



**Department of Mental Health**

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**REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS (RFGA118)**

**Infant, Early Childhood and Family Mental Health  
Consultation and Education**

<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	<b>October 14, 2024</b>
<b>QUESTIONS DUE</b>	<b>October 25, 2024 – 4:30 PM (ET)</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS DUE BY</b>	<b>November 22, 2024– 4:30 PM (ET)</b>

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES, AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFGA WILL BE POSTED AT:**

<https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP>

**THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT INTERESTED PARTIES WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH APPLICATION TO PERIODICALLY CHECK THE ABOVE WEBPAGE FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RFGA.**

**STATE CONTACT:**

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## 1. OVERVIEW:

- 1.1. **SCOPE AND BACKGROUND:** Through this Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) the Department of Mental Health (DMH), hereinafter referred to as the “State,” is seeking applications to establish subrecipient agreements with one or more non-profit entities to provide Infant, Early Childhood and Family Mental Health (IECFMH) Consultation and Education services to parents and caregivers of young children birth through age eight.

In January 2023, the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant by the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Also referred to as the Vermont Integration Project: Building Integration in Vermont's B-5 Early Childhood Systems (VIP B-5), Vermont's PDG B-5 Renewal Grant will support Vermont to strengthen our early childhood system and ultimately improve outcomes for Vermont's young children. A key grant activity includes use of subgrants to address some of Vermont's most persistent barriers to serving children and families including innovative pilots to support quality, access, workforce, connecting families to services, regional priorities, mental health, support for children with disabilities and specialized needs, and support for family childcare homes. In collaboration with the Child Development Division (CDD), the Department of Mental Health (DMH) is responsible for supporting workforce development by implementing proven strategies to support infant, early childhood (through age eight), and family mental health and commit to collaborating on data linking, integration, and evaluation efforts.

Additional information on the PDG-5 grants can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood Development website at [Preschool Development Birth through Five | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/early-childhood-development).

The State is aware that there are funds allocated through other funding streams for consultation and education. This grant application is to expand on that work by infusing these one-time funds into the early childhood system to support workforce development and quality improvement and address the increase in mental health needs and of all Vermonters.

- 1.2. **RFGA OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of the RFGA is to solicit proposals from qualified applicants to build capacity for IECFMH Consultation and Education within Vermont's Early Childhood system. The prevention-based approach pairs a mental health consultant with adults in service and caregiving roles across different settings where infants and young children learn and grow. IECFMH Consultation and Education equips adults to facilitate children's healthy social and emotional development and promotes equity and inclusion. Services can include mental health and behavioral consultation, coaching and education to early care and learning environments, caregivers and other providers around specific children and/or general consultation, education and coaching on how to create a positive climate for social-emotional development. The state is especially interested in approaches that build workforce competency in IECFMH consultation through certification across the workforce and build equity and inclusion for all children and families.

1.3. **DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION:** The Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) strives to improve the health and well-being of Vermonters today and tomorrow and to protect those among us who are unable to protect themselves. The scope of AHS is profound. Through its six departments, twelve district offices, and a network of community partners and providers, it is responsible for the implementation and delivery of all human service programs within the state. Each department has a distinct area of focus and responsibility and contributes to the creation and sustenance of an entire system of human service supports.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) resides under AHS and has the same critical mission in mind: to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves. DMH continues to focus on its vision for self-determination, empowerment, recovery, and resiliency. This means being responsive to the needs of Vermonters and their families, as well as continuing to challenge ourselves to try to change society's culture, philosophy, and values, while working to fully embrace the concepts of recovery and resiliency. By improving our effectiveness and coordination of programs and services around the State, we will help Vermonters meet their needs.

- 1.4. **AGREEMENT PERIOD:** Agreements arising from this RFGA will be for up to 12 months, concluding by December 30, 2025. The State anticipates the start date for such agreements will be in January 2025. Although funding for the 2025 calendar year is expected, agreement term may be impacted by funding availability.
- 1.5. **SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT:** All communications concerning this RFGA are to be addressed in writing to the State Contact listed on the front page of this RFGA. Actual or attempted contact with any other individual from the State concerning this RFGA is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.
- 1.6. **QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:** Any applicant requiring clarification of any section of this RFGA or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFGA must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for question submission indicated on the first page of this RFGA. Questions may be e-mailed to the point of contact on the front page of this RFGA. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on the State's web site <https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP>. Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.
- 1.7. **CHANGES TO THIS RFGA:** Any modifications to this RFGA will be made in writing by the State through the issuance of an Addendum to this RFGA and posted online at <https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP>. Modifications from any other source are not to be considered.
- 1.8. **SOURCE OF FUNDS:** The Department anticipates using Federal funds for the resulting agreement(s). The Department may choose to modify the source of funding contingent upon the availability of funds at the time of award. Any selected organization will be subject to the requirements in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) #93.434, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

1.9. **PROPOSAL ASSISTANCE:** If an applicant requires assistance in preparing their proposal, registering with SAM.gov, or needs guidance on socioeconomic certifications, the applicant may contact the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Department of Economic Development (DED), APEX Accelerator (formerly the Procurement Technical Assistance Center [PTAC]). The Vermont APEX Accelerator specializes in helping small businesses navigate the documentation associated with State and Federal procurement. There is no cost to the Applicant for assistance provided by APEX Accelerator. Their website is: <https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/programs/ptac>.

