

# **Request For Application (RFA) Guidance Tribal Early Learning Fund (TELF) Grant Description**

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## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **Background and Summary**

#### **Why the Tribal Early Learning Fund?**

Washington Tribal Nations are strong communities rooted in family, culture, and traditions. Teaching young children traditional ways of life is an important part of building strong Tribal communities.

This is a non-competitive grant program based within the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to serve Tribal children on and off reservations throughout the state of Washington. Early learning programs provide children and families with health services, family support, and education, along with other supports that meet the needs of each tribe. However, many of these programs lack adequate resources to meet the cultural and educational needs of Tribal children.

Data shows that Tribal children are the furthest from opportunity:

During the 2019-20 school year, only 34.6% of 996 American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) kindergartners met all six domains of kindergarten readiness. In Washington State approximately 35% of AI/AN children are living in poverty. AI/AN infants have the highest mortality rate during the post-neonatal period (after the first month), with nearly three times the rate seen among non-Hispanic Whites.

During the 68th Legislature Regular Session of 2022-2023, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), along with the Washington State Parent Ambassadors and Tribal Early Learning Directors, together lobbied the state legislature for \$10,000,000 million dollars. Subsequently, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Office of Tribal Relations (OTR), was awarded \$7,500,000 million in funds for the Tribal Early Learning Fund (TELF). During that same session, the House and Senate passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 1587, as included in the Governor's budget, awarding \$7.5 million over the Biennium; \$3,607,000 in year 1 (FY 2024), and \$3,614,000 in year 2 (FY 2025), respectively.

The Tribal Early Learning Fund is designed to support Tribal children in early learning programs including: Tribal ECEAP, Tribal Early ECEAP; Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO's); Tribal Licensed, Certified, Certified for Payment Only providers; Tribal Child Care providers and centers; Tribal Head Start, Tribal Early Head Start and Tribal Home Visiting Programs; ECEAP, Home Visiting, Early ECEAP; or State Licensed, or Certified providers & Home visiting programs serving Tribal children.

## **Program Purpose**

The ***purpose*** of this grant is to provide resources to ensure programs can best serve Tribal children in an inclusive and culturally appropriate manner.

Some potential uses of these dollars include the following:

1. Addressing historical trauma through culturally appropriate mental health supports
2. Nutritious meals incorporating indigenous foods
3. Books and materials that meet cultural needs
4. Staff professional development
5. Curriculum adaptations and supplements
6. Tribal language education
7. Elders and storytellers in the classroom
8. Drumming, singing, dancing, and traditional arts instruction
9. Additional staff for classroom and outdoor and nature-based curriculums

## **Program Priorities**

Priority 1: Tribal Language Education

Priority 2: Elders and Storytelling in the Classroom

Priority 3: Culturally-Responsive Books and Materials

Priority 4: Incorporating Indigenous Foods

Priority 5: Outdoor Based Education

Priority 6: Traditional Music and Arts Instruction

Priority 7: Curriculum Adaptation and Supplements

Priority 8: Transportation to facilitate Tribal child participation in early childhood education

Priority 9: Supplemental Home Visiting, ECEAP Slots, Fund Non-Federal Shares (HS/EHS)

Priority 10: Professional Development

Priority 11: Mental Health Supports

Priority 12: Educational Access (Wi-Fi)

## **Statutory Authority**

Senate Bill 5187 Sec. 229 (22) Year 1, \$3,607,000 (FY 2024); Year 2, \$3,614,000 (FY 2025), are provided solely for Tribal early learning grants to be distributed to providers with Tribal children enrolled in Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Early ECEAP, childcare, Head Start, Early Head Start and Home Visiting programs. Grants will be administered by the Department of Children, Youth and Families, Office of Tribal Relations.

## **STATE AWARD INFORMATION**

### **Amount of Funding Available**

Year 1, \$3,607,000 (FY 2024); Year 2, \$3,614,000 (FY 2025)

NOTE: Programs are eligible to apply for FY 2024 as well as FY 2025. More information will be made available at a later date.

### **Number and Amount of Awards**

Awards will be determined by applying the funding formula. Priorities and Eligible Programs have a maximum-minimum thresholds. Eligible applicants can apply for multiple priorities, total amount awarded will be determined by these thresholds, with the limits by Eligible Program by Category. An example is provided.

