

Bright Pathways RFP

Application Questions and Answers

Q: The RFP requires programming to operate Monday–Friday for a minimum of 100 days annually. Is the expectation that the program must operate all five days weekly, even if students are only required to attend a minimum of 3 days per week?

Attendance is measured weekly. Keep in mind the Bright Pathways program structure is to have participants attend 5 days a week. The minimum of 3 days is to account for illness or other excused absences.

Q: Does a “program day” require a minimum number of enrolled students present, or is it defined by the program being operational for the required two hours?

Staff should serve a minimum 1:15 ratio during operational hours.

Programming Staff Ratios

- *Minimum staff-to-student ratio: 1:15*
- *Maximum per category (Elementary – 1:18; Middle – 1:22; High – 1:25)*

Q: Can structured off-site activities (e.g., employer visits, college tours, internships) count as program days if they meet the 2-hour minimum and staffing ratios?

Yes

Q: Is the 3-days-per-week attendance target measured per individual participant each week, or averaged over a month or semester?

Attendance is measured weekly. Keep in mind the Bright Pathways program structure is to have participants attend 5 days a week. The minimum of 3 days is to account for illness or other excused absences.

Q: If a student averages 3 days per week over the semester but has occasional 1- or 2-day weeks, does that satisfy dosage expectations?

Attendance is measured weekly. Keep in mind the Bright Pathways program structure is to have participants attend 5 days a week. The minimum of 3 days is to account for illness or other excused absences.

Q: Are attendance expectations adjusted for high school students with documented work schedules or extracurricular commitments?

No.

Q: Given that high school students often participate in athletics, employment, dual enrollment, or family responsibilities, does ECT allow flexibility in attendance models provided overall dosage targets are met? If so, what would the overall dosage targets be for this situation?

Attendance models are standardized for all after school programming for this RFP.

Q: Does ECT anticipate different attendance stabilization strategies for secondary programs compared to elementary programs?

Strategy for engagement and attendance should be part of the programming presented for funding. The minimum standards for attendance remain the same regardless of age group for this RFP.

Q: Is funding continuation evaluated based on:

Overall program attendance averages? *No*

Percentage of students meeting the 3-day target? *No*

Outcome achievement tied to dosage? *Outcome achievement is attached to the participant. Outcomes are measured using data entered in SAMIS and IXL.*

Q: Are programs expected to remove students who consistently attend fewer than 3 days per week to remain compliant?

The provider should ensure children and youth enrolled in the program understand attendance expectations to remain in said programming. Providers should have plans and processes to ensure maximum attendance expectations are met.

Q: How does ECT define a “full-year participant” for reporting purposes?

A full-year participant would be 12 months of participation.

Q: If high school students participate in structured internships or workforce placements during summer, can those hours count toward daily attendance requirements?

No.

Q: Does ECT expect providers to implement formal attendance improvement plans if students fall below 3 days per week?

The provider should ensure children and youth enrolled in the program understand attendance expectations to remain in said programming. Providers should have plans and processes for ensuring maximum attendance expectations are met.

Q: Are attendance incentives considered allowable expenses under the budget guidelines?

Yes. Please refer to ECT policies and fiscal guidelines to ensure incentives provided are qualified expenditures.

Q: How should programs document and report outreach efforts when addressing attendance barriers?

The provider should ensure children and youth enrolled in the program understand attendance expectations to remain in said programming. Providers should have plans and processes to ensure maximum attendance expectations are met.

Q: RFP States: Students who are most in need or at-risk and would benefit from access to high quality OST opportunities. How does ECT define and verify that a student meets the ‘most in need’ or ‘at-risk’ criteria outlined in the Target Population section, and what documentation is required to confirm eligibility?

The Trust defines at-risk youth are often identified by the following:

Economic Disadvantage: Families with low income.

System Involvement: Children in the foster care system, or those with parents who are incarcerated.

Behavioral/Mental Health Challenges: Youth with mild to severe behavioral health needs.

Educational Struggles: Students exhibiting chronic absence, academic underperformance, or disconnection from school.

Exposure to Trauma: Children exposed to violence, abuse, or neglect.

Specific Populations: homeless, runaway or underhoused youth, and those with special needs.

