Buena Vista, Clay, Cherokee, Crawford, Dickinson, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Plymouth, Sac, and Sioux counties.

FY27 Funding Opportunity- Early Literacy

December 18, 2026 through June 30, 2027

Due:
December 6, 2026
4:30 p.m.

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

No exceptions will be made.

Email: northwesteci@gmail.com or bvcs.eci.director@gmail.com

Our Mission:

""To improve the quality of life for children & families by strongly supporting safe environments, lifelong learning, and facilitating a coordinated system for community services."

FUNDING GUIDELINES

- This application is for programs that implement high-quality early childhood literacy programs in Buena Vista, Osceola, and/or Plymouth Counties. There is an anticipated total amount of $95,000 available with multiple awards across the area for an average award of $19,000. Actual amounts awarded may vary, projects may be funded in full or partially funded, depending on the proposals received.

- The following are examples of the services and activities the board may fund under this contract for Early Literacy (Literacy performance measures, pages 30-31 in Tool O): *Designed to foster a love of reading and strengthen early language development in children by empowering families with the tools and knowledge to engage in literacy activities. Through targeted funding and community partnerships, this service provides resources and educational support to families, encouraging daily reading habits and interactive storytelling. Families participating in the program receive guidance on effective reading techniques and the importance of discussing new words and concepts during story time. By promoting these interactive literacy practices, children are exposed to richer language experiences, enhancing their vocabulary, comprehension, and overall readiness for learning. By equipping families to create strong literacy foundations, literacy support services help children develop critical language skills that are essential for future learning and academic success.*

- Funding requests must positively impact our Strategic Plan and provide evidence-based and/or research-based strategies and supports to increase the health and well-being of children and families in the following state results areas Secure and Nurturing Early Learning Environments, Children Ready to Succeed in School and Secure & Nurturing Families.

- Priority will be given to applications that:

  - Target Children, ages 3-4, and their families in Buena Vista, Crawford, Osceola, and/or Plymouth Counties
  - Foster literacy and school readiness by utilizing culturally relevant curriculum to help parents develop literacy and parenting skills used at home to become active partners in their children's education
  - Equip parents with strategies to support their child's literacy and learning

while improving their own literacy skills
- Connect Families with additional resources and partner agencies
- Engage parent/guardian and child interaction with multi language relevant to the population.

- Submit a signed original funding application via electronic mail with provided cover sheet and supporting documents. **The electronic mail application must be submitted no later than December 6th, 2026, by 4:30 p.m.** to northwesteci@gmail.com and bvcs.eci.director@gmail.com . **Applicants must use the subject line as follows: "NECA Early Literacy**". No additional hard copies are needed for this application. Application submissions are time-stamped based on the email server. Any applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. There are no exceptions or considerations that can be made.

- Applicants may be required to respond to questions concerning their funding request during the contract and review process. Previous funding, reporting, and information may be utilized to inform final board decisions. Applications will not be accepted for projects that occur outside of the period identified on page 1 of this application (December 18,2026 - June 30, 2027). Funding is limited and intended to directly benefit families.

- Awarded recipients are required to sign a contract containing fiscal responsibility and reporting requirements. It is the intent of the board that draft contracts will be available by December 15, 2026, and should be fully executed by December 18, 2026.

- An ongoing Q&A Document will be available at https://nweca.org/. Questions regarding the project and application will be addressed there.

- This RFP, subsequent intent to award, and draft contracts may be amended or rescinded at any time at the discretion of the Northwest Early Childhood Area board. This RFP is based on anticipated eligible funds and may be subject to change.

- The awarded contractors will be required to have funds spent by May 30, 2027, with final reimbursement claim forms submitted by June 15, 2027, unless additional conditions are established during negotiations.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must include the following:

- Cover Page
- Budget and Justification Form
- Narrative: project plan, fund usage, and timeline
- Applications should have numbered pages. **No hand-written applications will be accepted.**

PROJECTED TIMELINE

Materials Released	November 16, 2026
Request due	December 6, 2026, by 4:30 pm
Notice of Intent to Award	December 15, 2026
Draft Contracts	December 15, 2026
Contacts Executed, project begins	December 18, 2026

These contracts are intended to be one time only and there is no guarantee of ongoing funding availability. Applications will go through a technical review, those meeting the grant criteria will then be scored using a standardized rubric and the Northwest Early Childhood Area Board will make the final award decisions. In addition to the attached scoring rubric, previous experience with an applicant regarding funding, reporting, or contract implementation may be considered in final decisions. The board may seek additional information regarding an applicant to ensure complete due diligence and governance responsibility is met.

