

**2013 QRIS-PROGRAM QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS #3
For anticipated release on 2-29-2013**

Important Change to Grant Eligibility for Programs in Draft Status 2/22/13

After carefully considering feedback from the field, EEC has made a change to the eligibility requirements for this round of the QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grants. For this round of funding only, this change will apply only to any QRIS program applications in the QPM that were self-assessed at a Level 2 and at a status of “Final-Submitted to EEC” as of October 1, 2012 that were returned to “Draft” status by EEC as a result of the review process. These programs will be eligible as Level 2 programs for both Durable Goods and Services Funding and Program Planning Funding, providing they meet all other eligibility requirements.

If a program has already submitted a grant application and would like to edit to their grant application as a result of these changes, programs may contact gris@supportunitedway.org and request that their grant application be reopened to allow for editing. All requests to reopen grant applications must be received by 3-1-2013, and all grant applications must be submitted by the dates outlined in the RFR.

Required Documents

- 1. The RFR says that all required documents must be postmarked by 2-25-2013. What if I mailed my documents on February 26th or 27th? The might still arrive on time. Will I still be eligible for the grant?**

No, if your required documents were postmarked after 2-25-2013 your application would not meet the grant application requirements specified in the RFR and you would not be eligible for a grant at this time.

- 2. The RFR says that all required documents must be postmarked by 2-25-2013. What if I forgot to put some of the documents in the envelope or sent some wrong documentation. Can I just send them later? Will I still be eligible for the grant?**

No, if a complete and correct set of required documents were not mailed and postmarked by 2-25-2013 your application would not meet the grant application requirements specified in the RFR and you would not be eligible for a grant at this time.

Funding

- 3. Will the “sequester” (Federal government budget cuts) affect us if we are awarded a grant. Could we be awarded a grant and not receive reimbursement at the end due to these budget cuts?**

The Race-to-the-Top/Early Learning Challenge grant funds this project; these funds are not impacted by the federal government “sequester”.

- 4. We are a Family Child Care system; several of our educators who are applying for the grant have said they are unable to participate fully because they do not have funds available to spend \$2500 and wait to be reimbursed. If we apply for the grants as an agency, is it possible to purchase goods for them and get reimbursed?**

Yes as a lead agency this is allowable however the purchases should be specific to the needs of the individual family child care program and approved by the family child care educator.

- 5. Are programs required to keep a separate cost center for grant funds? Can we just run this through our program expenditures? What additional reporting requirements, if any, result from these federal funds?**

No, a separate cost center is not required. Please refer to page 16 of the RFR for additional information regarding accounting practices and procedures, and to the required form “Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act” for additional information on the additional reporting requirements for grantees re: Federal Funding.

- 6. Can a program apply for a portion of program planning and a portion of goods and services if they are Level 2 verified? If yes, what would the max level of funding a program could apply for?**

No, programs may only apply for one type of funding in an individual grant application; the funding types may not be mixed in a single application. If a Lead Agency is submitting multiple applications, they may submit some of the applications for Program Planning funding and some for Durable Goods and Services funding. The level of funding programs are eligible for is specified on page 9 of the RFR.

- 7. How do Family Child Care Educators document paying themselves for "overtime" hours under this grant?**

All funds awarded to a program/educator will be paid on a reimbursement basis. The program/educator must purchase the services or goods and, after receiving the services or goods, submit evidence of their out-of-pocket expenses for reimbursement. Evidence of payment for these hours could include, but is not limited to, payroll records and/or cancelled checks.

Online Grant Application

- 8. In the grant where it asked for Program/Educator Legal Name should I be using the name of the program we are applying for or the Legal Name of the Agency? We are only applying for that one program and not as a lead agency.**

The Program/Educator legal name would typically be the name listed on your EEC License. Note that we are not able to provide individual legal advice to programs or educators on which entity should be named on a legal form and/or who in their organization should sign these forms.

- 9. The application asks for the number of children enrolled, should this number be as of February 15th?**

Yes, please provide the number of children enrolled as of February 15, 2013

- 10. I am assuming the proposals need to be written in English....We have many Spanish providers inquiring. ~ Do the proposals need to be written in English?**

Yes, the proposal needs to be written in English.

