
FY'25 Request for Proposal (RFP)

General instructions for ALL applicants, regardless of program type.

North Iowa Children's Alliance
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The North Iowa Children's Alliance (NICA) Board has agreed to distribute this Application for FY'25 Early Childhood Iowa Funds. This will establish uniform guidelines and procedures for soliciting grant proposals from early childhood providers in the Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth county areas who provide services to children age prenatal through five.

Contingent upon receipt of Early Childhood Iowa funding from the State of Iowa, the NICA Board is announcing this Request for Proposals for FY25.

TIMELINE

3.25.24	Request for Proposal Released
4.19.24	Proposals Due
5.17.24	Contract Awards
6.1.24	Awarded Contracts Additional Information Due
6.16.24	Signed Contracts Due
7.1.24	Begin Contract

Late Applications Will Not Be Accepted

Our Purpose

The North Iowa Children's Alliance Board's purpose is to build strategies to improve the lives of young children and their families through collaboration, coordination, and planning in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth Counties. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to effectively utilize Early Childhood Iowa state funds to ensure young children are properly nurtured and stimulated in safe and healthy environments so they are ready to learn and succeed when they enter school, and to increase the availability of quality care to support parents in obtaining or retaining employment.

Early Childhood Iowa Initiative

Early Childhood Iowa was established by Iowa state legislation during the 1998 session to create a partnership between communities and state government with an emphasis on improving the wellbeing of families with young children. Services funded by ECI areas shall be high quality, accessible and sustainable. The statewide initiative promotes five key priority result areas, which include:

- Healthy Children
- Secure and Nurturing Families
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Secure and Nurturing Environments
- Ready to Succeed in School

Issuing Officer

The Issuing Officer is the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance until selection of the successful Bidders. The Issuing Officer will respond only to questions regarding the procurement process and questions related to the interpretation of this RFP. There shall be no communication regarding this RFP with any North Iowa Children's Alliance Board Member during the procurement process. Attempts to do so may negatively impact the grant award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

Jaci Miller, Director

PO Box 2| Fertile, IA|50434

Email: nichildrensalliance@gmail.com

North Iowa Children's Alliance Community Plan Indicators and Priorities

A [Community Plan 2022](#) was developed by the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board in support of residents prenatal through five, and their families. Board identified priority areas and strategies are as follows:

1. Reduce and/or eliminate child abuse: Babies, toddlers and young children in NICA area will grow up with safe and nurturing family and caregiver relationships.
 - ❖ Provide quality care and education early in life.
 - ❖ Enhance parenting skills to promote healthy child development.

2. Support for preventative health, mental health and wellness: Babies, toddlers, young children and their families will have regular, ongoing access to high-quality health services.
 - ❖ Promote the use of dental sealants to prevent cavities.
 - ❖ Reduce obesity risk for children by focusing on nutrition and physical activity.
 - ❖ Improve strategies to connect families to mental health services.
3. Childcare accessibility and quality care: Quality child care should be accessible and inclusive to all families and children who want to access services.
 - ❖ Support the early childhood care and education infrastructure to ensure availability of adequate child care.
 - ❖ Promote and increase quality, health and safety practices through technical assistance and consultation services.
 - ❖ Provide professional development and consultation services to achieve and maintain performance at higher quality levels in Iowa Quality Rating System and IQ4K.
4. Access to high quality early learning for being on track for school success: All children should have access to early care and learning programs.
 - ❖ Expand access to preschool and other high-quality early childhood programs.
 - ❖ Increase funding for preschool scholarships for eligible families.
 - ❖ Transportation to and from quality preschool programs for those in rural and/or low-income areas.
5. Safe, stable and nurturing families: children grow confident, resilient and independent in safe, stable and nurturing families, schools and communities.
 - ❖ Provide evidence-based home visiting and parent education programs.
 - ❖ Promote referrals to and participation in home visitation services.

Program Eligibility

To be considered eligible for funding the applicant must:

- Serve Cerro Gordo, Hancock, and/or Worth Counties.
- Be a not-for-profit entity or group 501(c)(3), or substantially meet the requirements to be certified as not-for-profit or have a not-for-profit administer the funding; local governments, churches, and schools.
- Be a single lead agency, even if developed jointly by more than one agency or organization. Participating agencies and organizations must be included as co-participants, sub-grantees, or subcontractors.
- Propose non-construction projects.

- Demonstrate efforts to secure other sources of funding or provide in kind. The North Iowa Children's Alliance Board is not intended to be the sole source of funding. Outside sources include: matching funds from other funding sources, community grants, donors, or parent payment for only those being served in the grant proposal.
- Demonstrate a commitment and ability to comply with all reporting requirements and relevant state and federal laws, including all rules and policies implemented by the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board.
- Applicant agencies must submit a separate proposal for each program and may not submit a single application for multiple programs. A program that serves multiple counties may submit a single application.
- Do not duplicate any services funded by NICA, state government, federal government or private organization in the three-county region.

Clientele Eligibility

Applicants that submit a proposal must ensure that children served by the program **reside** in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth County. Programs will be monitored for eligibility requirements.