CONTRACT INFORMATION

The awards will be made to the contractor in monthly disbursement based on actual expenditures; it is a draw down process only. Reimbursement requests will be due by the 10th of every month. Previous contract holders who had a contract terminated for cause are not eligible to apply for funds from the local Early Childhood Iowa Board.

STATE TOOLS

Refer to the State ECI website for state tools to assist in the contract process. State tools are subject to change, and contractors will be required to follow and comply with all changes. All programs will be required to collect data and performance measures that have been set by the Office of Early Childhood Iowa, by program type. Depending on the program that is offered, some programs/contractors may fit into more than one

program type, therefore requiring additional data sets. The NECA Board also reserves the right to request additional outcome data other than what is required within the state tools. The following tools have been identified to assist in the application process, and applicants are highly encouraged to review the tools before applying. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact northwesteci@gmail.com or bvcs.eci.director@gmail.com with any questions related to funding parameters or performance measures.

The program's effectiveness is measured by the number of children and families served, as well as the reported increase in daily reading and language-building activities. Families share feedback on changes in their reading habits and their engagement with children during storytelling.
Required State Performance Measures Page 30 in Tool O:
# of children served

# of children served (0-5) by age as of September 15th
Children 0-1 (0-11 months)
Children 1-2 (12-23 months)
Children 2-3 (24-35 months)
Children 3-4 (36-47 months)
Children 4-5 (48-59 months)
Children 5-6 (60-71 months)

# of families participating

# of families reporting on change in conditions
# of families that report an increase in reading to their child each day
# of families that report an increase in talking with their child about new words in stories

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

To avoid any conflict of interest in the above funding determination process, any member of the Board who has a direct interest or substantial related interest in a particular funding proposal will not participate in the evaluation of that proposal.

APPEAL PROCESS

All applicants will be sent notification of the selection decision. Applicants who are denied funding may appeal to the Board. Appeals must be in writing and be received within ten working days of the date of the Board funding decision. Send written appeals to the ECI Board Chairperson, C/O Northwest Early Childhood Area, PO Box 992, Cherokee, IA 51012, or to northwesteci@gmail.com or bvcs.eci.director@gmail.com.

Appeals must be based on the contention that the process violated state or federal law, did not follow review process, or involved a conflict of interest by the Board. All appeals shall clearly state how the selection failed in following the rules of the grant process as governed by the policies and procedures outlined in the application material provided to all applicants. The request must also describe the remedy sought. The Board will review the appeal and gather information regarding any infractions of the process. At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the TFA ECI Board, the Board will determine if there has been a violation of process and will rule on the appeal. Written notice will be sent to the appellant within ten (10) working days of the appeal review decision.

FUNDING APPLICATION CHECKLIST

It is required to utilize the application shell. **Do not include instructions with submitted application.** Applications submitted without all components will not be considered. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

All applications shall be assembled in the order below.

- Cover Page (1 page), provided.
- Project Plan (2-page maximum, 10-point font minimum)
- Budget and Justification Form (2-page maximum)

It is strongly encouraged to request an editable application if the applicant does not have the ability to edit PDF. Please email requests for an editable application at least seven (7) working days before the due date to northwesteci@gmail.com.

End of Request Instructions
(do not include application instructions page 1-5 in final submitted application)

Northwest Early Childhood Area Application Cover Page

Name of Applicant Organization: Legal Name of Organization

Address: Insert Address, City, State and Zip Code

Phone: Insert phone number **Email:** Insert email address

Program Contact Person: Insert program's contact person's name

The organization is a: ☐Government Entity ☐Private Not for Profit ☐Private For-Profit
☐Public School District ☐Private School ☐Other: _____

Tax Exempt Status: Federal ID #:

This application is for the following funding category:

Early Literacy ☐

This application is for a: New Project☐ Existing Project ☐

Name of Project: Insert project name.

This project is evidence or research based: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Describe the target population or program eligibility criteria.

Target Population or Eligibility Criteria:

Estimated number of families to be served:

Estimated number of children to be served:

County(s) this project will serve: ☐ Buena Vista ☐ Osceola ☐ Plymouth

Outcome Statement: (i.e.) *The purpose of* (insert name of your program here) *is to provide/produce* (service, activity or product) *to/for* (customer/stakeholder) *so they can/to* (outcome/planned benefit).

Total Amount Requested from NECA:	**$0.00**
Other funding secured for this project:	$0.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COST:	$0.00

I certify that I am duly authorized to commit assurances for the applicant and therefore agree to comply with all the provisions of the RFP, and to the best of my knowledge, the information

contained in this application is correct and complete.

_____ **Date:** _____

Signature of authorized agency person

Name: Type name of authorized signatory **Title:** Insert title of authorized signatory

PROJECT PLAN: *2 page maximum per project*

Describe in detail the intent of the project to utilize these funds to promote early literacy. Include materials, supplies, location, promotion, and responsible parties.