- 11. When putting in your durable goods in the budget under proposed purchases do you list thing individually or can you bundle thing. If you need multicultural items, do you have to list, books, dolls, posters or can you just bundle. Even science items, do you want us to list things individually? Do I place all of the items to be purchased on the one page? Do we only put the total of all the items in the budget amount requested box? I need an example on how to fill up the budget section.**

Please note the following directions found within the online grant application:

Budget Request

** indicates required field*

Please note the following information to assist you in completing this section of the application. For Program Planning funding, Staffing and Overhead are the only allowable expenses. For Durable Goods and Services Funding, Durable Goods and Services and Overhead are the only allowable expenses.

Proposed Purchase or Expenditure – Tell us the items you plan to purchase in this text box. Group them together if there is more than one item. If you do not have enough space in this box, you may continue your description in the box below.

Budget Narrative – Tell us the vendors for the items you plan to purchase and how much each item costs. If you do not have enough space in this box, you may continue your description in the box below.

What Are Your Plans for Implementation? – Tell us how this expenditure will help your program move towards the next level of the QRIS. If your expenditure is for maintenance, tell us why the maintenance is necessary.

When completing the online grant application, group items together in the “Proposed Purchase or Expenditure” text box. **It is required that each specific purchase or expenditure be listed.** For example, it would be correct to list in this box: Step It Up Wooden Changing Table, 3 of 7 ½” Stacking Classroom Chair, Large Tumbling Mat; 15 of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) Book. It would be incorrect to list in this box: classroom furniture, assessment tools. A second text box is provided if the first text box does not provide enough space to list of the proposed purchases and expenditures.

In the “Budget Amount Requested Box” put the total cost of all the proposed purchases or expenditures. In the “Budget Narrative” box provide information about the vendors and the individual costs of the items you are purchasing. A second text box is provided if the first text box does not provide enough space to complete the budget narrative.

12. In the Budget Request of the online grant application...I am prompted to answer "yes" or "no" for each standard. How can I list ALL expenditures and then answer "yes" or "no" appropriately as various items will not fit under one standard? OR Am I expected to complete one page for each standard, with the corresponding expenditures listed?

This section of the online grant application lists the five areas of the QRIS standards and requests the applicant indicate yes or no for each standard area. If any of the items your proposed purchases or expenditures are intended to support or maintain upward movement in the QRIS in a standard area, indicate yes for that standard area. If none of your proposed purchases or expenditures are linked to a QRIS in a standard area, indicate no for that standard area. No, it is not possible to complete a separate page; the entire Budget Request section of the online grant application is contained on a single page.

Eligibility

13. If we have submitted our self-assessment after February 15th are we now too late to apply for the grant?

Yes, a program/educator would not be eligible for this grant opportunity if they did not submit a final self-assessed QRIS level 1, 2, 3, or 4 application in EEC's online QRIS Program Manager (QPM) by 2-15-2013.

14. Up until a few months ago, our Infant/Toddler Program and Preschool Programs were in separate buildings. We have recently moved into a new building with Infant/Toddler (57children) on the 1st floor and preschool (60children) on the 2nd floor and combined our licenses. Still, each program has its own full time director and have different needs based on the measurement tools. Is it possible to apply as

each program type? Infant/Toddler as one grant request and Preschool as its own grant request now that we are under the same license?

In order to be eligible to apply for the grant a program must meet all eligibility requirements listed in the “Eligibility” section of the RFR beginning on page 7. This includes submitting a separate and complete QRIS self-assessment. Two programs being combined under one license will not affect eligibility for the grant as long as all other grant requirements are met.

15. If we have two programs, one preschool and one school age, under the same license, should we apply for both programs under one application or would it be best to apply for the programs with two separate applications?

Programs must make this judgment independently; we are not able to provide individual advice to programs or educators on what type of grant application they should submit.

16. I need to know whether I am eligible to apply for the online grant since my summary doesn't say 'final' on it. If not, what must I do to qualify for the next round?

