

## Professional Services Call for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

To ensure alignment with Arkansas' vision for quality, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will release a Call for Proposals for professional services for Early Childhood providers beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. **The Call for Proposals application is due November 1, 2025.** Please review the FAQ below for more information about this process.

### Call for Proposals Overview

#### 1. Why was a Call for Proposals process put in place?

The Call for Proposals process has been established to ensure that all professional services funded by ADE align with the state's vision for high-quality early childhood education.

#### 2. What is different about the Call for Proposals model?

ADE currently funds vendors to support early childhood providers and teachers in improving classroom quality across child care and schools. Beginning in 2026-2027, all professional services will prioritize job-embedded coaching, establish local lead organizations as key partners in the distribution of improvement resources, and focus quality improvement contracts on three key subject areas.

To achieve these outcomes, ADE is releasing a Call for Proposals for interested vendors. Funding for professional services awarded through this opportunity is limited to the following unit types and subject areas. The Call for Proposals guidance document provides detailed unit type and subject area definitions.

Unit Types	Subject Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Job-embedded Coaching</li><li>• Group Training</li><li>• Technical Assistance (virtual and on-site)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult-Child Interactions</li><li>• High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) and Child Assessment</li><li>• Foundational Support</li></ul>

Vendors will propose a per-unit cost for each unit type and subject area they wish to provide. Vendors can elect to offer one or multiple professional services. When applying, vendors will provide the following:

- Maximum number of units
- Per-unit cost
- Type of units and subject areas they want to provide
- Geographies they wish to serve

ADE will review all applications together and make decisions accordingly. Vendors may be awarded for all, some, or no part of their application.

**3. [UPDATED] What does a Call for Proposals process mean *for vendors*?**

The Call for Proposals process is open to all vendors seeking ADE-funded contracts to deliver professional services to early childhood education professionals starting in July 2026. As a part of the application, vendors must propose the professional services they intend to offer and the geographic areas where they can deliver those services. An applicant does not need to be a current approved vendor to be selected.

**4. How will *local leads* support professional services in their regions?**

Local leads play a key role in ensuring that professional services meet regional needs. Drawing on their knowledge of local priorities and needs, local leads will coordinate closely with vendors to deliver professional services in alignment with their local plans to improve access to quality.

**5. What does a Call for Proposals mean *for providers*?**

Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the Call for Proposals process ensures that Arkansas providers receive ADE-funded professional services aligning with Arkansas' vision for quality. Through this process, local leads will collaborate with providers to ensure that the professional services offered (job-embedded coaching, training, and technical assistance) are responsive to provider needs.

**6. Why are only specific subject areas covered?**

The subject areas of adult-child interactions, HQIM, and child assessment, and foundational support align closely with Arkansas' vision for high-quality early childhood education and its vision to improve outcomes for children and families. ADE will prioritize funding and contracting for services within these three subject areas.

**7. Why are only certain unit types (coaching, training, technical assistance) offered for specific subject areas?**

The three unit types (job-embedded coaching, training, and technical assistance) are the most effective modalities for delivering professional services within the approved subject areas. This targeted approach aligns with Arkansas' vision for high-quality early childhood education and its commitment to improving outcomes for children and families.

**8. [NEW] Will licensing and/or prelicensing training be included in this scope?**

Moving forward, all licensing and pre-licensing training will be under the purview of ADE. For this reason, licensing and pre-licensing training is not be included in the Call for Proposals Scope.

**9. [NEW] Are vendors prohibited from offering additional services and product offerings in the future that are not included in this Call for Proposals scope?**

Vendors may continue to offer professional services outside of the scope of this Call for Proposals, but they will not receive funding from ADE for those services.

**10. Will only one professional services vendor be awarded per county?**

Not necessarily. ADE's priority is to ensure early childhood professionals across Arkansas have access to the services they need to provide high-quality early childhood care and education. For this reason, selected vendors may have overlapping skills, subject matter expertise, and geographies.

**11. How many grants will be awarded in total?**

There is no set number of grants to be awarded. There is a set budget and ADE will make final contract determinations based on factors such as service need, coverage area, cost competitiveness, and alignment with state priorities.

