



THE INSPIRED COMMUNITY PROJECT

Request for Proposals

Training & Excellence Program's Impact on Retention
in the Field after 5 Years

April 2023

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Request for Proposals for Research

Sponsored by The Inspired Community Project

April 2023

Introduction

The Inspired Community Project is a non-profit research organization that was established in 2021 with the aim of addressing the unequal access to special education instruction, resources, and career opportunities in the Bronx, and the wider New York City area. The organization is deeply committed to creating a sustainable foundation for future generations within the special education community through research, empowering families as advocates, and in the community. Through its applied research in high-quality training, hands-on support, and people-first focus, The Inspired Community Project envisions a future where all people, communities, and boroughs have equal access to special educational services and resources. The organization's ambitious applied plans include graduating at least 40 Registered Behavior Technicians per year, providing 36,000 hours of Applied Behavior Analysis, engaging families in advocacy coaching, and creating local internship opportunities for those seeking degrees in education and therapeutic fields. In addition to its practical goals, The Inspired Community Project is committed to advancing research in the field of special education with a view to improving the diagnosis, and treatment of developmental disabilities such as autism. With a clear focus on equity, advocacy, and empowerment, The Inspired Community Project is committed to building a more equitable special education system in New York City through robust applied research in the field of early childhood special education.

The focus of this research is on the impact of a Peer-Support Approach to Early Intervention, the initial phase of this research will be run at least twice for a 12-week cycle within the financial year July 2023 - June 2024 on students who attend the Inspired Community Project Bronx-based Early Intervention Center.

The Inspired Community Project's Training and Excellence Approach

The Training & Excellence Program, developed by The Inspired Community Project, is a comprehensive workforce development program that emphasizes training over job placement. The program is structured to provide paid training for one week before Behavior Technicians (BTs) enter the classroom to work independently with children. The program follows a "learning on the job" approach similar to the training model used in hospitals, where doctors learn while seeing patients. To streamline the recruitment process and increase cost efficiency, The Inspired Community Project has formed partnerships with multiple workforce development and placement organizations throughout the Bronx. The organization has also established collaborations with several Bronx-based colleges and universities to provide internship placements for pre-certified students, including special education teachers, speech therapists, psychologists, and occupational therapists. The program aims to graduate at least 40 Registered Behavior Technicians per year by providing high-quality, paid, hands-on training and support through the certification process. The program also supports BTs in securing placements with insurance-based agencies, which offer opportunities for professional growth and development within the organization. This initiative is expected to benefit over 80 educators in their career growth

and help certify 5-7 new Board Certified Registered Behavior Technicians at The Inspired Community Project's location.

Training & Excellence

COMMUNITY UPLIFT
Majority of the new RBTs will be placed with community partner organizations and double their earning potential. Top of cohort are offered full time salaried positions to become Teaching Assistants with us.



CERTIFICATION & CAREER GOALS

Support, training and study prep for the RBT exam, discussion of next steps in their career, next-step planning and placement.

Module 4



IMPLEMENTATION & COMPETENCIES

Completion of the 40-hour Registered Behavior Technician course, and in-person demonstration Competency Exams.

Module 3



BASICS OF ABA

Behavior Technicians and new Teachers get formal training on Applied Behavior Analysis. Both classroom and hands-on learning.

Module 2



INTRO & ALLYSHIP

All staff receive training on working with and for the neurodiverse community.

Module 1



Research Questions:

1. What were the specific goals and objectives of the Training & Excellence Program?
2. What were the training experiences prior to joining the Training & Excellence Program?
3. What were the key findings regarding cohort members' retention rates in the education field after completing the Training & Excellence Program over the 5-year period?
4. Were there any differences in retention rates between cohort members who completed the program and those who did not?
5. What were the most significant factors that contributed to cohort members' decision to remain in the education field or leave it?
6. Did cohort members report any specific benefits or challenges associated with their participation in the program?
7. How did cohort members' perceptions of the program and its impact on their career trajectories change over time?
8. What recommendations would you make for improving the Training & Excellence Program or similar workforce development initiatives in the education field based on these findings?

Previous Research

Research has consistently highlighted the importance of quality staff training and retention in education. One study conducted by Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) found that investing in high-quality teacher training can lead to increased student achievement and better student outcomes. The study also found that providing ongoing professional development for teachers can improve their job satisfaction and increase their retention rates.

