



## Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CLOSING DATE 4/28/17

#### ***Great Start Collaboratives and Great Start Parent Coalitions: Evaluation Design, Planning & Implementation***

#### **I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – OVERVIEW**

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks an entity to design, plan and implement an evaluation focused on the progress made by Michigan's Great Start Collaboratives and Great Start Parent Coalitions. Michigan has 54 Great Start Collaboratives (GSCs) and 60 Great Start Parent Coalitions (GSPCs) that are leading efforts to improve system conditions in all 83 counties across the state focused on four Michigan early childhood outcomes:

1. Children are born healthy.
2. Children are healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth to third grade.
3. Children are developmentally ready to succeed in school at time of school entry.
4. Children are prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

#### **II. SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE RFP**

The ECIC is seeking an evaluator or evaluation team that will be responsible, while working with staff from the ECIC and the Michigan Department of Education – Office of Great Start (MDE-OGS), to:

- Design, plan and implement an overall evaluation. The design may differ from the evaluations conducted with GSCs/GSPCs previously and will study the GSCs/GSPCs from 2013 to present;
- Provide status reports as requested;
- Compile and present a final evaluation report to the ECIC and the MDE-OGS. The final report should include both statewide results as well as local/regional results to help inform individual GSC/GSPC future efforts.
- Propose a preliminary communication plan for effectively sharing the results of the evaluation with stakeholders and others, through state and local media outlets and networks.

The selected applicant will begin work immediately upon receipt of the award.

### **III. LENGTH OF CONTRACT AND FUNDING LEVEL**

The initial contract will begin approximately June 1, 2017 and final deliverables will be completed no later than December 31, 2018.

The maximum contract amount is \$300,000.00 over the nineteen-month contract period.

This contract is being issued under Michigan's federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, and as such must follow grant constraints. At the point of issuance of this announcement, Michigan is preparing a request for a no-cost extension that would allow completion of activities by the end of calendar year 2018.

### **IV. OVERVIEW OF THE GREAT START INITIATIVE**

In her 2004 State of the State address, Governor Granholm launched the *Great Start* initiative, which was defined as a movement to create public understanding that learning begins at birth and that investment in early childhood health, development and learning is crucial to the state's economic future. The Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) was founded to lead the *Great Start* initiative in 2005.

Fifty-four Great Start Collaboratives and 60 Parent Coalitions were funded and developed in stages between 2006 and 2009. The GSCs are comprised of community leaders from health and mental health, education, child welfare, child care, philanthropy, and business, as well as parents. The membership of the Great Start Parent Coalition is open to anyone serving in the parenting role, who is interested in working on efforts to ensure supports for children's physical and social-emotional health, early education, as well as parenting education and family supports in their community.

The overall goal of the Great Start Collaboratives and Great Start Parent Coalitions is to ensure the coordination and expansion of local early childhood infrastructure and programs that allow every child in the community to achieve Michigan's four early childhood outcomes. To guide their efforts, each GSC and GSPC jointly develop a strategic plan, which includes an annual Action Agenda. Michigan's Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions are also well known nationally for their focus on building strong parent leadership and voice and weave this value through all of their efforts.

In 2011, Governor Rick Snyder continued the focus on early childhood by calling for an integrated, coordinated system of early learning and development in Michigan, and through an Executive Order, created the Office of Great Start (OGS), located in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The creation of this office included a charge to lead efforts to coordinate and integrate Michigan's investments in children prenatally through age 8.

Governor Snyder's vision for Michigan includes "a coherent system of health and early learning that aligns, integrates and coordinates Michigan's investments from prenatal to third grade...and a reputation as one of the best states in the country to raise a child."

Shortly after the creation of the Office of Great Start, oversight and funding for the Great Start Collaboratives and Great Start Parent Coalitions was moved to the Michigan Department of Education – Office of Great Start. The Office of Great Start continued contracting with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation for training and technical assistance services for the GSCs and GSPCs. As part of their contract, ECIC is providing project management for this GSC and GSPC evaluation.

