Childcare Workforce Payment Administrator RFP
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated: 10/19/26

About this FAQ:

This page contains responses to all questions received for this RFP to ensure everyone has access to the same, most current information. This FAQ is updated based on questions asked within the defined Q&A window. This is a read-only resource; no action is required on this page. The Q&A period for this RFP closes at 11:59pm on October 16, 2026.

To submit a question, email DEELfunding@seattle.gov. Individual email responses will not be provided - answers will be posted here.

Question 1: 09/23/26

Hello DEEL Funding Team,

[REDACTED] is reviewing the newly released Childcare Workforce Payment Administrator RFP and plans to attend the October 1 information session.

We are a Washington nonprofit building youth, family-stabilization, child-welfare prevention, and community-support programming in Seattle. Because the RFP permits joint applicants, we are especially interested in whether DEEL has a proposer networking list, partner-matching process, or other mechanism for prospective applicants seeking an experienced fiscal/administrative partner for this opportunity.

Please also add [REDACTED] to any DEEL funding-opportunity or applicant notification list available for this and future solicitations.

Answer:

DEEL does not have a proposed networking list, partner-matching process, or other mechanism for prospective applicants wanting to apply for this RFP. The RFP permits applicants to partner with other organizations but they must submit one join application and show they've collaborated successfully in the past to deliver the full scope of work.

To be added to the DEEL listserv, please go to this link and submit your email address.

Question 2: 09/23/26

Hello DEEL Funding Team,

I have a clarification question regarding the eligibility language for the 2026 Childcare Workforce Payment Administrator RFP. The RFP webpage states that joint applicants must demonstrate a history of successful collaboration. [REDACTED] is a newer Washington nonprofit. If [REDACTED] were to partner with an experienced fiscal/payment-processing organization with the operational capacity to administer payments to approximately 5,000 childcare workers, would a newly formed prime/subcontractor relationship be eligible, or must the two organizations themselves have a documented prior history of working together?

Relatedly, may an applicant satisfy the payment-management, tax-guidance, data/privacy, and related administrative capacity requirements through a qualified subcontractor rather than submitting as formal joint applicants?

Thank you for clarifying. We want to make sure any application we prepare accurately meets the minimum qualifications.

Answer:

Eligibility states that the RFP permits applicants to partner with other organizations, but they must submit one joint application and **demonstrate they've collaborated successfully in the past** and can deliver the full scope of work together.

If subcontractors are part of your work plan, please make sure to provide detailed information and is captured in the budget.

Question 3: 09/25/26

On behalf of [REDACTED], please find both copied below and attached questions related to the DEEL Childcare Workforce Payment Administrator RFP. We appreciate your guidance and look forward to your responses.

3.1 Funding and Payment Structure

The RFP says total funding is "$477,000 over 3 years," with a Year 1 target budget of $150,000 (p. 1, Funding Amount). It also says the administrator will distribute $500 per worker to 5,000 workers each year (p. 2, About This Investment; p. 4, Payment Management), which comes to about $2.5 million a year. Can you please confirm if DEEL will advance the worker payment funds to the selected applicant? If so, does DEEL have any anticipated timing or structure in mind to those advances?

The RFP says performance/bonus payments "may be tied to 1-2 targeted performance measures of output outlined in section 5.3" (p. 6, Performance-Based Contracting). However, the RFP has no Section 5.3; Section 5 is the Application Process (p. 8). The same passage ties the base payment to "5,000 Seattle childcare workers paid per year," while prior rounds reached between 3,495 and 4,953 workers (p. 2). Can you please confirm if DEEL anticipates awarding this work via a performance-based contract, or other format?

Answer:

DEEL will advance the worker payment funds to the selected applicant at the time deemed appropriate by the applicant and DEEL. Typically it is around or before the time the application process starts.

There was a typo and it has been corrected in the amended version of the RFP Overview. It was meant to refer to section 3.3 not 5.3. This contract will not be a performance-based contract, this contract will have a bonus payment that may be tied to 1-2 targeted performance measured of output outlined in section 3.3.

3.2 Timeline and Contract Term

The RFP says contracting requirements must be met two weeks before the contract start date "(expected 1st September)" (p. 9, Appendix A, Contracting Readiness). It also lists the contract start as February 2027 (p. 1, Key Dates) and February 1, 2027 (p. 9, Detailed Timeline). Can you please confirm that the contract starts February 1, 2027, and that contracting requirements must therefore be met by about January 18, 2027?

