Questions from the CARES Plus – Round 2 In-box (as of March 26, 2013)_

Revised 5/8/13

Program Management

1. Q. Where are the talking points and PowerPoint presentations posted from the CARES Plus webinar on March 19, 2013?

   A. They have been posted to the CARES Plus Implementation website: http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/Help/caresplus.asp

2. Q. Is a Lead Agency required to use Form P.5 "Professional Growth Plan and Record Form" from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing?

   A. No, this form is a sample form only. It was included in the RFA to demonstrate the type of information to be included in a plan.

3. Q. Will Teachstone materials (CLASS Dimensions Guides/Key-cards) be available for distribution by 7/1/2013?

   A. *It is the goal of First 5 California to distribute the CLASS Dimension Guides and key cards as soon as possible after July 1, 2013. First 5 California staff will keep counties informed about availability of program materials as decisions are made.*

4. Q. Will the forms needed to complete the application be posted in a format other than PDF?

   A. Yes, the forms are also available as Word documents and are posted at the CARES Plus website.

5. Q. Page 21 of the RFA states, "Feedback from the fall observation will be provided for use in the spring advising section." How would it be used in the spring session (which is our "end of the year" session)?

   A. The feedback may be used to plan for future professional development regardless of whether a participant continues in CARES Plus the following year. Counties may use the results of feedback to advise local priorities as well. (For example, teachers in CSP classrooms may find the results useful toward overall classroom improvement.) Lead Agencies should encourage continued participation in CARES Plus, as appropriate.

6. Q. When will participants receive the fall feedback letters?

    A. The feedback letters are mailed directly to participants in March and April 2013. Some participants may already have received their feedback as of this posting.

7. Q. To be eligible for the CARES Plus program, a participant cannot make over $60,000 a year. Is this the gross or net amount?

    A. It is the gross amount. To be eligible, a participant cannot make more than $60,000 gross salary per year.

8. Q. Page 9 of the RFA states that participants must complete the two-hour online *Intro to the CLASS* as part of the CORE requirements. Can a participant substitute the completion on a live *Intro to the CLASS* for the online course?

    A. Yes. However, the participant must be able to verify the completion of the live Intro-to CLASS course with a certificate of completion. The live Intro to CLASS must be at a minimum the "2 hour" version approved by Teachstone, and it must be taught by a trainer with current age-level specific certification from Teachstone.

9. Q. If someone has completed the CSEFEL "Train the Trainer" course, is that person qualified to provide Component A training to CARES Plus participants in our county?

    A. No. At this time, only trainings sanctioned by the California Department of Education (CDE) are eligible for a Component A. CDE has not approved participants from the "train the trainer" CSEFEL program. Please refer to http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/compatraining.asp for a list of approved trainings and training vendors.

10. Q. Is there an Executive Summary for the California Early Childhood Educator Competencies manual?

    A. *Please contact the California Department of Education for materials available through its resource library.*

11. Q. Is the footnote found on page 14 of the RFA correct?

    A. *No. The footnote should read as follows: For a list of eligible courses that may be included in a local CARES Plus program, see Appendix M.*

12. Q. Is footnote number 14 on page 23 correct?

    A. *No. The footnote should reference Appendix C.*

13. Q. Page 22 of the RFA lists Component A trainings sponsored by CDE. Who is qualified to provide these trainings besides West Ed?

    A. *At this time, only vendors listed in the CDE-Approved CARES Plus Component A Training list are approved. Visit http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/compatraining.asp for a listing of trainings and vendors.*

14. Q. Page 23 of the RFF states that Race to the Top trainings need to be approved prior to being listed under the approved Component A training. What is the process for determining eligible training and providers?

    A. *First 5 California and CDE's Child Development Division staff are collaborating on development of a training approval process. CARES Plus Lead Agencies will be informed of the development process as it evolves.*

15. Q. Will the participant forms (P forms) be available in Spanish?

    A. *Yes. The P forms are being translated into Spanish. Forms will be posted as they become available. First 5 California anticipates posting translated forms by the time of award.*

16. Q. To be eligible for CARES Plus, must a participant work nine months prior to application in an early learning setting with children ages 0-5?

