

**Submitted Questions and Answers Regarding the  
Request for Proposals (RFP) for**

**THE CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
FINANCING STUDY**

Issued January 24, 2022

Announcement and Response to submitted questions in order of receipt

**Announcement on Feb. 16, 2022: New options for assistance with the RFP, Part 2**

- 1) For any applicant considering use of a Vermont State model from Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI) in the analysis, as part of its support for the project, JFO will offer execution of Vermont State REMI model runs with no guidance to the lead contractor in preparing inputs for the model runs or interpreting output results; or
- 2) For any applicant not bidding on Part 2 of the RFP, as part of its support for the project, JFO economists will use the State REMI model and work with the early childhood researchers to provide guidance on model inputs, interpretation of model outputs, and assistance in conveying economic and fiscal impacts of proposed financing plans. If a bidder chooses this path, please include a statement of familiarity, if any, with using the REMI model or a similar regional economic and fiscal modeling tool.

Questions submitted February 11, 2022

*1<sup>st</sup> set of submitted questions*

**1. *What is the anticipated end date for this contract? (Page 2, Sec. 1.2)***

Following submission of the final report (the latest of which is on or before January 15, 2023), the contractor(s) will be available for presentations of the report and its recommendations to legislative committees. These presentations could be any time from the middle of January to early March 2023 depending on the scheduling of the various committees of jurisdiction. As such, we anticipate the end date for the contract will likely be sometime towards the end of February or the beginning of March 2023. Expectations around time commitments beyond report submissions and the determination of a contract end date will be part of the contract negotiations.

**2. *Could the state please clarify what is meant by interest or advocacy groups mentioned in Section 3.1? Or provide a definition of an “interest or advocacy groups”? (Page 7, Sec 3.1)***

An interest or advocacy group is any group or organization that campaigns, lobbies, or advocates to influence public policy on behalf of a client or for a particular issue. If your organization has contracted with such groups in the past to provide services, analyses, and/or expertise, this would not necessarily preclude you from consideration for this contract. For example, if the contractor was hired to conduct

research and analysis on an issue for a report or was hired by another government or government-funded agency to do similar work, this would likely not be considered problematic. However, we ask that bidders disclose any such relationships and the nature of the work done. For further reference, the definition of “lobbyist” can be found in [2 § V.S.A. 261](#).

**3. Do you consider public childcare agencies (publicly funded by the government) to be “interest” or “advocacy” groups?**

As discussed above, we are more interested in the nature of the relationship and the work conducted. Again, we request that bidders disclose any such relationships and the nature of the work.

**4. Will the LJFO allow revisions, e.g., minimal edits, to the Standard Contract’s terms and conditions? (Page 8, Sec. 3.3)**

Yes. Some (not all) of the Standard Contract’s terms and conditions may be negotiable.

**5. Does the State of Vermont require the disclosure of overhead rates for subcontractors as well as the prime bidder? (Page 8, Sec. 4.6)**

If the work of the subcontractor is a core part of the scope of work, then we would want to understand the estimated hours and costs associated with the work being performed by the subcontractor.

**6. Is there a preference for contractors located in Vermont?**

There is no preference for contractors located in Vermont.

**7. For similar work in other states, it is common for contractors to conduct surveys and interviews with early childhood providers to collect the detailed assumptions needed for both the fiscal analysis and economic impact modeling. If the data are not available from the systems assessment, is this type of primary data collection expected and permitted within the scope of this project? (Page 3, Sec. 2.0)**

It is our desire that the contractor not duplicate work done as part of the systems analysis currently underway by leveraging the findings and stakeholder analysis already completed by the contractor hired by Building Bright Futures as much as possible. However, the contractor(s) may propose to engage in whatever systems assessments and data collection they feel is necessary to best meet the needs of the project, particularly if the data are not already available.

**8. Does Vermont have a compensation or salary scale developed for early childhood educators that aligns with the requirements to include analysis based on “compensation equity...with peers?” If not, is the intention that the contractor will develop such a scale as part of this project? (Page 5, Sec. 2.2)**

It is the intention that the contractor(s) will develop such a scale as part of the project.

- 9. For a proposal that presents an integrated approach to respond to both Part 1 Fiscal Analysis and Part 2 Financing Plan and Economic Impacts, is the contractor expected to submit two separate and complete proposals for each part, or can the contractor submit a single proposal that integrates the two parts into one response for all required content for sections 4.1 through 4.6? (Page 8, Sec. 4.0)**

The contractor(s) may submit a single proposal that integrates the two parts into one response. For proposals that incorporate both Parts 1 and 2, an integrated approach is preferred.

Questions submitted February 14, 2022

*2<sup>nd</sup> set of submitted questions*

- 10. Is there a specified or preferred length for the proposal? If so, do appendices and references count towards the page length?**

There is no specified or preferred length for the proposal nor is there a preferred format.

- 11. Are appendices allowed?**

Yes.

- 12. Are there font size, spacing, or margin requirements?**

No.

- 13. Is there a limit to the length of an individual CV?**

No.

- 14. Can we provide links to sample work products in the proposal?**

Yes.

- 15. Is there a specified budget format?**

There is no specified budget format. However, we are interested in seeing a breakdown of estimated costs (staff costs, travel, subcontracting, etc.) and/or costs associated with specific deliverables.

**16. Will the final presentation be held in person so that travel funds should be included in the budget?**

While we prefer final presentations to legislative committees be in-person, accommodations can be made if this option is unavailable. If possible, please provide an estimated travel budget for core team members to spend as many as three days in Vermont.