**12. Which early childhood professionals will receive services through this Call for Proposals?**

This Call for Proposals funds professional services for *all* early childhood education professionals, regardless of program type or funding source.

**13. [UPDATED] If awarded, how long will this contract last?**

Awarded contracts as a result of this Call for Proposals will have a five-year initial award, starting in July 2026, along with an annual redetermination by ADE. ADE reserves the right to adjust or terminate contracts based on performance.

## **Vendor Eligibility and Expectations**

**14. Who is eligible to complete the Call for Proposals application?**

Any vendor seeking ADE funding to provide professional services to early childhood professionals must apply through the Call for Proposals process. This includes a wide range of organizations and individuals with demonstrated experience, such as:

- Universities
- Education Service Cooperatives
- Government agencies
- Local early childhood lead organizations
- Nonprofit and for-profit organizations
- Other educational vendors or individuals with demonstrated experience delivering early childhood professional services

All applicants must clearly articulate their proposed services and demonstrate alignment with Arkansas' vision for quality early learning.

**15. [UPDATED] Can local leads apply to be vendors?**

Local leads may apply to provide professional services through the Call for Proposals process if they seek funding to deliver ADE-funded professional services to early childhood professionals under the designated subject areas.

If you are a local lead interested in becoming a professional services vendor, include considerations needed for capacity adjustments in the Narrative Application, particularly in response to the “Training and Capacity Building” question.

If a local lead is funded as a local lead and also provides professional services through this Call for Proposals, they must invoice ADE separately for the professional services they deliver under the CFP.

**16. I am a current local lead interested in applying. How does this affect the upcoming Local Leads Recompete process?**

Local leads and professional services vendors both play important roles in supporting Arkansas’ early childhood professionals. The Local Leads Recompete and Call for Proposals are distinct processes with separate purposes.

- The Local Leads Recompete process determines whether a region’s current local lead organization remains the best fit to fulfill local lead responsibilities.
- The Call for Proposals process allows ADE to identify and contract with professional services vendors who will deliver job-embedded coaching, training, and technical assistance to early childhood professionals during the 2026-2027 school year.

It’s possible that an organization can be awarded both the local leads designation and a professional services contract.

**17. [NEW] Will local leads have a role in vetting or selecting vendors through the Call for Proposals process?**

Local leads will not be directly involved in vetting or selecting vendors through the CFP process. However, local leads are encouraged to provide feedback on Arkansas’ professional services through the survey that OEC shared directly with them. If you are a local lead and need help accessing this survey, please reach out to Jennifer Douglas.

**18. I’m a vendor that has an established relationship with the state, offering professional services. Do I have to apply through this process?**

Yes, with a few exceptions. All vendors seeking funding to provide professional services must apply through the Call for Proposals process, unless they are an existing vendor that falls into one of the following categories:

- Mental health services
- Technical assistance for home visitors

- Communications support

Existing vendors providing services in the above areas are not included in the Call for Proposals process and may be eligible to continue their contracts with ADE.

If you are an existing vendor and have questions about whether your services are included in this Call for Proposals, please contact [ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov).

**19. [NEW] Do Child Care Aware organizations need to complete a Call for Proposals?**

If Child Care Aware organizations want to provide training, coaching, and/or technical assistance under the three subject areas outlined in the Call for Proposals, they will be required to complete the Call for Proposals application. OEC will release more information about funding additional traditional Child Care Aware activities beyond the Call for Proposals scope.

**20. Can I apply if I provide professional services for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?**

Yes. Professional services that support social-emotional learning (SEL) are eligible under the adult-child interactions subject area. This includes services that strengthen interactions promoting meaningful learning, social and emotional development, and school readiness.

For example, services aligned with approaches like [Conscious Discipline](#) may fall under this category if they focus on enhancing the quality of adult-child interactions in early learning settings.

Vendors offering SEL-related services should ensure their proposals clearly demonstrate alignment with the adult-child interactions focus area as defined in the Call for Proposals guidance.

**21. Can I apply for any unit on any topic?**

No. ADE has defined a specific set of allowable unit types and subject areas eligible for funding through the Call for Proposals process. Vendors must align their proposals with these approved combinations.

Guidance on which unit types are permitted for each subject area can be found in the Professional Services Matrix.

