



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

Workforce Development Communities of Practice

Issue Date: June 8, 2023

Initial due date for 2023 Agencies: July 20, 2023, 5 pm PST

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis after this if additional funds become available.

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I. INTRODUCTION

WestEd is requesting proposals from public or governmental agencies, community-based organizations, nonprofits, tribes/tribal organizations, schools and school districts etc. who have an interest in forming a Community of Practice (CoP) to share knowledge in multidisciplinary spaces and engage in deep learning with each other in the prenatal to five field. We want you to join us in helping provide learning opportunities for providers in ways that can transform systems and practices for our youngest children.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) contains background information on Best Starts for Kids and WestEd and outlines specific information that must be included in the bids submitted. Applications are due on July 20, 2023. but will continue to be accepted throughout the year and considered as funds are available.

Applications must be submitted online via [THIS LINK](#) and be received no later than 5pm PST on July 20, 2023 to be considered as part of the initial applications.

The Information Session for this RFP will be held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023 from 12:00-1:30 p.m. PST via Zoom. To register for this session, please [click here](#).

II. BACKGROUND

Every child is born full of possibilities. The vision of Best Starts for Kids, the community-driven initiative, is to support every baby born or child raised in King County, WA so they reach adulthood happy, healthy, safe, and thriving.

In order for children and their families to have positive experiences and form trusting relationships with the providers who serve them, providers themselves must be supported-through ongoing opportunities for knowledge-building as well as self-care and reflective time with supervisors and peers. The latter is especially crucial for workers who support children and families experiencing trauma, institutional racism, and lack of opportunity—and who might themselves have experienced adversities.

As a result, in its implementation plan, Best Starts for Kids set aside funding for trainings and other learning opportunities on the priority topics areas:

1. Healthy Child Development
2. Racial Equity Training
3. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Best Starts recognizes that there are many reasons for present-day challenges in the early childhood workforce with recruitment, morale, and retention. We must support and grow the incredible people, who together form a wide continuum of care, and who dedicate themselves to caring for our youngest children and their families. The challenges require a broad, systemic, policy solution that involve multiple partners

across sector and at different levels. Currently, Best Starts is seeking to support prenatal to five workers to achieve three overarching goals:

1. Increase knowledge of early childhood development and other relevant topics to improve the quality of their services and foster trusting relationships with the children and families they serve.
2. Create opportunities for peer connections, mutual support, and self-care through cohort groups and one-on-one reflective consultation.
3. Increase worker capacities to strengthen equitable outcomes for children and families by promoting understanding of and engagement with racial equity concepts and practices.

Best Starts for Kids set aside funding for trainings/workshops and other learning opportunities to support this endeavor through its Prenatal to Five Workforce Development (WFD) strategy. The purpose of this RFP is to select agencies who will engage in Communities of Practice, where King County's Prenatal-to-Five providers can engage in deeper learning on topics related to racial equity, healthy child development and infant and early childhood mental health, to build community with one another.

All contracts will be held by WestEd.

About WestEd

WestEd is a not-for-profit research, development, and service agency that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has over 900 employees, located in 13 offices across the United States. Throughout WestEd's over 50-year history we have maintained a strong commitment to staff diversity. Individuals of different ethnicities, races, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations, as well as from different cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, work at all levels of the organization. We value the range of perspectives provided by this diverse workforce and the ways in which those perspectives enrich and inform our agency and the work we do. Read more about [WestEd's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

WestEd complies with the required federal regulations on procurement, as well as applicable State procurement law and procedures.

Efforts, including affirmative steps prescribed by federal regulation (if applicable), will be made by WestEd to utilize small and minority-owned businesses, women's business enterprises and labor surplus area business when possible. The selected vendor may be required to undertake affirmative steps to utilize such businesses in subcontracts if this contract is federally funded. A vendor qualifies as a small business if it meets the definition of "small business" as established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR

121.201, Subsector 541618) by having average annual receipts for the last three fiscal years not exceeding \$16.5 million.

III. WESTED CONTACT

All communications, including any requests for clarification, concerning this RFP should be addressed in writing to the following:

Diana de la Lanza
bsk-wested@wested.org

IV. SOLICITATION KEY DATES AND TIMELINE

RFP Activity	Dates
RFP Released	June 8, 2023
Initial Applicant Responses Due	July 20, 2023
Initial RFP Notification of Qualification	September 15, 2023
Last Day to Request Technical Assistance	July 14, 2023
Last Day for Questions	July 17, 2023
Commence Work	October 2023 onwards

V. PROJECT SCOPE & REQUIREMENTS

Scope of Work

Communities of Practice (CoP) are spaces where King County's Prenatal-to-Five Providers have opportunities to co-determine needs and engage in deeper learning on specific, self-identified topics within the WFD priority topic areas of racial equity, healthy childhood development, and infant and early childhood mental health.

