applications due to Early Years by 5:00 PM
3 rd week of July	Initial review by RFA Selection Committee
4 th week of July	Follow-up questions sent out to applicants and responses due back from applicants
4 th week of July	Notification of applicants and award

VII. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your own successes and strengths in the delivery of technical assistance and training to child care providers and outreach to and engagement with families. What have been the biggest issues and how have you addressed them? Please describe your work in terms of four components: (1) strategies employed, (2) outcomes achieved, (3) collaborations developed and (4) types of funding accessed.
2. Describe what process you would use to conduct a SWOT analysis of early care and education and school-age care needs in the subcontract counties you are applying for. How would you determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regards to CCR&R service delivery? What do you believe will be needed to be successful?
3. Please provide a work plan for fulfilling the following functions:
 - Collaboration with other local agencies in the Territory
 - Data collection, analysis, and reporting
 - Other anticipated activities (e.g., training calendar, newsletter, website, etc.)
4. Describe how you have demonstrated leadership capacity and partnered your organization's activities with other agencies in your county and/or counties. Be sure to describe thoroughly any joint initiatives that have required close collaboration and sharing of resources and information.
5. Organizational/staff capacity:
 - a) Describe the education and experience qualifications of staff and the individuals (management-level and above) responsible for the administration and provision of the services in this application, and attach their resumes.
 - b) Describe the current and projected staff *positions* for your own CCR&R service delivery and the anticipated responsibilities to be filled under this application, including job descriptions for the positions.
 - c) Attach an organizational chart and provide a description of your agency's *organizational structure* that demonstrates your agency's ability to perform the functions under this Application. Describe how the CCR&R services pertaining to this application will be complemented and/or supported by those of the rest of your organization.

VIII. RFA SCORING CRITERIA

Question 1: 30 Points

- (10 points) Respondent should be able to describe experience related to technical assistance and training to child care providers and outreach/engagement with families and effecting change in their county/counties. Response should identify areas of greatest challenge and progress made toward overcoming these challenges.
- (5 Points) Strategies employed could include outreach and marketing, direct service, advocacy, organizing, public awareness activities, etc.
- (5 Points) Outcomes achieved can include numbers served, system changes, etc.
- (5 Points) Collaborations developed should identify community collaborators, collaborative processes and what was accomplished through these efforts.
- (5 Points) Types of funding accessed should speak to strategies for braiding and/or leveraging funds.

Question 2: 20 Points

Response should demonstrate the use of data-driven processes for analyzing the counties being served from the perspective of family, child care provider, and community needs and services. Response should elaborate on anticipated sources of information and processes for conducting a comprehensive assessment and applying what is learned.

Question 3: 30 Points

Response should include tasks, assigned staff responsibilities, and timelines where appropriate in order to implement each of the functions listed. The work plans should incorporate and be reflective of the contract requirements for the *CCR&R Services Program* subcontract.

Question 4: 10 Points

Joint initiatives include public awareness activities, public policy work, direct service, advocacy, etc. What evidence is there that relationships have been built and that there is trust and good will among community-based organizations? How has the agency played a leadership role in brokering these collaborations? Response should indicate how these relationships and/or experiences will translate to efforts to build and strengthen CCR&R services/capacity.

Question 5: 15 Points

- (5 Points) Management staff demonstrate experience in planning, developing and implementing similar projects and a proven track record in business operations and financial management of a small to mid-size agency or company.
- (5 Points) Job descriptions are provided for technical assistance, professional development/training staff and outreach/engagement with families, indicating appropriate educational and experiential qualifications.

- (5 Points) CCR&R services align with mission and structure of umbrella agency and there is evidence of general organizational support and capacity to manage services and functions of the *CCR&R Services Program* subcontract.

Attachments: 30 Points

- (5 Points) Board of Directors reflects a diversity of stakeholders and is supportive of proposal.
- (5 Points) Management personnel have the education, experience and expertise to effectively plan and implement the functions of *CCR&R Services Program* Contractor.
- (5 Points) Organizational chart reflects alignment of services with mission and structure of umbrella agency and overall support and capacity to manage services and functions of *CCR&R Services Program* Contractor.
- (15 Points) Financial statement reflects capacity to manage funds at this level, including satisfactory audit.

Line-Item Budget: 15 Points

- (5 Points) The budgets, budget narratives and FTE sheets are complete and submitted on the required forms.
- (5 Points) The budget narrative is detailed and includes itemized costs for every projected expense, how the total line item was calculated (when necessary) and how the expenses relate to the work of the *CCR&R Services Program*.
- (5 Points) The budget demonstrates efficient and effective use of financial resources

150 Possible Points



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION COVER SHEET
EASTERN REGION CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL
SERVICES PROGRAM CONTRACTORS**

AGENCY INFORMATION

Agency Name: _____

Agency Type: ☐ Public ☐ Private, non-profit 501(c)3 Federal Tax ID#: _____

Location Address: _____

County: _____

Mailing Address: _____

County: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Website: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency Director

Name and Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

CCR&R Director/Manager

Name and Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Fiscal Contact

Name and Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Application Contact

Name and Title: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

AUTHORIZATION

Agency Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Board Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____