# California State Preschool Program Quality Rating Improvement System Block Grant

**California Department of Education**

**Early Education Division**

**Request for Application Instructions**



**Application Due Date:  
 On or Before March 14, 2025**

**(January 2025)**

California Department of Education

Early Education Division

Early Education System Improvement Office

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## Background

The science of learning and development has made clear that children are best positioned to reach their full potential when they experience ongoing, language-rich, nurturing, inclusive, and developmentally informed learning experiences supported by interactions with caring adults and peers in environments that foster their curiosity; embrace and affirm their culture, language, and community; support their social-emotional development; and guide their learning from the earliest possible moments. Babies begin learning in the womb and by the time they are preschoolers, they have already become natural explorers, scientists, and creators.[[1]](#footnote-2) It is the responsibility of caregivers and educators to uplift, embrace, and nurture the assets of our youngest learners— their language, culture, curiosity, and innate ability to learn.

California is prioritizing the highest quality opportunities for those most affected by compounding and intersecting injustices of race- and gender-based oppression, poverty, and inequality. As a result, the California Department of Education (CDE) is committed to supporting a quality improvement infrastructure that is focused on ensuring high-quality preschool experiences for all of California’s young children in order to support critical whole child wellbeing and school readiness skills that prepare them for success in school and in life.

Over the past several years, California’s early education system has evolved in several important ways. As a result of the transition of general childcare and other related programs from the CDE to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the CDE is focused on a vision of quality specifically for preschool-age children. While the CDE acknowledges and upholds the critical importance of the earliest years from birth to preschool age, the authority and responsibility of the CDE is focused on supporting a system of high-quality Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) opportunities.

UPK supports California’s learners across settings through learning opportunities provided in the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), transitional kindergarten (TK), and other preschool programs that meet indicators of quality determined by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction pursuant to *Education Code (EC)* Section 8203 (see appendix A). As UPK is implemented, the CDE is focused on creating alignment from prekindergarten through third grade (P-3) and ensuring coordination with the TK through twelfth grade system. To support this alignment, the CDE launched and continues to grow its P-3 alignment initiative. The CDE’s ultimate goal is to ensure that every CSPP is equipped to provide high quality, joyful, developmentally informed, inclusive, and rigorous preschool learning opportunities for the children they serve.

In addition, the CDE has increased its focus on supporting diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB), and implementing anti-racist and anti-bias supports that affirm children’s race, home language, and sense of belonging. New requirements have been enacted that impact CSPP implementation, including requirements to serve children with disabilities, better support children who display behaviors that challenge adults and avoid exclusionary discipline practices, identify and better serve children who are multilingual learners, and, in 2024, expectations to implement the Classroom Assessment Scoring System 2nd Edition Pre-K (CLASS) and the CLASS Environment Pre-K (CLASS Environment) in all CSPPs by program year 2028–29.

As the largest funding stream under the Quality Counts California (QCC) umbrella, the CDE’s CSPP Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant provides $50 million annually to support quality improvement for CSPPs. The CDE has also invested in the Achieving Success in Positive Interactions, Relationships, and Environment (ASPIRE) program, which provides funding: 1) to ensure robust statewide and regional capacity to implement the six-year phase-in of the CLASS and the CLASS Environment requirements for all CSPPs (as articulated in management bulletin [MB] 23-10[[2]](#footnote-3)) and, 2) to support early educators to improve interactions, relationships, and environments across all CSPPs.

## Phased Approach to Revamping the CSPP Quality Continuum Framework

### In this Request for Applications

As the CDE uplifts UPK and increases coherence and alignment across the early grades, it is embarking on a five-year process to improve the $50 million state investment in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant based on recommendations from the UPK Mixed Delivery Quality and Access Report (UPK Report), the Re-imagining a More Equitable QRIS: The QCC Equity Project, current information on the science of learning and development, reduced other funding available to support CSPP and QCC, and CSPP standards requirements.

This process will **phase-in changes** to re-focus the CSPP QRIS Block Grant on elements of the QCC Quality Continuum Framework – Measured Quality Elements (QCF) that are most closely tied to child outcomes and on supporting CSPPs to meet and exceed their program requirements. Based on extensive feedback from interest holders– including grantees, program administrators, educators, and families, and incorporating recommendations from the UPK Report– **the CDE is implementing Phase 1 of the process with this transitional request for applications (RFA) for Fiscal Years 2025-2027.**

In implementing Phase 1 and this **transitional** RFA, CSPP QRIS Block grantees will use the existing QCF (see appendix B) to inform CSPP quality improvement plans (QIP) and support continuous quality improvement activities. However, ratings for the period covered by this transitional RFA will be solely based on the portion of the QCF related to CLASS scores (Core 2 [Teachers and Teaching]: Element 4 [Effective Teacher-Child Interactions] in Tiers 3, 4, and 5, amended to reflect required use of CLASS 2nd Edition and CLASS Environment [see Appendix C]). This approach will allow CSPP QRIS Block grantees to focus on supporting CSPPs to meet the new requirements to utilize CLASS in accordance with MB 23-10 and focus quality improvement activities on supporting interactions and the environment as measured by CLASS and CLASS Environment.

Additionally, to provide local flexibility for CSPP QRIS Block grantees to work on locally determined goals that are responsive to community needs and uplift program strengths, the CDE will embark on a planning effort with consortium leads, families, and state partners to design a voluntary statewide program badging structure to highlight program strengths. The badging structure will propose requirements for up to five badges on priority topics (for example, inclusion, supporting multilingual learners, family engagement, anti-bias/anti-racist practices) and determine a process for offering badges. In this RFA, grantees are asked to indicate their interest in helping to develop a badging structure. Once the badging structure is co-created, it will provide options for local flexibility among CSPP QRIS Block grantees.

The narrowed rating approach for this transitional RFA, fiscal years (FYs) 2025–27 builds from the work of QCC,[[3]](#footnote-4) by using the current program assessment standards for the CLASS to focus on enhancing the QCC CLASS capacity building efforts. This approach also fulfills the [*EC* Section 8203.1](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/sb858edcode82031.asp) statutory requirement to provide continuous quality improvement based on a tiered structure, and moves away from the current ratings to focus on data-driven, ongoing, continuous quality improvement of adult-child interactions— which promise to have the largest impacts on child outcomes,[[4]](#footnote-5) particularly for children who have been furthest from opportunity.

### In Future RFAs

Following the implementation of this transitional RFA, the second phase in CDE’s five-year process to improve the $50 million state investment in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant will be designed to be responsive to declining investments in QRISs in California as well as interest holder feedback. In revising the QCF and implementing a future RFA, the CDE and its partners will focus on simplifying ratings, reducing administrative burden, and building a more robust system that measures and supports quality improvement on elements that are meaningful to CSPPs and have demonstrated impacts for children and families.

The CDE plans, in collaboration with the field, and with state partners, **to develop, adopt, and implement a new QCF** that will build from the CLASS and the CLASS Environment and incorporate additional elements of quality.

### Two-Year RFA

This transitional RFA encompasses FYs 2025–26 and 2026–27. This two-year structure is intended to reduce administrative burden related to releasing and responding to RFAs and to allow time for the development and adoption of a new QCF. This transitional RFA was informed by input sessions and focus groups with grantees, educators, program administrators, and families as well as work with the other QCC state agencies. Despite the two-year RFA structure, grantees will operate on a one-year spending plan for their annual allocations. In other words, grantees will need to expend their full FY 2025–26 award by June 30, 2026, and their full FY 2026–27 award by June 30, 2027. The CDE may exercise its authority to reallocate any unspent funds. *Note: CSPP QRIS Block Grant funding is subject to appropriation in the California state budget each year.*

## Purpose

The CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds are allocated to local consortia for support of CSPP quality rating and improvement processes to increase the number of low-income children in high-quality preschool programs preparing children for success in school and life. This RFA details Phase 1 as we work towards a new approach to supporting data-informed continuous quality improvement across CSPPs to ensure that all children enrolled in CSPP have access to the highest quality preschool learning experiences.

## Use of Funds

Per *EC* Section 8203.1, “early learning quality rating and improvement system” or “QRIS” is defined as a locally determined system for continuous quality improvement based on a tiered rating structure with progressively higher quality standards for each tier that provides:1) supports and incentives for programs, teachers, and administrators to reach higher levels of quality, 2) monitors and evaluates the impacts on child outcomes, and 3) disseminates information to parents and the public about program quality.

This RFA, in alignment with the statutory requirements in *EC* Section 8203.1 and in support of CSPP regulations, requires local consortia that receive a CSPP QRIS Block Grant to do the following:

1. Based on local community needs, make measurable progress towards universal participation in the quality improvement system for CSPPs through actionable goals and intentional recruitment activities that increase the number of participating CSPP contracting agencies and collect relevant data for continuous improvement
2. Implement the evidence-based tools, the CLASS and CLASS Environment, as described in the QCF (Appendix B) and CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (Appendix C)
3. Utilize the myTeachstone data system to collect data on program quality, and additional data systems as needed to support local needs
4. Make evidence-based decisions using data on CSPP quality as measured by the QCF (Appendix B) and CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (Appendix C)
5. Develop and implement a continuous quality improvement action plan, including any local partnership activities, that support all CSPPs to improve practice and child outcomes
6. Describe how they will increase the number of sites making progress towards and achieving a higher level of quality as measured by the QCF (Appendix B) and CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (Appendix C), and what direct support will be offered to CSPPs that achieve the highest tier
7. Disseminate information to families and the public about program quality

Local consortia receiving CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds shall allocate those funds to CSPPs, as established by Article 2 (commencing with *EC* Section 8207), or local educational agencies (LEAs), for activities that assess, support and improve quality. Per *EC* Section 8203.1, a Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN) that provides CSPP services shall be eligible for an allocation from a local consortium of CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds for activities that assess, support, and improve quality for family childcare homes (FCCH) providing CSPP services.

## Request for Applications Submission

The FY 2025–27 CSPP QRIS Block Grant application will be submitted to the CDE via Snap Survey and can be accessed on the [RFA web page](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/csppqrisbgrfa25.asp). Responses should encompass both FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27. This document is intended to provide additional information and instructions while applicants are filling out the RFA survey. Submission of the application will serve as the applicant’s CSPP QRIS Block Grant Implementation Plan (BGIP). No additional plan is required to be submitted. For questions or concerns, contact the CDE CSPP QRIS Block Grant Team at [QCC@cde.ca.gov](mailto:QCC@cde.ca.gov). The CSPP QRIS Block Grant is a non-competitive RFA. The CDE will review the applications and may ask for additional information to complete the review process.

### Eligible to Apply

Local consortia are eligible to apply. Per *EC* Section 8203.1, “local consortium” is defined as a local or regional entity, administered by a lead agency which must be an LEA (as the funding for CSPP QRIS Block Grant is Proposition 98 funding), that convenes a planning body that designs and implements a QRIS. If a county or region has an established local consortium, the current lead administering agency shall be provided the first opportunity to apply for a CSPP QRIS Block Grant. Existing local consortia are encouraged to consider whether their lead agencies have the capacity to administer the CSPP QRIS Block Grant, given the changes articulated in this RFA, and propose alternative lead agencies as necessary.