Each awarded agency selects topics aligned with WFD's priority topic areas that are most relevant and responsive to their agency's needs, priorities, and goals. Agencies can co-determine with WestEd and Best Starts for Kids how many sessions to devote to a particular topic of interest.

CoP's can take place within each agency or as a collaboration with multiple awarded agencies involved in one shared specific topic of learning. Each agency must apply separately and can form a Community of Practice together if individually selected for the RFP. Each agency can either have their own Community of Practice or participate in a collaboration with multiple awarded agencies. Agencies may only participate in one Community of Practice per agency.

Participants from multiple awarded agencies can form a cohort of up to 25 participants together to engage in the same topic. Each agency can also form their own cohort of between 8-25 participants.

Each CoP will on average meet once or twice monthly for one year up to a period of 2 years until 2025. The duration and frequency can be adapted to fit the agency's schedule. Awarded agencies will receive an interest form at the end of each year of participation to voice their interest continuing the CoP through the two-year period until 2025.

CoP's can be held in either a virtual format via Zoom or through in-person sessions, or an alternative format, based on the agency and participants' preference. Agencies can determine session schedules to occur during daytime or after regular work hours based on facilitator or participant availability.

CoP's require a convener from each agency who will be responsible for coordinating the CoP's. A convener from each agency is still required even if the CoP is a collaboration with multiple awarded agencies. Conveners whose positions are not partially or fully funded by Best Starts for Kids will receive up to a \$30 an hour stipend for the following duties that include and are not limited to:

- Being a point of contact for WestEd and Best Starts for Kids
- Attending all meetings with WestEd and Best Starts for Kids
- Acting as a liaison in communicating with facilitators and partner agencies
- Scheduling and recruiting participants for the CoP

- Assisting in the identification or selection of facilitators
- Event administration and coordination of in-person and/or virtual workshops
- Workshop logistics, technological support, and language access
- Troubleshooting and conflict resolution
- Completing session feedback updates
- Encouraging all group participants to complete all evaluation surveys required
- Notetaking and information dissemination to agency leadership

Awarded agencies can elect to have staff time-release stipends of up to \$30 an hour for staff participation in the CoP. Staff members including conveners whose positions are partially or fully funded by Best Starts for Kids are not eligible to receive a stipend.

Language access supports and interpretation services are available upon request by the awarded agency. WestEd and Best Starts for Kids can provide additional access supports and ways to eliminate barriers as needed upon request by the awarded agency.

CoP also provides a space to engage in discussions that could promote change and growth within the agency. Agencies applying to this RFP must be prepared to listen and incorporate feedback that participants choose to share via their convener.

Examples of past CoP topics include and are not limited to:

- Social-Emotional Development
- Trauma-Informed Practices
- Implicit Bias
- Brain Science
- Self-care and healing

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, funding allocations for any current Best Starts for Kids grantees who may be selected for this RFP will have limitations where funding is already provided through other Best Starts for Kids grants.

Timeline

Applications will be accepted with initial applications due July 20, 2023 at 5:00 PM PST. CoP's can take place any time starting October 2023 onwards.

Qualifications

This request for proposals invites nonprofits, tribes/tribal organizations, schools and school districts, and public or governmental agencies serving children prenatal to age five and their families in King County. Small nonprofits and community-based organizations are encouraged to submit proposals. This RFP is open to agencies in the state of Washington who serve prenatal to age five children and families residing in King County. Priority will be given to agencies located within King County that are culturally rooted in

the communities they serve. Agencies outside of King County may be awarded as funding remains. All agencies serving prenatal to age five children and families residing in King County are highly encouraged to apply.

WestEd will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

Agency Summary and Background	Questions 7-8
<p>Highly Competitive Proposal clearly describes a group of CoP participants who directly serve children prenatal to age five and their families. Proposal reflects Equity and Social Justice principles.</p>	<p>Less Competitive Proposal is not designed for workers who directly serve children and families. Proposal does not reflect Equity and Social Justice principles.</p>
Agency Supports	Questions 9-10
<p>Highly Competitive Proposal clearly articulates how the agency will foster a supportive environment and engage leadership in changes brought about by the CoP. Proposal reflects Equity and Social Justice principles.</p>	<p>Less Competitive Proposal does not articulate how the agency would foster a supportive environment and engage leadership in changes brought about by the CoP. Proposal does not reflect Equity and Social Justice principles.</p>
Agency Outcomes	Questions 11-12
<p>Highly Competitive Proposal has a clear vision of desired outcomes for both the CoP participants as well as the children and families they serve. Proposal reflects Equity and Social Justice principles into their work.</p>	<p>Less Competitive Proposal does not articulate how forming a CoP will result in better outcomes for participants and the children and families whom they serve. Proposal does not reflect Equity and Social Justice principles.</p>

VI. PROPOSAL OUTLINE

To simplify the review process and to obtain the maximum degree of comparability, the responses will be collected via an online form. It should include the following items and be organized in the manner specified below.

