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I. Introduction, Background, Purpose and Objectives

A. Introduction

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is pleased to announce the California Newcomer Education & Well-Being (CalNEW) project. The CalNEW project will allocate funding to school districts to provide funding for direct services to refugee students and other eligible school-aged children. Section 81 of Assembly Bill (AB) 99 (Chapter 15, Statutes of 2017) appropriated ten million dollars ($10,000,000) over three fiscal years beginning in FY 2017-2018 from the State General Fund (SGF) to CDSS to provide additional services for refugees and other eligible school-age students served by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). School age students are defined as students attending Kindergarten through the attainment of a high school diploma or California High School Equivalency Certificate (CHSEC).

The CDSS invites eligible school districts to apply for the CalNEW funding. The CalNEW project will include a capacity building component for successful applicants along with project implementation plans comprising of culturally sensitive and trauma informed services. The purpose of these services is to improve well-being, English-language proficiency, and the academic performance of eligible school-age students. The CalNEW project will fund supplemental educational programs and services to eligible students and their families who have been in the United States (U.S.) five years or less, with the goal of offering opportunities for continued integration and successful academic outcomes.

The CalNEW project will provide supplemental resources to impacted school districts that have received significant numbers of eligible students and are in the following counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus Counties. See Appendix A for a breakdown of eligible population arrivals.

Successful applicants selected for the first-year funding will receive second-year funding, subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory progress of their CalNEW projects.

B. Background

The terms “newcomer(s)” and “eligible students” as referenced in this project includes populations such as asylees, refugees, and Special Immigrant Visa holders who have arrived in the United States in the last five years. For additional information on all eligible population groups, see Eligible Beneficiaries.
Newcomer students in California may have little or no formal education and may lack English-language proficiency. These are significant obstacles to academic progress. Additionally, newcomer students may have unmet mental health needs due to trauma from experiencing or witnessing stressful events including violence, torture, and separation from immediate family and close relatives. The trauma may be further compounded by stress during the resettlement process such as acculturation and isolation stressors.

Newcomer students, ages 14 and over, face unique challenges because they have a shorter amount of time before transitioning into young adulthood. During this short amount of time, they must learn English, integrate into American society, and receive the services needed to mitigate the impact of their childhood trauma.

Newcomer parents and guardians also confront challenges that impact children’s educational experience. Newcomer families may not be fully aware of the magnitude of the cultural and academic demands posed by schools on their children and may lack an overall awareness or understanding of the educational system in the U.S. Most newcomer parents also lack English-language skills making it more difficult to acquire information and assist their children.

C. Purpose and Objectives

The goal of the CalNEW is to provide supplemental resources to impacted school districts that have received significant numbers of eligible students to address the obstacles confronting these children so that they may succeed in academic endeavors and social integration.

The purpose of the CalNEW project is to:

1. Provide supplemental educational programs and social services to eligible students who have been in the U.S. five years or less, that will assist in improving academic performance and social adjustment. The CalNEW funds are intended to assist school districts to plan, design, implement, and evaluate supplementary instructional and social adjustment support services.

2. Enhance the quality of the educational and social adjustment services offered to eligible students by establishing and/or expanding collaborative relationships with organizations already providing assistance and/or support.

The objectives of the CalNEW project are to serve eligible students and:

1. Improve the well-being and mental health of eligible students.
2. Increase the number of eligible students who meet grade level requirements.
3. Improve the level of English-language proficiency among eligible students.
4. Improve overall academic performance among eligible students.
5. Improve school attendance rates.
6. Improve high school diploma and CHSEC attainment rates among eligible students.
7. Increase the likelihood that eligible students age 14 and above achieve self-sufficiency.
8. Increase the participation of students and families in school activities.
9. Improve coordination between schools and local service provider networks.
10. Increase/improve collaboration between participating school districts, the newcomer community, service providers, and community based organizations to address gaps in services.

II. Project Components

The following components are central to the design of services for eligible populations.

A. Broad partnerships focused on newcomers. The CDSS encourages partnerships with local service providers, including resettlement agencies, health and mental health providers, and community- and faith-based organizations, to ensure coordination for effective planning and successful program implementation, while avoiding duplication of services and maximizing limited resources.

B. Culturally and linguistically appropriate materials (e.g. special curriculum/activities, translation services, interpreter services, etc.).

C. Flexible scheduling during and outside school hours (e.g. afterschool classes, weekend tutorials, online assistance).

D. Specialized approaches suited for newcomers (e.g. cultural orientations, newcomer parent/guardian/sponsor/teacher meetings, school orientations).

E. Newcomer integration into school system (i.e. English-language development (ELD) instruction; mentoring; group activities; providing support of the sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression of newcomer children).

F. Approaches and activities that facilitate newcomer social integration activities that foster community building in schools (e.g. civic engagement).

G. Approaches to improve newcomer consumer education (e.g. financial and computer literacy, and nutrition).

H. Attention to measurable academic performance (i.e. high school graduation rate, accomplishment of required course work on a timely basis, improved academic performance levels, etc.).