The RFP says payments "will be issued once a year, during the period from October to November" (p. 4, Payment Management). Question 4 asks how workers will be paid "by December 2027" (p. 8). Appendix B also schedules a Summary of Payment Distributions for 10/15/27 (p. 11), which falls before most of that window. Can you please confirm the intended distribution window, and what the 10/15/27 report should cover?

Answer:

There was a typo and it has been corrected in the amended version of the RFP Overview. The expected start date for the contract is February 1, 2027 and that contract requirements must be met by about January 18, 2027.

Reporting dates and contents may be adjusted based on actual work plans.

3.3 Application Submission and Scoring

Question 4 asks for a personnel and non-personnel budget breakdown "in the template provided" (p. 8). Can you please confirm whether it is uploaded as an attachment or completed as form fields in Submittable?

The scoring table assigns 30 points to Financial Management and 10 points to Cost (p. 7, Section 4.2). The application questions label Section 2: Financial Management & Budget as worth 40 points (p. 8). Can you please confirm that Questions 4–6 are scored against both criteria, and whether the budget template itself is scored under Cost?

The RFP lists 12 narrative questions and a budget template (p. 8) but no other required attachments. It also says joint applicants must "show they've collaborated successfully in the past" (p. 1, p. 2 Table 1). Can you please confirm whether any additional attachments are required *or allowed,* such as financial statements, an organizational chart, or letters of partnership?

Answer:

Question 4 asks about the workplan and is submitted in a form field in submittable. There are no attachments for Question 4. The budget using the template will be uploaded as an attachment on Question 5.

10 points are scored under Cost that will be looking specifically at the budget and budget details.

Additional attachments can be uploaded after Question 12 for supporting documentation.

Attached is a PDF of a test application for reference.

3.4 Contracting and Insurance

Appendix A requires $1,000,000 Abuse and Molestation coverage "if working with children ages 0-17" (p. 10, Appendix A, item a.v). Page 9 also flags this coverage as a common barrier for new administrators. The administrator's scope is outreach, payments, data, and customer service to providers (p. 2, Table 1), with no direct contact with children. Can you please confirm that Abuse and Molestation coverage is not required for this contract?

Appendix A requires "Worker's Compensation insurance for Washington State as required by Title 51 RCW" (p. 10, item c). Can you please confirm this applies only to employees working in Washington, consistent with Title 51 RCW?

Answer:

The selected administrator is exempt from Abuse and Molestation coverage if they will not be working with children ages 0-17.

Yes, Title 51 RCW's workers' compensation insurance requirement applies to employers who have employees "reported" to Washington, which generally means employees who regularly work in, live in, or are principally localized in Washington, not just those physically present in the state at a given time.

3.5 Worker Eligibility

The RFP says eligible employees must "serve or work with children on-site for most of their shift" and be "an employee of the childcare program" (p. 3, Section 2.2.b). It does not address hours, tenure, or employment type. Can you please clarify whether there is a minimum number of hours, FTE, or length of employment? Are contractors, substitutes, or temporary staff eligible, or only W-2 employees?

The RFP says eligible employees must "have a STARS ID" (p. 3, Section 2.2.c) and that providers submit employees' STARS IDs at application (p. 4, Outreach & Recruitment). Can you please confirm whether an otherwise-eligible employee who lacks a STARS ID when the provider applies may get one before the application closes and still be included?

The RFP says employees must be employed by the provider "at the time of application" (p. 3, Section 2.2.a) and that payments reach workers through their provider employers (p. 1). It does not say what happens when a worker leaves between application and payout. Can you please clarify the following? (a) If a worker leaves before the administrator disburses funds, are they still eligible? (b) If a provider has received funds for a worker who leaves before being paid, should the provider pay the former employee, return the funds, or reassign them to a replacement hire? (c) Is the administrator responsible for recovering unused funds?

Answer:

The current FAQ for the current round of workforce payment can be found here. The administrator selected from this RFP will answer these questions for the contract term in partnership with DEEL. Please include details of how

you would change or improve from current program in your workplan. In terms of the STARS ID, an employee receives their STARS ID as soon as they apply for one.