Criteria for Requests

1. Demonstrate that the applicant's project was developed to meet the North Iowa Children's Alliance priorities and indicators and ultimately link to the [Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan](#).
2. Qualifies under guidelines for Early Childhood Iowa Funding.
3. Currently the application is only available in survey format (Google form). This can be found [here](#).
4. If you apply for a home visiting program, you will need to fill out an additional application specific to the home visitation program requirements. [This can be found here](#).
5. Recommendation for funding based on the following:
 - a. Program's ability to implement a plan to meet identified needs or gaps in service, that includes a clear program evaluation component and assess program outcome measures.
 - b. Services provided to Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth county children, prenatal-5 years – including number served and cost of the service.
 - c. Proof of quality practices being implemented by the program or service
 - d. Collaboration with other agencies or community services and/or North Iowa children's Alliance funded programs.
 - e. Available funding and/or funding silos.
 - f. Overall value and impact of the project.

- g. Previously funded projects will be evaluated on past contract compliance and performance.

The total number of awards and average award size will be based on project submissions. There are no minimum or maximum award amounts within the scope of the available funds.

Requirements for Funded Programs

Applicants awarded funds are required, but not limited to:

- Submit required performance measures, required by the State Early Childhood Iowa Board.
- Submit semi-annual reports to the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board, which shall be distributed after a contract has been fully executed.
- Conduct an on-site visit with the ECI Director and/or North Iowa Children's Alliance Board Member.
- Provide the board with a copy of the agency's most current financial audit summary (if applicable) and proof of current liability policy that is applicable to the contract year.
- Provider of services or representative must attend at least one North Iowa Children's Alliance Board Meeting per year. At one time a year, providers of services will have time allotted on the agenda for sharing agency information and outcomes.
- *Family Support*: ECI Area Boards are required in Iowa Code, Chapter 256I.9(2), to give priority funding to programs who are evidenced-based or promising models for family support as defined in [Tool FF](#). Only programs who have received/working on the Iowa Family Support Credential or comparable state or national standard are eligible to apply. Programs must also adhere to requirements set forth in Tool FF.
- Funded programs must publicly recognize the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board as a funding source. The Board's logo will be provided for public awareness purposes when requested.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to know and understand all relevant Tools Kit Tools mentioned with this request. Access to Tool(s) can be found at: [Early Childhood Iowa | Health & Human Services](#)

How to Submit an Application

6. All applicants must complete the electronic application Google form. This can be found [here](#). Keep narrative sections brief, yet detailed enough to provide the Board with appropriate information. The total number of awards and the award size will be based on project submission and availability of funding allocated to our

area. A PDF version of the Google form may be found [here](#). If you apply for a home visiting program, you will need to fill out an additional application specific to the home visitation program requirements. [This can be found here.](#)

The deadline for submission is as follows:

- All applications are due by **April 19, 2024 at 4pm central standard time.**
- Paper copy submissions will not be accepted. All submissions must be done via the electronic application.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal is received prior to the deadline.
- An electronic confirmation will be sent of all applications received.

Attachments

Required attachments and/or links are located within the survey. There is no additional information needed at this time.

Review Process

All submitted applications will go through a technical review by the Issuing Officer before moving on to the RFP ad-hoc committee. The applications will be reviewed by an RFP ad-hoc committee. They will meet to review, make project funding recommendations and create a budget for the Board. The committee will conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. The Committee will review and evaluate the applications based on the completeness of the application, alignment of program focus with Board priorities. The North Iowa Children's Alliance Board will determine grant awards at the May 2024, Board Meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

The ECI Director will not make any recommendations for funding but will provide information as requested by the Board.

Conflict of Interest

To avoid conflict of interest in the above funding determination process, any member of the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board, who has a direct or indirect interest in a particular funding proposal, will not participate in the scoring and evaluation of that proposal or similar proposals.

Notification of Awards

All applicants will be notified in writing electronically, regarding the funding decision. Notification will be made to the contact person listed in the application within 30 days of the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board's decision.

[Review of Award Decision / Appeal](#)

Applicants who are denied funding may appeal to the respective Early Childhood Area Board. The appeal must be made in writing and filed within 10 days of the date of the written notification to the applicant of the grant committee's decision to the Director, Jaci Miller. Appeals should be in writing. The request to review the award decision must be in writing and must clearly and fully identify all issues being contested by references to the line(s), section(s) and page(s) number of the RFP. The appeal shall clearly state how the Board failed in following the rules of the grant process as governed by the policies and procedures outlined in the application materials. The request must also describe the remedy sought. The Board shall review the request to review the award decision based only on the record and issue a written decision within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the review request. The decision of the Board shall be final.

[Public Information](#)

All applications and review materials (if available), will be kept confidential and in a secure location until all programs have a fully executed contract. After that time, all materials become public information. Copies of all materials can and will be distributed to the public at their request. Any requests for copies of materials are to be made in writing to the ECI Director using a form provided by the Board.

