



Notice of Funding Availability #746 – Early Learning Scholarship: Family Child Care Questions & Answers, Part 1 (Released February 7, 2017)

Below are answers to questions submitted in written form during its Information Sessions and questions submitted via email to Steve.Kim@sfgov.org. This document only captures some of the questions submitted to date. OECE will publish additional answers to questions in the coming days.

Questions that share an answer were grouped together by OECE. Questions and answers are organized around the following headings:

Minimum Qualifications:

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):

Early Learning Scholarship:

Preschool for All:

Target Populations:

Other:

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- 1) Question: Is there a minimum number of children that the ELS will finance by agency?
Answer: The minimum requirements for Early Learning Scholarship funding are to enroll at least 2 low-income children. If you are currently a Preschool for All provider, you may apply for Preschool for All 9-month or Preschool for All 12-month to serve 4-year olds of any income level.
- 2) Question: My program only works with children ages 2.5 to 5 years old, will this affect my eligibility?
Answer: No. Programs that serve children of any ages 0 to 5 are eligible to apply to this NOFA.
- 3) Question: What requirements are necessary to participate in the program?
Answer: The minimum qualifications to be eligible to receive in Early Learning Scholarship or Preschool for All funding are listed on pages 11-12 in the English version of the NOFA.
- 4) Question: Define 'good standing' with licensing.
Answer: An FCC must not be currently on conditional status with Community Care Licensing following a Type A violation.
- 5) Question: Can I apply if I only serve infants?
Answer: Yes.

- 6) Question: What does it mean to be “on time” with our financial obligations?
Answer: Providers must ensure child enrollment reporting is done in a timely manner to ensure payments are made accurately and on time.
- 7) Question: What do you mean by "financial obligations" referenced in the NOFA application requirements?
Answer: On page 16 of the NOFA it refers to “Financial Responsibility,” which simply states that OECE nor the City accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by an FCC responding to this NOFA (e.g., printing costs, consulting costs, etc.)

QRIS:

- 8) Question: There is only one space for the QRIS score. Is this the average from FCERS? What if last assessment was a CLASS score? What number goes in the space? An average of all numbers?
Answer: Only a current QRIS score is entered in this cell. The QRIS score is a number from 1 - 5 based on several elements including FCERS and CLASS assessment scores, as well as other elements. If an FCC has not yet been assessed or scored on the QRIS, they will agree to actively work with the QRIS technical assistance and training (T&TA) contractor(s) to achieve a Tier 3 rating no later than June 30, 2020. OECE will work with selected FCCs to schedule T&TA regarding the QRIS assessment.
- 9) Question: What if I don’t have a QRIS score, can I still apply to the ELS?
 Question: What happens if the provider does not have the points to reach Tier 3? How much will the provider be paid?
 Question: How can we get a QRIS assessment? Who do we call to set up an assessment?
Answer: If an FCC has not yet been assessed or scored on the QRIS or has a QRIS score lower than 3, the FCC can definitely apply for ELS funding. OECE is asking applicants to agree to work toward achieving a score of 3 or higher on the QRIS no later than June 30, 2020. OECE will work with selected FCCs to schedule training and technical assistance regarding the QRIS assessment after July 2017. You do not need to call anyone at this time. FCCs without a QRIS score will be paid at the Tier 3 rates through June 30, 2020.
- 10) Question: Does the QRIS score affect how much money you receive?
 Question: If I get to Tier 4 or 5 next year, will I receive the bonus (voucher)?
Answer: If you are qualified through the NOFA, receive Early Learning Scholarship funding to serve children, and your QRIS score increase to a 4 or 5 in subsequent years, your FCC will be eligible for the Annual Quality Grant amounts in those subsequent years.
- 11) Question: I have an appointment on March 3 to get my QRIS score. How do I notify you about my score?
 Question: I will have my QRIS on March 21st so I don’t have my QRIS score. What should I

put in that box?

Answer: OECE will accept your most recent QRIS rating if you have an assessment scheduled for the fiscal year (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018).

12) Question: If my score QRIS tier is 3.0, can I qualify for the ELS?

Answer: Yes.

13) Question: Does QRIS figure into the PFA Tuition Credit program?

Answer: Preschool for All 9 Month/12 Month providers must achieve and maintain a minimum QRIS score of Tier 3.

EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP:

14) Question: It sounds like ELS-City (Voucher) for non-target subsidy families are only good for one year and that families need to go back on SF3C for continuing care for a second year. Is this true?

Answer: There would be annual recertification to determine continued eligibility of families for all ELS funding. A family may become eligible for a state or federal subsidy or remain eligible for ELS funding. In these cases they would continue to receive services beyond one year. ELS-Bridge funding provides continuity of care, when approved by OECE, for families who lose their eligibility for local, state and/or federal subsidies. FCCs serving children ages 0 to 5 years old who have lost their subsidy eligibility and that have been approved by OECE will be funded at the ELS FCC Rate for at least a minimum of one program year. Target Population families will be funded until the child reaches kindergarten if they do not regain eligibility for state or federal subsidies, subject to funding availability.

15) Question: On the Excel file the cell under ELS-City (Moderate) doesn't update. What kind of scholarships can those families qualify for?

Answer: ELS – City (Moderate) funding is for providers who serve low-moderate-income families with children under the age of 4 whose families need ECE services but who are not eligible for other state or federal subsidies. Approved families verified as low-moderate-income may select and enroll in any OECE approved provider. Approved children may receive Early Learning Scholarship support for at least a minimum of one program year. ELS-City (Moderate) awards will be based on funding availability. The relevant cells on the Projected Peak Enrollment Form will indicate to OECE the demand and need for support for low-moderate income families.

