

Bright Beginnings RFP 2026-02 Questions and Answers

1. Can Escambia Children's Trust funding support an existing program, or is funding limited to new or substantially expanded programming for this RFP?

Yes. Existing programs are eligible for funding under the Bright Beginnings RFP provided ECT funding does not supplant other available funding for the program. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how their proposed services align with the RFP priorities, produce measurable outcomes, and explain the value ECT funding will provide as well as how the funding is non-duplicative. Both existing and new programs will be evaluated using the same published review criteria.

2. If the program in mind requires a specified training model that must be followed and that means we do not have participants till the close to year one, is that allowable? The program we have in mind for implementation requires recruiting, hiring, and training staff. The model of training is very prescriptive and likely means there will not be program participants till the end of year one at the earliest, possibly not until year two.

Is it allowable under the contract to not have participants in year 1 due to an implementation period.

Expenditures are budgeted up to \$5,000 per participant and predicated on services being provided. Direct services must be provided to children and families to support the expense.

3. We noted that the RFP states that for-profit organizations may apply so long as the proposed project does not generate a profit for the proposing organization.

Would Kindermusik International be eligible to apply directly as the sole applicant if the proposed program were designed specifically to serve children, families, and early childhood providers in Escambia County and all requested funding were used to support program delivery, materials, training, implementation, and allowable program costs rather than generate profit? **Yes, however ECT funding should not supplant funds already in existence for such programming.**

4. We would also appreciate clarification as to whether the term "local provider" requires the applicant organization itself to be based in Escambia County, or whether an organization may qualify by directly implementing and supporting services for Escambia County participants. **Providers must have capacity to deliver services in our community and should be able to provide in the program model how this would be executed.**

5. One of the things that we're considering is office space. I heard you mention that indirect costs cannot exceed 15%. So, let's say for example that we submit a grant request for \$300,000. Does that mean our total rent for the year could not exceed \$45,000, or \$3,750/month? Although, I imagine we would need to scale lower to account for other indirect costs, like furniture and Internet for the space. Am I understanding that correctly? **If space is directly for the program, what I would do is directly charge the portion of rent, internet, utilities, furniture that is tied to this program. For example, if you have 1,000 square feet of space and 700 square feet are used for this program then you would**

charge 70% of the rent to this program as a direct expense. The Internet would be set up in the same way but could also be a number of employees based for the allocation or differently allocated depending on the use.

6. Our grant application focuses on enhancing our existing program while also expanding into new classrooms. Currently we do not offer healthcare benefits to any staff members. Because every member of our team is directly involved in delivering our flagship program, offering some type of healthcare benefit would make a significant difference in recruiting new talent and retaining high-quality staff. Would it be permissible to include a healthcare stipend or similar benefit for existing and new full-time employees as part of the grant budget? **Yes, health insurance is an allowable benefit. We can cover the same portion of the healthcare cost as the employee's portion of time spent in our program. In other words, if an employee spends 50% of their time in our program, then we can cover 50% of their health insurance expense. It would have to be health insurance and not a subsidy, and the percentage paid by your agency would need to be included in your HR policies, for example ECT covers 80% of the cost and the employee covers 20%.**

7. Can I have a compliance or review of financial done instead of an audit? **A for profit agency would need to submit individual tax returns or a Form 1120 for the most recent year, along with current financial statements to include your balance sheet and profit and loss statement.**

8. I am a "For profit" so I won't have a determination letter or a 990. **On the determination letter you will submit a document stating that this is not applicable to you and why it isn't applicable. For the 990 you will submit individual tax returns or a Form 1120 for the most recent year, along with current financial statements to include your balance sheet and profit and loss statement.**

9. Is reimbursement for this funding based on actual costs or per participant costs submitted with application only? With new programming, there are costs associated with recruiting participants- before anyone is enrolled, will those earlier costs eligible for reimbursed? **Reimbursement is based on actual costs. ECT understands that there will be a ramp up period but expects it will be a reasonable length substantiated with specific timeframes and goals for incremental enrollment . Reimbursements will not exceed \$5,000 per participant over time.**

10. Since a big portion of our Bright Beginnings grant application is focused on program expansion, can we use ECT grant funds to slightly increase existing program staff salaries to account for their increased workload related to the grant? **Staff salaries should be competitive with market rates be supported through qualifications required on job descriptions.**

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11. We are preparing our proposal and would appreciate clarification on the budget form. The form requests information such as employee counts, 1099 contractors, and benefits. Should we provide this information for the entire organization or only for the personnel included in the proposed project? **You only need to provide this information for the proposed project.**