Early Years

A Comprehensive Approach to
Enhancing Early Care and Education

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

FOR

NORTH CENTRAL REGION – TERRITORY 1
CCR&R SERVICES PROGRAM
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

November 10, 2026

*** Due by 5:00 PM, November 23rd***

Request for Applications

Title: **CCR&R Services Program – Professional Learning Communities**

Funding Agency: **Early Years**

Estimated Funding: **$32,500 per year for a 3-year funding cycle**

Service Area: **Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, and Warren Counties**

INTRODUCTION

Child care plays a critical role in supporting children's development, family stability, and community well-being. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies connect providers with training, technical assistance, and professional resources that strengthen the quality and sustainability of early care and education. Strong leadership is essential to effective program operations, workforce stability, and continuous quality improvement.

Early Years is seeking applications from qualified organizations to coordinate and deliver Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for current and aspiring child care directors, owners, and administrators in the service area. The selected contractor will provide structured, cohort-based learning, practical management content, peer networking, and assessments consistent with Early Years requirements.

Funding and Award(s). The estimated funding is approximately $32,500 in total funding per year for the full service area. Early Years may make one award or multiple smaller awards based on application quality, proposed county coverage, capacity, and available funding. Applicants may propose serving selected counties or the full service area. Collaborative proposals are encouraged. Each application must identify the lead fiscal agency, partners, responsibilities, service areas, and requested funding.

BACKGROUND

Early Years is a mission-driven nonprofit dedicated to strengthening North Carolina's early care and education system through workforce development, program quality improvement, and comprehensive CCR&R services. Its mission is to strengthen accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education by supporting families, communities, and the workforce. The PLC initiative is part of the effort to strengthen management and leadership capacity among early care and education administrators.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Output

Ensure that **160** unduplicated current and aspiring directors and administrators annually enroll in and meet the minimum threshold of participating (80% of sessions) in professional learning communities (PLC) cohort centered around growing the management skills for current and aspiring directors and administrators by:

1) Offering four to six cohorts annually to serve 160 current and aspiring directors and administrators
2) Delivering cohort-based learning to current and aspiring directors and administrators in every county within the service area
3) Providing 9 sessions on the topics (below) approved by Early Years which will be consistent statewide and delivered in accordance with Early Years' requirements
4) Using interactive adult-learning approaches that encourage discussion, practical application, peer learning, and professional networking
5) Building director capacity to lead continuous quality improvement (CQI) in their programs.
6) Maintaining enrollment and attendance records
7) Administering pre/post assessments for each topic area

B. PLC Required Topic Areas:

1) Effective Leadership
2) Child Care Business Practices
3) Child Care Requirements and Regulatory Partnerships
4) Complaints, Child Maltreatment Investigations, and Administrative Actions
5) Workforce Recruitment and Retention
6) QRIS Pathways & Professional Development Planning
7) Family Engagement
8) Community Relationships and Advocacy
9) Administrative Systems & Record-Keeping

The sequence of sessions and materials to be used must be reviewed by Early Years prior to implementation.

C. Required Outcome

At least 75% of directors included in the outcome measure will score 80% or higher on content-based assessments, demonstrating improved knowledge of program management practices.

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 service area;
2) Submit Financial Status Reports by the tenth (10^{th}) 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) Meet with Early Years staff quarterly to provide updates on activities, key accomplishments, and challenges/barriers to meeting program goals.
6) Notify Early Years staff within one week of a change in key CCR&R staff to ensure continued communication;
7) 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 twelve 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) Other data as requested by the Division.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants 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 service area (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 diverse groups such as child care providers, institutions of higher education, and community agencies,
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.

Estimated Timeline

November 10th	RFA Released
November 16th	Intent to Apply: Eligible agencies interested in applying for this RFA are encouraged to notify Early Years of their intent to apply through the following link: https://forms.gle/51egnasJY51tHBMm9 by 5 pm on November 16, 2026. This is optional and requested to assist Early Years in planning.
November 23rd	Applications due to Early Years by 5:00 PM
4th week of November	Initial review by RFA Selection Committee
1st week of December	Follow-up questions sent out to applicants and responses due back from applicants
2nd week of December	Notification of applicants and award

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 **5 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:
   - ✓ The budgets, budget narratives and FTE sheets are complete and submitted on the required forms.
     - Complete the FTE sheets first. They will auto-populate salary and fringe amounts in the Line-Item Budget
   - ✓ The budget narrative is detailed and incudes 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*.
   - ✓ The budget demonstrates efficient and effective use of financial resources

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1) **Relevant experience and results**

   Describe your organization's experience providing professional development, adult learning, or leadership support to early care and education professionals. Include strategies used, measurable outcomes, challenges addressed, and partnerships developed.

2) **PLC implementation**
   - Explain how you will recruit and retain current and aspiring directors/owners within all counties in the service area.
   - Provide a proposed work plan showing number of cohorts, estimated participants per cohort, schedule, and delivery format,
   - Identify outreach partners, anticipated barriers, and specific strategies to support attendance and access.
   - Explain how you will cover all required topics and make sessions practical and engaging.

3) **Peer learning and CQI application**
   - Describe how facilitators will create opportunities for peer networking, problem-solving, and application of new management practices.
   - Explain how participants will be supported in identifying and pursuing realistic CQI goals.

4) **Organizational capacity, staffing, and partnerships**
    - Describe partnerships and the organization's capacity to manage the project.
    - Describe the current and projected staff positions and the anticipated responsibilities to be filled under this application, including job descriptions for the positions.
    - Identify any proposed guest experts.

5) **Data quality, assessment, and performance management**
    - Explain how enrollment, attendance, unduplicated participation, pre/post assessments, and county coverage will be recorded and verified.
    - Describe how you will monitor progress toward the 75% assessment outcome and respond if participation or results fall below expectations.

PROPOSED SCORING CRITERIA

Criterion	**Points**
Relevant experience and results	10
PLC Implementation	30
Peer learning and CQI	20
Staffing and capacity	10
Data and assessment plan	10
Attachments	10
Budget and budget narrative	10
TOTAL	**100**