III. Eligibility Criteria

Only school districts meeting the following eligibility criteria will be considered for funding:
A. School districts from a refugee-impacted county: Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus Counties; and
B. Have numerical data demonstrating 100 or more newly arrived eligible students enrolled in school year 2016-17.

IV. Eligible Beneficiaries

Students that arrived within the last five years, with the following immigration statuses are eligible for services under this grant: (1) refugees; (2) asylees; (3) Cuban and Haitian entrants; (4) Certain Amerasians from Vietnam; (5) victims of severe forms of trafficking who receive certification or an eligibility letter from ORR and certain other specified family members of trafficking victims; (6) children classified as Special Immigrant Juveniles receiving services from ORR-funded Unaccompanied Refugee Minor programs; and (7) Iraqi and Afghan children with Special Immigrant Visa status.

Successful applicants will be required to verify that each student participating in CalNEW funded activities meet eligibility requirements. The CDSS shall provide successful applicants with additional information and instructions about certifying program eligibility.

V. Application Requirements

Eligible school districts can respond to this Request for Applications (RFA) by submitting a completed application for the CalNEW project funding. Only applications demonstrating all of the following elements will be considered:

A. Identify the process for determining the eligibility of CalNEW participating students and have a plan to protect students’ confidential information.
B. Propose a project plan that includes culturally sensitive and trauma informed components that address language, academic support, mental health, and self-sufficiency.
C. Have or will hire culturally competent and sensitive staff qualified to complete the objectives of the CalNEW project.
D. Have or will develop an effective plan to recruit, conduct outreach, and engage students and families to maximize the number of eligible students participating in the CalNEW project.
E. Collaborate or plan to collaborate with the local or nearest County Refugee Coordinator (CRC) and at least one Resettlement Agency (RA). In addition, create a plan that describes how this collaboration will improve the school district’s CalNEW project.
F. Collaborate or plan to collaborate with community based organizations and other providers to refer eligible students and address service gaps.
G. Present an evaluation method of collecting and documenting CalNEW project effectiveness and accomplishments.
H. Have a plan to capture qualitative and quantitative data that measures participation in CalNEW services and activities and demonstrates an
improvement in eligible students’ English-language proficiency, academic performance, and/or high school diploma or CHSEC attainment.

I. Have an evaluation plan to measure CalNEW project outcomes.
J. Present a proposed budget that shows correlation between the proposed expenditures and project activities.

VI. Allowable Activities

Applicants must describe, in detail, the educational services and activities that will be provided to improve the linguistic and academic performance of eligible students, as well as attend to the socio-emotional and mental health needs that may affect the educational performance of these students. The CalNEW funds may not be used to supplant educational instruction and services mandated under federal and state laws. Services and activities may include, but are not limited to:

A. Supplemental ELD instruction.
B. Use of curricula that supplements and encourages optimum learning, development of necessary skills, and acquisition of a high school diploma or CHSEC.
C. After-school tutoring programs focused on helping eligible students understand and complete assignments.
D. After-school and summer programs that support remedial work or promote school readiness.
E. Programs that provide vocational training, financial and computer literacy.
F. Orientation to eligible students and their families on the education system and school requirements, such as student attendance and performance.
G. Involvement of trained teachers/staff/administrators that are knowledgeable about eligible students’ culture and language.
H. Parental involvement programs.
I. Mentoring programs.
J. Interpreter services for parent/teacher meetings and conferences.
K. Services of bilingual and bicultural counselors and aides.
L. Staff training on eligible students’ cultures and use of special teaching materials.
M. Utilization of modern technology deemed to improve English-language acquisition and other school related skills.
N. Utilization of educational materials to assist eligible students to learn.
O. Referral of eligible students to providers that address service gaps.
P. Evaluation of the effectiveness/outcomes of the services provided.

School districts may also propose activities in their applications that are not listed above. However, the proposed activities must serve the objectives of the grant as outlined in the CalNEW Purpose and Objectives. Successful applicants may only use CalNEW funds for the allowable activities listed in their approved application. Justification for providing any proposed services not listed above must be included in the CalNEW project application.
VII. Funding and Budgets

The CalNEW funds must be used to supplement what school districts are mandated to provide for English-language learners under the federal and state educational laws.

The use of CalNEW funds for items not included in the original application or scope of work may be disallowed. Any deviation from the original proposed budgeted line items must be submitted in writing to the CDSS prior to the use of CalNEW funds. Written approval from the CDSS is required before using CalNEW funding in a manner that differs from the original application and budget(s).

Construction costs are not allowed under the CalNEW.

Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) $5,000.00. A description of the equipment must be provided, including the cost per unit, the number of units, the total cost, and a plan for use on the project, as well as use or disposal of the equipment after the project ends.

VIII. RFA Award Process

All eligible applications will be reviewed by the CDSS and funding determinations shall be made at CDSS' sole discretion. The funding decisions cannot be appealed.

Following the application review and selection process, the CDSS will issue tentative award letters to successful applicants that will include the specific amount awarded and details regarding the terms and conditions of the grant award. The CDSS will announce the names of successful applicants by posting the information on the RPB webpage.