    A. *Yes. A participant must have worked a minimum of nine months in a qualified learning care facility prior to enrollment in the CARES Plus program. This requirement helps to ensure that participants have demonstrated a dedication to serving young child as well as a commitment to work in the early learning field.*

17. Q. It has been a long standing practice in our county that a program director verify each CARES Plus participant's employment at the time of enrollment and then again at the end of the program year. Is this an appropriate practice, in light of the new Form P.1 that allows for participant certification of eligibility?

    A. *Yes. We encourage the continuation of this practice. We also ask Lead Agencies to use this form as well. Form P.1 is a standard way of ensuring uniform collection of this required information.*

18. Q. We have a single application for AB212 and CARES Plus participants, so Form P.1, pages 2 and 3, do not accurately reflect eligibility as there are some CDE subsidized-programs caring for children up to age 12. Can this form be modified?

A. *No. CARES Plus serves providers working with children between 0 and 5 years of age. Form P.1 must be used as is, and addenda may be used to meet the needs of other funding streams*

19. Q. Should a Lead Agency add the cost of postage to ship cameras to its budget?

    A. *No. If a Lead Agency is not going to directly distribute cameras to participants, then CDTC will continue to ship them.*

20. Q. Do all CARES Plus advisors need to be Component C advisors?

    A. *No. There has been no change to how a Lead Agency may provide access to an advisor from Round 1 to Round 2. (See RFA page* 15.)

21. Q. The majority of information asked for in Form P.1 has already been woven into the application we are currently using. Is it possible to include any elements not already there in lieu of using this form?

    A. Yes. Form P.1, pages 4-9, can be modified as long as all required data listed in Appendix D are included. The form was meant to standardize the collection of data required from Appendix D.

22. Q. Please define the term "enrollment" found on page 19 of the RFA.

    A. *"Enrollment" means that a participant has applied for and been approved by the Lead Agency to participate in the local CARES Plus program. For Component D participants, that means that the local application process has been completed and the initial enrollment data has been submitted to First 5 California by August 20, 2013. (Please see page 31 of the RFA for more information.)*

23. Q. Can Family Child Care assistants continue to participate in CARES Plus – Round 2?

    A. *Yes. There has been no change to this in Round 2.*

Fiscal

1. ~~Q. Annual reporting – If not a First 5 county, does the Lead Agency provide this data to F5CA?~~

    ~~*Yes. The Lead Agency is responsible for making sure the CARES Plus fiscal data are contained in the First 5 county commission's annual audit.*~~

    Please see Fiscal, Question 4 in the FAQs April 15, 2013 (posted May 2, 2013) for an updated response.

2. Q. In using Race to the Top (RTT) as a county program match, if we have a budget, for example, of $500,000 RTT for 2013-14 and then only spend $450,000, how does that work since we would plan a CARES Plus budget for using the $500,000?

    A. First, the Lead Agency must make sure that the terms and conditions of the RTT funding can be used for the match in CARES Plus. If it can be used for the match, any RTT funds not used will remain in your accounts for other allowable uses under the RTT terms and conditions. CARES Plus funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis only. If you do not use all of the money, there will be nothing to do since you are invoicing only for those expenditures that have been incurred.

Research and Evaluation

1. Q. The Participant Application Form P.1 does not include many questions that are currently required in PRO0F, which does not let us "Save" unless all fields are completed. Will PRO0F be changed to require only answers that match the questions on the form, or will we need to develop a supplemental form to ask the others (e.g., site accreditation type, typical hours of operation, degree from foreign education, etc.)?