A local consortium shall include representatives from organizations including, but not limited to, all of the following:

1. LEAs
2. First 5 county commissions
3. Higher educational institutions
4. Local childcare and development planning councils
5. Local resource and referral agencies
6. Alternative payment programs
7. Family representative(s) or organization(s) representing families in the local community
8. Tribal representatives, where applicable and desired by local tribes
9. Other local agencies and community partners as appropriate, which may include, but are not limited to, nonprofit organizations that provide services to children from birth to five years of age, inclusive, childcare licensing regional offices, special education local plan area, the county social services department, the local public health department, the local behavioral health department, regional centers, and Head Start and Early Head Start grantees

## CSPP QRIS Block Grant Implementation Plan

In order to be eligible for a CSPP QRIS Block Grant, the grantee must submit a BGIP, based on self-assessment findings, that describes how the consortium will:

1. Use the QCF (Appendix B) to implement a quality improvement system to meet local needs, including goals and objectives for quality improvement, utilization of evidence-based quality improvement and support approaches, and communication strategies with families that reflect community needs assessments (Section A of this RFA)
2. Make measurable progress toward universal participation in the quality improvement system for CSPPs through actionable goals and intentional recruitment activities that increase the number of participating CSPP sites (Section B of this RFA)
3. Engage with existing systems and support agencies to effectively assess program quality, and enhance support for CSPPs in the community (Section C of the RFA)
4. Increase the number of sites making progress toward and achieving a higher level of quality as measured by the QCF (Appendix B) and the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (Appendix C), develop and implement site level QIPs to support all CSPPs to continuously improve practice, and provide access to a tiered system of universal, targeted, and intensive quality improvement supports, including coaching[[5]](#footnote-6) (Section D of this RFA)
5. Allocate funds equitably to support quality improvement of all participating CSPPs, including newly participating sites and CSPP FCCHENs while continuing to support the CSPPs that have achieved the highest level of quality (Section E of this RFA)
6. Collect, summarize, and utilize data to continuously improve the consortium’s approach to governance, quality improvement, outreach and communications, and incentives (Section F of this RFA)
7. Ensure appropriate representation of interest holders in consortium membership and engage in partnerships with relevant local and statewide agencies to enhance the consortium’s capacity to support CSPPs to meet the needs of children and families in the community (Section G of this RFA)
8. *Optionally,* indicate interest in participating with the CDE, other interest holders, and state partners to develop a badging structure, and/or identify specific areas of interest for potential badges that reflect local priorities and needs and reinforce the CDE’s commitment to partnership, equity, and local California-led innovations (Section H of this RFA)

### Section A: Meeting Local Needs

1. Describe your most recent needs assessment for your county(ies) and include all sources of information and data used, including how families’ (or family representatives’) perspectives were incorporated (open response)
2. Using this needs assessment data, describe where in the community the most impact can be made, specifically supporting children living in poverty, multilingual learners, children in the foster care system, children experiencing homelessness, children with disabilities, and children who are Black or African American, Tribal, migrant, or live in rural or isolated communities; responses may include additional information about high-need populations within your consortium not listed above (for example, communities affected by natural disasters) (open response)
3. Describe the goals and objectives of the consortium’s BGIP, including how individual program results and plans will inform the local approach to utilizing the CSPP QRIS Block Grant (open response)
4. Describe how you will implement a local QRIS that utilizes evidence-informed quality improvement and support approaches (for example, coaching) aligned with the QCF that are tailored to the local conditions; as applicable, identify other partners and local funds that are invested in supporting the BGIP (open response)
5. Describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will share information to inform the public and families about its local quality improvement system and the importance of high-quality early education for children’s learning and development (open response)

### Section B: Participation and Recruitment Goals

1. Detail the current CSPP QRIS Block Grant participation rate in your county or multi-county consortium and include:
2. How many total CSPP sites there are in your county or multi-county consortium (provide number)
3. How many CSPP sites are currently participating in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant (provide number)
4. Use the goal tables in Appendix E to determine a reasonable and achievable participation goal for FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27 that reflects an increase in CSPP QRIS Block Grant participation or maintenance of full participation by all CSPPs and goals should demonstrate how the consortium will ensure improvement in participation or maintenance of full participation; indicate the consortium’s goal and justification for:
5. Number of CSPP sites to be added to the CSPP QRIS Block Grant FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27 (provide a number), unless all CSPPs in your area are already participating (indicate by noting N/A)
   1. If you have not reached full participation of all CSPPs in your area, include a detailed plan that describes how you will work to increase engagement and projected additional CSPPs you will add each year; include which member agency(ies) and staff will be responsible for the recruitment of new CSPP sites and any barriers the consortium is working to overcome in recruitment of new CSPP sites (open response)
   2. If you have reached full participation of CSPPs in your area, include a detailed plan that describes which member agency(ies) and staff will be responsible for maintaining CSPP site participation and exploring how to support partnerships and engagement with other UPK programs (open response)
6. Describe the process the local consortia will use to recruit and retain CSPPs to participate in CSPP QRIS Block Grant activities, including which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish the recruitment and retention activities described (open response)

### Section C: Engagement, Assessment, and Improvement Goals

Use the QCF (See Appendix B) to inform responses, and describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will accomplish each of the following activities:

1. Engage with the appropriate ASPIRE regional leads to conduct initial and ongoing CLASS and CLASS Environment observations for the purpose of quality improvement or ratings of every CSPP in the service area, in alignment with MB 23-10 (open response)
2. Carry out observations and ratings and provide QIP support. Specifically, detail how the consortium will ensure observers meet the qualifications to administer the CLASS tools as outlined in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (Appendix C) (open response)
3. Support CSPPs to self-assess unrated elements in the QCF (Appendix B), as needed, and to use that information to inform program level QIPs as appropriate (open response)
4. Prioritize sites for assessment as well as how sites will be prioritized for support in revising QIPs and making data-informed program changes (open response)
5. Identify the data system(s), including, at a minimum, myTeachstone and the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry,[[6]](#footnote-7) that will record observation and rating information, track site-level and teacher-specific quality improvement supports and incentives (as applicable), record participation of the individual CSPPs, and track progress relative to the consortium’s local quality improvement goals(open response)
6. Engage CSPP staff in CSPP QRIS Block Grant activities to increase CSPP quality, including which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for this work and how the consortium will engage programs in continuous quality improvement activities (open response)

### Section D: Quality Improvement Strategies, Investments and Supports

In this section of the RFA, describe how CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds will be used to increase the number of sites achieving the highest common tier of the QCF (Appendix B).

Describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish each of the following activities:

1. Create individualized QIPs for participating sites(open response)
2. Actively integrate QRIS data systems with the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry for the purpose of utilizing reliable, validated professional development (PD) and qualification data into QCC/QRIS Block Grant implementation; include how the consortium will ensure PD opportunities are recorded, published, and attendance tracked within the Workforce Registry and ensure that participating site lead teachers, site administrators, family childcare (FCC) owner or operators, coaches, and trainers create and maintain a complete Workforce Registry profile, which includes submission of qualification documentation and verification of current employment (open response)
3. Collect and use data and feedback from CSPPs in their county or region to inform continuous improvement in the implementation of quality improvement supports(open response)
   1. Include processes for data collection from the CDE, Teachstone, and ASPIRE regional and statewide leads, and CSPPs, as applicable
   2. Include how data will be shared with participants
   3. Include how data will be used to support quality improvement activities
4. Create opportunities for providers to strengthen their knowledge and skills by expanding access to evidence-informed quality improvement strategies, such as coaching, specific training sessions, and peer learning; include how each of the following will be implemented:
   1. Professional development and training: topics should be evidence-informed, address needs identified in the local needs assessment, and focused on priority areas related to improving adult-child interactions and supporting DEIB; CDE priorities for training topics can be found in Appendix F (open response)
   2. Coaching: Respond to applicable strategies (open response)
      1. Onsite, ongoing, job-embedded coaching supports.
      2. Coaching, including online or virtual coaching, to improve program quality through nurturing adult-child relationships and creating quality learning environments, in alignment with CLASS observations.
      3. Coaching, including online or virtual coaching, to support training and technical assistance related to topics identified in Appendix F.

c. Peer Learning: Include applicable strategies (open response)

i. Communities of practice

ii. Cohort learning approaches

d. Identify the required education, experience, and cultural competency qualifications for coaches and/or trainers (open response)

1. Prioritize coaching for CSPPs (for example, focusing primarily on Tier 3) and identify how the consortium will work with the regional and/or statewide ASPIRE grantee to ensure support for CSPPs is linked to the CLASS tools (open response)
2. Partner with other programs or funding streams to combine training or invite additional participants from the UPK mixed-delivery system to existing training and professional development opportunities, including, if applicable (open response)
   1. ASPIRE grant (CDE funding)
   2. Early Education Teacher Development grant (CDE funding)
   3. Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) and IEEEP expansion grantees (CDE funding)
   4. Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive Legacy grantees (First 5 California funding)
   5. QCC Quality Improvement Grant grantees and QCC Workforce Pathways Grant grantees (CDSS funding)
   6. UPK implementers (CDE funding)
   7. UPK Planning and Implementation grant (CDE funded/ County, District, Charter)
   8. Kindergarten through twelfth grade(K–12) Statewide System of Support lead(s)
3. Explain proposed stipend structure for programs or educators (for example, proposed number, amount, requirements) and how these stipends will support quality improvement activities that strengthen and expand their knowledge, skills, and competencies to support young children and their families; please write N/A if no stipends are proposed (open response)

### Section E: Allocation of Funds to CSPPs

Per *EC* Section 8203.1, local consortia receiving CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds shall allocate those funds to:

1. Contracting agencies of CSPP, as established by Article 2 (commencing with Section 8207), or
2. LEAs

These grant funds should be used for activities that support and improve quality and assess quality and access.

In allocating the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds, priority shall be given to support the CSPP sites that have achieved the highest common tier of quality. These supports can take a variety of forms and can include but are not limited to ongoing coaching supports, access to specific quality improvement resources, and stipends.

Grantees are also required to ensure CSPPs that have not yet achieved the highest common local tier of quality, or are new to participating in QRIS, receive similar support to improve quality.

Describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish each of the following activities:

1. Allocate grant funds to CSPP center-based contracting agencies or LEAs to support, improve, and maintain quality and assess equitable access to quality programs; specifically include stipend(s), incentive(s), and so on: (Open response)
   1. The amount given per stipend or incentive to each site, or educator and/or administrator
   2. The planned activities that will improve quality
   3. The planned activities that will assess equitable access to quality programs
2. If applicable, allocate grant funds to FCCHEN CSPP contracting agencies for activities that support, improve, and maintain quality and assess equitable access to quality programs; specifically include stipend(s), incentive(s), and so on: (Open response)
   1. The amount given per contracting agency of CSPP FCCHEN
   2. The planned activities that will improve quality
   3. The planned activities that will assess equitable access to quality
3. Allocate grant funds to support classrooms of CSPP sites that have achieved the highest common tier of quality, according to their most recent rating; specifically, include: (Open response)
   1. What type of support is provided, how the support will improve or maintain quality, and the amount allocated for each type of support per site or classroom; if the consortium provides direct support in the form of site block grants, include the rationale for the amount of the site block grant and describe data used to inform the allocation
   2. The type of support provided and amount for FCCH within a FCCHEN (if applicable), as well as how the support will improve or maintain quality
4. Allocate grant funds to new participating sites and to CSPP sites that have not yet achieved the highest common local tier of quality; specifically include: (Open response)
   1. The type of support provided and amount allocated for each type of support per site or classroom, as well as how the support will improve quality; if the consortium provides direct support in the form of site block grants, include the rationale for the amount of the site block grant and describe data used to inform the allocation
   2. The type of support and amount for FCCHs within a FCCHEN (if applicable), as well as how the support will improve quality
   3. As applicable, any challenges in assisting these sites to move to the highest common local tier of quality and how grant funds will be used to address them

### Section F: Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish each of the following activities:(Open response)

1. Collect, summarize, and utilize local QCC data and myTeachstone data to examine and improve the consortium’s approach to governance, quality improvement, outreach and communications, and incentives; examples of utilizing data can include, but are not limited to:
2. Adjusting coaching and professional development opportunities to meet the new and varying needs of CSPP educators
3. Analyzing the effectiveness of allocations to CSPP sites, as compared to quality improvement indicators
4. Examining whether outreach activities result in increased CSPP participation in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant
5. Collect information annually from subrecipients to monitor the efficacy of the allocation of grant funds, including:
   1. How the subrecipient spending will be monitored to ensure funds are administered correctly (administered to the correct subrecipient and spent appropriately as articulated in the Use of Grant Funds section of this RFA) and effectively
   2. How the lead agency will measure the effectiveness of allocations

### Section G: Governance and Strengthening Partnerships

Applicants must provide information about the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency as well as all consortium partners.

Through submission of this RFA, the applicant consortium ensures that the below listed required partners have reviewed and approved the consortium’s BGIP and this application. (Certification checkbox)

1. Describe which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish each of the following governance and partnership activities:
   1. Governance and decision-making process for ensuring shared knowledge and agreement with the consortium’s CSPP QRIS Block Grant plan and budget; include how early educators will be engaged in planning and decision-making processes, including but not limited to school districts, Head Start, and Tribal partners, where applicable (open response)
   2. Roles and responsibilities which will be assigned to each **REQUIRED** consortium member agency;include information for: (Open response)
      1. LEAs
      2. First 5 county commissions
      3. Local postsecondary educational institutions
      4. Local Planning Councils
      5. Local resource and referral agencies
      6. Alternative Payment Programs
      7. Other local agencies, including nonprofit organizations, that provide services to children from birth through five years of age
   3. How the consortium will strengthen and expand partnerships with the following: (Open response)
      1. Families and other key interest holders (for example, providers, parents, Head Start grantee, state-contracted early learning and care programs)
      2. Local Tribe or Tribal Representative (as applicable)
      3. County Health and Human Services Agency
      4. Special Education Local Plan Area
      5. County Department of Social Services
      6. County Department of Public Health
      7. Foster Child Care Bridge (as applicable)
      8. Child Care Licensing Regional Offices
      9. Others as appropriate, including local school districts and expanded learning providers to support smooth transitions from preschool / early education programs to TK or K–12
   4. How the lead agency will engage in the following regional connections to support relationships, partnerships, and information sharing as it relates to the quality improvement activities, as applicable: (Open response)
      1. Any local school districts who are not members of the consortium
      2. State system of support leads
      3. ASPIRE regional leads
      4. Expanded learning providers
2. Describe how this RFA application and local BGIP were shared with the consortium members. If applicable, include feedback and changes from the consortium members that were incorporated into the RFA submission; include information on any barriers and successful engagement in information sharing with the required entities listed above, where applicable (open response)

### Optional - Section H: Program Badging

The CDE is encouraging CSPP QRIS grantees and interest holders to participate in a collaborative effort to create an approach and infrastructure for program badging. The goal of the program badging is to be responsive to local community needs and uplift program strengths, as well as provide flexibility for individual programs and communities to focus on the badges that are most meaningful for the children and families served.