*In order to be eligible to apply for the grant a program must meet all eligibility requirements listed in the “Eligibility” section of the RFR beginning on page 7, including the status of the application in the QRIS Program Manager. Note the following exception in **Important Change to Grant Eligibility for Programs in Draft Status 2/22/13** found at the top of the first page of this document. The eligibility requirements for the next round of funding will be specified in the RFR when it is released at a future date.*

17. If an educator has submitted a self assessment during the past months and has been verified by EEC, do they need to submit a new one with a current date?

No, this would not be required in order to be eligible to apply for the grant.

18. Does my QRIS application in the QPM need to be in final status by February 15th or by March 8th to be eligible for this grant?

A QRIS application in the QPM needs to be in final status by February 15, 2013 in order to be eligible for this grant opportunity with the following exception: For this round of funding only, this change will apply only to any QRIS program applications in the QPM that were self-assessed at a Level 2 and at a status of “Final-Submitted to EEC” as of October 1, 2012 that were returned to “Draft” status by EEC as a result of the review process. These programs will be eligible as Level 2 programs for both Durable Goods and Services Funding and Program Planning Funding, providing they meet all other eligibility requirements.

19. If I serve 13 children but some of them are part time am I eligible for up to \$5000 in Durable Goods and Services Funding? Does the enrollment number of 12 referenced in the in the RFR mean 12 children or 12 FTE's?

Yes, you would be eligible for up to \$5000 in funding. The number refers to children enrolled, not FTE's (full time equivalents).

20. Under the QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grant, eligibility section, is the following definition for "Financial Assistance": *Financial Assistance: For purposes of this grant, financial assistance includes: EEC financial assistance, Head Start funding, privately subsidized scholarships for families meeting EEC income eligible criteria (i.e., total household income at or below 85% of the state median income), or the number of preschool children qualifying for free/reduced lunch (public schools only) at your site (not district). The last section says, "The number of preschool children qualifying for free or reduced lunch." Should that actually be school children?

No, "preschool children" is used correctly in this definition.

Vendors

21. If we are planning to order from a catalogue like Discount School Supplies, are quotes from 2 other catalogues adequate as bids? ~ If we need equipment found in school supply catalogues, such as Discount School Supply, are price quotes from other such catalogues acceptable as the other bids?

A price quote will need to include the complete cost of the proposed purchase or expenditure, including any shipping costs and/or taxes. A paper or online order form or quote listing all of these costs would be acceptable; simply providing a copy of the catalog would not be accepted in lieu of a bid.

Lead Agency Participation

22. This entity runs 4 Early Learning Child Care Centers and 2 After School Programs. All 6 are EEC Licensed and are at QRIS Level 2. Do I need to apply individually for each of the 6 programs or are we considered a "Lead Agency"? ~ Our entity has two licensed after-school child care programs...When applying for the QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grant, should we consider our entity the 'lead agency' and submit an application for each site? Each site has its own EEC program number and license number. Also, should the contact person be me, the executive director, or the director of the licensed programs?

Programs must make this judgment independently; we are not able to provide individual advice to programs or educators on what type of grant application they should submit. The contact person designated in the application will need to be responsive to important communications about the grant application; programs should choose a staff member who is best able to fulfill this responsibility.

23. Can Lead Agencies participate in this grant opportunity more than once during a calendar year? If so, is the cap 15 programs and up to \$25,000 for each round of the grants or for the calendar year?

Yes, Lead Agencies may participate more than once during the calendar year, but the cap for awards for the entire calendar year is 15 programs and up to \$25,000 for the calendar year.

24. I will be submitting for three of our child care locations. Shall I submit one request or three separate requests?

Programs must make this judgment independently; we are not able to provide individual advice to programs or educators on what type of grant application they should submit.

25. Must a Lead Agency ask for reimbursements for multiple programs at one time or can they ask for reimbursement by individual program?

Reimbursements forms will be submitted once for each program/provider grant awarded. Lead Agencies may request reimbursement for a grant award as soon as an individual program/provider has expended their grant fund.

26. I work for a large non-profit with three School age sites. Each site has a site director and all three are under my supervision. We are at level 1 with drafts for level 2 QRIS and want to apply for grant dollars so that we can reach that level 2 in each of these sites. Do I/we need to send in a separate grant request for each of these three sites? Or, can we do it as one request for all three? The plan for each of these sites is almost identical since we have been working as an agency to improve their QRIS level.