## 2. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS/DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The State is interested in obtaining applications to meet the following need(s) to support Infant, Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Consultation and Education with Early Care and Learning professionals, parents/caregivers, and other key partners through use of PDG B-5 Renewal funds. These services do not include intensive or long-term mental health treatment.

2.1. **General:** Respondents should provide detailed proposals, containing a clearly defined approach, for IECFMH consultation and education supports to caregivers and early learning environments. The approach should establish specifics about the services delivered, populations to be supported, expected outcomes, proposed performance measures, and funding proposal per the requirements of this Section.

### 2.1.1. Responses should be sure to address the following:

- 2.1.1.1. What work is to be done?
- 2.1.1.2. What are the deliverables and associated outcomes anticipated?
- 2.1.1.3. Who is responsible for doing the work?
- 2.1.1.4. What is the timeline for the work to be done?
- 2.1.1.5. How will the work be performed?

2.2. **Applicability to the State's Objectives and Need Areas:** Proposals should establish a clear link between the services and/or programming proposed and meeting one or more of the specific objectives or need areas listed below:

- Building the IECFMH Consultation workforce. Activities may include developing and implementing an IECFMH workforce development plan, IECFMH Consultation certificate programs, Reflective Supervision training, IECFMH consultation certificate and/or other relevant IECFMH training.
- Targeted IECFMH consultation and education services to caregiving systems serving the following populations: low-income families, children and youth with special health care needs, English language learners, migrant/undocumented families, children and families experiencing homelessness, geographically isolated families, children with incarcerated parents, or children/families at risk or experiencing abuse or neglect.
- Increased capacity to serve privately insured children and children not enrolled or eligible for Children's Integrated Services (CIS).

- Increasing supports for parents and caregivers who can benefit from education and information on healthy early childhood social and emotional development, understanding and supporting young children who have specific mental health needs, and trauma-responsive parenting.
- Increased capacity for Early Care and Learning environments and Family Childcare Homes to engage in IECFMH consultation by providing direct operational supports, such as stipends for staff, cost of substitutes, etc.
- Increased/enhanced consultation, coaching and education to teachers, providers, and parents/caregivers on neurodivergence.
- Building capacity to ensure IECFMH consultation and education services meet the needs of multicultural populations, including through multicultural liaisons and translation supports and services.

**2.3. Reporting Requirements:** Respondents shall include in their responses a reporting approach that, at a minimum, provides the State with quarterly reporting on project progress. The proposed reporting approach shall include the frequency of reporting, and core data elements to be included in the periodic reporting. The State will consider how proposed reporting ties to proposed performance measures in evaluating responses.

**2.4. Performance Measures:** Responses must propose clear and measurable performance measures that will enable the State to determine the success of the services and/or programming, including quantity, quality and impact measures. These performance measures should be linked to the desired impact of the services and/or programming and should, at a minimum, reflect how the project has successfully created capacity for IECFMH consultation. For reference, potential measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of individuals served
- Measurable increases in service capacity
- Defined program outputs/milestones/accomplishments such as decreased expulsion/suspension rates, improvements in child social behavior, increases in teachers' sense of efficacy, decreases in teaching stress, reductions in staff turnover, increases in the overall quality of the program, increases in parent's sense of competence.
- Recipient satisfaction with services

**2.5. Applicant Eligibility:** To be considered eligible for an award, proposals and applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The Applicant must comply with the terms and conditions required for all State grant recipients. See Attachments and links section.
- The entity must be eligible to receive federal awards. See [CFDA 93.434](#) for specific eligibility information for PDG funds.
- Proposals must clearly demonstrate that the services proposed contribute to building capacity, quality and/or expand reach to populations not currently being served by IECFMH consultation.

2.6. **Exclusion Criteria:** In accordance with the federal Preschool Development Grant requirements and other federal requirements, the following funding restrictions apply:

- Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR § 75.442)
- Pre-award costs are not allowable.
- Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.
- Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

### 3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

3.1.1. **PRICING:** Applicants must price the terms of this solicitation at their best pricing. Any and all costs that the Applicant wishes the State to consider must be submitted for consideration.

