

Request for Proposals

Evaluation Team for Illinois Community Parenting Support Saturation Pilot

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) is a statewide private foundation that is focused on increasing children's access to healthcare throughout the State of Illinois. ILCHF concentrates its funding primarily in the areas of children's oral health and mental health. The vision of the foundation is that every child in Illinois grows up healthy.

ILCHF is part of a small group of foundations collaborating to sponsor a three-year pilot of a project to increase young children's holistic readiness to succeed in kindergarten. The intervention strategy being used involves providing all parents in a community with support for their caregiving at multiple levels of intensity. The funders have selected a lead agency to guide the project (Illinois Action for Children) and the lead agency will issue a RFP to identify two communities in Illinois to implement the pilot and services. One community will be within the City of Chicago and one will be elsewhere in the State of Illinois. This RFP seeks to identify an evaluation team to study the process and outcomes of the pilot. The evaluation will span three years and be funded by ILCHF at \$100,000 per year.

There are four principal partners in this project. They include:

1. The 'Funders Group' who have committed to funding this project for a minimum of three years. The Funders Group currently includes the following foundations: Crown Family Philanthropies; Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation; J.B and M.K Pritzker Family Foundation; Robert R. McCormick Foundation; anonymous foundation; and Steans Family Foundation.
2. The 'Lead Agency' which is responsible for the development, coordination and communication plan for the project. The Funders Group has selected 'Illinois Action for Children' as the Lead Agency through a competitive RFP process.
3. The 'Community Implementation Partners' who will plan and implement the multi-level parenting supports that will saturate the defined community. The Community Implementation Partners are located in North Lawndale Chicago, Rockford and Aurora.
4. The 'External Evaluation Team' which will be responsible for assessing the extent to which the project has achieved its intent and answer the research questions.

Overview of the Community Parenting Support Saturation Pilot

This pilot and evaluation will explore the following hypothesis: *Is it possible to significantly and measurably increase the number and percentage of children who successfully arrive at kindergarten fully ready to thrive by more effectively engaging and supporting primary caregivers in their parenting efforts and activities?*

This funding group's interest focuses narrowly on developing a community's ecosystem of systems, strategies and interventions that effectively strengthen parenting skills in a way that ultimately results in improved child outcomes.

Through discussion, the Funders Group developed the following **core beliefs and values**, including:

- Parents, families and communities want the best for their young children.
- Parenting is challenging.
- Parents, families and communities have a vital impact on their children's health, emotional and behavioral well-being, education and long-term success.
- The best thing we can do for children is to support their parents to become the best parents they can be.
- Recent findings from behavioral and brain science provide important insights into child development.
- The Funders Group, is interested in supporting parents, families and communities to use this new knowledge.
- The Funders Group believes in the importance of community leadership, innovation, continuous improvement, collaboration and evaluation.

*Note: the Funders Group uses the term **parent** in a general sense to capture the role of a child's primary caretakers.*

We refer to **saturation** as an array of interventions that collectively address multiple levels of parenting needs and is available to all parents of young children (ages birth to 5) in a community. Such interventions might range from higher touch approaches (e.g., home visiting), to moderate touch (parenting skills training groups) to lower touch strategies (e.g., public awareness campaigns).

We are now looking to launch and support a *pilot* initiative to (1) demonstrate what a saturated approach within a community or network of communities might look like and (2) test whether this approach truly leads to measurable changes in parenting beliefs and skills as well as improved child educational outcomes in the form of kindergarten readiness.

This Funders Group is making a grant of approximately \$700,000 per year over three years to support the lead agency and the community pilot interventions. Communities participating in the pilot will be supported by a coordinating infrastructure led by Illinois Action for Children, to enable the opportunity for cross-community communications, networking and learnings. Communities will divide between \$400,000 and \$540,000 in each of the three years to implement their saturation plans. The three communities and the Implementation Partners for each are:

Rockford IL – Alignment Rockford

Aurora IL – SPARK

North Lawndale Chicago IL – Carole Robertson Center for Learning

Priority will be given to evaluation applicants possessing the necessary skills and also who are located relatively near these communities in order to minimize travel expenses.