**22. Will any vendors be prioritized in the process?**

Only proposals offering professional services within the subject areas adult-child interactions, HQIM, and child assessment, and/or foundational supports, will be considered for funding and contracting through the Call for Proposals process.

**23. What should I do if my project doesn't clearly fit within the Call for Proposals categories?**

Some projects may not neatly align with the Call for Proposals structure. These can include PDR

administration, YPQA tool training and reviews, and work by Resource and Referral agencies. Additionally, certain required state and federal training may not be explicitly listed in the application.

If your proposed service supports statewide infrastructure, compliance, or required initiatives, it may fall outside the scope of the CFP. In these cases, please contact [ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov) for guidance on how to proceed.

#### **24. How should I determine the proposed unit cost, given the range of costs associated with implementation?**

The unit costing process is the same for job-embedded coaching, training, and on-site technical assistance: vendors should provide a unit cost for each proposed service and the anticipated number of units to be delivered.

When determining a proposed unit cost, vendors must account for all relevant expenses associated with delivering that unit. These include, but are not limited to:

- Personnel costs (e.g., trainer time, support staff)
- Any fees associated with conducting the unit (venue costs, materials and supplies, printing)
- Travel costs
- Other associated costs

In proposing a unit cost, vendors should consider:

- Their capacity to deliver the number of proposed units for the proposed geographies at that cost
- Their ability to demonstrate impact (including both quality and scale) for the cost amount if awarded the contract
- The competitiveness of the per-unit cost for the unit delivered

#### **25. [NEW] How should I consider staffing salaries when calculating a unit cost?**

When calculating a unit cost, vendors should begin by mapping the resources required to deliver each type of unit. Each unit—whether coaching, training, or technical assistance—should consider the salary and benefits of the staff delivering the service, proportional costs of support staff, administrative overhead, travel, and materials.

When calculating a unit cost, the vendor might consider the following questions:

- How many units, realistically, would our organization like to target to provide in one year?
- What would it take to deliver those units, considering staffing needs in particular?
- What other factors would impact the cost of those delivering those units? Mileage? Administrative support? Materials?

**26. [NEW] Since the Call for Proposals is a 5-year contract, will unit costs be fixed for the entire period? How should vendors account for annual changes like cost-of-living adjustments to salaries or increases in training material costs?**

ADE recommends that vendors calculate unit cost for the most immediate fiscal year and communicate necessary adjustments to unit costs as they arise during subsequent years in the contract term.

**27. [NEW] My organization wants to apply to provide a variety of training, which may differ greatly in costs. How do I calculate a unit cost if it differs greatly within subject areas or unit types?**

If a vendor's training unit cost has a significant range, a vendor may choose to create a new tab in the same Coverage and Price Schedule workbook rather than averaging. Be sure to name each tab descriptively.

For example, if Training X has a unit cost of \$50 and Training Y has a unit cost of \$290, and both fall under the Foundational Support, a vendor could create a new tab named "Training Y" and share the higher unit cost there to differentiate.

**28. [NEW] Does the unit need to be fulfilled fully by direct coaching, training, or technical assistance, or can it also include related activities?**

The unit can only be fulfilled by providing the full professional service. For example, if a vendor delivers 90 minutes of training and assigns 30 minutes of homework, that would not count as a full unit. A vendor must provide the entire 120 minutes of training to fulfill one unit. This is true for all unit types and subject areas.

**29. [NEW] Can units be billed partially?**

Vendors should not bill units partially. A vendor must provide the entire unit of service in a single engagement. For example, a vendor cannot bill for a half unit for a 30-minute coaching session.

**30. [NEW] Will there be a way to break down unit costs to show materials, supplies, or evaluation costs?**

Vendors can consider these contributing factors in their proposed unit cost, but ADE does not require an in-house evaluation and will only pay vendors for the unit cost to deliver the service.

**31. [NEW] Does hosting a conference fall under the scope of this Call for Proposals?**

No, hosting a conference does not fall under any of the three unit types under the scope of this Call for Proposals. However, a vendor may propose to deliver professional services within one of the three approved unit types at a conference. For example, a vendor can deliver a unit of training on adult-child interactions at a conference.