Documentation that supports the most in need or at risk criteria should be determined by the provider and sufficiently support the enrollment decision.

Q: Is formal income verification (e.g., free/reduced lunch documentation) required to determine participant's eligibility, or may providers rely on school referrals, counselor recommendations, or community-based criteria?

This would be the responsibility of the provider to determine verification processes to make a determination. The determination process should be captured in said agencies' policies and procedures.

Q: If a provider operates within a high school serving predominantly at-risk students, must each individual participant be screened for eligibility criteria, or is the site-level demographic profile sufficient to establish participant's eligibility?

Each youth must be screened for eligibility criteria.

Q: The RFP allows up to 2 hours per day of staff prep time without children present. Does administrative work such as attendance tracking, data entry, reporting, parent communication, and partnership coordination fall within this 2-hour limit, or is this cap intended only for curriculum planning and activity preparation?"

The time can incorporate all the questioned activities.

Q: If a full-time Site Director or Program Coordinator has responsibilities that extend beyond direct service hours (e.g., compliance, data management, recruitment, staff supervision), are those administrative hours fully allowable under the grant, provided they are directly tied to program implementation?

Yes, but also should be justifiable to the size and scope of the program proposed.

Q: Do staff hours spent on recruitment, enrollment processing, background checks, transportation coordination, or school meetings count as allowable time under the grant if they occur outside of direct programming hours?

The RFP allows up to 2 hours per day of staff prep time without children present, for direct care staff. Other admin responsibilities as mentioned above should be captured either in full time supervisory responsibilities or agency indirect expenses.

Q: Is there a maximum number of reimbursable hours per staff member per week (e.g., 40 hours), and if so, does this include both direct service and administrative time?

ECT does not reimburse overtime in any program per policy, which would be an excess of 40 hours total per week.

Q: As this is a three-year funding opportunity under the Escambia Children's Trust Out-of-School Time (OST) framework, may an applicant propose a phased implementation model in which programming expands over the course of the grant term? Specifically, would ECT consider responsive a proposal structured as follows:

Year 1: Summer OST programming only;

Year 2: School-Year OST programming and Summer OST programming;

Year 3: School-Year OST programming and Summer OST programming.

Provided that the applicant meets all required annual service-hour minimums, staffing ratios, outcome metrics, and performance accountability measures outlined in the Request for Proposal (RFP), would this graduated expansion model be allowable and competitive within the scoring rubric?

The current RFP provides for school year, summer, or year-round programming.

Q: Is there a maximum time we can pay staff to get enrollment up and running before we are accountable for student attendance?

Applicants will be notified of their award in May, and contracts will be effective 8/1. Applicants will need to explain their recruiting process in their application, so they will be ready for the programming start date.

Q: How many minutes per week will students be required to use IXL? Trying to budget how many tablets to purchase.

Participants are expected to log on to IXL daily.

Q: If we are partnering with schools, do we need a signed collaborative schools agreement with the district ahead of time or will a signed letter of intent suffice?

A Letter of Intent from the superintendent will be sufficient for the application. A formal MOU will be required for the execution of your contract.

Q: In the Service/Program Partners portion of the RFP, we have several organizations with which we pilot programs before we send through MOUs. They are signed off on by the Recreation Division Manager, Assistant Director, and the Director of Parks and Recreation. All people who come into the center are required to have a level 2 background check, and all information is left on file. There is no cost to each one of the service programs that come into the centers, as they run off of their own variety of grants. Are the pilot program proposal forms submissible for this grant? If so, will the program proposal form and a letter of support/commitment work?

Yes, letter of support/commitment will suffice.

Q: Was it mandatory to be registered for the meeting on February 18, 2026? We have watched the Youtube Link and reviewed the PowerPoint but are we ineligible for not formally registering for the meeting?

You will be eligible to apply if you have participated or watched the Information Session. Financial workshops are listed on the RFP Landing Page and are mandatory as well.

Q: Can you provide clarification on the requirement of "last 3 years of Financial Reviews" for an Organization -our budget is between \$500k-\$900k We have our 990 performed by a CPA but no formal Financial Review or Audit. Does that make our Organization ineligible? Is there any variance opportunity if we have Financial Review performed on 2025 and plan to have 2026 reviewed as well?