**17. What type of contract do you anticipate awarding? (e.g. cost reimbursement, fixed priced)?**

We anticipate the contract will include a fixed payment structure tied to a schedule of deliverables.

**18. Are we allowed to contact Building Bright Futures or Foresight Law and Policy and Watershed Advisors during the crafting of the proposal?**

Yes.

**19. The RFP states that that the emphasis of the study is on children from birth to five years of age with “consideration given to the intersection of and impacts on child care (including afterschool and out of school time care) for children from six years of age though 12 years of age”. On p. (5) the financing plan references “child care and early childhood education for children from birth through five years of age and childcare for children ages six through 12 years of age...” Can you please clarify the relevant age range for both Part 1 and Part 2 of the study?**

The study will look at the child care and early childhood education system for children from birth through five years of age and child care (such as after school and out-of-school care) for children ages six through 12 years of age.

**20. Will the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) be able to provide access to administrative data such as the Child Care Financial Assistance Program?**

JFO will assist the contractor in obtaining data from the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and any other state agencies as needed, including securing any data use agreements (DUAs) if necessary.

*3<sup>rd</sup> set of submitted questions*

**21. Who defines policy scenarios?** The RFP states (top of p. 6) that for the fiscal and economic analysis, two alternative family contribution levels will be analyzed (CCFAP/ Act 45 and Build

*Back Better (BBB) if passed.) If BBB [Build Back Better] is not passed by May/June 2022, will JFO, the contractor, or both jointly be responsible for defining the second alternative?*

If Build Back Better is not passed by May / June 2022, JFO and the contractor will work jointly to determine if the “7%” scenario or another alternative should be analyzed and amend the scope of work in the contract as deemed necessary by both parties.

- 22. What is considered “long-term” sustainability?** *The RFP (middle of p. 6) states that not less than three financing mechanisms should be analyzed, and that “these funding sources will include diverse financing mechanisms that take into consideration the status of federal legislation and the need for long-term sustainability.” What is contemplated as “long-term”?*

Ideally, proposals would include financing mechanisms that estimate funding that will continue to meet the needs of the system in the foreseeable future and that is not regressive and/or will not diminish over time based on assumptions about currently known and predictable variables.

- 23. How are “peers” defined?** *In several places, the phrase “compensation commensurate with peers” is used. Does JFO have a working definition of peer groups of interest (e.g., industry, occupation, educational attainment)?*

See question #8. JFO does not have a working definition of “peer”. Part of the work of the contractor will be to define the peer groups for the purposes of this study.

- 24. Does a preferred definition of “regional” exist?** *The RFP states (p. 5) that the contractor will determine if regional variation should be considered in the analysis. Should these regions align with a specific geography (e.g., AHS districts, counties, rural) or can the contractor select a regional lens if pursuing?*

No. There are many options in defining regions in Vermont. For instance, it could be by Vermont county or it could be more subjective such as Chittenden County, the Northeast Kingdom, Central Vermont, the upper valley, etc. The contractor(s) and JFO can work together to determine an appropriate approach.

- 25. To what extent should school-age populations be included in this analysis?** *The RFP says “costs of quality childcare for children from birth through five years of age, broken out by infants, toddlers, and preschool children” should be calculated “with consideration given” to impacts on school-age populations. This sounds like a narrative explanation of the relationship to care structures for children age 6 to 12 is warranted. Later (bottom of p. 5), identifying financing for the care of children age 6 to 12 is framed as a central activity.*

Please see question #19. For children ages 6 to 12 we are interested in the costs associated with after school and out-of-school care (including during the summer).

- 26. To what extent should professional development needs be included in this analysis, rather than acknowledged and referenced as important?** *The RFP says*

*to “include” professional development opportunities and “any needed expansion.” Does this mean that the expansion of professional development opportunities to meet potential increases in demand should be part of this analysis? To do this well would require a full indexing of all potential degree-granting, credentialing, and professional development opportunities that this workforce might access and separately analyzing their capacity to meet this workforce’s needs in offerings, space, and affordability. Is this an expectation here?*

The study should identify the statewide professional development opportunities and needed expansion of educator preparation programs as an acknowledgement, reference, and/or issue for further consideration. Inclusion of a proposal for a more in-depth analysis by the bidder is optional. Bidders who include an analysis in their proposals should also break out the costs to conduct this part of the analysis.

**27. To what extent can the state commit to furnishing the contractor with data?**

*For instance, data regarding the number of early educators employed at individual sites, along with their educational, experiential, and wage characteristics would be necessary to create a refined and accurate cost of care model. Without these data, approximations can be made based on existing data from national and other state sources, but the resulting calculations will not be as precise. Assured access to data on childcare sites, including licensed capacity, enrollment levels, and provider-level subsidy receipt/value will also shape the analytic plan.*

It is our understanding that there are no central sources of Vermont-specific data on wages, benefits, education levels, facility cost, etc. The Department for Children and Families (DCF) does have data on items such as expenditures, location of providers, point-in-time worker information, etc. JFO will work with the contractor(s) to secure any data use agreements (DUAs) necessary to get data from DCF or any other state agency. For data that is unavailable, the contractor(s) will have to make assessments on the best data to use.

**28. Is JFO aware of other legislative proposals in this session that could intersect with this issue and affect affordability of childcare for Vermont families?**

While there are proposals during every legislative session concerning child care in Vermont, at this time it is too soon to speculate on the fate of any such bill or proposal or how any such legislation might impact the work of this study.

*4th set of submitted questions*

**29. What current sources of data do you have for identifying regional variances in areas such as salaries and benefits as well as facility costs?**

Please see question #27

**30. Is there a planned or allocated budget range for the financing study?**

No. We look forward to seeing your proposals.