The planning effort may include face-to-face and virtual meetings to develop a program badging structure, proposing requirements for badges on priority topics (e.g., inclusion, supporting multilingual learners, family engagement, anti-bias/anti-racist practices) and determining a process for offering badges. This engagement is optional and not required at this time. If you are interested in participating in the design and Phase 1 implementation of a statewide badging structure, indicate your interest and commitment to attend planning meetings in FY 2025–26.

1. Please note the name and contact information for anyone interested in participating in the badge development effort, include any interest holders as noted in section G of this RFA (open response)
2. Please indicate specific badges most relevant to your consortia you would like to see developed (for example, inclusion, supporting multilingual learners, family engagement, anti-bias/anti-racist practices); list in order of preference. (open response)

## Budget and Budget Narrative

A detailed budget and budget narrative must be combined into a ZIP file and submitted with the CSPP QRIS Block Grant [RFA Survey](https://surveys3.cde.ca.gov/go/csppqrisrfa2025.asp). The budget and budget narrative documents should encompass the duration of the grant: July 1, 2025–June 30, 2027. The CSPP QRIS Block Grant budget template and budget narrative are available on the [Request for Application](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/csppqrisbgrfa25.asp) web page.

On the Budget Narrative, provide justification for each expenditure category, and include information about roles, time allocation, and salary and benefits of the lead agency staff; equipment and supplies; travel; stipends and incentives; indirect costs; and a clear description of services to be contracted.

Provide the following:

1. Personnel
   1. The specific responsibilities of each lead agency position directly participating in quality improvement activities as described in their application
   2. The title of each position
   3. The role of each position to support quality improvement activities
   4. The agency that funds each position
   5. The time or full-time equivalent (FTE) of each position
   6. The salary for each position
2. Benefits
   1. Fringe benefit percentages for all personnel in the project, by agency
   2. The basis for cost estimates or computations
3. Supplies
   1. An estimate of materials and supplies needed for the quality improvement activities for the consortium, by nature of expense or general category (for example, instructional materials, office supplies)
   2. The basis for cost estimates or computations, including unit number of each supply or material
4. Travel
   1. The purpose of the travel, how it relates to quality improvement goals, and how it will contribute to project success
   2. Purpose of each trip
   3. An estimate of the number of trips
   4. An estimate of costs for each trip
   5. Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations
5. Equipment
   1. Justification and need for any equipment to be purchased
   2. Purpose of the equipment to be purchased
   3. The type of equipment to be purchased
   4. The estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased
   5. Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

Note: The CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds can be used to purchase equipment with a unit cost not to exceed $5,000. Equipment being purchased for a participating site must be identified in a site improvement plan. Unit cost includes all costs required to make the item serviceable, such as taxes, freight, installation costs, site preparation costs, and so on

1. Contractual
   1. The purpose of any contract and its relation to the project
   2. The products to be acquired or the professional services to be provided
   3. The agency that will be responsible for the contract
   4. The estimated cost per expected procurement
   5. For professional services contracts, the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to the grant award
   6. Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations

Note: Indirect fees may only be charged on the first $25,000 of any subcontract and are limited to the CDE approved indirect cost rates. For example, if the grantee has a subcontract for $100,000, the grantee may only charge indirect fees on the first $25,000 of that contract. See Chapter 3.06 B of the California [State Contracting Manual](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OLS/Resources/Page-Content/Office-of-Legal-Services-Resources-List-Folder/State-Contracting) for more information.

1. Other
   1. Purpose of expenditure
   2. Other item by major type or category (for example, communications, printing, postage, equipment rental)
   3. Cost per item
   4. Any additional basis for cost estimates or computations
2. Funds to CSPPs
   1. Description of the types of support provided to encourage participation in the QRIS, the purpose of each support, and the estimated unit cost
   2. Description of the types of support provided to contracting agencies of CSPPs, including LEAs, for activities that support, improve, and maintain quality and assess access to quality across programs and communities to support equity, the purpose of each support, and the estimated unit cost
   3. Description of the types of support provided to contracting agencies of CSPP FCCHENs for activities that support, improve, and maintain quality and assess access to quality across programs and communities to support equity, the purpose of each support, and the estimated cost
   4. Description of direct supports provided to CSPP sites, classrooms, educators, or administrators of CSPP sites; the purpose of each support, the estimated unit cost, and the data used to determine the support and the type of support (monetary or equipment)
   5. Description of incentives to CSPP sites, classrooms, educators, or administrators of CSPP sites. The purpose of each incentive, the estimated unit cost, and the data used to determine the incentive and the type of incentive (monetary or equipment)
3. Total Direct Costs
   1. The sum of expenditures, across all budget categories in Personnel and Operations
4. Indirect Costs
   1. Total indirect cost, including the grantee’s approved rate and which categories the indirect is being applied to
5. Total Funds Requested
   1. The sum of direct and indirect costs for the applicable reporting period

## Grant Terms and Conditions

### Use of Grant Funds

Check this box to confirm receipt and review of the updated Allowable and Non-Allowable Costs Section. (Checkbox certification)

#### Expenditure Timeline

In alignment with the two-year period for the expenditure of grant funds, the grant award notices (GANs) for this RFA will encompass three FYs (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028). The CDE’s direct grantees will operate on a one-year plan for spending their annual allocations. FY 2027–28 is intended for subrecipient spending, not grantee spending. Annual CSPP QRIS Block Grant funding is subject to appropriation each year in the California state budget.

#### Allowable Use of Grant Funds

The CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds are not intended for direct services to children and families, but rather to support the quality improvement system and support early learning programs to achieve higher levels of quality. No project or activity can be approved that proposes to provide direct services (for example, increasing early learning program slots, bonuses or salaries for site personnel), supports only sites that are at one specific level of quality (for example, only preschool programs at Tier 5), or provides a service required by state or federal law, other than pursuant to *EC* Section 8203.1. For example, any project that solely provides special education services for children with disabilities cannot be approved because special education is already required by state law with special funds appropriated to pay for it.

Applicant budgets for the use of grant funds will be reviewed, and any items that are deemed non-allowable, excessive, or inappropriate will be eliminated. All expenditures must contribute to the goals and objectives of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funding.

Funds can be used only for costs incurred for the successful implementation and administration of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant and include the following allowable expenditures (either performed by the lead agency or a subrecipient):

1. Data collection and storage
2. Quality improvement activities (stipends, learning materials, curricula, coaching, professional development and so on)
3. Rating and monitoring
4. Communications and outreach
5. Other materials and supplies, including marketing materials to promote awareness of UPK among early learning and care programs and the community at large
6. Meetings and conferences (note: any conference expenses must be approved in advance)
7. Rental of a venue to provide professional learning (note: the expenses must be approved in advance)
8. Publication and printing costs
9. Subscriptions to journals or magazines
10. Payment for memberships in professional organizations
11. Equipment, aligned with needs identified in a program’s QIP, not for administrative or personal use (non-furniture/non-capitalized) with a unit cost of $5,000 or less (unit cost includes all costs required to make the item serviceable, such as taxes, freight, installation costs, site preparation costs, and so on)
12. Training specifically related to QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant design or implementation, including professional development and technical skill development
13. In-state travel specifically related to QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant (this will be reimbursed in accordance with state travel guidelines; all costs exceeding state rates will not be covered through these funds)
14. Out-of-state travel specifically related to QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant (travel is limited to three consortium staff members or contractors per FY and prior CDE approval must be sought
15. Agreements with one or more county office of education (COE), LEA, institution of higher education, not-for-profit educational service provider, consortia member, or community-based organization to assist in fulfilling the responsibilities of the grant
16. The CDE will reimburse lead agencies for incurred administrative costs (both direct and indirect as defined below) related to the QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant; for budgeting and reimbursement purposes, administrative costs directly related to the QCC/QRIS Block Grant should be reflected in the Personnel or Operating expenditure categories
17. “Direct costs” include the salaries, wages, and benefits of employees while they are working exclusively on the delivery of a specific project or service related to quality improvement (preparing action plans, developing budgets, monitoring activities, and so on), as well as materials, supplies, equipment, utilities, rent, training, travel, and so on; these costs should be easily identifiable with a specific project or directly assigned with a high degree of accuracy
18. “Indirect costs” are shared costs that benefit or support multiple projects or services administered by a lead agency and that cannot be readily identified with a specific project or service (for example, legal, accounting, human resources, procurement, facilities, maintenance, technology, and so on). These costs should be apportioned by a systematic and rational allocation methodology; the methodology should be documented by the lead agency and available upon request. The lead agency must not exceed the indirect cost rates provided annually by the CDE which can be found on the [Indirect Cost Rates](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/ic/) web page. The lead agency shall identify and justify direct costs and indirect costs, including employee fringe benefits, in accordance with State Contracting Manual Volume I, Section 3.17.2, subsection A.1.

#### Non-Allowable Activities and Costs

Funds provided under this grant may *not* be used for the following purposes:

1. Materials and supplies for participating sites not tied to site improvement plan
2. Direct service of early learning and care (for example, funding of slots) or other program services
3. Acquisition of equipment for administrative or personal use
4. Acquisition of furniture (for example, bookcases, chairs, desks, file cabinets, tables) unless it is an integral part of an equipment workstation, or it provides reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities
5. Consumables (for example, food services, alcoholic beverages, banquets, meals, diapers)
6. Purchase of space
7. Purchase of promotional favors, items, or memorabilia, such as bumper stickers, pencils, pens, t-shirts, gifts, or souvenirs provided to the QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant staff and partners
8. Bad debts, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs
9. Costs of advertising and public relations designed solely to promote the Governmental unit, lead agency, or partners; or promotional items or memorabilia, including gifts or souvenirs
10. Entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities, and any expenses directly associated with such costs
11. Goods or services for personal use of the lead agency and partner employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees
12. Legal costs incurred in defense of any civil or criminal fraud proceeding or legal expenses for prosecution of claims against the State of California
13. Lobbying costs, whether direct or indirect
14. Political activities
15. Organized fund-raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and requests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions
16. Materials and supplies for participating sites not tied to site improvement plan
17. Current year agreement funds to pay prior or future year obligations
18. Capital assets such as equipment, land, buildings, vehicles, and so on. Unallowable costs also include all costs required to make the item serviceable (for example, taxes, freight, installation costs, site preparation costs)
19. Facilities renovation, improvements, and repairs
20. Idle facilities or idle capacity except to the extent they are: 1) necessary to meet fluctuations in workload, or 2) necessary when acquired and are now idle because of changes in program requirements, efforts to achieve more economical operations, reorganization, termination, or other causes that could not have been reasonably foreseen
21. Gift cards

### Funds to CSPPs

Grant funds can be disseminated from the CSPP QRIS Block Grant grantees to the CSPPs who are participating in the QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant. In allocating the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds, while priority shall be given to directly supporting CSPP sites that have achieved the highest tier of quality, grant funds should also be allocated to CSPPs that have not yet achieved the highest common tier of quality and/or are new to QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant.[[7]](#footnote-8)

#### Spending Timeline

Subrecipients (CSPPs) who receive grant funds from CSPP QRIS Block Grant grantees are required to spend these funds within 12 months of the grantees spending period for the relevant fiscal year. For example, if a grantee is awarded funding for FY 2025–26, the grantee must administer grant funds before the grant end date on the GAN (June 30, 2026). The subrecipient of the grant funds has an additional 12 months to spend their funding (June 30, 2027). The purpose of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant is to improve quality for CSPP programs participating in QCC/CSPP QRIS Block Grant. Funding may not be stored or accumulated for use in future FYs.