#### **Percentages for Eligible Program Applicants:**

1. Category #1: Tribal Head Start and/or Tribal Early Head Start; Tribal Early Childhood and Education Assistance Programs (ECEAP) and Tribal Early ECEAP; Tribal Child Care Centers.
  - a. 70% = \$2,524,900
2. Category #2: Tribal Nations, Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIO's), Tribal Home Visiting, Tribally Licensed Child Care Providers, Certified/ Certified for Payment only Tribal Child Care Providers, Tribal/Native Serving Organization, or Tribal Child Care Providers.
  - a. 20% = \$721,400
3. Category #3: Home Visiting, ECEAP and/or Early ECEAP Contractors and Subcontractors serving Tribal children; State Licensed, Certified Child Care Centers and/or Providers serving Tribal children with a license open and in good standing.
  - a. 10% = \$360,700

Through research of the number of total slots available via programs contracted, subcontracted, and licensed that serve Tribal children and families across Washington State we found that there are approximately 3,461 slots available to serve Tribal children across Washington State.

TELF Award in year 1 is \$3,607,000, we divided 3,461/3,607,000 to get \$1,042 per child. Which gives us our 'amount per child'. The dollar amount per child is \$1,042, based on the number of total slots available to all program types across all regions. Based on this number we set maximums and minimums by priority to ensure we serve those programs, contracted, subcontracted, and licensed to serve Tribal children.

Priority: Maximum and Minimum

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Minimum</b>
#1 Tribal Language Education	\$30,000	\$5,000
#2 Elder Storytelling	\$30,000	\$5,000
#3 Culturally Responsive Books & Materials	\$15,000	\$3,000
#4 Incorporating Indigenous Foods	\$15,000	\$2,500
#5 Outdoor Based Education	\$20,000	\$5,000
#6 Traditional Music & Arts	\$20,000	\$5,000
#7 Curriculum Adaptation & Supplements	\$15,000	\$5,000
#8 Transportation for Early Education	\$15,000	\$5,000
#9 Supplement: Home Visiting, ECEAP Slots, and Non-Federal Share (HS/EHS)	\$15,000	\$5,000
#10 Professional Development	\$20,000	\$2,500
#11 Mental Health Supports	\$25,000	\$5,000
#12 Educational Access (Wi-Fi)	\$5,000	\$2,500

In determining maximum-minimum amounts and ensuring that smaller programs with less than 10 Tribal children, we have created a maximum-minimum table. To better help determine award amounts, we will use this table as a ceiling-floor variable, for programs that are applying for more than 1 priority.

In addition, the maximum-minimum by priority table, the maximum-minimum by eligible program by category was created; to ensure we reach as many eligible programs as possible.

#### Eligible Program: Maximum and Minimum

Eligible Program by Category	Maximum	Minimum
Category #1	\$250,00	\$5,000
Category #2	\$100,000	\$5,000
Category #3	\$75,000	\$2,500

**Example:** Tribal Head Start applicants can be awarded up to \$250,000, based on their category and the types of priorities they combine. See our example below.

“Our program wants to focus on language revitalization and traditional music and arts. We plan to bring in one of our tribe's Lead singer and Tribal Elder into the classrooms three times a week. He will teach our traditional songs and language and talk about how these songs came to be and or who they belong to. With this goal, our children will know how to sing three songs by spring 2024. They will hear stories from a Tribal Elder and the staff will adapt our current curriculum so that children after have the same opportunity.”

In this example, Tribal Head Start A is seeking to add tribal language and traditional arts, Priorities #1 and #6, in doing so, Tribal Head Start A could request up to \$50,000 based on the maximum-minimum thresholds. Tribal Head Start A is also seeking to incorporate Elder Storytelling, Priority #2. They potentially could receive up to \$80,000, based on the maximum-minimum thresholds. Additionally, part of programming included adaptation of materials, Priority #7, that potentially increases their request to \$95,000 for the grant application. In this example, Tribal Head Start A braided 4 priorities, in order to meet their programs' needs.

#### Partial Funding

The Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) does not anticipate awarding any grantee 'Partial Funding'.

#### Period of Performance

FY 2023-2024 (Begin and End Dates: July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)

FY 2024-2025 (Begin and End Dates: July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025)

#### Funding Type

Non-competitive Grant - Tribal Early Learning Fund Grant

## **ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

**Eligible applicants serving Tribal children, Prenatal and children up to 5 years of age:**

1. Tribal Head Start and/or Tribal Early Head Start
2. Tribal Early Childhood Education Assistance Programs (ECEAP) and Tribal Early ECEAP
3. Tribal Child care centers
4. Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIOs), Tribal/Native Serving organization with an early learning program
5. Tribal Home Visiting Programs
6. Tribal Licensed, Certified, or Certified for Payment Only Child Care Providers with an open license and in good standing serving Tribal children
7. Home Visiting, ECEAP and/or Early ECEAP Contractors and Subcontractors serving Tribal children
8. Licensed, or Certified Child Care providers with an open license and in good standing serving Tribal children

Eligible program applicants must currently have Tribal children enrolled in your program who are either members of the 29 tribes in Washington State or 574 Federally Recognized Tribes.