    A. *As part of the development of the CARES Plus – Round 2 RFA, we reviewed the data elements required in Round 1 and revised the list of data elements that are required for Round 2 (see appendix D). The Participant Application form that was posted with the RFA for Round 2 aligns with the revised data requirements. We have identified a subset of data that is required for initial enrollment that will allow the participant to be entered into the PRO0F data system in "Save" status. (Please see Slides 13 and 14 of the Program Evaluation and Data Collection presentation posted on the CARES Plus Implementation page.)*

2. Q. There are some data elements, for example, asking whether or not a person participated in CARES between 2000 and 2010 that the Lead Agency has on file. Can we remove those questions from the application?

    A. *For continuing participants, the Lead Agency can assist the participant with validating or providing this information. However, data for the two questions about prior CARES and CARE Plus participation <u>must</u> be provided. These questions were included to help identify whether the participant should already be in the CARES Plus Data System or not, and to enable evaluation of outcomes controlling for length of program participation. Participants may have been entered under a different name or may have participated in another county. (See slide 14 of the Program Evaluation and Data Collection presentation.)*

3. Q. Regarding the question, "Have you participated in CARES Plus since 2011"? – is this asking whether the person participated any year since 2011, or if the person has been in the program continuously since 2011?

    A. *We would like to know if the applicant participated in any year since 2011. This can help identify whether the participant should already be in the CARES Plus Data System or not. They may have been entered under a different name or may have participated in another county. We are trying to avoid having duplicate participants and want to be able to support longitudinal studies of participants that have been in the program for multiple years. (See slide 13 of the Program Evaluation and Data Collection presentation*.)

4. Q. The new rule requiring 80% of our applicants to be entered into PROOF prior to August 30 will prove difficult as our application period closes August 30. The majority of our program participants work in programs that operate on a school-type calendar, and our local deadline is set at two weeks after the beginning of the school year. This maximizes the opportunity for participation and has been quite effective locally. If we adjust our local deadline to enable us to meet yours, we will see a decline in numbers. Is there anything that we can do?

    A. *The deadline for Initial Enrollment data entry for all Component D (MTP) participants is August 20th. This deadline is necessary to enable MTP participants to receive the full benefits of the MTP Program. It also allows the opportunity for participants that are not selected or eligible for MTP to be able to choose another component.*
    The deadline for entry of 80% of the total number of remaining participants must be entered into the Data System with initial enrollment data completed. This requirement is to ensure adequate representation for the CLASS™ observation sample. This provides the ability for counties to accept up to 20% of their participants <u>after</u> the September 15th deadline. The data elements required for Initial Enrollment deadline (August 20th or September 15th) are defined in Appendix D under the Initial Enrollment column. (See slide 9 of the Program Evaluation and Data Collection presentation.)

5. Q. Is there any chance that a few adjustments could be made to PRO0F that would expedite data entry? The new reporting deadlines could prove to be very challenging to meet as the task is monstrous and the timeframe is short.

    A. *PRO0F will only be used for the Initial Enrollment of participants for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. The required data elements for Initial Enrollment are limited to reduce the data entry effort. Work facility information is not required for the Initial Enrollment. The new CARES Plus data system will enable selection from a list of facilities when adding the participant's work history information. (Please see Slides 9 and 12 of the Program Evaluation and Data Collection presentation posted on the CARES Plus Implementation page).*

6. Q. Can we supply more than one answer to the question, "What is the primary language spoken with children?" We do not think our participants who provide bilingual instruction will be able to choose one primary language

    A. *Currently primary language is a single selection data element. However, First 5 California is having internal discussions to determine whether or not we should add a "Bilingual" value.*

7. Q. As the CARES Plus subcontractors for First 5 Los Angeles, does our program officer need to review the 1,000 participant files in order for us to check this box, or does this refer to something else?

   A. *Yes, please refer to the Form P.1 Application, Page 8. A program administrator needs to review the applications and certify that:*
      - *The participant meets all of the state and local eligibility requirements to participate in the CARES Plus program.*
      - *The participant completed and signed all required forms.*