16) Question: I have PFA children in my FCC do I need to complete both forms?

*Answer: You need to fill out both an NOFA Application Form and Peak Enrollment Form. If you only want to serve PFA 9 month/12 month then fill out the **FCC Peak Enrollment Form - Preschool for All ONLY form**. Otherwise, use the other FCC Peak Enrollment Form.*

17) Question: What does “full time” mean to OECE?

Answer: For ELS-Gap on State vouchers it's 30 hours or more a week. For ELS-City

(Voucher/Reserved) and (Bridge) it's 6.5 hours or more a day. Please refer to Page 5 of the NOFA for more information.

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL:

- 18) Question: I am a large FCC and want to apply for PFA. I am currently in the process of QRIS. Can I apply for ELS?

Answer: Yes, you are eligible to apply for ELS. Only FCCs with current Preschool for All 9-Month or 12-Month funding can apply for Preschool for All funding. If an FCC has not yet been assessed or scored on the QRIS, they must agree to actively work with the QRIS technical assistance and training (T&TA) contractor(s) to achieve a Tier 3 rating no later than June 30, 2020. OECE will work with selected FCCs to schedule T&TA regarding the QRIS assessment after July 2017.

- 19) Question: Does the 175 days for PFA still include 5 teacher work days?

Answer: PFA- 9 month is a continuation of PFA funding for existing PFA-9 month FCCs and will include all existing components of that program, including teacher work days. .

TARGET POPULATIONS:

- 20) Question: What happens to those children who are not part of the target population?

Answer: Target populations have been prioritized. OECE will seek to serve all eligible children, subject to fund availability.

OTHER:

- 21) Question: If an FCC is following the SF Private Preschool common dates for 2017-18 enrollment (March 7th acceptance letters sent out, March 14th enrollment forms due) how will we be able to accurately meet the March 3rd deadline if we want to apply for an ELS since we won't know if we have sufficient #s of target families enrolled?

Answer: We would encourage FCCs to apply for all relevant FY 2017-18 projected child enrollments to the best of their ability. Projections can be based on previous patterns of enrollment and/or desired enrollment of target families. OECE funding received by an FCC will be based on actual enrollments. Enrollment projections can be adjusted annually.

- 22) Question: When will the OECE calendar another meeting with Centers and FCCs where OECE staff team listens and Centers/FCCs talk? OECE needs to have town hall type meeting for FCC's and Centers as soon as possible (i.e. March) to receive questions/suggestions/comments in real time.

Answer: OECE values provider and family perspectives in our work. OECE concluded a three-month community engagement process in September through mid December 2016 to inform its work leading to the release of this NOFA. OECE will continue to seek feedback through multiple

forums to improve our efforts, and will proactively reach out to stakeholders about future opportunities.

- 23) Questions: What happens if we make mistakes on these forms, especially on the Projected Peak Enrollment Form?

Answer: Edits/updates can be made prior to the final submission date and time of March 3, 2017 at 5:00 pm. LAST UPDATE WILL BE CONSIDERED FINAL SUBMISSION. Once the deadline has passed edits/updates will not be allowed. An initial screening of your application will occur to ensure minimum qualifications have been met. If minimum qualifications are met, your application will then be reviewed and considered for funding. The City reserves the right to request supporting documentation of information submitted in the application. Please review the Selection Process and Criteria section in the NOFA for more information. Respondents who have been selected for funding will begin contract negotiations with OECE Staff. During this period, the peak enrollment form will be discussed and agreed upon for the development of the funding agreement.

- 24) Question: Are you prepared to deal with the fallout of us all losing C-Wages?

Answer: Transition Funding is to help currently funded providers ensure continuity of services for children currently enrolled, and provide some funding stability during the first two years of OECE's new ELS funding approach. FCCs currently funded through CWAGES and/or Preschool for All which will face reductions in their OECE funding under the new approach will be prioritized for this funding stream. Transition funding will be one-time funding paid over two years. Transition funding is limited and will be negotiated with OECE.

- 25) Question: Is OECE going to compensate for wage increases?

Answer: Paid FCC staff must be compensated at a rate no less than the San Francisco Minimum Wage Ordinance (\$14.00 per hour starting July 1, 2017). The ELS FCC Tier 3 rate incorporates compensation support.

- 26) Question: What are the consequences if an FCC does not apply or decides to leave after accepted?

Answer: If an FCC does not apply it would not be able to receive any OECE funding to support San Francisco children and families for three or more years. OECE does not anticipate future applications within the next three years but this may change depending on demand and funding availability. An FCC may choose to leave the ELS or PFA program after acceptance. Any advanced funding not used to serve ELS and/or PFA children and families would need to be returned to OECE.

- 27) Question: Will some current funding programs expire soon?

Answer: Yes, all of OECE's current funding programs will expire on June 30, 2017. Any provider who would like to continue to receive City funding or apply to receive City funding for the first time, must apply through the NOFA.

- 28) Question: How do we qualify for the Transition Funding? How much is it?

Answer: FCCs who project losing money under OECE's new funding approach qualify for

Transition Funding. FCCs must apply for Transition Funding to be awarded this funding. The amount of Transition Funding for each FCC will not exceed the FCC's projected loss under the new funding approach, as determined by OECE.

29) Question: Can I send my application by certified mail; if not can I do it in person?

Answer: No.

30) Question: Why wasn't the Powerpoint translated?

Answer: The Powerpoint presentation for the Information Session are available in English, Spanish and Chinese at <http://sfoece.org/funding-opportunities/>