**NOTE:** An applicant that has multiple eligible programs that may fall into another category, the applicant must submit a separate grant application and proposal for that category.

**Example:** If a Tribal Nation would like to apply for category #1: Tribal Early Head Start and also has a category #2: Tribal Home Visiting program. The Tribal Nation would need to submit two separate grant applications and proposals for both eligible programs.

### **Funding Priorities**

Providers may apply for funds under the following priorities: incorporating indigenous foods, culturally-responsive books and materials, staff professional development, curriculum adaptations and supplements, Tribal language education, elders and storytelling in classrooms, traditional music and arts instruction, and transportation to facilitate Tribal child participation in early childhood education. 12 priorities have been identified but funding is not limited to these priorities and will be assessed during the review process.

**Prioritization:**

Priority 1: Tribal Language Education

Priority 2: Elders and Storytelling in the Classroom

Priority 3: Culturally-Responsive Books and Materials

Priority 4: Incorporating Indigenous Foods

Priority 5: Outdoor Based Education

Priority 6: Traditional Music and Arts Instruction

Priority 7: Curriculum Adaptation and Supplements

Priority 8: Transportation to facilitate Tribal child participation in early childhood education

Priority 9: Supplemental Home Visiting, ECEAP Slots, Fund Non-Federal Shares (HS/EHS)

Priority 10: Professional Development

Priority 11: Mental Health Supports

Priority 12: Educational Access (Wi-Fi)

**Ineligible Costs and Activities**

TELF grant dollars cannot be used for capital expenses. Activities or materials that do not advance or inspire practices that promote inclusive and culturally responsive learning, environments, and enhanced language access.

**Other ineligible costs and activities include:**

Other non-allowable expenses:

1. Costs not related to the project outcome
2. Religious activities or purposes, including worship or instruction
3. Capital improvements, like major construction or renovation
4. General program costs, like the basic expenses of owning and operating your business, are not allowed. This includes things like:
  - 4.1. Regular payroll costs for existing staff;
  - 4.2. Costs of purchasing, owning, or maintaining a vehicle;
  - 4.3. Costs associated with the space out of which you operate, like rent or utilities;
  - 4.4. Insurance;
  - 4.5. Other business operating costs;
  - 4.6. Federal taxes.
5. Raises or bonuses for existing staff
6. Gifts for families



## APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### How to register to apply for this grant

In addition to the application please complete these two *vital* steps: (1) fill out and/or register for smartsheet, (2) register for a Statewide Vendor (SWV) number.

**Smartsheet:** The smartsheet registration is to complete the online TELF application. Please read through this guidance to help you write your proposal. It may be helpful to use Microsoft Word to answer the questions and then copy and paste your responses into the Smartsheet application.

1. Please find the TELF Application Smartsheet link here:  
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/54cece2f35534ab2a97add7110d95ce>
2. Step-by-step:
  - 2.1. Fill out and/or register for smartsheet
  - 2.2. Answer application questions
  - 2.3. Upon submission, OTR will send verification that the application was received and in the review process.

**Statewide Vendor Number (SWV):** The SWV Number registration is for payment purposes. You can also set up direct deposit, but it is not required. We have provided a number of links below. The link to the Statewide Vendor (SWV) Number is the front facing website, it provides instructions and answers to questions you might have. You will also find links to the Individual and Facilities User Guides, along with the Provider Registration Form below.

Apply for statewide vendor number website: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/licensed-provider/vendor-number>

Individual User guide: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/SWVUserGuide-ind.pdf>

- 2.4. Facilities User guide:  
<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/SWVUserGuide-fac.pdf>
- 2.5. DCYF Provider Registration Form, fillable and downloadable:  
<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/forms/ProviderRegistrationForm.pdf>
3. Provider Direct Deposit Authorization Form, fillable and downloadable:
  - 3.1. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/forms/ProviderDirectDepositAuthorizationform.pdf>

#### 4. Provider Change Form

4.1. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/forms/ProviderChangeForm.pdf>

### **Application Process**

#### **What is needed in the application?**

1. You will need to write a project proposal. Identifying project goals, based on the priority and/or priorities you have identified.
  - a. You will need to have a detailed description of the; Project Proposal, Cost, Management & Outcomes.
2. You will need to identify what staff and/or personnel who will be engaged in project activities.
3. Cost of project.
4. You will need to identify who will manage and report your project back to OTR/DCYF.
5. You will identify your own outcomes, based on priorities, and who will manage and/or implement your project.

### **Releasing Copies of Applications**

OTR will provide this pamphlet to support you through the process of submitting your online application. You may download and print this off, for ease of access.

### **APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

#### **Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation is made up of 4 Criteria: Background Information; Proposed Project; Organizational Experience; and Program Management & Experience.