[RFP Application Form](#)

Please address the questions below in the online form and ensure that there is sufficient detail in your narrative in order for reviewers to have a clear understanding of your work.

A complete online application will consist of the following elements (applications which do not include all elements will not score well in the review process):

Unscored Questions 1-6, Multiple Choice/Short Answer

1. Please write your agency name, address, contact information and website.
2. Please write your Application Contact Person's Name, Email, and Phone Number.
3. Is your agency located in King County?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No, please write the county you are located in:
4. Does your agency serve children prenatal to age five and their families residing in King County?
 - c. Yes
 - d. No, please explain:
5. What area(s) do you serve?
 - a. All of King County
 - b. North King County
 - c. East King county
 - d. South King County
 - e. City of Seattle neighborhood, please explain:
 - f. Other area or neighborhood of King County, please explain:
6. Please name any agencies you would like to partner with to form a Community of Practice together if applicable. *Please note that each agency must apply separately and be individually selected for this RFP in order to form a Community of Practice together.

Scored Questions 7-12, 5 points each, 4,500 character limit per question

7. Please tell us about who you are as an organization. How are your organization, leadership/board, and staff culturally rooted in the communities, families and children whom you serve?
8. Please tell us about the participants who will make up your Community of Practice:
 - a) What are their roles b) What challenges do they face in their work?
9. How will your agency work with the CoP facilitator to create a space that promotes a sense of safety, trust, support and mutual connection?

10. How will your agency/organization respond to, act upon, and apply change that is brought about through participation in these Communities of Practice? Please explain how leadership will be informed of changes and how they will engage with participants in considering and implementing those changes.
11. What positive impacts and outcomes would you like your Community of Practice to achieve for: a) the participants; and b) the children and families they serve?
12. What disparities and/or gaps in service or approaches, would a Community of Practice help address for the participants as well as the children and families served?

Unscored Questions 13-23, Yes/No/NA and Short Answers
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13. In previous years, Communities of Practice were called “Workforce Collaboratives.” Have you been part of a Workforce Collaborative before with the Best Starts for Kids Workforce Development Strategy?
14. Is your organization a Best Starts for Kids grantee?
15. Do you have a “convener” (coordination, logistics, event administration, evaluation) that can take on this body of work? If yes, please share the convener’s name and email.
16. Is your convener’s position currently funded by Best Starts for Kids?
17. Do you have the capacity to host virtual sessions?
18. Do you have the capacity and space to hold in-person sessions of up to 25 people?
19. Are you electing to receive Staff-Release Time of up to \$30/hour?
20. Do you have preferred facilitators whom you have worked with before? If yes, please share the facilitator(s) name(s) and email(s).
21. Would you like to receive language access supports such as interpretation or translation?
22. What other supports or access would you need from Best Starts to successfully form a Community of Practice? (e.g. transportation cost support, snacks reimbursement...)
23. Please add any additional information you’d like to share.

VII. REVIEW PROCESS

Responses should be submitted on the most favorable terms relevant to the RFP requirements, instructions, scope, and pricing. WestEd contemplates selection of qualifications to the responsive, responsible vendor whose proposal is the most advantageous to WestEd, and its decision is final.

As a federal contractor, it is WestEd’s policy to utilize, whenever possible, small businesses, disadvantaged small businesses, veteran-owned small businesses, minority-

owned business, and/or woman-owned businesses. Therefore, vendors that meet these criteria will be given preference, should they meet all other stated criteria in the RFP.

VIII. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Any Vendor must affirmatively agree and certify that it will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (Govt. Code, § 12900 et seq.) and any applicable regulations promulgated there under (Cal. Code of Regs., tit. 2, § 72850.0 et seq.). Any Vendor must affirmatively agree to include the non-discrimination and compliance provisions of this clause in any and all subcontracts to perform work under the agreement.

IX. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ADDENDA

Written questions or comments regarding this RFP must be in writing and received no later than (July 17, 2023). Questions should be emailed to Diana de la Lanza at bsk-wested@wested.org All questions will be responded to via email. Vendor(s) invited to submit a response understand and agree that they have an affirmative duty to inquire and seek clarification regarding anything in this RFP that is unclear or open to more than one interpretation.

Free proposal assistance, also known as Technical Assistance (TA) is available to support organizations applying to this RFP. Please see the [Best Starts' blog](#) for a list of TA consultants and their contact information. We encourage you to reach out to a TA consultant as early as possible. We cannot guarantee TA consultant availability within five business days of this RFP's deadline for proposals. Organizations wishing to access TA should email the consultants directly. We encourage you to only contact one TA consultant at a time and allow them 24 hours to respond before contacting any other consultants.

WestEd reserves the right in its sole discretion to revise or amend this RFP prior to the stated submittal deadline. Any such revisions will be made by written addenda to this RFP.

X. SUBMISSION

Initial applications are due July 20, 2023. Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis after this if additional funding is available.

Responses should be submitted electronically via this [online application](#).