#### Allowable and Non-Allowable Activities for CSPPs and LEAs

In addition to the **allowable costs** listed above, grant funds provided by grantees to CSPPs and LEAs may be spent by CSPPs and LEAs on:

1. Classroom equipment
2. Classroom furniture
3. Classroom materials and manipulatives
4. Minor facilities improvements (below a capitalized threshold amount of $5000.00) (for example, purchasing materials and play equipment to improve outdoor spaces)
5. Classroom improvements to accommodate students with disabilities
6. Community outreach
7. Professional Development (workshops, trainings, coaching, and so on)
8. Education software (for example, Learning Genie, Ages and Stages Questionnaire Online, and so on)

In addition to the **non-allowable costs** listed above, grant funds to CSPPs and LEAs may not be spent by CSPPs and LEAs on:

1. Major facilities improvements (for example, playgrounds)
2. Savings for future, anticipated expenses
3. Teacher bonuses (this includes any direct payments to teachers for purposes other than participation in quality improvement activities)
   1. Bonuses for teacher retention are not allowable

For activities and expenses that are not listed, please reach out to the CDE CSPP QRIS Block Grant Team for approval of expenses. (QCC@cde.ca.gov)

### Indirect Cost Rate

1. If indirect costs are claimed, an indirect cost allocation plan must be on file with the contractor and available for review by the CDE staff and auditors.
2. In accordance with the *Uniform Guidance,* Title 2 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (2 *CFR*) Section 200.414(f), the maximum indirect cost rate for any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, shall be 10 percent of the modified total direct costs.
3. For any non-federal entity that has a negotiated indirect cost rate, which includes all school districts and COEs, the maximum indirect cost rate shall be the lessor of the negotiated indirect cost rate or the 10 percent indirect cost rate referenced in *Uniform Guidance,* 2 *CFR* 200.414(f). A list of negotiated indirect cost rates are available on the CDE web page found at https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/ac/ic/.
4. This rate is applied to budget categories 1000–5000 only in determining the maximum amount of indirect costs that are reimbursable under the contract.
5. The amount of cost allocable to this contract shall not exceed the benefits to this contract. The allocation method must quantify this benefit among all similar programs and then distribute the costs accordingly.
6. The indirect cost rate shall not include consideration of any costs otherwise non-reimbursable. If a depreciation or use allowance is included in the indirect cost rate, such allowance shall not be claimed on the asset.

### Use of Subcontractors

The lead agency can subcontract with another entity to implement the CSPP QRIS Block Grant as an intermediary; however, the lead agency remains legally responsible for all program, administrative, evaluation, and fiscal requirements of the RFA and grant award agreement, even if administered through an intermediary.

If a lead agency subcontracts with another agency to implement the CSPP QRIS Block Grant, any communication regarding implementation of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant must occur through the lead agency. The CDE will not discuss any program, administrative, evaluation, or fiscal issues with a subcontractor. The lead agency must adhere to the State of California’s contract bidding requirement. The lead agency is responsible for the timely collection of necessary data and reporting.

If it is discovered the lead agency did not attempt to obtain prior CDE approval or did not follow the State of California’s contract bidding requirements, the related expenses will be disallowed.

Any subcontract entered into as a result of the subsequent grant award agreement shall contain all the provisions held within.

### Grant Allocations and Payments

Based on the 2024–25 Contracted Child Days of Enrollment Child data from (March 2024 CDD-801A Enrollment data) the CDE’s Child Development Management Information System, the CSPP QRIS Block Grant allocations provided below for 2025–26 were determined using a formula that accounts for the proportion of CSPP slots allocated to each consortium including a $5,000 operational base for addressing small county needs. Amounts are organized by the current CSPP QRIS Block Grant grantees. For FY 2026–27, grant allocations will remain the same and will be re-evaluated during the next RFA cycle in FY 2027–28. The annual CSPP QRIS Block Grant allocation is subject to appropriation each year in the California State Budget.

**Annual Consortium Funding Allocations for the CSPP QRIS Block Grant for FYs 2025**–**27**

| County | Annual Allocation |
| --- | --- |
| Alameda | $2,105,639.00 |
| Amador | $41,043.00 |
| Butte | $307,053.00 |
| Calaveras | $25,065.00 |
| Contra Costa | $1,091,968.00 |
| Del Norte | $51,608.00 |
| El Dorado | $187,926.00 |
| Fresno | $2,292,550.00 |
| Humboldt | $116,279.00 |
| Imperial | $521,551.00 |
| Inyo | $56,512.00 |
| Kern | $1,450,850.00 |
| Kings | $339,219.00 |
| Lake | $130,718.00 |
| Los Angeles | $13,613,723.00 |
| Madera | $297,402.00 |
| Marin | $230,318.00 |
| Mendocino | $169,748.00 |
| Merced | $613,002.00 |
| Mono, Alpine | $27,526.00 |
| Monterey | $836,073.00 |
| Napa | $177,358.00 |
| Nevada | $84,070.00 |
| Orange | $2,865,840.00 |
| Placer | $142,750.00 |
| Plumas | $36,919.00 |
| Riverside | $2,520,525.00 |
| Sacramento | $1,945,181.00 |
| San Bernardino | $3,046,299.00 |
| San Diego | $3,540,888.00 |
| San Francisco | $1,254,244.00 |
| San Joaquin | $1,321,765.00 |
| San Luis Obispo | $166,688.00 |
| San Mateo | $834,322.00 |
| Santa Barbara | $552,328.00 |
| Santa Clara, San Benito | $1,566,116.00 |
| Santa Cruz | $332,488.00 |
| Shasta, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Tehama, Trinity | $521,340.00 |
| Siskiyou | $73,504.00 |
| Solano | $331,047.00 |
| Sonoma | $429,659.00 |
| Stanislaus | $889,239.00 |
| Tulare | $1,081,448.00 |
| Tuolumne | $37,693.00 |
| Ventura | $936,527.00 |
| Yolo | $340,573.00 |
| Yuba, Colusa, Sutter | $465,416.00 |

### Payment Schedule

The payment schedule for the FY 2025–27 CSPP QRIS Block Grant will be as follows:

1. Grantees will receive 45 percent of their funding up front at the beginning of each fiscal year of the grant cycle (FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27).
2. Once reported expenditures demonstrate that half of the initial payment (22.5 percent of the grantee’s total award) is spent down, grantees will receive another 45 percent payment.
3. The final 10 percent of funding will be paid out as reimbursement upon receipt of quarterly reporting that demonstrates expenditures beyond 90 percent of the total grant award.
   1. Note: The last 10 percent may be paid out in multiple installments depending on the timing of grantee expenditures.

Note: Payment schedule is subject to adjustments as needed.

### Grantee Initiated Budget Revisions

Budget allowances will not be available and budget revisions are required in any instance that a budget category is exceeded. Budget revisions must be submitted to and approved by the CDE on a quarterly basis.

### Overpayment

If it is determined that a lead agency received an overpayment of CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds, the CDE will inform the lead agency of the overpayment and provide the following options for recovery: 1) issue an invoice to the lead agency, or 2) reduce a future reimbursement claim. If the invoice is preferred, payment shall be processed within 45 days of receipt or future claims may be withheld or adjusted. By accepting this grant funding, the application agrees that the CDE has the right to recoup all the costs associated with collection of the overpayment, including attorney’s fees.

### Carryover Funds

There are no carryover funds for the CSPP QRIS Block Grant. All funding must be spent within the grant period. The FY 2025–26 allocation shall be spent by June 30, 2026. The FY 2026–27 allocation shall be spent by June 30, 2027. During the grant year, the CDE may determine adjustments to grant award amounts based on grantee expenditures and historic expenditure patterns. The CDE reserves the right to reallocate unspent funds to grantees with a need for more funding.

### CDE Initiated Revisions and Amendment to Funding Allocations and Budgets

Lead agencies will have access to funding and spending flexibility within their total budget by FY if cash is available in the appropriate CDE accounts, performance measures are met, and reporting requirements are met. During the term of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant, funding allocations and budgets will be amended based on performance and compliance with requirements of the RFA. Amendments to funding allocations can be made by CDE at any time during the term of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant. Budget revisions and amendments must be submitted to the CDE quarterly.

Allocations may be decreased for the following reasons:

1. Joint assessment (completed by the CDE and the lead agency) determines lead agency does not have the capacity to exhaust the entire funding allocation
2. Major CSPP QRIS Block Grant system changes:
   1. Major changes to quality improvement methods
   2. Any subcontractor changes
   3. Changes to the CSPP QRIS Block Grant administration and oversight staff (for example, executive director, chief financial officer, program director, and so on)

Major system changes in state funds are permissible only upon written approval by the CDE. The lead agency must submit a written request at least 60 days prior to the implementation of the proposed change (staffing changes must be disclosed within 30 days of a change). If applicable, an action plan and corresponding budget amendment must be submitted describing the major system change and the change to the original budget for one or more FYs.

### Assignment

The grant award is not assignable by the grantee, either in whole or in part, without the consent of the CDE in the form of a formal written amendment.

### Dispute Resolution

The lead agency shall attempt to resolve disputes of fiscal components (reimbursement, budget amendments, etc.) with CDE staff. If the dispute is not resolved at the first staff level, the Executive Director or designee of the lead agency may appeal the decision. If the lead agency wishes to appeal, a written description of the issues and the basis for the dispute must be sent to the EED Director within 30 calendar days of receiving an initial response from the first-level determination of the dispute. The letter must have an original signature of the Executive Director or designee. The appeal should be emailed to [QCC@cde.ca.gov](mailto:QCC@cde.ca.gov).

Within 30 calendar days of receiving the lead agency’s written dispute, the EED Director will review the facts of the dispute, and if deemed necessary, will meet with the lead agency’s Executive Director or designee for purposes of resolving the dispute. The EED Director shall notify the lead agency in writing of the results of the appeal, along with the reasons for the decision, within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the lead agency’s notification of the dispute. The EED Director's decision is the final administrative action afforded the appeal.

### Funding Contingencies for Grant Award Notifications

* + - 1. Any entity that enters into a CSPP QRIS Block Grant agreement with the CDE understands and agrees that the agreement is valid and enforceable only if sufficient funds are available in the appropriate accounts administered by the CDE to carry out the purposes of the agreement. This agreement shall be invalid and of no further force and effect if sufficient funds are not available in the appropriate account due to:
         1. Any additional restrictions, limitations, or conditions enacted by the Legislature
         2. Any statute enacted by the Legislature that may affect the provisions, terms, or funding for the agreement in any manner
      2. In the event there are insufficient funds in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant account due to any of the aforementioned reasons, the state of California and the CDE shall have no liability to pay any funds to the lead agency or to furnish any other considerations under the agreement; the lead agency, subsequently, shall not be obligated to perform any provisions of the agreement.
      3. If full funding does not become available, the CDE will amend the agreement to reflect the funding reduction or reduced activities.
      4. If possible, alternate funding arrangements may be made to address CDE cash flow issues.

### Reporting

The CSPP QRIS Block Grant grantees will submit programmatic and fiscal reports. Fiscal reports will be submitted on a quarterly basis and programmatic reports will be submitted on a biannual basis to the CDE.

Quarterly fiscal reporting for CSPP QRIS Block Grant FY 2025–26 is due:

1. Quarter 1 (July 1 through September 30, 2025): October 20, 2025
2. Quarter 2 (October 1 through December 31, 2025): January 16, 2026
3. Quarter 3 (January 1 through March 31, 2026): April 20, 2026
4. Quarter 4 (April 1 through June 30, 2026): July 31, 2026

Biannual programmatic reporting for CSPP QRIS Block Grant FY 2025–26 is due:

1. January 16, 2026 (July 1 through December 31, 2025)
2. July 31, 2026 (January 1 through June 30, 2026)

Quarterly reporting for CSPP QRIS Block Grant FY 2026–27 is due:

1. Quarter 1 (July 1 through September 30, 2026): October 19, 2026
2. Quarter 2 (October 1 through December 31, 2026): January 15, 2027
3. Quarter 3 (January 1 through March 31, 2027): April 19, 2027
4. Quarter 4 (April 1 through June 30, 2027): July 30, 2027

Biannual programmatic reporting for CSPP QRIS Block Grant FY 2026–27 is due:

1. January 15, 2027 (July 1 through December 31, 2026)
2. July 30, 2027 (January 1 through June 30, 2027)

Grantees will also submit the following annual reports (unless otherwise notified):

1. QCC Common Data File (CDF)
   1. FY 2025–26 due September 15, 2026
   2. FY 2026–27 due September 15, 2027
2. QCC Annual Performance Report (APR)
   1. FY 2025–26 due Fall 2026
   2. FY 2026–27 due Fall 2027

#### Fiscal Reports

Quarterly fiscal reports (expenditure reports) to include details of all expenses and activities as noted in the budget template will be submitted through a platform to be determined and provided by the CDE. Additionally, specific details must be included for the following (as noted):

1. All direct funds to CSPPs (including directly to educators and program staff):
   1. Amount paid out
   2. Recipients
   3. Tier rating of recipients
   4. Purpose of funds (stipend, direct support, coaching, and so on)

#### Programmatic Reports

Programmatic reporting will be submitted through a platform to be determined and provided by the CDE. Bi-annual programmatic reporting may include, but is not limited to the following questions:

1. Outreach
   1. Description and types of outreach activities that were completed to increase participation in QRIS Block Grant
2. Professional Development or Coaching offered during the reporting period
   1. Topics
   2. Who provided the training or coaching
   3. Number of participating early educators CSPP and others (for example, Head Start, TK)
   4. Duration of professional development and coaching
   5. Mode of professional development/coaching (in-person, virtual, hybrid)

Note: Reporting requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the CDE.