## **V. PREVIOUS EVALUATION EFFORTS**

The GSCs and GSPCs participated in a statewide evaluation process in 2010 and again in 2012 focused on assessing the impact of the Great Start initiative at the local and state levels. The previous evaluations aimed to:

- Identify Great Start accomplishments to date and changes in accomplishments over time.
- Understand the Parent Coalition and Collaborative characteristics related to local success.
- Understand what propels the Parent Coalitions and Collaboratives forward toward greater accomplishments.
- Identify lessons learned and recommendations for next steps.

As part of the 2012 evaluation, each Great Start Collaborative and Great Start Parent Coalition received a customized feedback report that provided their GSC and GSPC with information about their strengths and challenges, individual networking maps which illustrated how closely the local organizations and agencies reported that they were collaborating with each other, and data about how their Collaborative compared to others in the state. Eleven key “levers for change” emerged as critical to GSCs and GSPCs that were considered more successful. These levers are: equity orientation, root cause focus, strong relational networks, intentional systems change actions, local champions, interdependent organizations, readiness for change, parent leadership and voice, effective partnerships, shared goals, and active constituents.

The statewide and local data was used by the local Collaborative Directors and Parent Liaisons to hold meaningful conversations about increasing the coordination of services for families and children and how to create strategies to improve upon the areas that were found to need growth. As a whole, the network was also able to celebrate successes and share this important data with funders and other key decision makers at the state and local levels.

## **VI. QUESTIONS TO GUIDE EVALUATION**

A successful evaluation design will, at a minimum, address the following questions:

1. What progress has been made in implementing a comprehensive early childhood system working toward Michigan’s four early childhood outcomes via:
  - a. Each Great Start Collaborative and Great Start Parent Coalition(s) partnership;
  - b. Individual Great Start Collaboratives;
  - c. Individual Great Start Parent Coalitions; and
  - d. Great Start Collaboratives and Great Start Parent Coalitions collectively statewide.
2. What system benefits have the Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions produced?
3. What approaches are/or have enabled success for accomplishing the strategic plan priorities of the Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions?

4. What conditions need to exist for Great Start Collaboratives to occupy and achieve a true leadership role for early childhood in a community?
5. How has the environment and context within which the Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions have had to operate enabled more or less success (e.g. staffing levels, funding, fiduciary, value regarding parent leadership and voice, engaging local partners, etc.)? What are the local conditions that support or impede Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition work?

## **VII. RESOURCES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposal for this evaluation should be informed by the following documents:

- “Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future: The Plan for Early Learning and Development in Michigan” from the Michigan Department of Education – Office of Great Start available at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/1\\_Great\\_Start\\_-\\_Great\\_Investment\\_-\\_Great\\_Future\\_-\\_FINAL\\_422080\\_7.PDF](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/1_Great_Start_-_Great_Investment_-_Great_Future_-_FINAL_422080_7.PDF)
- “The ABLe Change Framework: A Conceptual and Methodological Tool for Promoting Systems Change” by Drs. Pennie Foster-Fishman and Erin Watson available at <http://systemexchange.msu.edu/upload/ABLe%20Change%20Framework.pdf>
- “A Framework for Evaluating Systems Initiatives” by Julia Coffman, PhD, available at <http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Framework%20for%20Evaluating%20Systems%20Initiatives.pdf> .
- “State-Local Models and Approaches Designed to Build Strong Early Learning Systems: What States Have Learned” by the State Capacity Building Center: [https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/statelocalmodels\\_508.pdf](https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/statelocalmodels_508.pdf)
- “The Nuts and Bolts of Building Early Childhood Systems through State/Local Initiatives” by Gerry Cobb and Karen Ponder available at <http://www.buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Nuts%20and%20Bolts%20of%20Building%20Early%20Childhood%20Systems%20through%20State-Local%20Initiatives.pdf>
- Applicants may also request a copy of the 2012 GSC and GSPC statewide evaluation report by emailing Alissa Parks at [aparks@ecic4kids.org](mailto:aparks@ecic4kids.org).

Contractors will have access to data on the status of young children in Michigan available via a contract between ECIC and the Michigan League for Human Services and the Kids Count project in Michigan. These data form the basis for the Community Assessment performed by each Great Start Collaborative.