Programs must make the judgment independently to apply for grants through a Lead Agency; we are not able to provide individual advice to programs or educators on what type of grant application they should submit. It is not allowable combine requests for multiple programs into one grant application; even within a Lead Agency application, an individual application is completed on behalf of each individual program or educator requesting funding.

27. We have four programs at different sites that we would like to submit applications for. Would it be possible to apply as four different individual programs (with four different applications) even if they have the same Tax ID and DUNS numbers, or would we have to apply as a lead agency and include those four programs within our application?

Depending on the legal and/or organization structure of your entity, several individual programs may have the same DUNS or Tax ID numbers (for example, this would be the case for a public school system). This does not disqualify these programs from submitting individual program applications, should they choose to do so.

28. Two organizations merged and have a new name. They are no longer their own entity, however many of their documents (EEC license & DUNS #) are still under the name of the previous program.

A.) Which DUNS # do we use?

Use the DUNS number that is linked to the current legal name of the entity.

B.) Is it OK that all the paperwork (names, signatures, etc.) will be from one entity and the official name and license of the program (and QRIS documentation) will list the other entity?

In this case, while the program is still in the process of transitioning to the new legal name this would be allowable.

C.) They have a Preschool and School Age Program on the same site that uses the same EEC license. I understood from the training that we can apply for separate grants – as they are separate programs. However, when they listed themselves in the QRIS registry (in 2010) they listed both programs under one license number (and all the staff are under one list as well). If we head down the path of “separating” them (as we should to evaluate and move through the QRIS levels) is the SACC program not allowed to apply for this grant because we didn’t separate them (and register the school age program as a QRIS level 1 program on its own) by the February 15th deadline?

That is correct, they would not be eligible at this time; a program must meet all eligibility requirements in order to participate in the grant opportunity.

29. Our agency consists of several stand-alone programs (both center-based and school age) with different license #s and accreditation #s. However, these programs fall under one tax id# (and same DUNS# and EIN).

A.) We understand that they may choose to apply separately (not subject to the lead agency cap) or that they may choose to apply under the lead agency (which would be subject the lead agency cap).

That is correct. Please see the response to Question #27.

B.) We also understand that the lead agency cap refers to a calendar year period, not a grant fiscal year period. Please confirm or clarify.

That is correct. Please see the response to Question #23.

C.) In addition, we understand that both types of applications may apply for the 8% admin/overhead. Please confirm or clarify.

No, administrative overhead is only allowable in Lead Agency applications.

Other

30. How long are we required to keep the fiscal documentation on file?

The State Records Retention Schedule provides that grant financial records should be kept for six (6) years after the last grant payment is made.” Massachusetts Statewide Records Retention Schedule 01-11, Section D1-2.

31. The grant states, “Programs/educators may not apply more than once during any calendar year. Programs/educators will be eligible to apply for a QRIS Quality Program Improvement grant annually.” Please clarify what is meant by calendar year. Does this mean the grant start date or the grant end date? ~ If you apply for the grant in March 2013 and do not receive any funding, are you eligible to apply again in the second round for 2013? ~ If I apply for a grant in this round and do not receive it, can I apply again for the next grant or do I need to wait until next year?

Programs and providers may only receive one QRIS Program Quality Improvement Grant during the calendar year 2013. If a program does not receive a grant in this round, they may apply again in the next round of 2013 funding.

32. Can participants receive EEC training hours for attendance at the Technical Assistance session for this grant?

No, effective January 1, 2013, EEC requires that all training have either CEUs, CECs, or college credits associated with it. The goal is to ensure high quality training. Training must meet the guidelines for Continuing Education Units (CEUs), Competency Education Credits (CECs), or college coursework as stated within EEC Professional Development Policy P-EEC-13 for regulations.

33. If a person takes the Foundations of QRIS course for CEUs, can these CEUS be applied to one of the education requirement standards of QRIS? If so, what standard?

Yes, if the person has received the CEU’s. The QRIS application and self-assessment process is unique for each program. A program should review the standards and determine based on their program which standard that they should apply this measure to.

Allowable Expenditures – General Questions

34. If you are submitting as a single program, can you include 8% overhead or is this just for lead agencies?

No, administrative overhead is only allowable in Lead Agency applications.