The CDSS will formally notify the successful applicants in writing. The grant award will be executed upon the receipt by the CDSS of a grant award agreement signed by an authorized representative of the selected applicant. Each successful applicant will be required to send a representative to attend a one-day CalNEW orientation training in a format (e.g. webinar, in-person meeting), location and date to be determined.

IX. Estimating Eligible Student Enrollment

Applicants should complete the CalNEW Student Enrollment Methodology Form (Appendix B) to estimate the number of eligible students enrolled in the district who have been in the U.S. for five years or less by selecting one method to estimate the total number of eligible students being reported. Applicants must respect the confidentiality and anonymity of eligible students and their families when gathering
the necessary data. (See Eligible Beneficiaries for information on eligibility requirements.)

Applicants must address how students will be identified as CalNEW-eligible. Successful applicants must ensure that school personnel who are involved in this process will protect the confidentiality of this information.

Method 1: Estimate the number of potentially eligible students by counting foreign born students enrolled from specific countries where eligible populations have been known to originate from, as listed in the Estimated Number of Eligible Students Form (Appendix C). (Note: This process is only an estimate for purposes of this application, since a student born in another country does not guarantee they arrived in the U.S. with eligible status or within the last five years). **Collaboration with the CRCs, RAs, and service providers may assist in the process of estimating the number of eligible students.**

Method 2: Estimate the number of students based on survey results. Applicants can announce the potential availability of supplementary educational services for eligible students to the local community and request that parents or guardians submit a participation request form developed by the district. The form may contain a certification block that the student was admitted to the U.S. under any eligible status. The family shall be reassured that all information will remain confidential and will only be used to verify eligibility for services. Include students’ country of origin by completing and submitting Appendix C.

Method 3: Enter the number of students based on any other approach used to estimate the number of participants. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of the process/approach that will be used.

**X. Collaboration**

To assist in addressing the academic and social challenges confronting eligible students, the CDSS is requiring collaboration with the following entities of the eligible community: the CRC, at least one RA, and three service providers. Successful applicants must also attend their local Refugee Forum and Reception and Placement consultation meetings, if one is held in their area. It is extremely important and valuable to initiate or expand relationships within the refugee community. Historically, there has been a strong correlation between success and the strength of collaborative relationships with the refugee community.

Applicants must enter the corresponding information for the local, or nearest, CRC and RA, and three service providers, on the CalNEW Application for Funding. Forum meetings consist of refugee service providers and other interested parties discussing issues pertinent to refugees. The Refugee Programs Bureau (RPB) website has a list of organizations and events that may assist in planning collaborative efforts, including refugee forum meetings, CRCs, RAs, and community based organizations. The list is provided for informational purposes only. The CDSS does not endorse any of the organizations and no formal review
or certification was required to be on the list. Exercise due diligence in evaluating any organization prior to selection.

XI. General Provisions

School district officials responsible for the administration of the CalNEW must adhere to all statutory, regulatory, and other requirements that may pertain to the CalNEW and implement the CalNEW and expend funds as indicated in the application for funding. To document this agreement, a CalNEW Grant Assurance Form (Appendix D), signed by the authorized representative of the applicant in blue ink, must be included in the CalNEW application.

Applicants are also required to sign in blue ink and submit all required certifications (Appendices E through H) and additional information related to operating the CalNEW with their applications. Applicants are required to sign the California Civil Rights Laws Certification (Appendix H); this certification is required should successful applicants be awarded a contract over $100,000.

When submitting an application for CalNEW funding, the applicant agrees to abide by the information contained in the required certifications and assurances (Appendices E through H) and with the terms of the CalNEW General Terms and Conditions and Scope of Work Agreement (Appendix I), which provides additional information regarding the operational requirements and outlines the responsibilities of both the CDSS and the Contractor.

XII. Application Information

Applicants must provide the original CalNEW application and all attachments, signed in blue ink by the person authorized to submit the application, and e-mail one PDF soft copy to the CDSS with the subject line: “CalNEW Project Funding Application” on or before 5:00 p.m. on February 2, 2018. Applications received later than 5:00 p.m. on February 2, 2018 (including hard copies postmarked after the due date) will not be reviewed and considered for funding. For questions, please contact the RPB at (916) 654-4356 or RPB@dss.ca.gov. Applications must be mailed to:

California Department of Social Services
Refugee Programs Bureau
Attn: CalNEW Project
744 P Street M.S. 8-9-646
Sacramento, CA 95814

Applications must be submitted in PDF format using the CalNEW Application for Funding form. Incomplete, late, or altered application forms will not be accepted.
XIII. CalNEW Grant Timeline

Request for Applications released by the CDSS ..................... December 29, 2017
Deadline for receipt of Applications............................................. February 2, 2018
Grant start date ................................................................. TBD
Mandatory collaborative meeting .......................................... TBD

Semi-Annual Progress Reports:

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Final Performance Report: ................................................................. August 15, 2020