

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Louisiana State Department of Education (LDOE) believes that all students are smart and capable thinkers. The Department's vision to set high expectations for all students, regardless of their individual needs, supports every child on the path toward a college degree or professional diploma and overall success.

As part of a multi-pronged approach to achieve this vision, the legislature established the state-level Early Literacy Commission (the Commission) through Louisiana Senate Resolution 182 and Louisiana House Resolution 222 (2019). The legislation calls on the Commission to develop and implement an aligned system to provide effective evidence-based reading instruction for children from birth through grade 3. More information regarding the Early Literacy Commission is [available](#).

To support the Commission's recommendations, the State is prioritizing resources that will provide young learners and school age students with opportunities to develop reading and writing skills that will enable them to build a foundation for success in school and beyond. The Department developed the [Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Guide](#), which provides school systems with a vetted vendor list. Vendors on this list are qualified to deliver high-quality professional development and direct support in the following areas: Literacy and Readiness Screeners, and Pedagogy of Teaching and Learning. If added as approved partners to the guide, vendors will contract directly with networks to provide services.

### **Statement of Need**

Early literacy is a critical predictor of educational and lifelong success. Children who are not exposed to high-quality early literacy instruction are at a greater risk of future academic struggles. The recommendations of the Early Literacy Commission acknowledge the current progress and work but demand a push ahead with the following goals:

- Every teacher uses a high-quality curriculum to teach students the foundations of reading and language and literacy.
- Every school system implements a comprehensive literacy assessment plan that includes different assessment tools used for different purposes at different times during the school year.
- Every teacher uses literacy assessment data to monitor students' progress and inform instruction.
- Students who need intensive intervention are provided research-based literacy interventions.
- Every school has a culture in which all teachers are responsible for and equipped to deliver effective literacy instruction.
- Every teacher uses evidenced-based practices to meet the literacy needs of all students.
- Every educator preparation program emphasizes evidence-based literacy practices.

In order to accomplish the recommendations of the Early Literacy Commission, school systems and centers need to be able to invest resources in early learning and literacy. Read more about the Early Literacy Commission's [recommendations](#).

### **Application Process**

The Department is accepting applications from organizations and conducting an initial screening to ensure submissions align to our description of need. The Department will then review applications to ensure they meet criteria for inclusion into the Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Guide. Organizations that do not meet eligibility criteria will be notified. Organizations that meet established criteria will be notified through email that their application has been approved and they are eligible to be included in the Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Guide. School systems will be provided with assistance from the Department to effectively utilize this guide.

Applications will be accepted for the following categories:

- **Supplemental Screeners:** Professional development in the area of developmental, literacy, or content specific screeners that builds the capacity of educators and school systems to identify key skills and behaviors appropriate for school readiness and develop a responsive instructional plan to address any potential gaps, including but not limited to:
  - Birth to 5 developmental screeners
  - Math or other content area screeners
- **Early Learning Pedagogy of Teaching:** Professional development empowers teachers to understand scientifically based reading instruction, and other content areas. Professional development in this area should focus on supporting teachers’ effective implementation of high quality curriculum.

All applications will be submitted via <https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io>. Applicants will establish an account and should select *Supporting Early Literacy and Learning Guide* to apply to this RFA. Applications for the first review window are due December 1, 2020.

After the first application window, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, and applicants can submit the application at any time. Completed applications will be reviewed biweekly. For inquiries about application windows email [EarlyLiteracy@la.gov](mailto:EarlyLiteracy@la.gov).

**Application Requirements**

The application requires demographic information from the applicant, as well as content area specific questions regarding previous experience, and the vendor’s content area expertise.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Each application and submitted accompanying materials will be scored according to criteria set forth by LDOE’s literacy team. There are five eligibility indicators, each of which fall into one of two categories:

All determinations of whether or not an application meets these evaluation criteria will be indicated on a “Pass / Fail” basis. The LDOE will interpret these evaluation criteria as indicated in the table below.

Evaluation Criteria	How the Evaluation Criteria will be Assessed: Evaluation Sub-Components
<b>Indicator I:</b> Vendor’s mission and work aligns with program goals.	1a) Vendor’s organizational mission aligns with the goals of at least one area of specialized support. 1b) Vendor has relevant experience to conduct the work, including supporting partners of varying sizes and levels of need. 1c) Vendor has a history of effective completion of work and/or favorable reviews.
<b>Indicator II:</b> Instructional modes and methods	2a) Vendor’s methodology and approach to foundational skills instruction and/or given content area are effective. 2b) Vendor is qualified to conduct high-quality professional

	<p>development in the area of specialized support for which they are applying.</p> <p>2c) Vendor will align services to the high quality curriculum used in Louisiana schools.</p> <p>2d) Vendor is committed to serving all young learners, including students with disabilities and English Learners.</p> <p>2e) Vendor includes a plan for support, including partnership services that vary in duration, and intensity of support.</p>
<b>Indicator III:</b> Professional learning Standards for Adults	<p>3a) Clear objectives are defined for participants and are addressed throughout presentation materials.</p> <p>3b) Vendor communicates a sound strategy to support appropriate screening, reading foundations, or the given content area of expertise.</p> <p>3c) Vendor offers flexible options for in-person delivery and/or virtual delivery.</p>
<b>Indicator IV:</b> Supporting Student Outcomes and Educator Practices	<p>4a) Vendor presents a clear plan for using data to drive student achievement and communicate results to stakeholders.</p> <p>4b) Vendor includes a discussion of a tool/resources used to collect relevant data.</p>
<b>Indicator V:</b> Vendor Rates	<p>5a) Proposed rate(s) is/are at fair market value considering material, activities, and qualifications.</p>

**Evaluation Process Notes**

The LDOE evaluation team will evaluate each application based on the Evaluation Criteria.

- Applications must “pass” all five eligibility standards to be accepted. In order to “pass” a standard the vendor must meet each sub-component of that standard.
- A Vendor’s application package will be accepted and listed as an approved vendor in the Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Guide if:
  - the application achieves a “pass” on all five evaluation criteria; and
  - the application conforms with all of the RFA’s administrative and legal requirements.
- No appeals will be considered at any stage.
- Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to submit new proposals during future RFA application processes.

**RFA Selection Processes**

The table below outlines the RFA selection process for the Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Vendor Guide.

	Supporting Early Learning and Literacy Guide RFA Process	Application Window 1	Application Window 2	Application Window 3
Step 1	Vendor applicants submit an application via <a href="https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/">https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/</a> .	Closes December 1	Closes February 12	Closes April 30
Step 2	The LDOE schedules and convenes review panels to review applications. Rejected applicants receive feedback.	Reviewed by Jan. 1	Reviewed by February 19	Reviewed monthly
Step 3	Approved applicants will be added as approved vendors in the Vendor Catalog.	Within 7 days after approval	Within 7 days after approval	Within 7 days after approval

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, and applicants can submit the application at any time. The timeline for each application window is listed above. For inquiries about application windows email [EarlyLiteracy@la.gov](mailto:EarlyLiteracy@la.gov).

**Related Resources**

- [Early Literacy Commission Legislative Report](#)
- [Student Engagement and Success Vendor Guide](#)
- [Partnership for Success Guide](#)
- [Louisiana Academic Content PD Vendor Guide](#)
- [School System Planning Resources](#)