3.1.2. Prices and rates shall remain firm for the term of the agreement. The pricing policy submitted by Applicant must (i) be clearly structured, accountable, and auditable and (ii) cover the full spectrum of materials and services required.

3.1.3. Funding through this grant is reimbursement-based.

3.2. **STATEMENT OF RIGHTS:** The State shall have the authority to evaluate Responses and select the Applicant(s) as may be determined to be in the best interest of the State and consistent with the goals and performance requirements outlined in this RFGA. The State of Vermont reserves the right to obtain clarification or additional information necessary to properly evaluate a proposal. Failure of Applicant to respond to a request for additional information or clarification could result in rejection of that Applicant's proposal. To secure a project that is deemed to be in the best interest of the State, the State reserves the right to accept or reject any and all applications, in whole or in part, with or without cause, and to waive technicalities in submissions. The State also reserves the right to make purchases outside of the awarded agreements where it is deemed in the best interest of the State.

3.2.1. **Presentation.** An in-person or webinar presentation by the Applicant may be required by the State if it will help the State's evaluation process. The State will factor information presented during presentations into the evaluation. Applicants will be responsible for all costs associated with providing the presentation.

3.3. **METHOD OF AWARD:** Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The State may award one or more agreements and reserves the right to make additional awards to other compliant applicants at any time if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the State.

3.3.1. **Evaluation Criteria:** Consideration shall be given to the Applicant's project approach and methodology, qualifications and experience, ability to provide the services within the defined timeline, cost, and success in completing similar projects, as applicable, and to the extent specified below. The State will use a

scoring scale of 100 total points, with a maximum of 80 points awarded based on the Technical Proposal and a maximum of 20 points awarded based on the Pricing Proposal. Points are divided into categories set forth below.

<b>Technical Proposal</b>	
Project Approach/Design	35
Alignment with State Objectives, Goals, and Needs	20
Organizational Capacity	15
Project Timeline	10
<b>Funding Proposal</b>	
Pricing Proposal	20
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

3.4. **AGREEMENT NEGOTIATION:** Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State may select one or more Applicants with which to negotiate an agreement, based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the State.

3.5. **COST OF PREPARATION:** Applicant shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFGA and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any presentations or demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.

3.6. **AGREEMENT TERMS:** The selected Applicant(s) will be expected to sign an agreement with the State, including the Standard Agreement Form and other standard attachments provided with this RFGA for reference.

3.6.1. **Business Registration.** To be awarded an agreement by the State of Vermont a Applicant (except an individual doing business in his/her own name) must be registered with the Vermont Secretary of State’s office <https://sos.vermont.gov/corporations/registration/> and must obtain a Business Account Number issued by the Vermont Department of Taxes <http://tax.vermont.gov/>.

3.6.2. **Payment Terms.** Subrecipient Agreements are funded on a reimbursement basis. Awardees will need to produce backup documentation to be reimbursed for expenses incurred for the work outlined in the Agreement(s).

**4. CONTENT AND FORMAT OF RESPONSES:**

The content and format requirements listed below are the minimum requirements for State evaluation. Applicants must adhere to the Section words limits below. The State will not evaluate any information provided in excess of the section page limitations. All responses shall be provided in size 12 Arial font.

4.1. The application should include a Cover Letter, a Technical Response, Management Response, Price Schedule, and Risk Assessment Checklist.

#### 4.2. COVER LETTER (Maximum 1000 words):

- 4.2.1. Applicants must explicitly identify which scopes of work identified in section 2.2 of this RFGA are included in their proposal for consideration.
- 4.2.2. **Confidentiality:** To the extent your application contains information you consider to be proprietary and confidential, you must comply with the following requirements concerning the contents of your cover letter and the submission of a redacted copy of your application (or affected portions thereof).
- 4.2.3. All responses to this RFGA will become part of the agreement file and will become a matter of public record under the State's Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. § 315 et seq. (the "Public Records Act"). If your response must include material that you consider to be proprietary and confidential under the Public Records Act, your cover letter must clearly identify each page or section of your response that you consider proprietary and confidential. Your cover letter must also include a written explanation **for each marked section** explaining why such material should be considered exempt from public disclosure in the event of a public records request, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the Applicant if the identified material were to be released. Additionally, you must include a redacted copy of your response for portions that are considered proprietary and confidential. Redactions must be limited so that the reviewer may understand the nature of the information being withheld. It is typically inappropriate to redact entire pages, or to redact the titles/captions of tables and figures. Under no circumstances may your entire response be marked confidential, and the State reserves the right to disqualify responses so marked.
- 4.2.4. **Exceptions to Agreement Terms and Conditions:** If an Applicant wishes to propose an exception to any terms and conditions set forth in the Standard Agreement Form and its attachments, such exceptions must be included in the cover letter to the RFGA response. Failure to note exceptions when responding to the RFGA will be deemed to be acceptance of the State terms and conditions. If exceptions are not noted in the response to this RFGA but raised during negotiations, the State reserves the right to cancel the negotiation if deemed to be in the best interests of the State. Note that exceptions to agreement terms may cause rejection of the proposal.