Similarly, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that high teacher turnover rates negatively impact student achievement, particularly in low-income schools. The authors concluded that investing in teacher training and support can help reduce teacher turnover rates and improve student achievement.

Moreover, Carpenter and colleagues (2018) investigated the impact of a professional development program on teacher practice and student outcomes. The study found that the program led to improvements in teacher practice and increased student achievement in math and reading.

Overall, these studies suggest that investing in quality staff training and retention is essential for improving student outcomes and reducing teacher turnover rates. By providing ongoing professional development and support, educators are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students and feel more satisfied and committed to their work.

A study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that teacher turnover has a significant negative impact on student achievement, particularly in high-poverty schools. The study suggests that retaining teachers through effective professional development and support programs can have a positive impact on student outcomes (Boyd et al., 2011).

A meta-analysis of 23 studies on teacher professional development found that effective professional development can improve teacher practice and student outcomes. The study suggests that effective professional development includes sustained, job-embedded learning opportunities that are aligned with school goals and support teacher collaboration and reflection (Garet et al., 2001).

Another study conducted by the Learning Policy Institute found that teacher turnover is a significant problem in the United States, particularly in high-poverty and high-minority schools. The study suggests that providing teachers with effective professional development and support can improve teacher retention and ultimately improve student outcomes (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

A systematic review of research on the impact of professional development on teacher retention found that effective professional development can improve teacher satisfaction, commitment, and retention. The study suggests that effective professional development includes sustained, job-embedded learning opportunities that are tailored to teachers needs and interests (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The Current Opportunity: Funding for the Initial Phase of Evaluation

The Inspired Community Project is thrilled to announce the launch of our new research project aimed at examining the benefits of In depth training through their Trianing and Excellence program on the impact of retention in the education field.

To support this critical work, we have already secured funding from The Butler Foundation and M&T Bank. We are actively seeking additional funding sources to ensure the success and sustainability of this project. With adequate funding, we will be able to partner with qualified researchers and practitioners, purchase necessary equipment and materials, and compensate study participants for their time and effort.

Furthermore, as the research will take place at The Inspired Community Center, located in the Bronx, we have access to the necessary space and resources to recruit a potential pool of participants, and implement the training onsite. We believe that this research has the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of individuals in the Bronx, as well as the wider New York City area, and we are committed to pursuing this opportunity with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

Timeline of Program

Pre-employment Required Trainings

Foundations in Health and Safety

Mandated Reporter

Early Intervention

Managing Challenging Behaviors: 18 -36 months

Prevention and Identification of Brain Injuries

Preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Promoting Safe Sleeping

Emergency Preparedness

ACEs and Trauma-Informed Practice developed by the CUNY School of Professional Studies

Media Use and Safety with Children

Anti-bias Education in Early Childhood

Supervision of Children

Supporting Language Development: Birth to 5

Semester A

Working with and for the neurodiverse community.

Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) qualification

- What is ABA? Origins/History of ABA, 7 Dimensions
- Evidence to support intensive early intervention
- Clinical Judgement in ABA
- Certification pathway
- Quality of staff and professional standards.
- Falsehood about ABA and teaching study
- Definition: Basic Concept Terminology, Verbal Behavior Terminology

Assessment

- Conduct preference assessments.
- Assist with assessment procedures (e.g., curriculum-based, developmental, social skills).
- Assist with functional assessment procedures

Semester B

Measurement

- Prepare for data collection.
- Implement continuous measurement procedures (e.g., frequency, duration)
- Implement discontinuous measurement procedures (e.g., interval, momentary time sampling)
- Implement permanent-product recording procedures.
- Enter data and update graphs
- Describe behavior and environment in observable and measurable terms

Skill acquisition

- Identify the essential components of a written skill acquisition plan.
- Prepare for the session as required by the skill acquisition plan
- Use contingencies of reinforcement (e.g., conditioned/unconditioned reinforcement, continuous / intermittent schedules)
- Implement discrete-trial teaching procedures
- Implement naturalistic teaching procedures (e.g., incidental teaching)
- Implement task analyzed chaining procedures
- Implement discrimination training
- Implement stimulus control transfer procedures
- Implement prompt and prompt fading procedures.
- Implement generalization and maintenance procedures.
- Implement shaping procedures.
- Implement token economy procedures