### Payment Withholds

Failure to submit timely and accurate fiscal information, evaluation data, and program reports as required by the CDE may result in the withholding of a disbursement of funds, until the required information, data, or reports have been submitted to CDE. Serious delays in fiscal report submission may result in a written request by the CDE for an accounting of expenditures or special review of fiscal and program activity. The CDE may reduce or terminate program participation if it is determined that a lead agency has failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the RFA or its approved grant award agreement, including any amendments to the RFA or grant award agreement.

### General Assurances

Applicants do not need to return the general assurances and certifications with the application. Instead, applicants must download and sign assurances and certifications, and keep them on file and available for monitoring reviews, complaint investigations, or audits. General assurances and certifications are available on the CDE [Funding Forms](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/ff.asp) web page.

### Independent Grantee

The grantee, and the agents and employees of the grantee, in the performance of this grant award, shall act in an independent capacity and not as officers, employees, or agents of the state.

### News Releases and Publicity

The grantee shall inform the grant manager at the CDE within 14 calendar days of any statements made to the news media regarding the operational procedures and status of work related to this grant award and provide the CDE the opportunity to review and comment on any print or electronic news releases related to this grant prior to the release of information to the public.

### Information Security Incidents

The grantee agrees to notify the CDE by telephone and in writing via email of any use or disclosure of information not provided for by this grant award of which it becomes aware within three working days of initial detection. Written reports of information security incidents shall contain information on the incident (for example, hacking, virus, and theft), a description of information that was compromised, and classification of the information (for example, confidential, sensitive, personal). The system or device affected by an information security incident shall be removed from operation immediately. It shall remain removed from operation until correction and mitigation measures have been applied.

### Release of Data or Products

Except as specified in the grant award, the grantee shall not release or disclose any aggregated data or any products created, produced, or developed pursuant to the grant to any person, except to the grantee’s personnel, attorneys, prospective vendors, the grantee’s law firms, and other companies or individuals who are necessary for, and are to be directly involved in, the development, production, and distribution of the products permitted. Products include, but are not limited to, drafts or works in progress. The grantee agrees to ensure that any agents to whom it provides the data agrees to the same restrictions and conditions that apply to the grantee with respect to such information. The grantee shall employ reasonable procedures to protect these products from unauthorized use and disclosure. The CDE retains the right to approve any procedures employed by the grantee to comply with this provision. Personally identifiable data regarding children, families and providers served under the grant funding shall never be released to any third party without the approval of the CDE. In order to ensure the confidentiality of all students, families, and providers, the grantee shall adhere to all state and federal privacy protection requirements including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, as amended (20 United States Code § 1232g and 34 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 99); the California Information Practices Act (California Civil Code Section 1798 et seq.); California *EC* sections 49079.5 and 49062 et seq.; and Article 1, Section 1 of the California Constitution. Grantees shall abide by all privacy protections policies set by participating CSPPs in accordance with Title 5, Section 17732: Confidentiality of Records.

### Capital Assets

The CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds may not be used for capital assets as defined by the California State Administrative Manual (SAM) and the *California School Accounting Manual* – land, improvements to land, easements, buildings, building improvements, vehicles, machinery, equipment, works of art and historical treasures, infrastructure, and all other tangible or intangible assets that are used in operations and that have initial useful lives extending beyond a single reporting period and a unit cost of $5,000 or more (SAM Section 8602).

In accordance with SAM, if property does not have an expected useful life of greater than one year and the purchase cost is not $5,000 or more, for purposes of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant, the purchase is considered an expenditure and not a capital asset.

Lead agencies must review existing policies regarding capital assets. If the lead agency’s policy identifies a lower monetary threshold than SAM for capital assets, the lead agency’s policy must be enforced when expending the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds. If the lead agency’s policy identifies a higher monetary threshold than SAM for capital assets, the state of California’s policy (per SAM) must be enforced when expending the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds.

### Retention of Program Records

Records substantiating state funds disbursed by the CDE to the lead agency are subject to monitoring, examination, and audit by the CDE or its designee, or the State Auditor, for a period of five years, or local policy retention period (whichever is greater) after final payment of program expenditures. Adequate and accurate program and expenditure records that document the allowable costs must be retained for this period. The CDE shall have access to the lead agency’s offices or the CSPP QRIS Block Grant sites, upon reasonable notice and during normal business hours, for the purpose of interviewing employees and inspecting and copying books, records, accounts, and other material that may be relevant to a matter under investigation, and for the purpose of determining compliance with the allowable uses of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds.

### Termination of Agreement

The CDE retains the option to terminate a GAN without cause at its discretion, provided that written notice has been delivered to the lead agency at least thirty days prior to such termination date. If the CDE terminates the agreement at its discretion, the lead agency will be entitled to reimbursement upon submission of an invoice and proper proof of claim, in that proportion which its services and products were satisfactorily rendered or provided and its expenses necessarily incurred pursuant to the agreement, up to the date when notice of termination is received by the lead agency (“the notice date”). The lead agency will not be entitled to reimbursement for any expenses incurred for services and deliverables pursuant to the agreement after the notice date, unless the lead agency receives written advance approval from the CDE.

### Ownership of Products and Copyright

Upon their creation, all products, deliverables, or like items that are produced, created, developed, or the like, using CSPP QRIS funds, shall become the sole and complete property of the CDE during the term of the grant. The CDE retains all rights to use, reproduce, distribute, or display any products created, provided, developed, or produced under the agreement and any derivative products based on products subject to this agreement, as well as all other rights, privileges, and remedies granted or reserved to a copyright owner under statutory and common-law copyright law.

Any subcontractor agreements shall include language granting the CDE the copyright for any products created, provided, developed, or produced under the grant award agreement and ownership of any products not fixed in any tangible medium of expression. In addition, the lead agency shall require the other party to assign those rights to the CDE in a format prescribed by the CDE. For any products for which the copyright is not granted to the CDE, the CDE shall retain a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license throughout the world to reproduce, to prepare derivative products, to distribute copies, to perform, to display, or otherwise use, duplicated, or dispose of such products in any manner for governmental purposes and to have or permit others to do so.

All products distributed under the terms of the agreement and any reproductions of products shall include a notice of copyright in a place that can be visually perceived at the direction of the CDE. This notice shall be placed prominently on products and set apart from other matters on the page or medium where it appears. The notice shall state “Copyright” or “©,” the year in which the work was created, and “California Department of Education.”

### Non-Discrimination

During the performance of the grant award agreement, the lead agency and its subcontractors shall not unlawfully discriminate, harass, or allow harassment against any employee or applicant for employment because of sex, race, color, ancestry, religious creed, national origin, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, age, marital status, and denial of family care leave. The lead agency and subcontractors shall ensure that the evaluation and treatment of their employees and applicants for employment are free from such discrimination and harassment. The lead agency and subcontractors shall comply with the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (Gov. Code §12990 et seq.) and the applicable regulations promulgated thereunder (California *Code of Regulations*, Title 2, Section 7285 et seq.). The applicable regulations of the Fair Employment and Housing Commission implementing Government Code Section 12990 et seq., set forth in Chapter 5 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the California *Code of Regulations*, are incorporated by reference into this Agreement.

### Indemnification and Hold Harmless

Neither the CDE nor any officer or employee thereof is responsible for any damage or liability occurring by reason of anything done or omitted to be done by the lead agency under, or in connection with any work, authority, or jurisdiction delegated to the lead agency under the grant award agreement. It is understood and agreed, pursuant to Government Code Section 895.4, the lead agency shall fully defend, indemnify, and save harmless the CDE and all of its officers and employees from all claims, suits, or actions of every name, kind, and description brought forth occurring by reason of anything done or omitted to be done by the lead agency under or in connection with any work, authority, or jurisdiction delegated to the contractor under the agreement.

## Appendix A: California Department of Education Block Grant Authority

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 8203.1.

(a) The Superintendent shall administer a QRIS block grant, pursuant to an appropriation made for that purpose in the annual Budget Act, to be allocated to local Consortia for support of local early learning quality rating and improvement systems that increase the number of low-income children in high quality preschool programs that prepare those children for success in school and life.

(b) (1) For purposes of this section, “early learning quality rating and improvement system” or “QRIS” is defined as a locally determined system for continuous quality improvement based on a tiered rating structure with progressively higher quality standards for each tier that provides supports and incentives for programs, teachers, and administrators to reach higher levels of quality, monitors and evaluates the impacts on child outcomes, and disseminates information to parents and the public about program quality.

(2) For purposes of this section, “local consortium” is defined as a local or regional entity, administered by a lead agency, that convenes a planning body that designs and implements a QRIS. A local consortium shall include representatives from organizations including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Local educational agencies
2. First 5 county commissions
3. Local postsecondary education institutions
4. Local child care planning councils
5. Local resource and referral agencies
6. Other local agencies, including nonprofit organizations that provide services to children from birth to five years of age, inclusive

(3) For purposes of this section, “quality continuum framework” or ‘QCF’ means the tiered rating matrix created and adopted by a local consortium for purposes of implementing a QRIS. The tiered rating matrix shall include three common tiers shared by all participating local Consortia. Changes to the common tiers shall be approved and adopted by all participating local Consortia.

(c) The QRIS block grant shall build on local Consortia and other local QRIS work in existence on or before the operative date of this section.

(d) For the 2014–15 fiscal year, if a county or region has an established local consortium that has adopted a quality continuum framework, the local consortium’s lead administering agency shall be provided the first opportunity to apply for a QRIS block grant.

(e) Local Consortia shall do the following to be eligible for a QRIS block grant:

(1) Implement a QRIS that incorporates evidence-based elements and tools in the quality continuum framework that are tailored to the local conditions and enhanced with local resources.

(2) Set ambitious yet achievable goals for CSPP contracting agencies’ participation in the QRIS with the goal of achieving the highest common tier, as the tier existed on June 1, 2014, or a higher level of quality.

(3) Develop an action plan that includes a continuous quality improvement process that is tied to improving child outcomes.

(4) Describe how QRIS block grant funds will be used to increase the number of sites achieving the highest common local tier and to directly support classrooms that have achieved the highest common tier, as that tier existed on June 1, 2014, or a higher level of quality.

(f) The Superintendent, in consultation with the executive director of the State Board, shall allocate QRIS block grant funds to local Consortia that satisfy the requirements of subdivision (e) based on the number of California State Preschool Program slots within the county or region.

(g) (1) Local Consortia receiving QRIS block grant funds shall allocate those funds to contracting agencies of the California State Preschool Program, as established by Article 7 (commencing with Section 8235), or local educational agencies, for activities that support and improve quality, and assess quality and access. In allocating the QRIS block grant funds, priority shall be given to directly supporting the classrooms of the California State Preschool Program sites that have achieved the highest common local tier of quality.

(2) No more than 20 percent of a local consortium’s QRIS block grant funds may be used for assessment and access projects.

(h) A Family Child Care Home Education Network established pursuant to Section 8223 that provides California State Preschool Program services shall be eligible for an allocation from a local consortium of QRIS block grant funds for activities that support, improve, and assess quality.

## Appendix B: Quality Counts California Quality Continuum Framework

**Quality Counts California (QCC)**

Quality Continuum Framework (QCF)

**July 2025**

**NOTE:** The Quality Continuum Framework (formally called the Rating Matrix) includes elements that are research-based indicators of quality. It provides a recommended *framework*, or *structure*, for quality improvement. **Only Element 4b is required for California State Preschool Program ratings.**

| **Element** | **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** | **5 Points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core I: Child Development and School Readiness  **1. Child Observation** | N/A | Program uses evidence-based child assessment or observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development | Program uses valid and reliable child assessment or observation tool aligned with the most recent iteration of the *California Learning Foundations* twice a year | Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is administered twice a year, at minimum, and results are used to inform curriculum planning | Program uses DRDP twice a year and uploads into DRDP Online or DR Access, and results are used to inform curriculum |
| Core I: Child Development and School Readiness  **2. Developmental and Health Screenings** | Meets Title 22 Regulations | Health Screening Form (Community Care Licensing form LIC701 “Physician’s Report – Child Care Centers” or equivalent) used at entry, then:  Annually **OR** Ensures vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually | Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2 | Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2 | Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ and ASQ-Social Emotional, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Program staff uses children’s screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2 |
| Core II: Teachers and Teaching  **3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher or Family Child Care Home (FCCH)[[8]](#footnote-9)** | Meets Title 22 Regulations **Center:** 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD) **FCCH:** 16 hours of training on preventative health practices | **Center:** 24 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit **FCCH:** 12 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit | 24 units of ECE or CD, plus 16 units of General Education **OR** Teacher Permit **AND** 21 hours of professional development (PD) annually | Associate’s degree (AA/AS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) OR AA/AS in any field plus 24 units of ECE or CD **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually | Bachelor’s degree (BA/BS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) **OR** BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE or CD (or a master’s degree in ECE or CD) **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually |
| Core III: Program and Environment[[9]](#footnote-10)  **5. Ratios and Group Size** (Centers only beyond licensing regulations) | **Center:** Title 22 Regulations  Infant ratio of 1:4  Toddler Option ratio of 1:6  Preschool ratio of 1:12  **Family Child Care Home (FCCH):** Title 22 Regulations (excluded from point values in ratio and group size) | **Center:** Ratio: Group Size  Infant/Toddler – 4:16  Toddler – 3:18  Preschool – 3:36 | **Center:** Ratio: Group Size  Infant/Toddler – 3:12  Toddler – 2:12  Preschool – 2:24 | **Center:** Ratio: Group Size  Infant/Toddler – 3:12 or 2:8  Toddler – 2:10  Preschool – 3:24 or 2:20 | **Center:** Ratio: Group Size  Infant/Toddler – 3:9 or better  Toddler – 3:12 or better  Preschool – 1:8 ratio and group size of no more than 20 |
| Core III: Program and Environment  **6. Director Qualifications** (Centers only) | 12 units ECE or CD, plus/with 3 units management or administration | 24 units ECE or CD, plus 16 units General Education, plus/with 3 units management or administration **OR** Master Teacher Permit | AA/AS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 6 units management or administration and 2 units in supervision **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually | BA/BS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually | Master’s degree with 30 units ECE or CD, including specialized courses, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR** Administrative Credential **AND** 21 hours of PD annually |