Based on the final evaluation design, the contractor will have reasonable access to Great Start Collaborative Directors and members, as well as Parent Liaisons who lead the Great Start Parent Coalitions.

ECIC will work with the contractor to procure access to other partners who will need to be engaged to facilitate the work of the evaluation.

## VIII. GUIDELINES FOR THE RFP

Potential applicants can learn more about the *Great Start* system by visiting the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start website at [www.michigan.gov/greatstart](http://www.michigan.gov/greatstart); <http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533---,00.html>.

All questions regarding this application should be directed to Alissa Parks, Senior Technical Assistance Consultant at the Early Childhood Investment Corporation – [aparks@ecic4kids.org](mailto:aparks@ecic4kids.org).

## IX. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

ALL MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR SUBMISSION ARE DUE TO ECIC NO LATER THAN 5:00PM ON APRIL 28, 2017. SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS REGARDING SUBMISSION CRITERIA.

### Background and Qualifications

- a) Describe, in no more than two paragraphs, the organization – business, Institute, University or College Department – with whom you or your team is associated.
- b) Summarize, in no more than one paragraph per person, career/work-related experience, academic credentials and any other experience for the individual(s) that would work on this evaluation. Include as **Attachment I** of your proposal resumes/CV's for each team member.
- c) List the specific skills and experiences that qualify you/the team to appropriately design, plan and implement the evaluation of the system. (2-page maximum)
- d) Demonstrate, using examples from past experiences, your/the team's ability to relate to and work with organizations like ECIC, the GSCs and the GSPCs. Include a brief description of the relevant experience(s), the levels of staff interactions, and outcomes that were achieved. (3-page maximum)

### Evaluation and Communications Approach – 12 Page Limit

- a) Provide a summary of the overall evaluation strategy proposed for this evaluation project, ensuring that each of the research questions are addressed.
- b) Describe the specific activities and steps for finalizing an overall evaluation design for this project.
- c) Describe the initial activities for an implementation plan, including proposed methods of assessments and data collection.
- d) Describe the specific activities that would be conducted to successfully execute the implementation plan, discussing capacity to provide key deliverables on time.

- e) Outline preliminary communications plan and propose contract deliverables that MDE-OGS and ECIC would use to share the evaluation results statewide and support GSCs and GSPCs to distribute locally.

For b-e above, please identify any expertise or outside assistance you may require to supplement you/your team's skills and experience during the course of the evaluation.

### **Deliverables, Timeline and Work Plan – No Page Limit**

Provide a detailed list of expected deliverables, specific activities, and proposed monthly timeline, within a work plan format, based on the proposed evaluation approach.

### **Itemized Budget**

Proposal should take into consideration all activities and supports necessary for full implementation of the evaluation in the timeframe provided, be prepared economically and efficiently, and be based on a contract budget of no more than \$300,000.00.

Provide a budget narrative that supports the funding requested for planning and implementation of the proposed evaluation approach. The following categories should be included: Salaries; Fringes; Contractual/Professional Services; Occupancy/Phone/Fax; Supplies/Meeting Costs/Postage/Printing; Travel; and Miscellaneous. No more than 15% is allowed for indirect costs and indirect may only be applied to the first \$25,000 of the budget.

### **Review Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance/suitability of applicant qualifications – background, skills, experiences – to lead and appropriately design, plan and implement an evaluation of this scale and scope.
- Feasibility of the evaluation to address the objectives detailed in this proposal balanced against the budget proposed.

Final determination will be made following a review by ECIC and MDE-OGS staff and key stakeholders. As part of the review process, ECIC and MDE-OGS reserve the right to request a presentation or meeting with potential contractors.

**Announcement of the selected evaluation entity will be on or before June 1, 2017.**

**Submission Criteria**

- White paper, 1" margins, 12-point type
- Six copies, all pages stapled or clipped together
- Pdf version of proposal on USB drive
- Order of documents:
  1. Cover Letter – including contact person for reviewer questions
  2. Narrative
  3. Work Plan
  4. Budget Summary
  5. Budget Detail
  6. Attachments

**Organizational Information & Submission**

All materials required for submission are due to ECIC no later than 5:00pm on April 28, 2017.

**Early Childhood Investment Corporation**

Attn: Alissa Parks

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