Small organizations utilizing CPA firm to support tax filing annually is a good practice. If there is no formal audit, the organizations should be prepared to share their practices that support fiscal monitoring and reconciliation. Ex: Monthly financial reviews and statement preparation; minutes from board meetings supporting governing board reviews of financials.

Q: Our program curriculum is set to have 5 participants to 1 coach. Is that going to be acceptable or do we have to run the program with 15 participants to 1 coach?

Academic standard time as prescribed by the RFP dictates a minimum of 1:15 ratio. Ratios for enrichment may vary depending on the activity and needs for youth support and safety.

Q: We utilize Sport 80 for full background checks and Child Safety training for ALL employees, board members, coaches, and volunteers - will this be accepted or will we need to use a secondary system the ECT requires?

A Florida Level 2 background check is a fingerprint-based, state and national criminal history check (via FDLE/FBI) required for jobs with high trust, such as healthcare, childcare, and elderly care. It covers arrests, convictions, and disqualifying offenses like felonies, violent crimes, or sexual offenses. The process is mandated by Florida Statute 435.04. Any alternative background screening system would need to meet the same standards. If not, then dual background screening will be necessary.

Q: For the current Out of School Time RFP, is an organization that administers a program during the regular school day along with out of school components eligible to apply for this RFP?

This RFP is specific to out of school time only. This does not prohibit an organization from providing services during the regular school day, however different funding sources should be utilized to cover those expenses.

Q: “Does the grant run from August 25 through July 26 for summertime only programs too? If so, can we start preparing for our summertime only program in May with the program to start in June?”

The organization should clearly outline timeframes of operation for the summer programming in the budget narrative. Should the organization need to begin activities prior to the start of summer programming, this would be permissible. Activities that begin prior to contract execution will not be reimbursable. Contracts will be authorized from August 1, 2026-July 31, 2027.

Q: Are all components required to be offered on a daily basis?

Not every component of the OST program needs to be offered daily; however, it is important that each component is consistently incorporated into a structured weekly routine.

Q: For the Summer Only funding category, may applicants operate multiple cohorts serving different students during the summer months, provided that each participant receives the full proposed dosage of services?

It will be important in the Summer Only funding category to ensure that all participants receive the full experience, regardless of the cohorts served. A complete description as to how the participants will be served concurrently as well as how the staff roles will be utilized to ensure all required services, dosages, ratios, and goals will be accomplished.

Q: For seasonal program support staff, are 1099 independent contractors allowable, or does the Trust require these positions to be classified as W-2 employees?

1099 independent contractors are allowed. You will need to submit a copy of their contract that states the dates the contract is good for and the compensation rate. You will also need to conduct background checks on these individuals.

Q: With the new outcome data reporting requirements for the 2026 RFP, should Summer Only programs report outcomes for each individual cohort separately, or should outcomes be aggregated across all participants served during the summer period?

You will report on individual participants and their performance on the established goals and projected outcomes, as it pertains to required components in the OST RFP guidelines.

Q: If a School-Year program operates

- **Monday through Thursday**
- **Saturday and/or Sunday**
- **Minimum 100 program days annually, Maximum 180 days annually**
- **After school – At least 2 hours per day**

Will this schedule meet the requirements for the School-Year program?

No, additional days of service on the weekends could be of great service to children and families, however there must be a program available Monday through Friday for this RFP.

Q: If the Summer Program operates

- **Monday through Thursday (not an ECSD school site)**
- **Saturday and/or Sunday**
- **Minimum 24 program days**
- **At least 4 hours per day of structured activities**

Will this schedule meet the requirements for the Summer Program?

No, additional days of service on the weekends could be of great service to children and families, however there must be a program available Monday through Friday for this RFP.

Q: Will a 2024 Financial Statement be acceptable to submit?

Financial Statements for 2025 would be acceptable if the organization was operable in 2025.

Q: Do the IXL subscription and SEL assessment costs come from a line item on our budget or does ECT pay for them directly?

IXL subscriptions will be paid for by ECT and outside of provider budgets. SEL should be included in the provider budget as the programming for SEL is not being dictated by the grant.

Q: If one agency is applying for a Bright Pathways grant, can they also be a subcontractor on another Bright Pathways grant?

Yes.

