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**437002-G21-0001779**

**PDG Early Care and Education   
Community Innovation Grant Implementation**

**Request for Letter of Interest**

**Responses must be submitted**

**No later than 2:00 PM**

**August 4, 2021**

LATE RESPONSES WILL BE REJECTED

There will not be a public opening.

For further information regarding this

LOI contact Luke Reible

At (608) 422-6389

E-mail: DCFProcurement@wisconsin.gov

Issued: July 13, 2021**Summary Sheet**

**Letter of Interest**

The State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is requesting a Letter of Interest (LOI) from all parties interested in submitting a proposal to manage the PDG Early Care and Education Community Innovation Grant Implementation project. The requirements to qualify to provide these services are detailed within this document.

This Request for Application (RFA) is NOT AN APPLICATION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL GRANT BUT TO ADMINISTER THE ENTIRE GRANT MAKING PROCESS INCLUDING REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS, GRANT ADMINISTRATION, FACILITATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND TRAINING.

All interested parties that meet the requirements to qualify will be asked to submit a Request for Application (RFA) for how they will deliver the program. Those proposals will be scored, with the highest scoring proposer receiving the award. More than one award may be made if it is determined in the best interest of DCF in meeting the needs across the entirety of the state.

You must respond with your Letter of Interest by the due date and time in order to be considered for this award. **If you do not respond with a Letter of Interest, you will not be allowed to respond to the RFA later**. If only one proposer responds that meets the requirements to qualify, DCF reserves the right to enter directly into contract negotiations with the sole respondent.

Please direct all questions regarding this Letter of Interest (LOI) and the selection process to the Purchasing Agent via email. **Questions must be submitted no later than July 23, 2021.** Answers to questions will be in the form of an FAQ document and will be posted to the [DCF Grant Application Opportunities](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/doingbusinesswith/applications) webpage.

Purchasing Agent:

Luke Reible, Purchasing Agent, Sr.

DCF Finance

Madison, WI 53703

[DCFProcurement@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFProcurement@wisconsin.gov)

**Submittal Due Date and Time**

**Letter of Interest (LOI) Due Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 by 2:00 PM**

Submit one electronic PDF file of the LOI to Luke Reible via email at [DCFProcurement@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFProcurement@wisconsin.gov) prior to 2:00 PM on Wednesday, August 4

, 2021. You will receive an email acknowledgement of receipt. **LOIs submitted after the deadline will be considered non-responsive and will not be evaluated.**

The Letter of Interest (LOI) has a maximum page-limit of ten (10) pages.

**Contract Term and Funding**

DCF intends to contract with the selected contractor(s) for a two and a half (2.5) year period—through December 31, 2023. The funding for this program is estimated up to $3,650,000 annually. The first partial year (2021) includes planning, preparations and potentially holding a grant competition, but not direct work with communities.

**Evaluation of Letter of Interest**

An Evaluation Committee will review the LOI to determine which proposers meet the minimum requirements to qualify. Proposers that meet the minimum requirements to qualify will be invited to submit a full proposal for how they will deliver the program. That invitation will include instructions for submitting and the criteria that will be used for scoring the proposal.

**Costs for Preparing the Letter of Interest**

All costs related to the preparation of the LOI and any subsequent proposal are the sole responsibility of the applicant. DCF assumes no liability for any costs incurred by applicants throughout the entire selection process.

**Disposition of Letters of Interest**

LOIs and their content become the property of DCF. DCF reserves the right to reject all LOIs.

All LOIs shall be open to public inspection after the intent to award the contract is announced.

**Tentative Procurement Timeline**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Action** |
| July 13, 2021 | Posting of the Request for Letter of Interest |
| July 23, 2021 | Questions due regarding RLOI |
| August 4, 2021 2:00 PM | Letter of Interest is due by **2:00 PM** |
| August 16, 2021 | Proposers that submitted LOI will be notified if they met the Requirements to Qualify, those that pass will be invited to submit a full proposal for delivery of the program. |
| September 3, 2021 2:00 PM | Full Proposals are due by 2:00 PM from qualified proposers |
| September 24, 2014 | Proposer Interviews/Presentations (estimated date, if needed) |
| September 27, 2021 | Notification of Intent to Award Sent to Applicants (estimated) |
| October 8, 2021 | Contract Award (estimated) |
| October 22, 2021 | Contract Start Date (estimated) |

**437002-G21-0001779**

**PDG Community Innovation Grant Implementation**

**Request for Letter of Interest**

**Services to be Provided**

**Purpose:** To support sustainable, innovative, public-private strategies that focus on enhancing the quality, access, and affordability of new and existing early care and education (ECE) programs and improving workforce supports, wages and benefits for all ECE professionals within local communities.