Provide your narrative here.

Describe strategies that will be used to engage participants from the target audience and maintain adequate staffing or volunteers.

Provide your narrative here.

Describe the timeline of project implementation. (All funds must be expended by May 30, 2027)

Provide your narrative here.

Describe agency or staff experience and/or similar offerings of the planned project, including successes, challenges, and expected outcomes.

Provide your narrative here.

Describe how the project utilizes evidence based or research-based strategies.

Provide your narrative here.

BUDGET & JUSTIFICATION FORM

Category	Expense Description *(Justification-Narrative)*	Amount Requested	Other Funding Specify amount.	Other Funding Sources Specify source	Total Requested Funds and Other Funding
Salaries		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Benefits		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Travel		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Office Supplies		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Program Materials		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Purchased Services		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Staff Professional Development/ Training		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Other		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
Administrative Cost		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00
TOTAL		$0.00	$0.00		$0.00

BUDGET SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

Provide a detailed budget justification that clearly describes each cost element and explain how it contributes to meeting the project's performance. It should describe how categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs. The budget justification should specifically and concisely describe how each item will support the achievement of the proposed project and supporting results. The agency should demonstrate an appropriate cost allocation among funding streams. A total project budget is required.

Salaries

Salaries should be explained by listing each staff position that will be supported from this request including name, position title, full-time equivalency (effort toward this program only) and annual salary. Be sure to include the person responsible for billing, and person serving as the program manager for this contract as well as direct service staff. FTEs should indicate what portion of effort is allocated to the funded program. For example, a fiscal manager is probably not 1 FTE, because they normally put forth effort on multiple programs. If they are less than 1 FTE and a direct service worker, please list other FTE sources in the narrative column.

Benefits

List all components that comprise the fringe benefit rate. Break the benefits out per item. The fringe benefits should be directly proportional to that portion of the personnel costs that are allocated for the program.

Travel

Itemize all in-state travel related to providing services. Describe how the estimate was determined and clearly demonstrate the relationship to the proposed program. Funds may not be used for out-of-state travel unless pre-approved by the Board. **Mileage may not exceed the state rate of $0.725 per mile** and must follow state per diem guidelines for meals.

Office Supplies

Expendable materials and supplies may be shown as a lump sum (paper, pencils, pens, staples, etc.) Clearly describe how the costs are estimated and why it is necessary for the program.

Program Supplies or Materials

Supplies that are purchased specifically for the program. Clearly describe how the costs were estimated and why it is necessary to the program. Itemize each item to be purchased, including the description and cost.

Example: Participant Workbooks, $2.00 x 20 participants x 3 groups = $120

Purchased Services

Provide breakdown for each service, how the estimate was derived, and give a justification for these expenses clearly demonstrating relationship to the proposed program. Professional fees and memberships can be included if there is a clear explanation as to the purpose and necessity to the program.

Professional Development/Training

For training, seminars and conferences. Indicate the number of personnel, the amount of tuition/fees, the name of the institutions and the place. Clearly describe how the costs were estimated and why it is necessary to the program.

Other

Include any proposed costs that do not fit within any of the above-mentioned categories.

Indirect/Administrative Costs

Indirect costs rates may be an allowable expense if the applicant provides documentation from a recognized federal agency that identifies an indirect cost rate approved by a federal agency for the applicant. Attach documentation to the application. Indirect costs are costs that an organization incurs for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular project or other institutional activity. Examples include office space, utilities, accounting services, audits, insurance, etc.

Applicants without such an approved indirect cost rate may charge no more than 10% administrative fees. The fees will be on actual expenses incurred during the contract period. **Provide a description of costs included in the indirect/admin costs.**

Sco

Scoring Criteria	1 - Low
Technical Review	*Scoring is not calculate release to the Board. Pr withdrawn from consid*
Purpose	Purpose statement is v clearly aligned with fun priorities.
Strategies	Applicant shows **some** of promising practice o supported approach.
Goals	Applicant shows some for which measurable d collected and analyzed progress
Performance Measures	Applicant shows **some** for which measurable d collected and analyzed progress.
Collaboration	Applicant shows **some** of meaningful collabora other organizations in t
Sustainability	Applicant shows **some** of a reasonable sustain plan. Is vague about pr not fully funded.
Budget and Justification	Applicant shows **some** of cost effectiveness an budget justification.
***Ongoing programs and requests for renewed funding**	Applicant has demonstr history of **some** measu results, progress and re investment.
Total	
Proposal Strengths	
Proposal Weaknesses	
Past Performance Considerations:	Desk and site audit rep Attendance and collabo meetings