**Element 4a: For Use By Non-California State Preschool Programs**

| **Element** | **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** | **5 Points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core II: Teachers and Teaching  **4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)9** | N/A | Familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site | Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer to inform the program’s PD or improvement plan  **OR**  Informal assessment and results used to inform Quality Improvement Plan and staff PD plan | Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores:    **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5 * Classroom Organization: 5 * Instructional Support: 3   **Toddler:**   * Emotional & Behavioral Support:5 * Engaged Support for Learning: 3.5   **Infant:**   * Responsive Caregiving: 5 | Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores:    **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5.5 * Classroom Organization: 5.5 * Instructional Support: 3.5   **Toddler:**   * Emotional & Behavioral Support: 5.5 * Engaged Support for Learning: 4   **Infant:**   * Responsive Caregiving: 5.5 |

**Element 4b: Required Rating Element For Use By California State Preschool Programs**

| **Element** | **1 Point** | **2 Points** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** | **5 Points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core II: Teachers and Teaching  **4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** | N/A | N/A | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement  **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND** Meets domain score requirements of:  **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5 * Classroom Organization:5 * Instructional Support: 3 | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND** Meets domain score requirements of:  **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5.5 * Classroom Organization: 5.5 * Instructional Support: 3.5 |

**Total Point Ranges for Quality Improvement**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Type** | **Common Tier 1** | **Local Tier 2** | **Common Tier 3** | **Common Tier 4** | **Local Tier 5** |
| **Centers**  6 elements for 30 points | **Blocked** (6 points) – must meet all elements | 7 to 16 points | 17 to 22 points | 23 to 26 points | 27 points and above |
| **FCCHs**  4 elements for 20 points | **Blocked** (4 points) – must meet all elements | 5 to 9 points | 10 to 13 points | 14 to 17 points | 18 points and above |

**California State Preschool Program Rating (Element 4b only)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Type** | **Common Tier 1** | **Local Tier 2** | **Tier 3** | **Tier 4** | **Tier 5** |
| **CSPP**  **(Centers and Family Child Care Home Education Networks)** | N/A | N/A | 3 points | 4 points | 5 points |

## Appendix C: California State Preschool Program Quality Rating Improvement System Block Grant Rating Requirements

| **Element** | **Common Tier 1** | **Local Tier 2** | **3 Points** | **4 Points** | **5 Points** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Element 4b: Required Rating Element For Use By California State Preschool Programs**  Core II: Teachers and Teaching  **4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** | N/A | N/A | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND** Meets domain score requirements of:  **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5 * Classroom Organization: 5 * Instructional Support: 3 | CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND**Meets domain score requirements of:  **Pre-K:**   * Emotional Support: 5.5 * Classroom Organization: 5.5 * Instructional Support: 3.5 |

### California State Preschool Program Rating (Element 4b only)

| **Program Type** | **Common Tier 1** | **Local Tier 2** | **Tier 3** | **Tier 4** | **Tier 5** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **California State Preschool Program (CSPP) (Centers and Family Child Care Home Education Networks [FCCHENs])** | N/A | N/A | 3 points | 4 points | 5 points |

### Rating Requirements

All sites participating in the CSPP Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant are required by *Education Code* Section 8203.1 to be rated. For this two-year transitional grant period, Fiscal Years (FYs) 2025–26 and 2026–27, CSPP QRIS Block grantees are to use the Quality Continuum Framework- Measured Quality Elements (QCF) CSPP QRIS Block Grant table (Appendix C) for ratings and the QCF (Appendix B), unless otherwise notified by the California Department of Education (CDE), to support quality improvement activities. The full requirements for rating are detailed below. Programs are required to be rated on a three to five-year cycle, based on their last tier rating (see frequency information below).

Grantees are to base CSPP ratings only on Element 4b (Effective Teacher-Child Interactions) on the QCF and are required to conduct Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Environment observations alongside any CLASS observations used for rating purposes. The rating requirements for the CSPP QRIS Block Grant require all CLASS observations to be done by an Independent Certified CLASS Observer (defined in Appendix G), using the CLASS Pre-K-3rd 2nd Edition Observation tool and CLASS Environment. Grantees may still use CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds to support quality improvements across the QCF but cannot use funds for rating purposes on elements other than CLASS and CLASS Environment, within this two-year transitional grant period, FYs 2025–26 and 2026–27.

Participating CSPP sites must commit to engaging in an ongoing continuous quality improvement process and maintain an updated quality improvement plan between ratings. CSPP QRIS Block grantees are required to monitor participating sites between ratings.

### Guidelines to Determine the Number of Classrooms to Observe With the CLASS

CSPP QRIS Block grantees are responsible for coordinating or conducting CLASS observations at participating QRIS sites for at least one-third of the total number of CSPP classrooms at a site, but are highly encouraged to observe 100 percent of CSPP classrooms, or observe a higher proportion in alignment with MB 23-10 (30 percent FY 2025–26 and 60 percent FY 2026–27). If observing only one-third of CSPP classrooms, those classrooms should be chosen randomly by the grantees from among all CSPP classrooms at the site. In this case, all classrooms should be included to calculate a site’s rating. If more than one-third of classrooms are observed, the grantee may either calculate the site's rating based on a random one-third sampling of observed classrooms, or all classrooms that have been observed, whichever is preferred. Classrooms with more than one funding source (for example, a classroom with blended CSPP and Head Start funding) shall be included in the count for CSPP classrooms.

To determine the required one-third of classrooms please use the following table:

| **Number of CSPP classrooms at site** | **Total number of CSPP classrooms to Observe** |
| --- | --- |
| 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 |
| 9 | 3 |
| 10 | 4 |

### Defining Classrooms for Observation

Classrooms are defined by the *teaching team* and the *group of children*. The table below demonstrates several scenarios to help determine the number of CSPP classrooms.

| **Scenario** | **Number of Classrooms** | **Rationale** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Full-day preschool in center or Family Child Care (FCC) setting; one group of children and one teaching team | 1 | This is one CSPP classroom, the children and the teaching team are the same for the whole day |
| Full-day preschool in center or FCC setting; one group of children with the same lead teacher, but different teaching team | 1 | This is one CSPP classroom, the children and the lead teacher are the same, though the teaching team changes |
| AM preschool + PM preschool in center or FCC setting; different children and same teaching team | 2 | This is two CSPP classrooms; even though the teaching team is the same, the children are different |
| AM preschool + PM preschool in center or FCC setting; different children and same lead teacher but different supporting staff | 2 | This is two CSPP classrooms; even though the lead teacher is the same, the children and support staff are different |
| AM preschool + PM preschool in center or FCC setting; using the same physical classroom at different times, different children and different teaching teams in AM and PM | 2 | This is two CSPP classrooms; different children and different teaching teams |

### Use of Existing Observations

A consortium may accept CLASS observations previously conducted in lieu of the county consortium sending an observer only if the observation was:

* Completed within the same fiscal year of the rating
* Performed by an Independent Certified CLASS Observer
* Used the Pre-K-3rd CLASS 2nd Edition observation tool and CLASS Environment

and

* Conducted with the same lead teacher, classroom, and physical location as the randomly selected classroom

### Frequency of Site Rating

A site’s rating is valid for three (for Tier 3) or five years (for Tiers 4 and 5), from the time the overall site rating is assigned (see below for examples). During this two-year grant cycle, CSPP QRIS Block grantees have flexibility to adjust rating cycles +/- 1 year to allow the redistribution of CSPPs being rated in a FY. CSPP QRIS Block grantees are required to inform contractors by the end of the first quarter if their CSPP(s) will be rated in that FY or three months prior to their scheduled observation, whichever comes first.

| **If The Site was**  **Rated in:** | **The Result was Tier 3 (or below on previous QCF), The Site’s Rating is Valid Through\*:** | **The Result was Tier 4 or 5, The Site’s Rating is Valid Through\*:** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| February 2025 | February 2028 | February 2030 |
| May 2024 | May 2027 | May 2029 |
| March 2023 | March 2026 | March 2028 |
| November 2022 | November 2025 | November 2027 |

\* Note: CSPP QRIS Block grantees have flexibility to adjust the annual rating cycle by one year in any direction during this two-year grant cycle.

Re-rating is required when a site license changes due to a change of physical location. The decision to re-rate a site for other reasons during the rating period is a local decision. Some local circumstances that may prompt a reconsideration of the rating before the rating period has passed include:

1. Significant turnover in staff
2. New director
3. Changes that warrant re-assessment of an individual classroom, including a change in the lead teacher of a formerly assessed classroom
4. Significant licensing violation
5. Other evidence of changes related to the criteria upon which the site was rated
6. Other reasons determined by local consortia

## Appendix D: History of Quality Counts California and the Quality Rating Improvement System in California

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the Early Education Division have participated in the multi-agency Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for the past 12 years, and under the umbrella of Quality Counts California (QCC) for the past six years. The QRIS is the result of California’s Race to the Top federal funding, which incentivized states to improve early learning and care quality to address the achievement gap for low-income children and families. QCC is the state-level quality system that implements California’s QRIS and was officially branded in 2018.

Through the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant funding, the QRIS in California was developed to ensure that programs met minimum standards for quality to serve young children. Initially, First 5 California (F5CA) and the CDE were in partnership in the development and implementation of the QRIS in California. On July 1, 2021, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) joined the QCC system as a result of the transition of quality early childhood programs from the CDE to the CDSS, and the CDSS became the lead agency for the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care federal funding. QCC began in 2012 and first consisted of 17 lead agencies with 15 mentee counties. Adjustments to the frequency of ratings, the requirements for programs to join, and the number of certified raters to conduct the activity have changed over time. At present, CDSS and F5CA have moved away from ratings completely, with CDSS disallowing rating activities and F5CA making rating activities “optional.” F5CA’s QCC funding, IMPACT Legacy, has been funded with a reduction to 90% of previous yearly allocations for Fiscal Year (2025-26) and decisions on the fourth and final year (FY 2026-27) of IMPACT Legacy subject to revenue availability. The three state-level funding activities under the QCC umbrella have worked collaboratively with local early education partners to provide necessary supports and implement high-quality practices to better serve children across California.

QCC now comprises 11 regional hubs and 49 consortia, extending QCC services to all 58 California counties as well as the Tribal Child Care Association of California. Each consortium lead agency is charged with providing technical assistance and support to Family Child Care Homes; family, friend, and neighbor providers; Family Child Care Home Education Networks; state-subsidized childcare and early learning programs; center-based programs; and private, community-based organizations.

## Appendix E: Goal Tables

The following tables contain data collected via the Quality Counts California (QCC) Common Data File (CDF) and the Child Development Management System (CDMIS) and are intended to be used by applicants to establish goals for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2025–26 and 2026–27. Grantees should use these numbers as reference while evaluating their own county or multi-county consortium level data sources to establish goals for FYs 2025–26 and 2026–27. The data in this section was provided by the Early Education Division’s Applied Data Research and Evaluation Office.

The following table contains counts of California State Preschool Program (CSPP) sites reported in the QCC CDF for FY 2023–24, and point-in-time data as reported to CDE in the CDMIS, from May 2024 for the total CSPP Sites. Due to the discrepancies in the timeframes of the data, please note that the percentages provided below may not reflect current CSPP and QCC participation counts. These data tables are the most up to date the California Department of Education (CDE) had access to at the time of the release of this request for applications. This information is provided as a reference, and applicants should consider their own data sources for the most accurate and updated information when creating goals for their CSPP sites.