The questions are as follows:

1. Background Information:
  - 1.1. What is the name of your program?
  - 1.2. What type of early education provider is your organization?
  - 1.3. Are you a Tribally affiliated program? Please explain.
  - 1.4. What are your hours of operations serving Tribal children and families?
  - 1.5. Where are you located, and what DCYF region are you in?
  - 1.6. How many Tribal children will be served by this project?
  - 1.7. How many staff members are employed by your early learning program?
  - 1.8. How many years has your early learning program been in operations?
2. Organization Experience:
  - 2.1. Who will manage this project? Please provide their contact information, phone number and email.

- 2.2. Has the staff member or personnel managing this project worked with state or federal agencies before?
- 2.3. What types of projects or experience does this person have to meet your project's priorities and outcomes?
- 3. Proposed Project:
  - 3.1. Have you worked with Tribal populations before? If so, how and when?
  - 3.2. How will your project address the purpose and priorities of the grant?
  - 3.3. How will the priorities address the needs of Tribal children and families?
  - 3.4. What priority/priorities will your program deliver and how will the priority/priorities impact Tribal children and families?
  - 3.5. What is the total budget and justification of your project's?
    - 3.5.1. This should be all expenses such as personnel, supplies, professional development, travel, contracts, and administrative costs.
  - 3.6. How will your leadership team support the person in charge of TELF delivery?
- 4. Program Management & Outcomes:
  - 4.1. How will you ensure your project is managed with fidelity?
  - 4.2. How will you explain and share back the results, project's outcomes from the identified priorities to the children and families you are proposing to engage?
  - 4.3. What types of processes or policies do you have in place that will allow you to collect and share, back to DCYF, on your project's performance?

## **OUTCOMES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Reporting requirements on management and outcomes is required by the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) and Office of Tribal Relations (OTR). We want to hear your voices. We have provided examples, in the RFA, listed under 'Share your story!'. These are examples of what a story might look like.

As you write your story, please consider how your project outcomes align with TELF Grant Purpose and Priorities; consider how many children and families it served, the types of activities you provided, and the overall outcome from the activity.

Our intent is that the outcomes, shared in a story, will help us make a case for continued funding. If you have questions or concerns, the OTR TELF Specialist is available to answer any questions and support you might need.

**EXAMPLE:**

- A. We planned 3 family engagement nights over the year: fall, winter, spring. In doing so, we've increased parent involvement, and our volunteer base grew. Our program once only drew 20% of parent involvement. Because of this funding, 70% of our families participated. Not only have they participated, but we've also seen an increase in volunteers from particular families. We've also been able to bring in family members to support educational learning opportunities. For example, one of our parents works at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries. We took a trip to the fish hatchery and learned all about the life cycle of salmon. We also had family members and grandparents offer to come and read a story to our 4 year olds. This prompted us to provide space and create a "Traditional Storytelling with Tribal Elders" program.

**Review and Selection Process**

The Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) will implement a peer review process to ensure a fair and neutral selection of the Tribal Early Learning Funds (TELF). An overview of the process for this funding opportunity is below:

**Initial Review:** OTR TELF Specialist and staff will review all applications to ensure eligibility, that priorities are identified throughout the application packet, and completed. If the application is incomplete, the application will be sent back to the respective Tribe and/or organization to complete and resubmit by the application deadline, March 1, 2024.

**Project Proposal Review:** DCYF Volunteer Reviewer Panel, will review and score each application to assess fidelity of projects for proposed programming, including proposed projects, project cost, and project management and outcomes.

**Funding Decisions:** The decision to fund eligible applicants will be determined according to the priorities outlined in the Funding Priorities section of this guidance document.

**Funding Decision:**

After the Project Proposal Review, it will come back to TELF Specialist and staff, at which point, the TELF Specialist and staff will meet with OTR Tribal Early Learning Liaison to discuss awards, and/or applicants that do not move past any of the Review Phases. Once a preliminary determination is made on all applications, they will be forwarded to the OTR Director of Tribal Relations for final approval.

**NOTE:** TELF Specialist and staff will put together a report on all eligible applicants and awards dispersed.

### Anticipated Announcement and State (OTR-DCYF) Award Dates

Important Dates	
Application open	Friday, January 19, 2024
Funding Opportunity Technical Assistance Office Hours	Wednesday, January 24, 2024 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Funding Opportunity Technical Assistance Office Hours	Tuesday, January 30, 2024 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Funding Application due by 5:00 p.m.	Friday, March 1, 2024
Award notices	Monday, April 1, 2024

**NOTE:** Upon submission of your application, it will be reviewed and if the review team identifies something missing, or if more information is needed, your application will be returned. The applicant will have until the application deadline, to update and re-submit the application.

If you have questions or concerns, OTR TELF Specialist is available to answer any questions and support you might need.

#### TELF Grant Contact

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