Semester C

Behavior Reduction

- Identify essential components of a written behavior reduction plan
- Describe common functions of behavior
- Implement interventions based on modification of antecedents such as motivating operations and discriminative stimuli
- Implement differential reinforcement procedures (e.g., DRA, DRO)
- Implement extinction procedures
- Implement crisis/emergency procedures according to protocol

Documentation and Reporting

- Effectively communicate with a supervisor in an ongoing manner.
- Actively seek clinical direction from supervisor in a timely manner
- Report other variables that might affect the client in a timely manner
- Generate objective session notes for service verification by describing what occurred during the sessions, in accordance with applicable legal, regulatory, and workplace requirements
- Comply with applicable legal, regulatory, and workplace data collection, storage, transportation, and documentation requirements

Semester D

Professional Conduct & Scope of Practice

- Describe the BACB's RBT supervision requirements and the role of RBTs in the service-delivery system
- Respond appropriately to feedback and maintain or improve performance accordingly
- Communicate with stakeholders (e.g., family, caregivers, other professionals) as authorized.

- Maintain professional boundaries (e.g., avoid dual relationships, conflicts of interest, social media contacts).
- Maintain client dignity

Review of the program and preparation for the RBT exam

Research Partner Scope of Work

The participants will be recruited by the Inspired Community Project from the Bronx and surrounding areas, and will complete the 12-month Training and Excellence Program with the training team at the Inspired Community Project, and the research partner will design and conduct a study during the 2023-24 academic year. The design of the research will be proposed by the research partner and refined in collaboration with The Inspired Community Project staff. The research partner will follow up with the participants annually for 5 years after the participant's completion in the Training and Excellence program.

The questions we envision the research addressing are:

- How do participating educators use the information and training gained during the Training & Excellence Program?
- What are the effects of program implementation on day-to-day work in the field?
- In classrooms using Training & Excellence Program, what are student outcomes in domains such as skill acquisition, social engagement, and group attending?
- What impact, if any, has the Training & Excellence Program had on your professional development, and on your ongoing employment?

The research partner will also carry out a baseline survey with the participants by answering questions such as:

- What motivated you to enter the education field?
- What do you hope to achieve through participation in the Training & Excellence program?
- How confident are you in your ability to remain in the education field for the long term?
- Have you had any prior experience or training in education or related fields?

The research partner to interpret and compare the received data from the participants. The Inspired Community Project's research and program staff will be conducting activities in the financial year July 2023 - June 2024 that will feed into the design of the Phase 1 research including:

- **Monthly meetings with the research team:** with clinicians and supervisors involved in the research project.
- **Data Analysis of the results, and a Brief that summarizes the data outcome:** this can be discussed with the data collection team and the final Brief should be presented within 4 weeks of the completion of the intervention, and should include data visualization.

The qualitative research will help the research team to interpret the results of the pre-post or pre-post comparison (or possibly quasi-experimental) study in Phase 1, refine the program's strategy for supporting implementation, and inform the design of the Phase 2 research.

The Inspired Community Project's research and program staff will be conducting activities in the winter and spring of 2023 that will feed into the design of the Phase 1 research including:

- One-on-one interviews with teachers who have already participated in The Inspired Community

Project's ELA professional learning seminar and those who have downloaded the resources but have not participated in the seminar.

- A survey of teachers who have participated in one of the two previous ELA seminars (during the summers of 2021 and 2022).

The interviews and survey will center on how participants are comprehending and applying the information they learned, as well as how involved they are in the program. This study aims to provide insights into the effect of a rigorous training program on the development of professional skills and the level of engagement of the participants. The research partner will work together with The Inspired Community Project staff to create a practical way to measure the effectiveness of the ELA approach during Phase 1 of the research.

Research Partner Deliverables

The following list of deliverables is designed to ensure strong communication and collaboration between the research partner and The Inspired Community Project staff.