HYPOTHESIZED MECHANISM OF CHANGE

The Funders Group hypothesizes that the mechanism of change that links the parental support intervention to the kindergarten readiness outcome goal is as follows:



The evaluation should employ both qualitative and quantitative measures to assess the overarching research question: ***'Is it possible to increase the number and percentage of children who successfully arrive at kindergarten fully ready to thrive by more effectively engaging and supporting primary caregivers in their parenting efforts and activities?'***

In order to answer this large question, the evaluation should also address the following sub-questions:

Process questions:

1. Assess the extent to which the parenting supports have actually 'saturated', or reached, every family in an identified community.
2. Assess the Lead Agency and Community Implementation Partners implementation process, with frequent sharing of data to inform program development, implementation and quality assurance.

Parent Impact questions:

3. Assess the utilization of multiple levels of parenting support (Universal, mid-level and intensive),
4. Assess changes in parenting behaviors.

Child Impact questions:

5. Assess changes in the relationships between children and their primary caregivers as a result of interaction with the parenting supports.
6. Assess changes in children's social emotional, behavioral and academic functioning.

The evaluation team will participate in monthly teleconference or in-person meetings with the funders group, lead organization and three implementation communities. The timing and cadence of these meetings can be adjusted over time, depending on the need.

The Funders Group is interested in ensuring that the evaluation contributes data and related analyses to the other three partners in an ongoing and real-time basis. The purpose of this data sharing is to inform program development and revisions as the pilot unfolds. The Evaluation Team will submit 6-month progress reports for the duration of the pilot to the Funders Group. In addition, the Evaluation Team will prepare a final summative report at the conclusion of the pilot.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

If your organization is interested in pursuing this opportunity, please provide responses to questions below and submit answers into the ILCHF electronic grant application system through this link.

https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_625?SA=SNA&FID=35104

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Name

Mailing Address

City

State

Postal Code

Web Site Address

Tax ID Number

Agency Budget

Briefly describe your organization including its mission, communities served, and population served.

PROJECT LEAD CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name

Last Name

Title

Office Phone

Extension

Office Fax

E-Mail

Mailing Address if different than above

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT/DEPARTMENT CHAIR (IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE)

First Name

Last Name

Title

Office Phone

Extension

Office Fax

E-Mail

NARRATIVE

1. **Background and Expertise.** Who will serve as the Principal Investigator and what is their experience in evaluation, particularly as related to parenting interventions? Who else will participate in the evaluation team?
2. **Defining the Evaluation Approach.** Provide a draft plan, with possible associated metrics, to answer the 6 research sub-questions. Provide a draft sampling plan that accommodates population size diversity between the three Community Implementation Partners.
3. **Approach to Community Communication.** Describe your plan to establish and maintain relationships and communication between the evaluation team and the Funders Group, Lead Agency and Community Implementation Partners, including an ongoing plan to share data as it is available to inform pilot quality improvement. Formal progress reports to the Funders Group will be

required at six-month intervals, however the ongoing data sharing with all partners will be emphasized

4. **Timeline.** Provide a draft timeline that covers the work of the project over three years.
5. **Proposed budget (as Attachment A).** Propose a three-year budget (up to \$100,000/year) for this work that includes any necessary planning and phase-in, training, and any other key components of your proposed approach. Use the budget workbook and budget narrative provided.
6. **Letters of Recommendation (as Attachment B).** Provide up to three letters of recommendation from partners with whom you have worked to evaluate strategic initiatives within child and family serving systems, especially any related to parenting interventions.
7. **Additional Attachments (merged as Attachment C).**
 - Principal Investigator’s curriculum vita (limit 4 pages)
 - Curriculum vita from any additional lead evaluation staff (limit 4 pages each)
 - Project Staffing Chart
 - Officer’s Certification Form
 - Board List
 - IRS Letter of Exemption
 - Most Current Audited Financials and Auditor’s Management Letter
 - Most Current Form 990 and AG990-IL

TIMELINE

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Who</i>
November 20, 2020	RFP is issued	Invite organizations
December 1, 2020	Informational Conference Call	Interested organizations
January 5, 2021	Deadline: responses requested	Interested organizations
January 22, 2021	Applicant interviews	Selected candidate(s)
February 25, 2021	Final candidate(s) decided upon	Selected organizations notified

We will host a conference call on **Tuesday December 1, 2020 at 10 a.m.** for applicants to pose questions before submitting information. Please email amystarin@ilchf.org to RSVP for the call. **Applicant finalists will be invited for virtual interviews on January 22, 2021 between 9am and 4pm.** Please ensure that a lead partner from your team can be available during that time frame.

Many thanks for considering this opportunity – we are excited to hear from you!