[ECI Area's Use of Google Docs](#)

Contracted programs may be required to use Google Docs throughout the contract period. It is advised that the contracted programs become familiar with this program, before becoming contracted.

[Contracting Period](#)

The contracting period will be for the period **July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025**, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the Termination section of the Contract.

[Statewide Budget Cuts](#)

Statewide budget cuts may occur after grant awards have been made. In the event, the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board will apply budget cuts as equitably as possible. Providers will be given notice of any pending budget cuts as soon as possible so that they can plan accordingly. Cuts would first be taken out of unallocated funds. Additional cuts would be taken out of the unspent fund balances of individual contracts. The application

of any budget reductions would require Board approval, whereupon contract amendments would be issued to individual contractors.

Contract Payments

Successful applicants may not draw down more than 25% of their grant award per fiscal quarter without prior approval of the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board. If the applicant expects to spend large lump sums in any given quarter, this must be explained/justified in the grant application. Funding by the State of Iowa is received by the NICA Board on a quarterly basis and is unable to grant more funds per quarter than have been received.

Insurance

If a contract is awarded, the Contractor, and any subcontractors performing the services required under a Contract, shall maintain in effect, with insurance companies authorized to do business in the State of Iowa, at its own expense, insurance covering its work. The insurance shall be of the type and in the amounts reasonably required by the Early Childhood Area. The Contractor's insurance shall, among other things, insure against any loss or damage resulting from or related to the Contractor's performance of this Contract. All such insurance policies shall remain in full force and effect for the entire life of this Contract and shall not be canceled or changed except after thirty days written notice to the Early Childhood Iowa Area. Unless otherwise requested by the State, the Contractor shall, at its sole cost, obtain the insurance coverage(s) set forth below:

TYPE OF INSURANCE	LIMIT	AMOUNT
General liability		\$1 million
Workers Compensation	As required by law	

All insurance policies required by the Contract shall provide coverage for all claims arising from activities occurring during the term of the policy, regardless of the date the claim is filed or expiration of the policy.

The contractor and any of its subcontractors performing work on this project shall submit certificates of insurance described above with their application. The receipt of such certificates does not constitute approval of the coverage contained on the certificates, and the Contractor remains responsible for determining that its insurance coverage meets each requirement of this Contract. Acceptance of the insurance certificates by the Early Childhood Area shall not act to relieve the Contractor of any obligation under this

Contract. All contractors and subcontractors shall keep a current, non-expired, insurance policy on file with the ECI Director. Program will be contacted for proof, if policy on file has expired.

The Contractor shall obtain a waiver of any subrogation rights that any of its insurance carriers might have against the State. The waiver of subrogation rights shall be indicated on the certificates of insurance coverage supplied to the Early Childhood Iowa area.

Use of Funds

Programs should review the North Iowa Children's Alliance Board Policy on Utilization of Funds before submitting an application. Click [here](#) for the Utilization of Funds Policy.

Budget Matrix

A budget matrix is required to be submitted as a part of the Google form application. The following categories and stipulations will be followed.

- SALARIES + BENEFITS: Identify staff person(s) to be paid on this grant; include staff title, annual salary, percent of time devoted to project, and amount requested. Program staff members are those directly involved with the coordination and implementation of the identified program/service. List personnel benefits associated with the salary section, such as Social Security, worker's compensation, unemployment insurance, health insurance, other benefits.
- CONTRACT SERVICES: These are the services that are outsourced out by the applicant in which a fee may be contracted.
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / TRAINING: To be used for training, workshops, and conferences. If known at the time of application, include name of event and registration cost/fees and number of personnel to attend.
- TRAVEL/MILEAGE: Itemize all in-state. Out of state travel must be approved by the Board before the cost is incurred. Hotel is reimbursed at \$75 per night, and *mileage cannot exceed the IRS rate*. Food is a non-allowable expense.
 - SUPPLIES: Itemize and describe all program related supplies and other expenses. Program materials such as curriculum, printing, brochures or other program material costs are also included.
 - MISCELLANEOUS: Proposed expenses that do not fit within any of the above listed categories.
 - ADMINISTRATIVE OR INDIRECT COSTS: Indirect costs shall be **no more than 15%** of the total project budget and/or grant award. Agencies that have a federally negotiated rate shall charge no more than 15% for indirect and/or administrative costs.

- Grant funds may not be used for the purchase of fixed assets such as automobiles, computer equipment, or fixtures unless such purchases have been specifically approved by the board.

Program Performance Measures and Monitoring

The North Iowa Children's Alliance Board contracts with programs that have a clear understanding of required Early Childhood Iowa Performance Measures. It is the applicant's responsibility to know and understand the [ECI Statewide Performance Measures](#) and reporting for the service being applied for. All performance measures will be used to evaluate the progress toward achieving goals, program effectiveness and the ability to produce positive outcomes for children once contracted. A reporting form for performance measures will be provided to contracted programs by July 1, 2024.

RFP Question and Answers

Answers to frequently asked questions may be found [here](#). This will be updated as questions are submitted to the Issuing Officer.