**32. How do I determine a proposed cost for virtual technical assistance?**

Unlike coaching, training, and on-site technical assistance, virtual technical assistance will *not* be

funded on a unit basis. Vendors should calculate this as a per-county, per-month cost, based on a predetermined, per-county rate. Proposed costs must be entered into the “B: Price Schedule” tab of the Coverage and Price Schedule.

**33. Is there a limit to the amount of funding I can be awarded?**

There is no defined contract maximum per vendor. ADE plans to award multiple professional services contracts totalling \$7-10 million. These contracts will span a range of skills, subject matter expertise, and geographical coverage to meet statewide needs.

It is important to note that completing the CFP process does not guarantee full funding. Final contracts may reflect some, all, or none of the proposed services. If awarded, each vendor’s contract will specify the maximum award amount per vendor based on factors such as service need, coverage area, cost competitiveness, and alignment with state priorities.

**34. What does it mean to be paid based on units delivered?**

Professional services vendors will submit monthly invoices reporting the units they have delivered. If fewer units are provided than originally contracted, ADE will only compensate for the units provided in that particular month.

**35. [NEW] How would a vendor address requests for professional services beyond the maximum approved amounts?**

ADE will regularly monitor unit usage and performance feedback and might increase the maximum approved contract amount on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, if a vendor reaches their maximum approved unit amount, the ADE may consider adding more units to their contract based on these factors.

## Application Logistics

**36. When is the application due?**

Call for Proposals applications are due by 4:00 pm on November 1, 2025. All materials must be submitted via [email](#) by the deadline to be considered.

**37. What do I need in order to complete this application?**

A completed application includes the following components:

- [Narrative Application](#) and relevant supporting artifacts (in PDF format)
- Coverage and Price Schedule (in Excel format)

Please carefully review the Call for Proposals guidance and step-by-step documents for specific instructions on completing and submitting each required component.



**38. I would like to submit a collaborative proposal in which multiple vendors collaborate to deliver a professional service. How would I apply?**

Select one lead vendor to be responsible for the application and reporting. In the application, be sure to clearly list all collaborating vendors and explain how the partnership will strengthen professional service delivery.

**39. Each question in the subject area portion of section C of the Narrative Application has a 300 per question word limit, should I submit an additional application if I go over this limit?**

No. While ADE encourages you to be concise in your responses, responses in the Narrative Application can be up to 500 words each. Please do not submit more than one Call for Proposals application. If you have any additional questions, please contact the ADE team at [ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov).

**40. How do I apply to offer HQIM units if ADE's approved HQIM list has not yet been released?**

The Office of Early Childhood is currently updating the HQIM list through a revised curriculum review process. This process draws on national best practices and is designed to ensure that all reviewed curricula:

- Align with the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework
- Reflect current child development research
- Support instructional quality for all students

Because the updated list will be released after the Call for Proposals application deadline, ADE encourages vendors interested in offering HQIM units to do the following in their application:

- Indicate if they are already trained in a particular curriculum
- Describe a plan for securing additional training for their team to support curricula on the final approved HQIM list

**41. [NEW] Does the Appendix I Funds per County tab in the Coverage and Price Schedule indicate the maximum award amount per county? How should this appendix impact proposed units?**

The Appendix tab shows an estimated annual funding amount allocated for each county based on the count of publicly funded classrooms per county as of August 2025. A vendor's proposed units should reflect maximum delivery capacity and may not necessarily be limited by the amount in this appendix. ADE will take budget limitations and vendor capacity into consideration when reviewing Call for Proposals applications.

This resource was provided to vendors as a reference point; the amounts are subject to change.

**42. [NEW] What types of classrooms/sites were included in the classroom count in the Appendix I Funds per County tab in the Coverage and Price Schedule?**

The Appendix counted all publicly-funded classrooms, counting licensed family child care homes as a single classroom. Out of School Time program classrooms were not counted as part of this count.

Please note that an update has been made to the Appendix tab in the Coverage and Price Schedule to reflect updates in classroom counts and corresponding funding ranges for a subset of counties only.

## More Information

### 43. [Updated] Who do I contact for more information?

Please contact the ADE team at [ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:ARECEQuality@ade.arkansas.gov) for more information. Questions will be accepted until **September 30th, 2025**.