35. Can Individual Family Child Care's apply for the 8% administrative overhead costs?

No, administrative overhead is only allowable in Lead Agency applications.

36. Is it possible to ask for funds under standards where we have received funds in the past? For example, last year, we received funds to improve our quality indoor and outdoor environments to help us reach standard 2A3.1. However, since receiving those funds, we have acquired some additional classrooms and could benefit from additional furniture to provide a quality environment. If the answer to this question is no, are we only able to request funds under standards where we have not received funds during past grant cycles?

Yes, it is possible this could be an allowable purchase or expenditure if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS.

37. Because of another grant we were awarded for 20 programs in our system, each educator needs funding for their final assessment observation conducted by a CDA advisor. Could the system or individual program apply for funding for this service?

No, this would not be an allowable expenditure with these grant funds

38. Can professional development be allowed in the form of CEU's or through the purchase of a college course?

No, this would be professional development and not an allowable expenditure with these grant funds

Allowable Expenditures – Program Planning Funding

39. Can Program Planning funding be used to cover time spent creating the various required documents for Level 2?

Yes, this could be an allowable use of grant funds as long as the documents were being completed by the classroom educator. These funds may not be used to compensate an administrator for time spent completing creating these documents.

40. Can Program Planning Funding be used to cover time spent finding a health consultant?

Yes, this could be an allowable use of grant funds as long as this work was being completed by the classroom educator. These funds may not be used to compensate an administrator for time spent doing this work.

41. Can Program Planning Funding be used to cover time spent working with a mentor to make sure IPDP meets QRIS requirements or to address issues in the Program related to QRIS identified in the tools?

Yes, this could be an allowable use of grant funds for the time spent out of the classroom by the classroom educator. These funds may not be used to compensate a mentor.

42. Can Program Planning Funding be used to cover time spent developing Program Improvement Plans?

Yes, this could be an allowable use of grant funds as long as this work was being completed by the classroom educator. These funds may not be used to compensate an administrator for time spent doing this work.

43. Can Program Planning Funding be used to move from Level 1 to Level 3?

Programs/educators are encouraged to use the funding to move as far upwards as possible in the QRIS; they are not limited to working only towards the next QRIS level. Program Planning Funding is available to programs at Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. It may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable).

44. Can Program Planning Grant funds be used for educators to complete the other tools associated with QRIS such as the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment includes, the PAS or BAS, and the Program Improvement Plan? Essentially, the QRIS Measurement Tools listed from the site here: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qris/qris-resources-for-programs.html>.

Yes, this would be an allowable use of grant funds as long as the tools were being completed by the classroom educator. These funds may not be used to compensate an administrator for time spent completing these tools.

45. The program planning grant funds <may> be spent completing observational tools. Can money be spent to purchase the tools under this header?

No, this would not be an allowable expenditure. Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable).

46. I'm a family childcare provider and I want to hire a person to complete the overtime hours pertaining to the Environment Rating Scale for QRIS, are there specific hours that need to be completed by the individual and how many hours can I pay this individual for the overtime hours?

No, hiring a consultant to complete the ERS would not be an allowable expenditure. Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable). If the funding is used to hire substitute teachers, the number of hours would be determined by the submitted plan, the hourly rate, and the total amount of grant funding approved.

47. After a director has worked her 40 hours (~7-4), can she/he qualify as a substitute to provide planning time for a teacher who is scheduled to be in a classroom from 4-6 and can this be an allowable expense under the Individual Program Planning Funding?

If the director is certified as a teacher and will be performing duties as a classroom teacher, then they qualify as the substitute teacher. However documentation by the program will be expected to be maintained that demonstrates the director is qualified and was performing the work of a substitute teacher. Compensation will be at the hourly rate of the classroom teacher. Ideally, the classroom teacher or another should be afforded the overtime first.

48. If an administrator in a center has a defined role as both teacher and director and has a schedule in which she works in the classroom during a certain part of the day on a regular basis (every morning, for example), would she still not be eligible to receive any funds for herself as a teacher so that a sub could replace her in the part of the day when she has a regular teaching time so that she can plan with other teachers? ~ If an administrator is a half time teaching director and spends 50% of her(his) time in the classroom, can the Individual Program Planning Funding be used to pay a substitute so that she(he) can be excused from teaching duties to work on planning and classroom ratings for the QRIS?