3.6 Provider and Worker Verification

The RFP states a "preference for administrator to have a verified database of eligible childcare workers" (p. 4, Outreach & Recruitment) without defining it. Can you please clarify what would satisfy this preference?

The RFP says the application should let providers "verify their eligibility and number of qualifying employees" (p. 4). Question 10 asks what safeguards will "ensure payments reach only eligible employees" (p. 8). Can you please clarify what proof of employment DEEL expects the administrator to collect: a roster attestation, payroll records, or STARS ID checks alone?

Answer:

DEEL is not prescribing a single required method. For the purposes of this RFP, a “verified database of eligible childcare workers” simply means that the applicant can demonstrate the ability to reliably confirm that individuals meet the eligibility criteria defined in the RFP. This could be accomplished through any documented, consistent, and auditable process the applicant proposes. Applicants are free to propose the approach that best aligns with their operational model, provided it enables accurate and timely eligibility confirmation.

DEEL does not require one specific form of documentation and will evaluate proposed safeguards based on their effectiveness, feasibility, and auditability. Applicants should describe the safeguards used that may include documentation, verification steps, and controls to ensure that payments are issued only to eligible individuals.

3.7 Payment Flow and Tax

The logic model says the administrator will "develop a system to track and issue checks" (p. 3). The Payment Management section says only to "collect payment information for the participating childcare providers" (p. 4), without naming a payment method. Can you please confirm that electronic payments (ACH) to providers are acceptable, with paper checks available for providers who request them?

The RFP describes payments reaching workers "via their Seattle-based licensed childcare provider employers" (p. 1) and says "each childcare provider should receive a set payment per worker" (p. 4). Would DEEL consider having the administrator pay workers directly, either as the default or as an option for providers who prefer it?

The RFP makes the administrator responsible for the "timely and accurate distribution" of payments to workers through their employers (p. 1) and for fraud detection (p. 4). It does not say whether the administrator must confirm that providers actually paid their workers. Does DEEL require this verification, and what documentation is expected? In prior rounds (p. 2), what happened when a provider didn't pay out funds, and were those funds recovered?

The RFP requires "basic tax guidance" to providers (p. 2, Table 1, item D) and guidance "on the tax documentation required for distributing the payments" to employees (p. 4, Payment Management). Can you please clarify DEEL's expectations on the following? (a) Should the administrator issue a 1099 or other tax form to each provider? (b) Are the funds expected to pass through provider payroll as taxable wages? (c) Does DEEL have a position on whether providers report the funds as business income, with wages paid as an offsetting expense, so our guidance matches prior rounds?

Answer:

Electronic payments (ACH) to providers are acceptable, with paper checks available for the providers who request them.

The goal of this investment is to support Seattle children via a stable childcare workforce. The service target is 5,000 Seattle childcare workers receiving a one-time payment per year. Applicants are welcome to propose a model that they think best aligns with this goal.

The current FAQ for the current round of workforce payment can be found here. The administrator selected from this RFP will answer this question for the contract term in partnership with DEEL.

3.8 Data and Reporting

The RFP requires the administrator to "collect demographic information on the participating employees" (p. 4, Outreach & Recruitment). The Appendix B Provider Workforce table asks for aggregate counts by race for each provider (p. 12), and the Participating Employees table has no demographic fields. Can you please confirm whether demographics should be reported by providers in aggregate or collected from individual workers?

The RFP says the selected administrator "will receive the data and reports from the earlier payment rounds" (p. 3), but does not say when or in what form. Can you please confirm the timing, format, and fields of this data, and whether it will include provider contact details and worker STARS IDs?

Answer:

Demographics can be collected in aggregate from providers, but it can be adjusted based on actual work plans.

The selected applicant will received the data in raw spreadsheets of which questions were asked once the contract is signed. STARS IDs were only collected in 2026.

Question 4: 10/15/26

The RFP states payments to providers will be issued in October and November. It also states payments need to be in providers' hands within four weeks of submitting their application.

Our question is: which is correct? For example, if we plan for the provider application to go live in June, that would mean we would be required to issue payments in July for those that apply in June. However if we wait and don't open the application until September (so payments can be issued in Oct or Nov), all TA, customer service, and application reviews/eligibility verification would be compressed into a very compact timeframe, causing burden for everyone.

Answer:

The intent of stating October and November was to have payments issued to Childcare Workers in the last quarter of the year. Dates and contents may be adjusted based on actual work plan.