### California State Preschool Program Site Participation in Quality Counts California

| **County Name** | **CSPP Sites Participating in QCC (as reported in the QCC CDF FY 2023–24)** | **Total Count of CSPP Sites by County (as reported in CDMIS, May 2024)** | **Percent of CSPP Sites in County Participating in QCC/QRIS Block Grant** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alameda** | 130 | 133 | 98% |
| **Alpine** | 2 | 1 | 200% |
| **Amador** | 5 | 6 | 83% |
| **Butte** | 18 | 20 | 90% |
| **Calaveras** | 4 | 5 | 80% |
| **Colusa** | 6 | 6 | 100% |
| **Contra Costa** | 36 | 65 | 55% |
| **Del Norte** | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| **El Dorado** | 24 | 23 | 104% |
| **Fresno** | 122 | 168 | 73% |
| **Glenn** | 2 | 5 | 40% |
| **Humboldt** | 9 | 15 | 60% |
| **Imperial** | 20 | 30 | 67% |
| **Inyo** | 7 | 7 | 100% |
| **Kern** | 56 | 90 | 62% |
| **Kings** | 20 | 17 | 118% |
| **Lake** | 11 | 11 | 100% |
| **Lassen** | - | 6 | 0% |
| **Los Angeles** | 579 | 812 | 71% |
| **Madera** | 25 | 19 | 132% |
| **Marin** | 17 | 17 | 100% |
| **Mendocino** | 20 | 21 | 95% |
| **Merced** | 35 | 35 | 100% |
| **Modoc** | 4 | 6 | 67% |
| **Mono** | 3 | 5 | 60% |
| **Monterey** | 49 | 69 | 71% |
| **Napa** | 8 | 11 | 73% |
| **Nevada** | 8 | 6 | 133% |
| **Orange** | 187 | 191 | 98% |
| **Placer** | 17 | 17 | 100% |
| **Plumas** | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| **Riverside** | 143 | 150 | 95% |
| **Sacramento** | 117 | 146 | 80% |
| **San Benito** | 2 | 3 | 67% |
| **San Bernardino** | 158 | 192 | 82% |
| **San Diego** | 164 | 200 | 82% |
| **San Francisco** | 98 | 97 | 101% |
| **San Joaquin** | 97 | 118 | 82% |
| **San Luis Obispo** | 18 | 22 | 82% |
| **San Mateo** | 68 | 75 | 91% |
| **Santa Barbara** | 32 | 41 | 78% |
| **Santa Clara** | 95 | 113 | 84% |
| **Santa Cruz** | 38 | 51 | 75% |
| **Shasta** | 24 | 30 | 80% |
| **Siskiyou** | 11 | 10 | 110% |
| **Solano** | 25 | 24 | 104% |
| **Sonoma** | 31 | 40 | 78% |
| **Stanislaus** | 46 | 66 | 70% |
| **Sutter** | 10 | 10 | 100% |
| **Tehama** | 9 | 15 | 60% |
| **Trinity** | 1 | 2 | 50% |
| **Tulare** | 75 | 86 | 87% |
| **Tuolumne** | 6 | 5 | 120% |
| **Ventura** | 71 | 71 | 100% |
| **Yolo** | 21 | 31 | 68% |
| **Yuba** | 12 | 14 | 86% |
| **Statewide Totals** | 2,806 | 3,439 | 82% |

### County Tier Ratings

The following table contains CSPP site tier ratings in each county as reported in the QCC CDF for FY 2022–23. The table includes the most up to date data the CDE has access to at the time of the release of this Request for Application (RFA). As noted above, these numbers should be used as reference, and applicants should consider their own data sources for the most accurate and updated information when creating goals for this RFA.

| **County Name** | **Rating In-Process (No Tier Rating Reported)** | **Tier 1** | **Tier 2** | **Tier 3** | **Tier 4** | **Tier 5** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alameda** | 13 | 1 | 19 | 66 | 31 | 130 |
| **Alpine** | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| **Amador** | 5 | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| **Butte** | 5 | - | - | 4 | 9 | 18 |
| **Calaveras** | 4 | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| **Colusa** | 6 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| **Contra Costa** | - | - | 2 | 24 | 10 | 36 |
| **Del Norte** | 5 | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| **El Dorado** | 12 | - | 1 | 8 | 3 | 24 |
| **Fresno** | 57 | - | - | 36 | 29 | 122 |
| **Glenn** | - | - | - | - | 2 | 2 |
| **Humboldt** | 1 | - | - | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| **Imperial** | 15 | - | - | 5 | - | 20 |
| **Inyo** | 3 | - | - | 4 | - | 7 |
| **Kern** | 3 | - | - | 11 | 42 | 56 |
| **Kings** | - | - | 1 | 5 | 14 | 20 |
| **Lake** | 2 | - | 1 | 6 | 2 | 11 |
| **Lassen** | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| **Los Angeles** | 345 | - | 18 | 142 | 74 | 579 |
| **Madera** | - | - | - | 3 | 22 | 25 |
| **Marin** | 9 | - | 1 | 6 | 1 | 17 |
| **Mendocino** | 1 | - | - | 7 | 12 | 20 |
| **Merced** | 33 | - | - | 2 | - | 35 |
| **Modoc** | - | - | - | 4 | - | 4 |
| **Mono** | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Monterey** | 3 | - | - | 27 | 19 | 49 |
| **Napa** | - | - | 1 | 7 | - | 8 |
| **Nevada** | 3 | - | - | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| **Orange** | 71 | - | - | 26 | 90 | 187 |
| **Placer** | 1 | - | - | 7 | 9 | 17 |
| **Plumas** | 3 | - | - | 2 | - | 5 |
| **Riverside** | 27 | - | 1 | 77 | 38 | 143 |
| **Sacramento** | 6 | - | - | 90 | 21 | 117 |
| **San Benito** | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| **San Bernardino** | - | - | - | 95 | 63 | 158 |
| **San Diego** | 4 | - | 2 | 53 | 105 | 164 |
| **San Francisco** | 85 | - | - | 4 | 9 | 98 |
| **San Joaquin** | 48 | - | 3 | 29 | 17 | 97 |
| **San Luis Obispo** | 18 | - | - | - | - | 18 |
| **San Mateo** | 4 | 1 | 14 | 30 | 19 | 68 |
| **Santa Barbara** | - | - | - | 9 | 23 | 32 |
| **Santa Clara** | 31 | - | 4 | 37 | 23 | 95 |
| **Santa Cruz** | 5 | - | 2 | 29 | 2 | 38 |
| **Shasta** | 10 | - | - | 4 | 10 | 24 |
| **Siskiyou** | 2 | - | - | - | 9 | 11 |
| **Solano** | 24 | - | - | 1 | - | 25 |
| **Sonoma** | 18 | - | - | 5 | 8 | 31 |
| **Stanislaus** | 4 | - | 3 | 16 | 23 | 46 |
| **Sutter** | 6 | - | - | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| **Tehama** | 3 | - | - | - | 6 | 9 |
| **Trinity** | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| **Tulare** | 2 | - | 5 | 26 | 42 | 75 |
| **Tuolumne** | 6 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| **Ventura** | 7 | - | - | 37 | 27 | 71 |
| **Yolo** | 21 | - | - | - | - | 21 |
| **Yuba** | 1 | - | 1 | 3 | 7 | 12 |
| **Statewide Total** | 936 | 2 | 79 | 955 | 834 | 2,806 |

## Appendix F: Prioritized Activities

California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Block grantees are required to use funding to support CSPPs in continuous quality improvement and exceed these new requirements to provide the highest quality early learning experiences to all enrolled children. Prioritized activities that meet local needs should include the following:

1. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and anti-bias/anti-racist activities
2. Activities to improve practice for educators and administrators (activities described in detail below)
3. Leveraging existing professional development, training, and coaching opportunities in their communities to ensure CSPPs have access to these supports.
4. Compiling and promoting available resources and opportunities for educators and administrators to improve quality across the core areas in the Quality Continuum Framework such as:
   1. Supports to achieve program quality standards as stated in *Education Code* Section 8203 (for example, developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate program approach; compliance with the CSPP Program Monitoring Instrument)
   2. Promoting children’s culture, language, race, and identity, as well as fostering a sense of belonging
   3. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) 2nd Edition and CLASS Environment tool and implementation
   4. Supporting multilingual learners
   5. Responsive and inclusive learning environments for children with disabilities
   6. California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations
   7. Challenging behaviors
   8. Trauma-informed practices
   9. Early childhood mental health
   10. Adverse Childhood Experiences
   11. Elimination of suspension and expulsion
   12. Anti-racist, anti-bias practices
   13. Developmental and behavioral screenings and child observational assessments using standardized, validated tools.
   14. Desired Results Developmental Profile, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and ASQ: Social-Emotional tool

## Appendix G: Key Terms

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Achieving Success in Positive Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (ASPIRE) Grant (California Department of Education [CDE] funded) | The ASPIRE program is designed to support the goal of implementing Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) 2nd Edition® and the CLASS Environment tool across all California State Preschool Programs (CSPPs) through a regional and statewide support system. For more information, visit the [Classroom Assessments Resource](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/classrmassessmtresource.asp) web page. |
| California Early Care & Workforce Registry | This is a web-based data system that allows data to be stored in one place for use by early childhood education (ECE) professionals, researchers, and policymakers. This registry collects and verifies demographic, education, training, and employment data about the ECE workforce. ECE professionals can also search and enroll for professional development opportunities, apply for funding opportunities, develop resumes, and search the registry job board. Administrators can use the registry to create professional development plans, track staff progress, and build reports for funders. |
| CLASS Observer, or Observer | Professional who has completed the training to become a CLASS observer, passed the CLASS certification test, and has an active CLASS certification from Teachstone. Additionally, certified observers must also have completed the CLASS Observer Support Series, including:   * Settings with Dual Language Learners, * Settings with Children with Disabilities, and * Reducing Bias.   The purpose of this additional training requirement is to ensure California is centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in CLASS implementation. |
| CLASS Environment | The observation tool developed by Teachstone and used with CLASS to describe and measure specific features of learning settings that can support effective interactions and enhance children’s development and learning. |
| CLASS Environment Observation | This means conducting the CLASS Environment tool as defined above. The CLASS Environment Observation is done in addition to the CLASS Observation’s three cycles as defined below. |
| CLASS Environment Observer | This means someone who meets the requirements of a certified observer and has completed the CLASS Environment Observer training, which includes: the PreKindergarten (Pre-K) CLASS Environment Foundations, the CLASS Environment Foundations, and the CLASS Environment within a CLASS Observation. |
| CLASS Observation | This means at least three cycles of observation by a certified CLASS observer. |
| CLASS® 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd | The CLASS refers to the Classroom Assessment Scoring System®, an observation and scoring tool designed by the University of Virginia to measure the quality of classroom processes and teacher-child interactions. |
| Coaching | Coaching is a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills, who often serves in a different professional role than the recipient(s). Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional dispositions, skills, and behaviors and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group. \* |
| Consortium | Consortium refers to a local entity comprising multiple partner agencies, and that convenes a planning body that designs and implements a quality rating improvement system (QRIS).  A Regional or Multi-county Consortium is a group of counties within a geographic region of the state that collaborate, design, and implement a common local Quality Counts California model across that group of counties. Whether a local consortium or multi-county consortium, there will be a lead agency, or possibly two lead agencies. |
| Cycle | This is a 20-minute observation period and a 10-minute scoring period conducted as part of a CLASS Observation. |
| Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN) | This means FCCHEN established pursuant to the *Education Code* Section 8223. FCCHENs are administered by entities, usually non-profit agencies or local educational agencies (LEAs), to support consortia of licensed Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) to meet CSPP requirements, and access CSPP funding to provide preschool services in FCCH. |
| Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) and IEEEP expansion grantees (CDE funding) | The IEEEP authorized the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to award up to $200 million in grants on a competitive basis for allocation to LEAs. The purpose of IEEEP is to increase access to inclusive early care and education programs for children with disabilities, including children with severe disabilities. Funds will be awarded to selected LEAs for the purposes of adaptive and universally designed facility renovations, adaptive equipment, and professional development. For more information, visit the [Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP)](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/ieeep2022to27.asp) web page. |
| Independent Certified CLASS Observer | This is someone who meets the “Certified CLASS Observer” criteria, does not work at the site and does not provide coaching or other types of consultation directly to the site in which the observation is being conducted. |
| Lead Agency | The recipient of funds, or direct grantee, to the CDE. The lead agency heads the consortium and is responsible for all reporting and record-keeping requirements. |
| MyTeachstone | Data system that streamlines improvement efforts through a research-based, all-in-one platform designed to focus, measure, and improve teacher-child interactions. |
| Stipend | Payment made directly to an educator for the purpose of supporting participation in a specific professional activity or rewarding a professional achievement. |
| Technical Assistance | Technical Assistance is the provision of targeted and customized support by a professional(s) with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by recipients. \* |
| Universal PreKindergarten Planning and Implementation (UPK P& I) Grant (CDE funded/ County, District, Charter) | The UPK P&I Grant is a state early learning planning and capacity building initiative with the goal of expanding access for preschool-age students to Pre-K programs at LEAs. Grant funds may pay for costs associated with creating or expanding CSPPs or transitional kindergarten programs or establish or strengthen partnerships with other providers of Pre-K education within the LEA, including Head Start programs. For more information, visit the [Universal PreKindergarten Planning & Implementation](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5753) web page. |

## Appendix H: California State Preschool Program Quality Rating Improvement System Block Grant Request for Applications Checklist – Fiscal Years 2025–27

Applicants must have downloaded, read, and filed the [General Assurances and Certifications document](https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/ff.asp) in their files. This document is to be kept on file for compliance reviews, complaint investigations, or audits.