- Monthly Meetings with The Inspired Community Project staff during the design phase
- Weekly updates during the data collection period
- Monthly progress reports
- Summary of data collection at the end of the data collection period
- Preliminary analyses
- Final report that includes analysis of district data, if available

Timeline of Research Project

Year 1

Planning phase: Define research objectives, questions, and hypotheses; develop a research design and methodology; review literature; create project timeline and budget.

Data collection phase: Recruit and enroll participants in the Training & Excellence Program; collect baseline data on cohort members' retention rates; implement the program and collect data on training and support provided to cohort members; conduct surveys and interviews with cohort members.

Year 2:

Data collection phase: Collect data on cohort members' retention rates within the program; implement the program and collect data on training and support provided to cohort members; conduct surveys and interviews with cohort members.

Year 3:

Data collection phase: Continue to collect data on cohort members' retention rates in the field and other relevant factors 1-year post completion of the program; conduct additional surveys and interviews with cohort members.

Year 4:

Data analysis phase: Continue to collect data on cohort members' retention rates in the field and other relevant factors 3-years post completion of the program; Clean and organize data collected during the data collection phase; analyze data using appropriate statistical methods; identify patterns, trends, and correlations in the data.

Year 5:

Reporting phase: Prepare a final report summarizing the research objectives, questions, hypotheses, methodology, findings, and conclusions; develop visual aids and graphics to illustrate key findings; create recommendations for program improvements based on the research findings; present findings and recommendations to stakeholders in the education field.

It's important to note that this timeline is a general guide and the actual timeline may vary depending on the scope and complexity of the research project, the availability of resources, and any unforeseen challenges that may arise during the research process. Additionally, it may be necessary to extend the timeline beyond 5 years in order to continue tracking cohort members' retention rates and assess the longer-term impact of the program.

Eligibility

The Inspired Community Project seeks a research agency that can provide a partnership in the development of the research agenda, as well as the analysis and dissemination of the results. The Inspired Community Project will be responsible for the implementation of the intervention and the recording of the raw data.

The Inspired Community Project has a demonstrated deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in our internal functioning and work with staff, our engagement with educators, and our selection of partners. We seek partners who are committed to understanding the lived experiences of people from historically marginalized backgrounds and working to mitigate the impact of oppressive systems. Successful applicants will demonstrate that their proposed teams have the following knowledge, experience, and skills:

Scholarly expertise

- Substantive knowledge and experience in planning a proposal, structuring implementing, and disseminating results to applicable fields:
 - The ability to meteor during the developmental phase of the research project
 - Guidance during implementation phases to ensure that the research meets viability standards for a randomized control trial project
 - Support with the dissemination of results so that they have the most impact in the field
- Evidence of scholarly contributions to the field through peer-reviewed papers, conference presentations, and other dissemination avenues
- Using culturally responsive evaluation practices
- Designing and carrying out an evaluation of the data collected
- Create reports of the collected data
- Developing measures of fidelity and tracking implementation fidelity

- Obtaining research approval from participating districts

Other requirements

- Commitment to Equity: a clear demonstration that equity is centered in both strategy and practice for the evaluation and more generally in the organization
- A track record of collaborative engagements with research sponsors and partners

Proposal Guidelines:

Qualifications

- Please identify the specific project staff proposed to work on this study and the roles that they would play.
- Please describe the team members' experience with the following activities:
 - Applying an equity lens in evaluation or research studies
 - Show a Plan for Mentoring TICP a a researcher organization
 - Conducting a design task that also includes primary data collection to inform the design of a follow-on study
 - Obtaining district and IRB research approvals
 - Disseminating findings about research evidence
- Please describe examples of effective working partnerships with non-profit organizations and how the team anticipates working with The Inspired Community Project specifically.

Budget

- The amount of time allocated by personnel, and the amount of time each researcher would spend on each task. To ensure sufficient senior leadership time, we expect that the Study Director would spend at least 20% time on the project.
- Direct costs such as stipends for subjects, travel, consultant fees, supplies, etc. We would require a launch meeting in-person or via zoom to discuss this, as well as ongoing meetings at significant stages of the project.

Appendices

Please include the following in an appendix (these pages do not count towards the total number of pages):

- Timeline with major research activities (Be sure to include the timing for obtaining research permissions from districts and IRB approval.)
- Budget, including the number of days allocated to all proposed team members
- Curriculum Vitae of all project personnel

References

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