

Ready Regions Grant Opportunity: LOI Guidance Document

On August 18, 2021, Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) plans to release a Letter of Intent (LOI) form for interested organizations to apply to serve as a Ready Regions lead. In preparation for the release of the LOI form, which will kick off the grant competition, this guidance document and outline provide a preview of the information that will be required for submission of the LOI, so that communities can begin collaborative planning now.

How to use this document:

Review the LOI Outline on the next page and use it to inform conversations within your region now to:

1. Work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to ensure equitable representation reflective of the region.
2. Determine the most capable collaborative structure.
3. Identify the organization that will serve as the applicant and lead agency responsible for submitting a LOI on behalf of the region.

VECF plans to release the LOI form on 8/18/21 with responses due from regions by 5pm on 9/10/21

Additional resources:

- Review the nine suggested regions [here](#). Applicants may suggest adjustments to these regional footprints in the LOI; ultimately, final decisions will be based on VECF's commitment to cover every community in Virginia.
- Register for the LOI Informational Webinar scheduled for 8/25/21 at 12pm ([register here](#)).
- Review all grant resources, including timeline and FAQ, posted online [here](#).

Examples of Ready Regions Strategies and Activities

This upcoming grant opportunity is intended to create a statewide network of [Ready Regions](#) that serve as early childhood hubs supporting all 133 localities in Virginia. Ready Regions will be Virginia's early childhood systems builders. They will be responsible for **coordination and integration of critical early childhood services and resources**, starting with early childhood care and education (ECCE). Ready Regions will focus on ensuring the system is effective and equitable for children and their families.

Required strategies will build from the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five (PDG B5) assurances:

- **Confront racial inequities** within the early childhood system.
- **Build relationships** through collaborative community partnerships to ensure regional systems and structures that are reflective and supportive of each region's diversity in needs, assets, and perspectives.
- **Strengthen quality** to ensure high-impact learning experiences and outcomes for children.
- **Increase access** by championing equitable early childhood opportunities.
- **Engage families** in informing the design of early childhood systems, policies, and services.

Required activities will include, for example:

- Coordinate quality measurement and guide improvement in ECCE classrooms as part of the [VQB5 System](#).
- Build and/or strengthen coordinated enrollment processes.

Additional activities may include, for example:

- Strengthen ECCE program business practices and financing strategies.
- Administer and expand the [Mixed Delivery Program](#).
- Support a talented and diverse early educator workforce.
- Facilitate ECCE participation in the [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) (CACFP).
- Diversify regions' funding base for supporting high-quality ECCE.
- Build public awareness and advocate for public support for early childhood education.

Have questions? We encourage you to connect with us before applying. To request a conversation with VECF staff about the Ready Regions application and your community, please request one of the available times [here](#).

Letter of Intent Outline

This outline is for **planning purposes only** to give prospective applicants a preview of the types of information needed to provide in completing and submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI). VECF plans to release the LOI form on August 18, 2021; completed LOIs must be submitted through VECF's online grants management system.

I. Helpful Reminders

- Submission of an LOI is required to express interest in being identified to submit a full proposal.
- LOI is due to VECF no later than 9/10/21 at 5:00 pm.

II. Contact Information

- Who is the primary contact for any follow-up questions regarding this grant opportunity?
- Did the primary contact attend the 8/25/21 informational webinar or listen to the recording?

III. Coverage Area

- Have you reviewed the map of suggested [Ready Regions](#)?
- Which region are you applying to serve?
- Adjustments to coverage areas will be considered, with the understanding that VECF is committed to full coverage of the state. Are you proposing any adjustments to your coverage area? If yes:
 - What localities are you proposing to cover?
 - Provide a rationale for your proposed coverage area including the data points and sources used to inform your request.
 - What discussion have you had with the other regions who are impacted by the proposed changes?

IV. Partnerships

- Ready Regions must be committed to a public/private approach and include diverse and equitable representation reflective of the region. Ready Regions will be expected to engage school divisions, social and human services, health districts, quality improvement networks, early childhood care and education (ECCE) programs, and other related organizations.
- Has your organization been identified by the community to lead Ready Regions?
 - If yes, briefly describe how and why your organization was identified as lead by the community.
 - If no, briefly describe why your organization decided to apply.
- Please identify the organizations within the region that have participated in the development of this LOI or that you plan to engage in the future including:
 - Organization Name
 - Organization's Anticipated Role (OPTIONAL)
 - Subcontractor to implement the work
 - Partner to guide and advocate for the work
 - ECCE Program or Community Representative to inform the design of the work
 - Other
 - Name and Job Title of the Staff Representative (OPTIONAL)
 - Level of Engagement in the LOI Process
 - Highly Engaged: assisted with development of LOI and intends to remain involved
 - Moderately Engaged: involved in some discussions to inform the LOI
 - Somewhat Engaged: aware of the LOI, but not in discussions to inform the application
 - To Be Engaged: not aware of the LOI, but plan to contact them

V. Other

- Is there any other information you would like to provide to support your LOI? (OPTIONAL)