#### 4.3. TECHNICAL RESPONSE (Maximum 3000 words). In response to this RFGA, an Applicant shall:

- 4.3.1. Provide a clearly defined approach describing the services or programming proposed by the Applicant to increase capacity for IECFMH consultation. This approach should establish specifics about the services to be delivered, populations to be supported, expected outcomes, proposed performance measures, and funding proposal per the requirements of this Section.
- 4.3.2. Describe your capabilities and particular experience relevant to the RFGA requirements.
- 4.3.3. Describe the proposed reporting and performance measurement approach that is consistent with Sections 1 and 2.3 of this RFGA.



4.4. **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (Maximum 2000 words).** In response to this RFGA, an applicant shall:

- 4.4.1. Provide details concerning your organization, the organization's leadership, size, capabilities, similar efforts supported, and resources.
- 4.4.2. Address how your organization will provide the necessary resources and operational capacity to provide the expected services. This should, at a minimum, discuss staffing or resourcing strategies for achieving the proposed objectives.
- 4.4.3. Briefly discuss quality assurance, oversight, or internal control steps that will be in place to ensure proper execution of the proposed approach.

4.5. **PRIOR EXPERIENCE (Maximum 1000 words or two one-page letters.)** Please provide descriptions of two prior projects with which you have provided similar programming or services in the past. Experience may be explained through a partner's letter of support.

4.6. **PRICE SCHEDULE:** Proposals **must** include a funding proposal that includes the amount of funding requested and a proposed deliverable-based payment schedule consistent with the requirements of Section 4 of this RFGA. Applicants shall submit their pricing information using the RFGA budget template in section 7.2 of this RFGA.

4.7. **RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST:** This form **must** be completed and submitted as part of the response for the proposal to be considered valid. The [Risk Assessment Checklist](#) can be downloaded from the DMH Website.

## 5. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

5.1. **CLOSING DATE:** Applications must be received by the State by the due date specified on the front page of this RFGA. Late applications will not be considered. If unallocated funding is still available after timely applications are reviewed, the State may consider late submissions.

5.1.1. The State may, for cause, issue an addendum to change the date and time when applications are due. If a change is made, the State will inform all applicants by posting on the webpage indicated on the front page of this RFGA.

5.2. **STATE SECURITY PROCEDURES: Please be advised extra time will be needed when visiting or delivering information to State of Vermont offices. All individuals visiting State offices must present a valid government issued photo ID when entering the facility.**

5.2.1. State office buildings may be locked or otherwise closed to the public. If this RFGA permits hand delivery of applications, delivery instructions will be posted at the entrance to the State facility. **Any delay caused by State Security Procedures will be at the applicant's own risk.**

### 5.3. APPLICATION DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS:

5.3.1. **ELECTRONIC:** All applications for this RFGA shall be submitted via the following online application link: <https://form.jotform.com/242816396254059>

5.3.1.1. E-MAIL Applications. Emailed applications **will not** be accepted.

5.3.1.2. FAX APPLICATIONS: Faxed applications **will not** be accepted.

5.3.2. U.S. MAIL OR EXPRESS DELIVERY OR HAND DELIVERY: Paper applications **will not** be accepted.

5.3.3. An accommodation to the online method of submission can be requested by emailing the point of contact for this RFGA

## 6. APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST:

For reference, all the required elements listed below are built into the online application.

- ✓ Required Number of Copies (paper format only)
- ✓ Cover Letter
- ✓ Technical Response
- ✓ Management Response
- ✓ Redacted Technical Response, if applicable
- ✓ Prior Experience
- ✓ Price Schedule
- ✓ Completed Risk Assessment Checklist
- ✓ W-9 Tax Form Signed (non-electronically) in the past 6 months.

## 7. ATTACHMENTS & LINKS:

7.1. [Risk Assessment Checklist](#)

7.2. [Grantee Budget Template](#)

7.3. [Standard State Grant](#) with its associated attachments, including but not limited to:

7.3.1. [Grant Award Detail \(GAD\) – Part 1](#) (6/27/2024)

7.3.2. [Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants](#)  
(10/1/2024)

7.3.3. [Attachment E – Business Associate Agreement \(BAA\)](#) (5/22/2020)

7.3.4. [Attachment F – AHS Customary Contract/Grant Provisions](#) (6/19/2024)