In these cases, a substitute teacher could be hired only for hours this educator is scheduled to be working in the classroom. These funds may not be used to compensate an administrator during regularly scheduled administrative time. If the director is certified as a teacher and will be performing duties as a classroom teacher, then they qualify as the teacher or substitute teacher. However documentation by the program will be expected to be maintained that demonstrates the director is qualified and was performing the work of a teacher or substitute teacher. Compensation will be at the hourly rate of the classroom teacher.

49. Are programs choosing to apply for program planning grants able to include related payroll tax and fringe benefit costs in their grant(s)? ~ Can you please clarify what is included as allowable in "compensation" of teachers and substitutes? Is it just the hourly wage or can it include the associated benefits (insurance, taxes, etc.)?

These funds are to be used strictly as monetary compensation (teacher's hourly rate) but can include costs that are normally applied to an employee's salary.

50. I am a Family Child Care provider. How do I determine an hourly rate for program planning time? Is it tied somehow to the rate per child for vouchers?

Providers should look at market rates of hourly pay for similar positions, such as preschool teachers, in your region of the state to determine a reasonable rate. United Way, in collaboration with EEC, reserves the right to specify/approve an hourly maximum rate that can be spent on staff compensation. No, this rate of pay is not tied to the voucher rate.

51. If staff members work overtime hours as planning time for the Program Planning Grant I will need to pay them time and a half. Is that okay?

Yes, that is allowable for staff members that are working over forty hours in a work week. Programs are responsible for meeting all legal and contractual obligations in compensating staff members working additional hours.

52. How do you treat overtime when program educators' scheduled workweeks are less than 40 hours?

Educators may be paid their regular hourly rate (or a rate determine for a provider as discussed above) for up to forty hours in a work week; they may only be paid time and a half for hours that exceed forty in a week. Programs are responsible for meeting all legal and contractual obligations in compensating staff members working additional hours.

53. Can I use the Program Planning funding to pay teachers to take the online QRIS course so they can learn more about QRIS to help them with their planning?

No, professional development would not be an allowable expenditure. Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable).

54. I have a question concerning the Program Planning Time Grant. I was wondering if program planning time would be allowed for educator's to work and plan for NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation?

This would only be an allowable expenditure if the NAEYC/NAFCC accreditation criteria being worked on during this time aligned with a program improvement plan supporting upward movement on the QRIS.

55. Can we pay consultant fees for someone to work with programs on NAEYC accreditation, i.e. consult on portfolios, standards, etc. ~ Is staff time to work on NAEYC requirements eligible fund use for program planning?

No, this would not be an allowable expenditure. Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable), it may not be used to pay consultants.

56. Throughout the grant, when referring to program planning, substitute costs are specifically mentioned, as opposed to overtime costs.

A.) Please clarify that both substitute usage and overtime are eligible expenses under program planning.

Yes, as specified in the “Fund Use” section of the RFR beginning on page 13.

B.) We understand that the substitute costs may be used for the classroom teacher as well as aides whereas the overtime expenses may only be for the classroom teacher. Is this correct?

No, both classroom teachers and assistant teachers would be eligible to participate in planning time.

C.) How are programs to request overtime for an individual who is exempt-salaried?

The individual should be compensated at the same regular hourly rate as the classroom teacher is compensated at for the additional hours.

57. Question regarding Program Planning Grant: The funds for this <may be used> for educators to complete the required observational tools- can the time also be spend completing the other tools associated with QRIS not listed, i.e. the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment includes, the PAS or BAS, and the Program Improvement Plan? Essentially, the QRIS Measurement Tools listed from the site here: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qr/qr-resources-for-programs.html>

Yes, these are allowable expenses.

58. Can money from program planning grant funds be spent to purchase the observational tools?

No, this would not be an allowable expenditure. Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs for classroom educators and overhead (if overhead is applicable). Money from the Durable Goods and Services grant could be used to purchase observational tools.