**Background:** Wisconsin has a strong vision for its families with children ages birth to 5, communities, regions, and ECE workforce. We seek a strong partner in achieving this vision.

B-5 Vision for Wisconsin Communities: All local communities, with the support of regional and state partners, have an interconnected ECE network that fully integrates health, nutrition, education, and other publicly-funded services that support children’s well-being and success.

For Wisconsin Regions: All regions in Wisconsin establish and/or strengthen existing structures to fully support local ECE systems, maximize resources and economies of scale, and engage regional ECE partners, K-12, higher education, health, housing, workforce development, and others in identifying, addressing, and meeting the needs of all children in the region.

For ECE Teachers and Providers: Wisconsin’s ECE teachers are paid competitive wages and benefits; supported with ongoing, culturally and linguistically appropriate, high quality professional development opportunities; and have career ladder opportunities that promote professional growth. Program leaders and training/technical assistance (T/TA) providers understand and promote equity in service delivery, drive knowledge and skill development in critical areas (e.g. mental health, social emotional learning, trauma-informed care); have effective strategies to recruit, retain, and support high quality staff; and are meaningfully engaged in collaborative efforts to improve child outcomes.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Division of Early Care and Education (DECE) was awarded a Preschool Development Birth to Five Grant (PDG B-5) to expand Early Care and Education (ECE) initiatives throughout the state. The overall mission of this grant is to provide early care and education opportunities throughout the state that improve the well-being, health, development, and kindergarten readiness among all children ages B-5. By leveraging enthusiasm for systems change at the state level, and local and regional partnerships and strengths, the PDG will expedite WI’s efforts to develop an equitable B-5 system that meets the needs of families and prepares the next generation of WI children to succeed and thrive.

The [Wisconsin Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/b5-strategic-plan.pdf) uses the areas of workforce, access, affordability, and quality as a framework for evaluating and transforming early care and education in Wisconsin. Efforts in each of these areas must always focus on Wisconsin’s commitment to achieving equity and inclusion in the B-5 early childhood state system. While examining and working toward progress in each framework area, Wisconsin stakeholders will engage in collaboration, seek innovation based on excellent research, and ensure sustainability of their efforts over the long term. In 2020, workforce was identified as the first goal and top priority, as the success of all other framework areas depends on Wisconsin’s ability to support and maintain its ECE workforce. Please refer to a list of the most relevant Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan references in Appendix C.

**Role of Contractor to be Selected:** DCF is soliciting applications from community organizations to provide an innovative process to guide communities in identifying its early childhood program challenges and assets. The contractor will support communities in leveraging assets to develop solutions to address these challenges, including by managing distribution of grant funds. In addition, qualified Applicants will provide business planning training and consultation to early childhood programs throughout Wisconsin.

The Contractor is expected to solicit community participation throughout the state for the programs offered. Contractors must prioritize communities where families are socially vulnerable and children may be at-risk or lacking access to needed support and quality programming to prepare them for PreK-12 school and life. A minimum of 7 communities must be served annually. A mix of rural, urban and tribal communities must be served (*minimum* of 3 rural, 3 urban and 1 tribal). Additionally, business planning cohorts and technical assistance *must* be offered in each community.

The full award includes both contractor administration costs and dollars for community grant making and stipends.

The selected contractor(s) will, at a minimum:

1. Develop and implement a process for identifying and selecting qualified rural communities, urban communities, and tribal communities.
2. Within selected communities:
   1. Develop, implement and monitor a grant-making process to support communities in the following work.
   2. Provide a strengths and gaps analysis of the early childhood program landscape within a community, with a focus on sustainability of existing and future programs including wages, benefits, diversity (in relation to the community they serve), and retention of its early childhood workforce; other focus areas may also emerge in the analysis.
   3. Facilitate engagement of community members beyond the field of early childhood to contribute to the community process and plan.
   4. Facilitate the creation of a community-led action plan to address identified gaps;
   5. Support current ECE providers to maintain viable businesses via business-planning cohorts;
   6. Support communities in implementing their action plans.
3. Administer a minimum of 40% of the total award as grants and stipends to Wisconsin communities and ECE providers.

Provide stipends for ECE businesses participating in action planning, business training and/or consultation.

1. Design and implement an intentional communication plan to promote services to communities and early childhood programs.
2. If the contract includes one or more subcontractors, negotiate and communicate contracts with all subcontractors (if appropriate) to ensure subcontract deliverables meet the same level of quality as delineated in the Applicant contract. The selected Applicant will be directly responsible and liable for all of its subcontractors’ performance under the contract.
3. Collaborate with the State, other state agencies, an assigned evaluator and other State grantees on the implementation of the services set forth in this request for Letters of Interest.