Complete applications will include the following:

* Completed Request for Application (RFA) survey
  + Responses to each question on the RFA survey
* Attachments (to be combined into a ZIP file and attached to the RFA survey before submission)
  + Budget (Fiscal Year [FY] 2025–26 and FY 2026–27)
  + Budget Narrative (FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27)

## Appendix I: Scoring Rubric

The California State Preschool Program (CSPP) Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) Block Grant Fiscal Years (FYs) 2025–26 and 2026–27 Request for Application (RFA) is a non-competitive RFA. The RFA contains mandatory components that must all be deemed by the California Department of Education (CDE) Early Education Division (EED) to be complete in order for an applicant to be awarded funding. The following rubric is used by the CDE to determine whether an application is complete.

**Instructions:** Read and score each section of the applicant’s submission based on the completion criteria below.

**Applicant County:** [Insert Applicant County]

**Applicant Lead Agency:** [Insert Applicant Lead Agency]

### Section A: Local Needs

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant summarizes most recent needs assessment and identifies all sources of information and data used, and elaborates on the ways that family perspectives were included. Describes where in the community the most impact can be made, specifically supporting high needs populations. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes goals and objectives of the local consortium and the quality improvement plan, and describes how individual program results and plans will inform the local approach to using CSPP QRIS Block Grant funding. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes how a locally tailored QRIS using evidence-informed quality improvement and support approaches (such as coaching) will be implemented; as applicable, applicant identifies other partners and local funds that are invested in supporting the local Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will share information to inform the public and families about its local quality improvement system and the importance of high-quality early education for children’s learning and development. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section B: Participation and Recruitment Goals

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant details and includes the current CSPP QRIS Block Grant participation rate in their county or multi-county consortium and includes the amount of CSPP sites there are in their respective county or multi-county consortium and the amount of CSPP sites are currently participating in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicants use the goal tables in Appendix D to determine a reasonable and achievable participation goal for FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27 that reflects an increase in CSPP QRIS Block Grant participation or maintenance of full participation by all CSPPs. If the applicant has reached full participation of CSPPs in the respective area, the applicant should include a detailed plan that describes which member agency(ies) and staff will be responsible for maintaining CSPP site participation and exploring how to support partnerships and engagement with other Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) programs. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes the process the local consortia will use to recruit and retain CSPPs to participate in CSPP QRIS Block Grant activities, including which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will accomplish the recruitment and retention activities described. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section C: Engagement, Assessment, and Improvement Goals

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant uses the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (See Appendix C) to characterize which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will engage with the appropriate Achieving Success in Positive Interactions, Relationships, and Environments (ASPIRE) regional leads to conduct initial and ongoing Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and CLASS Environment assessments for the purpose of quality improvement or ratings of every CSPP in the service area, in alignment with management bulletin (MB) 23-10. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant uses the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (See Appendix C) to characterize which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will carry out observations and ratings and provide QIP support. Specifically, detail how the consortium will ensure observers meet the qualifications to administer the CLASS tools as outlined in Appendix C. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant uses the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (See Appendix C) to characterize which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will prioritize sites for assessment as well as how sites will be prioritized for support in revising QIPs and making data-informed program changes. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant uses the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (See Appendix C) to characterize which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will identify the data system(s), including, at a minimum, myTeachstone and the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry, that will record observation and rating information, track site-level and teacher-specific quality improvement supports and incentives (as applicable), record participation of the individual CSPPs, and track progress relative to the consortium’s local quality improvement goals. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant uses the CSPP QRIS Block Grant Rating Requirements (See Appendix C) to characterize which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for how the consortium will engage CSPP staff in CSPP QRIS Block Grant activities to increase CSPP quality, including which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for this work and how the consortium will engage programs in continuous quality improvement activities. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section D: Quality Improvement Strategies, Investments, and Supports

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will create individualized QIPs for participating sites and collect and use data and feedback from CSPPs in their county or region to inform continuous improvement in the implementation of quality improvement supports. Applicant has included processes for data collection from the CDE, Teachstone, ASPIRE regional and statewide leads, and CSPPs, as applicable; explained how data will be shared with participants; and explained how data will be used to support quality improvement activities. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes how they will actively integrate QRIS data systems with the Workforce Registry for the purpose of utilizing reliable, validated professional development (PD) and qualification data into Quality Counts California (QCC)/CSPP QRIS Block Grant implementation. Include how the consortium will ensure PD opportunities are recorded, published, and attendance tracked within the Workforce Registry and that participating site lead teachers, site administrators, family childcare owner/operators, coaches, and trainers create and maintain a complete Workforce Registry profile, which includes submission of qualification documentation and verification of current employment | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will create opportunities for providers to strengthen their knowledge and skills by expanding access to evidence-informed quality improvement strategies. Applicant includes how each of the following will be implemented: professional development and training, where topics should be evidence-informed, address needs identified in the local needs assessment, and focused on priority areas related to improving adult-child interactions and supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). CDE priorities for training topics can be found in Appendix E. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will prioritize coaching for CSPPs (for example, focusing primarily on Tier 3) and identify how the consortium will work with the regional and/or statewide ASPIRE grantee to ensure support for CSPPs is linked to the CLASS tools. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will partner with other programs or funding streams to combine training or invite additional participants from the UPK mixed-delivery system to existing training and professional development opportunities, including, if applicable:   * ASPIRE grant (CDE funded) * Early Education Teacher Development grant (CDE funded) * Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) and IEEEP expansion grantees (CDE funding) * Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive Legacy grantees (First 5 California funding) * QCC Quality Improvement Grant grantees and QCC Workforce Pathways Grant grantees (California Department of Social Services [CDSS] funding) * UPK implementers (CDE funding) * UPK Planning and Implementation grant (CDE funded/ County, District, Charter) * Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K–12) Statewide System of Support lead(s) | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant provides a clear rationale for proposed stipend and/or incentive structure for programs or educators and how these stipends/incentives will support quality improvement activities that strengthen and expand their knowledge, skills, and competencies to support young children and their families or writes N/A if no stipends are proposed. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section E: Allocation of Funds to CSPPs

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will allocate grant funds to CSPP center-based contracting agencies or local educational agencies (LEAs) to support, improve, and maintain quality and assess equitable access to quality programs and provide the amount given per stipend or incentive to each site, or educator and/or administrator, the planned activities that will improve quality, and the planned activities that will assess equitable access to quality programs. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| If applicable, applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will allocate grant funds to Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN) CSPP contracting agencies for activities that support, improve, and maintain quality and assess equitable access to quality programs and include the amount given per contracting agency of CSPP FCCHEN, the planned activities that will improve quality, and the planned activities that will assess equitable access to quality. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will allocate grant funds to support classrooms of CSPP sites that have achieved the highest common tier of quality, according to their most recent rating. Applicant must include:   * What type of support is provided, how the support will improve or maintain quality, and the amount allocated for each type of support per site or classroom; if the consortium provides direct support in the form of site block grants, include the rationale for the amount of the site block grant and describe data used to inform the allocation. * The type of support provided and amount for Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) within a FCCHEN (if applicable), as well as how the support will improve or maintain quality. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will allocate grant funds to new participating sites and to CSPP sites that have not yet achieved the highest common local tier of quality. Applicant must include:   * The type of support provided and amount allocated for each type of support per site or classroom, as well as how the support will improve quality; if the consortium provides direct support in the form of site block grants, include the rationale for the amount of the site block grant and describe data used to inform the allocation. * The type of support and amount for Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) within a FCCHEN (if applicable), as well as how the support will improve quality. * As applicable, any challenges in assisting these sites to move to the highest common local tier of quality and how grant funds will be used to address them | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section F: Monitoring and Evaluation

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will collect, summarize, and utilize local QCC data and myTeachstone data to examine and improve the consortium’s approach to governance, quality improvement, outreach and communications, and incentives. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will collect information annually from subrecipients to monitor the efficacy of the allocation of grant funds, including:   * How the subrecipient spending will be monitored to ensure funds are administered correctly (administered to the correct subrecipient and spent appropriately as articulated in the Use of Grant Funds section of this RFA) and effectively. * How the lead agency will measure the effectiveness of allocations. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section G: Governance and Strengthening Partnerships

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will establish a governance and decision-making process for ensuring shared knowledge and agreement with the consortium’s CSPP QRIS Block Grant plan and budget; include how early educators will be engaged in planning and decision-making processes, including but not limited to school districts, Head Start, and Tribal partners (where applicable). | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes how roles and responsibilities will be assigned to each REQUIRED consortium member agency; include information for (open response):   * LEAs * First 5 county commissions * Local postsecondary educational institutions * Local Planning Councils * Local resource and referral agencies * Alternative Payment Programs * Other local agencies, including nonprofit organizations, that provide services to children from birth through five years of age | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes which member agency(ies) and staff are responsible for and how the consortium will strengthen and expand partnerships with the following:   * Families and other key interest holders (for example, providers, parents, Head Start grantee, state-contracted early learning and care programs) * Local Tribe or Tribal Representative (as applicable) * County Health and Human Services Agency * Special Education Local Plan Area * County Department of Social Services * County Department of Public Health * Foster Child Care Bridge (as applicable) * Child Care Licensing Regional Offices * Others as appropriate, including local school districts and expanded learning providers to support smooth transitions from preschool / early education programs to Transitional Kindergarten (TK) or K–12 | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes how the lead agency will engage in the following regional connections to support relationships, partnerships, and information sharing as it relates to the quality improvement activities, as applicable: (open response)   * Any local school districts who are not members of the consortium * State system of support leads * ASPIRE regional leads * Expanded learning providers | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant describes how this RFA application and local QIP was shared with the consortium members. If applicable, include feedback and changes from the consortium members that were incorporated into the RFA submission. Include information on any barriers and successful engagement in information sharing with the required entities listed above, where applicable. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Section H: Optional, Program Badging

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Optional: Applicant notes the name and contact information for anyone interested in participating in the badge development effort, including any interest holders as noted in Section G of this RFA. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Optional: Applicant indicates specific badges most relevant to your consortia you would like to see developed. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Budget and Budget Narrative

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant provides a complete and reasonable Budget in the provided template. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant provides a Budget Narrative that aligns with the Budget provided. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Budget and Budget Narrative includes only allowable expenses as outlined in the request for applications. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

### Other Measures

| Description | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Applicant acknowledges changes to allowable and non-allowable expenditures. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |
| Applicant acknowledges changes to site block grant and incentive expenditure requirements. | [complete/incomplete] | [insert notes] |

1. As a general definition, preschoolers turn three or four years old prior to the beginning of the school year. For the purposes of the California State Preschool Program, the definition of a three- or four-year-old child differs and is provided in *Education Code (EC)* Section 8205. Note: CSPPs may now also serve two-year-old children per *EC* Section 8207.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. California Department of Education, Early Education Division. [Management Bulletin 23-10](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb2310.asp): Guidance on Implementation of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and CLASS Environment in the California State Preschool Program. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For a full history, see Appendix D [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Vitiello, V. E., Bassok, D., Hamre, B. K., Player, D., & Williford, A. P. (2018). Measuring the quality of teacher–child interactions at scale: Comparing research-based and state observation approaches. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 44, 161-169; Johnson, A. D., Markowitz, A. J., Hill, C. J., & Phillips, D. A. (2016). Variation in impacts of Tulsa pre-K on cognitive development in kindergarten: The role of instructional support. Developmental psychology, 52(12), 214; Justice, L. M., Jiang, H., Khan, K. S., & Dynia, J. M. (2017). Kindergarten readiness profiles of rural, Appalachian children from low-income households. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 50, 1-14; Gregory, A., Hafen, C. A., Ruzek, E., Mikami, A. Y., Allen, J. P., & Pianta, R. C. (2016). Closing the racial discipline gap in classrooms by changing teacher practice. School psychology review, 45(2), 171-191; Cash, A. H., Ansari, A., Grimm, K. J., & Pianta, R. C. (2019). Power of two: The impact of 2 years of high-quality teacher child interactions. Early Education and Development, 30(1), 60-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. These leveled supports should align with other CDE initiatives, such as CSPP requirements for inclusion and CLASS implementation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Grantees are required to participate in the Workforce Registry as it is available and funded. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See EC 8203.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. For all ECE or CD units, the core eight are desired, but not required.

   Note: Point values are not indicative of Tiers 1 through 5 but reflect a range of points that can be earned toward assigning a tier rating (see Total Point Range). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Effective August 2023, Environment Rating Scale (ERS) was removed as a QCC rating requirement, however, Title 5 programs using CDSS contract funds are required, per statute (5 CCR 18281), to use the ERS as part of the self-assessment requirement. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)