Allowable Expenditures – Durable Goods and Services Funding

59. I would like to remove my cribs to a room connected to my classroom. The room needs to have some interior maintenance to accommodate for a sleep area for my infants. The current sleep area I would like to change to a gross motor room for my infants. Can I use Durable Goods and Services funds for this project as long as I link it to the QRIS Standards to either maintain a level or advance?

It is possible this could be an allowable expenditure if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS. Funding may not be used for any improvement resulting in a “major renovation” to the building and/or facility. Federal guidance on child care fund use defines “major renovation” as: (1) structural changes to the foundation, roof, floor, exterior or load-bearing walls of a facility, or the extension of a facility to increase its floor area; or (2) extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change.

60. I operate a Head Start family day care. I would like to use the grant money to pave my parking area to provide a space for bike riding and other gross motor activities. This would help me to advance to level 3 on the QRIS scale and improve my outdoor environment. Is this something that would be considered a proper use of the grant? ~ We are at a self assessed level 3. When we assessed ourselves, EEC did not have their new regulations regarding playground surfacing, and in order to stay at a level 3, we need funds to resurface areas of the playground to ensure the safety off the children. Because we are not actually moving up a level, but rather maintain a level - or rather not moving backwards, would we be eligible to apply for QRIS funds?

No, this is not an allowable expenditure.

The grant info states that professional development cannot be used with grant funding...Is it possible to purchase "formal" training as in CEU's or college courses...can these be allowed under the durable goods grant?

No, professional development is not an allowable expenditure.

61. Are iPads for use in collecting assessment data in the classroom an allowable expenditure?

Yes, iPads for collecting assessment data are allowable if the expenditure is under \$500.00 and this purchase is related to a standard, however computer hardware is not an allowable expenditure this includes monitors, desktops, or laptops

62. Is a Wii or other game system an allowable expenditure? ~ Can educators purchase a Nintendo Wii?

It is possible this could be an allowable expenditure if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS, for example to increase opportunities for gross motor activity in an ASOST program or to support the needs of a child with an IEP. It would not be an allowable expenditure in an infant/toddler classroom.

63. Can I purchase required QRIS assessment and evaluation tools with grant funding?

Yes, it is possible this could be an allowable expenditure with Durable Goods and Services funding if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS. Note that Program Planning Funding may only be used for staffing costs and overhead (if overhead is applicable).

64. Can I purchase a refrigerator with this funding?

No, this is not an allowable expenditure.

65. Can I purchase a new sink and have it installed? If it is not a portable sink?

A portable sink is an allowable expenditure. A sink that is not portable sink, but a permanent fixture is considered a capital improvement to the property and the improvement results in a "major renovation" to the building and/or facility and would not be an allowable expenditure.

66. Can a public school used grant funds for improvements to a shared outdoor playground space such as adding mulch for safety?

Yes, it is possible this could be an allowable expenditure on a grant application if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS

67. Does outdoor equipment purchased with grant funds need to be portable or can it be permanently installed?

Yes, permanent outdoor equipment is an allowable type of expenditure. It is possible this could be an allowable expenditure on a grant application if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS.

68. I am a licensed FCC educator... I have a drainage issue in my back yard that limits my ability to access my outdoor space during certain times of year & after periods

of heavy rain. This could potentially affect my ability to advance to QRIS level 3. Would having this taken care of be something I could use the grant for?

No, this is not an allowable expenditure.

69. Are individual child licenses for online assessment systems are an allowable use of QRIS grand funds?

No, this is not an allowable expenditure.

70. Will health care consultations be allowed for providers that are Self-Assessed at Level 3 or 4?

Yes, this is an allowable type of expenditure if it were tied to a program improvement plan and supports upward movement on the QRIS.

71. Applying for this grant would allow us to replace supplies in our classrooms, and assist us in improving our ECERS/ITERS/SACERS scores, which would assist us in upward movement in QRIS. However, this is not listed on our QRIS application summary. Nowhere on our QRIS application summary profile does it discuss improving the ECERS/ITERS/SACERS scores, so I am concerned that we may miss out on this grant opportunity by requesting to purchase materials for our classrooms if that is not listed on the program application summary profile.

Program quality improvements that support raising scores on an assessment tool are an allowable type of expenditure if the requested purchases/expenditures are for allowable items and they are tied to a program improvement plan supporting upward movement on the QRIS.