Coordinate with the State to ensure that grant policies and services are accessible, particularly to underserved, priority populations which include family members of and programs dedicated to serving: children experiencing poverty; children experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; children with disabilities or experiencing developmental delays; children of color, including from the 11 federally recognized sovereign tribal nations within Wisconsin’s borders; multilingual children; children who are migrants, immigrants, or refugees; children in foster care (including kinship care); children receiving in-home safety services and supports; children from military families; children with an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parent; children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Collect data to report as required on any assigned measures, as well as measure progress and effectiveness of the services offered. Assist the State and State’s contracted evaluators in their data collection efforts related to the contracted work.

Ensure effective and efficient operations of the grant duties including data privacy, data integrity and continuous quality improvement.

**Minimum Requirements to Qualify**

To be eligible for a contract award, you must be qualified and able to provide the following. In addition to instructions found in Appendix A, please respond to the requirements listed below in your letter of interest.

* The selected Applicant is expected to begin delivery of services outlined in this LOI at the beginning of the proposed contract start date of October 22, 2021. If Applicant is unable to begin delivery of any of the required deliverables at the beginning of the proposed contract start date of October 22, 2021, please include a transition plan with proposed timeline to begin service and budget requirements.
* The ability to prepare a detailed workplan and timeline which identifies a methodology for the development and implementation of program deliverables. Provide an example of when you have done this.
* Experience distributing resources that target early childhood (e.g., child care, health and wellness, early childhood special education, family home visiting, preschool). at a state-level, in more than one state. Describe this experience. If no experience in early childhood, discuss other experiences in education and/or related social services.
* Experience establishing collaborative relationships with state and local agencies/organizations that provide services to early childhood/education/social services programs. Experience building collaborative relationships with the national, state, and local business community is greatly preferred. Provide examples of established collaborations and their outcomes.
* A minimum of five years of experience in working in multiple states with a range of early childhood/education/ social services programs to build child care system capacity, create sustainable business models, and promote economic development. Describe your experience.
* Demonstrated ability to analyze financing for projects and experience with implementing sustainable blended funding models for early childhood/education/social services programs, including public and private funding sources. Describe your experience and role in that example.
* Experience in working within states (more than one) with demographic profiles similar to Wisconsin to solve a problem (required). Please describe this work. If possible, describe experiences working with diverse communities in a culturally responsive way.
* Knowledge and experience in providing relationship-based professional development (coaching, mentoring and consultation) and training of adult learners. Describe your experience.
* Experience facilitating professional development through training delivery systems, including on-line training delivery for adult learners. Describe your experience.
* Strong marketing and communication skills (required). If possible, showcase communications used to reach diverse, underserved, and underrepresented families and early childhood/ education/social services program staff. Provide examples of this work in both urban and rural communities.
* Experience and examples of your work in the collection, usage, and reporting of data for continuous quality improvement.

**Appendix A**

**Guidelines for Preparing the Letter of Interest**

Introduction:

The LOI selection process is to be used in the selection of a contractor to manage the PDG ECE Workforce Development and Grant Making program for DCF. Submitting a LOI is the beginning of this selection process and is used as the basis to determine eligible proposers.

All interested parties that meet the requirements to qualify will be asked to submit a proposal for how they will deliver the program. Those proposals will be scored, with the highest scoring proposer(s) receiving the award. If only one proposer responds that meets the requirements to qualify, DCF reserves the right to enter directly into contract negotiations with the sole respondent.

The LOI should be submitted via email, as a single PDF attachment, and addressed to:

Luke Reible, Purchasing Agent, Sr.

DCF Finance

Madison, WI 53703

[dcfprocurement@wisconsin.gov](mailto:SueL.HandrichHerr@wisconsin.gov)

In not more than 10 pages (excluding Appendix B), all pages must be 8-1/2 X 11, plus include the following information.

* Description of previous experiences as called for on p. 6 demonstrating an ability to deliver the services requested in this LOI process. Response should include data, examples, frequency, dollar value, or any other relevant information for each point that demonstrates your organization meets the minimum requirements and can manage this program.
* Description of the expertise of staff and information on the Applicant’s current or recent projects of a similar size and scope. Include your managers and other key staff members that will be assigned to this contract who are listed in Appendix B Proposed Key Personnel. Key Personnel include: Project Manager, staff that engage with communities, rate proposals, and manage contracts with grant recipients. The Applicant is required to complete the form Proposed Key Personnel in Appendix B, but it will not count as part of the 10 allowed pages.
* The mailing and e-mail addresses and the phone numbers of the primary contact person for this LOI process.

