



PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 submitted to the Office of State Procurement Services.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the requested information in the white spaces below. All responses (except signatures) must be typed; no hand-written forms will be accepted. See the guidance document posted with this form on the Procurement Services intranet site (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW			
Department Office/Division/Program:	DHHS/OCFS		
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:	Jennifer Levesque/Melanie Boucher		
(If applicable) Department Reference #:	ECE-25-5050		
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$ 479,997.00	Advantage CT / RQS #:	CT 10A 20250226000ECE255050
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:	5/1/2025	Proposed End Date: 12/30/2025
AMENDMENT	Original Start Date:		Effective Date:
	Previous End Date:		New End Date:
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:	Early Childhood Associates Inc, Framingham, MA		
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:	Evaluation of Preschool Development Grant Renewal		

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION			
Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Competitive Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Grant
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. State Statute/Agency Directed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Federal Agency Directed
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Willing and Qualified
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Client Choice
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. University Cooperative Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Other Authorization

Please respond to ALL of the questions in the following sections.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Provide a more detailed description and explain the need for the goods, services or grant to supplement the response in Part I.

The Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG-B5) is a grant available to states to support early childhood services for children birth through age five (5). There are two (2) types of PDG-B5 grants: Initial grants support states in conducting a comprehensive statewide birth through five (5) Needs Assessment followed by in-depth strategic planning; and renewal grants providing funds to states to carry out the Activities in their Strategic Plan. Maine was awarded \$8 million per year for three (3) years, through the Preschool Development Grant Renewal (PDG-R). The grant is a partnership between the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Maine Department of Education (DOE), and the Governor's Children's Cabinet. The PDG-R requires that states use a portion of the funding to evaluate the PDG-R funded projects that were implemented by the Department.

The Maine DHHS was selected by the Mills' Administration to oversee and manage this renewal grant. Staff at the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) in DHHS are responsible for operating both the new Help Me Grow program and the Child Care Development Block Grant which includes the Child Care Subsidy Program, Maine Road to Quality Professional Development Network, the Quality Rating System, and licensing and background checks for child care providers. In addition, OCFS staff, in partnership with DHHS' Chief Health Officer, oversee social and emotional behavioral health services for young children and their families. Lastly, DHHS operates most programming for vulnerable young children including TANF, child welfare, maternal and child health, home visiting services, public health nursing and Medicaid. The PDG-B5 grant is an integral part of the services provided to young children and families in Maine. Specific goals for the PDG-B5 include:

- a. Strengthening the Early Care and Education Workforce;
- b. Improving parent engagement and leadership;
- c. Better align Maine's Early Childhood Education System with the Early Elementary years to ensure better preparation for kindergarten and ensure smoother transitions into kindergarten;
- d. Increase quality Early Childhood Care and Education programming;
- e. Expand public Pre-K slots in communities with limited or no public Pre-K; and
- f. Build an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to inform policy decisions.

The purpose of this Agreement is to provide the Department with data-informed results on the programmatic benefits and efficacy of the PDG-R activities that have been implemented by the Department. The Provider shall evaluate the efficacy of the PDG-R activities that have been implemented, and, either themselves or through the use of a sub-contractor, shall conduct the Needs Assessment, which will assist the Department in revising the existing Strategic Plan.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the RFP number, if applicable.

Maine was awarded the PDG B-5 grant in December 2022. The PDG-B5 requires an annual evaluation to ensure the strategic goals laid out in the state's plan are being met. Due to the short timeline of this grant, the first annual evaluation report was due 12/30/2023 and Early Childhood Associates (ECA) work on evaluations of other Maine based early childhood grants over the past thirteen (13) years, ECA was identified as the vendor that could satisfy current timeline requirements. Leveraging the evaluation services of ECA mitigates ramp up time and positions the State to be able to submit the annual evaluation on time. This is critically important as the evaluation will be used to determine ongoing funding for the grant.

This sole source contract also leverages previous evaluation experience for the PDG-B5 services established under the initial grant executed through the Maine DOE. The Mills' administration made the decision to re-align the PDG-B5 grant under DHHS to create synergies with existing early childhood education efforts presently underway. As such, maintaining the current evaluation vendor will provide consistency and connection to prior grant services and serve as continuity moving forward.

3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

Evaluation costs were included in the state plan approved by Administration for Children and Families, Office of Early Childhood Development. These costs are considered fair and reasonable based on other consulting contracts with the Department and previous PDG-B5 evaluation services provided. Costs include a subcontracted effort to update and revise the Needs Assessment with creation of applicable assessment tools. The total cost of the evaluation effort is 8% of the programmed budget.

4. Describe the plan for future competition for the goods or services.

The Department does not plan to RFP these services.

PART IV: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) / MAINE JOBS & RECOVERY PLAN (MJRP)

Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

Yes, MJRP funds (023) – If Yes, please attach the approved Business Case(s).

Yes, ARPA funds (025) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.

No – If No, proceed to Part V.

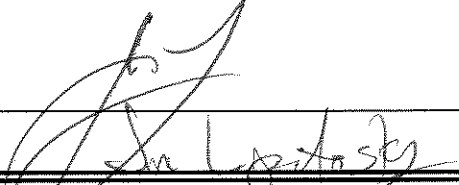

PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); CONTRACT WITH THE STATE

Maine law contains Conflict of Interest statutes directed to State Departments, State Officers, and Employees Generally under MRS Title 5, §18 and §18-A, in harmony with MRS Title 17, §3104.

The requesting department signatory understands and acknowledges Maine's Conflict of Interest statutes.

PART VI: APPROVALS

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:		Date:	2-May-25
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	DocuSigned by:  Kathy Paquette 41C2BA36FAF44CD...		
Typed Name:	Kathy Paquette	Date:	5/13/2025