72. My program was granted a level 2 (yay!) and now we are working towards a level 3. Most of, if not all, are done by the program, but we haven't been reviewed from an outside source. Can we use the funds for the reviewer and the process? Or that would come out of our own budget?

No, this would not be an allowable use of funds. EEC will schedule a QRIS validation visit with an outside reviewer as needed for the validation process at no cost to the program.

73. Are NAEYC accreditation fees eligible fund use for durable goods/services?

No, this would not be an allowable use of funds.

74. Are programs able to hire employees to translate documents instead of hiring a contractor? Cost would be significantly reduced if this is allowable. These expenses

would be salary line items not contracted line items as the individuals are employees of the program.

No, this would not be an allowable use of funds. A professional translator must be retained to provide these services.

75. Would the grant cover us purchasing a new assessment tool and the training on how to use this tool? Would this fall under durable goods?

Yes, the purchase of assessment tools may be an allowable expenditure. No, professional development is not an allowable expenditure with Durable Goods and Service grant funds.

76. If we want to apply for a grant to raise our ECERS score in a particular area, but the resulting higher score won't result in a move from QRIS level 2 to 3, can we still apply? We achieved the minimum score of 3 in ECERS for a criteria required for Level 2. Level 3 does not require a higher ECERS score and doesn't even address the same criteria. Progress in this area (materials reflecting diversity) does not appear on our Summary Profile for moving to Level 3. However we did write and submit a Program Improvement Plan with our QRIS Level 2 application for these criteria (1A.2.2) and we recognize its importance. ECERS helped us see where we could grow and we want to do more. Part of the Improvement Plan was to purchase more materials books and puzzles reflecting diversity and this grant opportunity initially seemed like a good fit. Now, I'm doubting the fit. I realize you can't comment specifically on our intention, but can you comment in general as to whether a move in ECERS score has to be tied to a move in QRIS score and what impact having a submitted Program Improved Plan has on this.

As the ECERS is a tool used as a piece of the overall quality efforts a program continuously strives for, an improvement in the ECERS score indicates an improvement in quality. However, improvement in the ECERS may not necessarily result in achievement of the next QRIS level; it is only one component of attaining that upward movement to the next QRIS level.

77. Many of our providers are renewing their NAFCC and since it is listed under documentation for the QRIS they were wondering if any of the money could be spent on NAFCC application fees?

No, this would not be an allowable use of funds.

78. Since the Strengthening Families Assessment asks if educators provide treats like coffee and muffins at drop-off or pick up time could an educator applying for the grant ask for money for a coffee maker?

No, this would not be an allowable use of funds.

79. Many of our providers did a self-assessment using the FCCERS. They were not as critical of their programs as they could have been (but this was their first time completing the assessment and to their defense they were not trained as they should have been due to the time constraints) I am assuming when the reliable rater comes out for educators now working toward level 3 these educators scores might be lower. If a provider asks for more science materials to add to the science area and they scored a 7 on the FCCERS in that area can they not ask for these items?

This may be an allowable expenditure. Programs/educator determine where the grant funding would best meet the needs of quality improvement for their program and connect it to the standards that they are working to advance to the next level even if they have work on this standard in past. Quality is about continuous self-assessment and improvements made to achieve and sustain quality.

80. The RFP states you can use funds to buy a camera to use in your program (to show parents what the children are learning. To create story boards etc.) Can they purchase film for the camera with these funds?

No, the purchase of consumables such as film, photo paper, printer ink, and/or photo development costs would not be allowable expenditures.

81. The RFP states that an educator can purchase curriculum aligned with the MA guidelines. Some educators purchase curriculum from vendors through the mail. If the curriculum is aligned with the MA Guidelines could they use funds to buy curriculum for the year? (they purchase curriculum ideas monthly for their programs)

Purchase of curriculum would be an allowable expenditure, but funds must be expended for goods and services received during the grant period. Purchase of monthly curriculum would not be allowable if the expenditure was specifically for a monthly good or service that falls outside of the grant period.

82. I understand that the funds can not be used to pay for a one time activity that will not support sustaining quality in a program in the long term...but could an educator hire a consultant to provide music and movement activities for her program monthly for multiple months?

No, this would not be an allowable expenditure.