**Appendix B**

**Proposed Key Personnel**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Languages Spoken Fluently** | **Title** | **Education** | **Training/Experience Related to Early Childhood** | **Primary Role** |
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**Appendix C: Wisconsin Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan References**

The goals and strategies listed below are the most relevant excerpts of the Statewide Strategic Plan related to the desired outcomes of the Workforce Development Grant-Making contract partnership.

**Global Strategy GS5.** Develop and promote innovative, collaborative ECE business models (See examples in Appendix D of the [Statewide Strategic Plan](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/b5-strategic-plan.pdf))

**WORKFORCE**

**Goal 1:** The Wisconsin early care and education WORKFORCE will be diverse, fairly compensated, and supported.

**Workforce Objective 1A.** Increase the size of the ECE workforce and its diversity (i.e., its inclusion of members from underrepresented populations by race, ethnicity, language, and gender).

**Workforce Objective 1B.** Increase job satisfaction and retention among members of the ECE workforce.

**Workforce Objective 1C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 Early Childhood state system and with community members to address workforce issues.

**Workforce Strategy WF1.** Develop a robust compensation strategy for the early childhood workforce that results in higher pay and increased benefits.

**Workforce Strategy WF3.** Explore development of group benefits packages for ECE programs.

**Workforce Strategy WF9.** Facilitate collaboration among the workforce of local ECE and K-12 local education agencies (LEAs) to learn from each other, evaluate each other’s assets and offerings (e.g., professional learning, facilities, funding, wages, and benefits), and determine how they can collaboratively address workforce issues.

**Workforce Strategy WF19.** Ensure that ECE professionals who work in family support or other related services (beyond child care) are informed about and included in communication, collaborative development, and implementation of the workforce strategies above to the greatest extent feasible.

**ACCESS**

**Goal 2:** Wisconsin children and families, including rural and vulnerable populations, will have equitable ACCESS to early care and education programs that meet their needs.

**Access Objective 2A.** Build awareness of the amount and type of B-5 local ECE that is available and/or needed in each region (i.e., for certain age groups, populations, and/or non-standard hours of service).

**Access Objective 2B.** Increase the number of children and families served by B-5 ECE programs by opening new programs, expanding existing programs, and preventing closure of current programs; prioritize programs meeting targeted needs, particularly in rural areas.

**Access Objective 2C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to address needs for expansion of ECE programs.

**Access Objective 2D.** Enhance a statewide system of information and referral for families and family-supporting programs that includes connections to services and programs that support optimal health, development, and care.

**Access Strategy AC3.** Develop and implement sustainable models to increase availability of child care in deserts, for infants and toddlers, and during non-standard (evening, overnight, and weekend) hours.

**Access Strategy AC4.** Facilitate collaboration among ECE, K-12 local education agency, and community partners (i.e., Head Start, Early Head Start, school-based and community approach 4K) to maintain and/or increase child care slots (where needed).

**Access Strategy AC5.** Collaborate across public and private entities, including B-5 ECSS agencies, LEAs, businesses, and community organizations to develop and implement innovative business plans for expanding ECE programs through a mixed delivery system.

**AFFORDABILITY**

**Goal 3:** Early care and education will be AFFORDABLE for Wisconsin families, including vulnerable and underserved populations.

**Affordability Objective 3B.** Decrease the cost of operating ECE programs without reducing quality through innovative cost-sharing models and economies of scale.

**Affordability Objective 3C.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS and with community members to increase the affordability of ECE programs.

**Affordability Strategy AF1.** Develop and implement sustainable models to decrease price of child care, particularly for infants and toddlers, while ensuring programs maintain adequate funding.

**Affordability Strategy AF2.** Facilitate collaboration among members of local ECE and K-12 local education agency (LEA) workforces and other community partners (e.g., Head Start, Early Head Start, school-based and community approach 4K) to offer additional low- or no-cost options to qualifying families.

**Affordability Strategy AF3.** Expand shared services networks across the state and/or explore other systems or collaborations to reduce program operation costs.

**Affordability Strategy AF11.** Explore creative policies to address community challenges (e.g., lack of transportation, vacant facilities) to increase resources for families and decrease operating costs for programs.

**QUALITY**

**Goal 4:** Wisconsin early care and education will be high-QUALITY and responsive to all families’ needs.

**Quality Objective 4D.** Increase collaboration across the B-5 ECSS to facilitate parent, family, provider, and community engagement in quality improvement efforts.

**Quality Objective 4E.** Expand research-based programs that ensure parents/guardians have the supports they need to promote optimal health and development for their children.

**Quality Objective QU3.** Increase the capacity of all programming to support children with special needs and train staff on the referral process to available programs and services, including Part C and Part B of IDEA.