



Early Childhood Policy In Institutions of Higher Education

*An Initiative Funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation
and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund*

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP A WEB-BASED NETWORK THAT ADVANCES THE EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY (ECP) FIELD AND FACULTY IN IHEs

PART I – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Throughout the world, interest in young children is burgeoning. Predicated on accumulated knowledge that attests to the importance of the early years (birth through age 8) and the ability of quality services to improve children’s developmental outcomes, health, and education, services supporting young children are commanding increased attention. Importantly, this orientation is accompanied by a growing interest in, and knowledge of, early childhood policy, which is essential for supporting the success of such services. Understanding that policy construction and implementation are complex processes, there is mounting need to prepare personnel, materials, and programs that foster the advancement of policies for young children. Persons developing policies need to think differently as they tackle the policy, infrastructure, and advocacy challenges that new, more equitably distributed, and durably sustained services require.

As new fields come into being, extant institutions and organizations support their establishment and maturation. Traditionally, for example, Institutions of Higher Education take on the role of preparing those who advance and lead the emerging field, with prominent examples being the environmental, women’s and gender, and Black studies efforts. Like these once were, the study of early childhood policy (ECP) is at the cusp of becoming a new field. To foster its development, the Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education (ECPIHE) initiative has spawned a series of efforts, this RFP among them¹. Awash with excitement and burdened with the challenges of advancing this work in an era marked by a pandemic, there is an urgent need to activate and implement mechanisms that will both support and advance the emerging field of early childhood policy. Supportive networking and public broad-scale communications are key elements of that process and the subject of this Request for Proposal.

¹ For more information about the ECPIHE effort, please see:
<http://www.policyforchildren.org/ecpihe/>

PART II – OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

II.1. GOALS OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The goal of this RFP is to provide an opportunity for an entity interested in ECP to take the lead in developing a web-based network. This network will function as an interactive website with the goal of advancing the field and supporting higher education faculty and others interested in ECP work. As presently envisioned, the successful respondent to this RFP would provide the communication platform and strategies, leadership, and vision to enhance the work, scholarship, and teaching of those interested in implementing ECP services and in advancing the development of ECP as a field through a web-based network.

II.2. ANTICIPATED SCOPE OF SERVICES

The funder is seeking the services of an organization/entity to develop and execute plans to support this goal by providing a virtual platform through which the public can become aware of ECP and IHE faculty can be supported in their efforts to elevate ECP to prominence in their own institutions, courses, and beyond. Funded over a two-year period, this opportunity seeks respondents who will launch a web-based network that will live in perpetuity. The network is envisioned as a vehicle for sharing information, materials, and promoting diverse opportunities for faculty engagement and discourse. With a primary focus on IHE faculty, the network should be designed to serve others who provide professional development as well as foster understanding of ECP beyond IHE.

Submitters can propose to use an existing early childhood and/or policy web-based platform tailored to meet the needs of this proposal. With the goal of the project in mind, successful bidders should propose the activities they think will best advance the ECP field and simultaneously establish and support a network of IHE faculty working in ECP. Proposals should address each of the three categories: Outreach, Structure/Strategy, and Accountability/Stability, with an explanation of what specifically is proposed for each. Options/ideas for potential proposal activities are listed under each category, although respondents to this RFP are encouraged to be inventive and consider other strategies, as well.

II.2.a. Outreach

Propose activities to support **outreach**:

External – to facilitate public awareness through the web-based network

- Developing and implementing a communication plan for outreach to those unaware of ECP
- Implementing process/strategies for providing information to help establish a field of ECP

Internal – to foster networking among participants

- Implementing strategies for outreach to engage IHE faculty participants
- Establishing a process for planning and implementing different types of networking opportunities among participants
- Creating a process to solicit materials to share with network participants

- Designing a process for soliciting information about events of interest for participants and publishing a calendar of events
- Creating tips for members on how to chat/share/ask questions/etc.
- Establishing a process to track members/messages/documents/posts/etc.

II.2.b. Structure and Strategy

Propose a **structure and strategy** to support virtual networking opportunities for faculty at IHEs and non-IHE professional development providers who are interested in furthering the ECP work:

- Providing IHE faculty members the opportunity to network with other faculty as they develop courses and other materials (a place to share syllabi, case studies, videos, readings, etc.)
- Providing informal opportunities for linkages among network participants
- Maintaining a calendar of events for faculty interested in early childhood policy
- Organizing and sharing activities/materials for the network

II.2.c. Accountability/Sustainability

Propose activities to support **accountability/sustainability** including:

- Discerning how participation on the website will be monitored and reported
- Discerning how the web-based network will be evaluated and refined to meet the needs of participants
- Developing a sustainability plan for how the web-based network will be maintained once the 2-years of funding ends
- Sharing evaluation and accountability strategies
- Maintaining progress reports
- Presenting a sustainability plan (how will you maintain the website once the 2-year funding cycle ends)

II.3. BUDGET

- Budget for 2 years
- Priority will be given to proposals that are under \$40,000
- Include budget justification and budget narrative
- Overhead is limited to 10%
- Indicate the in-kind value of submitter's resources that will advance this effort.

PART III – GUIDANCE REGARDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

III.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

With the goal of advancing a new field of inquiry and supporting faculty and professional development providers through a web-based network, the awardee will meet the following criteria:

III.1.a. Institution of Higher Education or Professional Organization/Entity

Any IHE from the United States or an Early Childhood and/or Policy Organization may apply to this RFP.

III.1.b. Demonstrated Early Childhood Capacity

The entity responding to this request must have experience in both the early childhood and policy arenas. Combined, the personnel proposed for this project must have content expertise.

III.1.c. Demonstrated Technological Capacity

The entity responding to this request must have successful experience in designing and operating an interactive website.

III.1.d. Institutional/Organizational Willingness to Instantiate ECP Durably

Responders to this RFP are welcomed from IHEs/organizations demonstrating commitment and capacity to perpetuate the ECP efforts when the ECPIHE funding is reduced or eliminated. A plan for instantiating the support for the network through the use of institutional, organizational, public, or private funding is necessary.

III.2. CONTENT OF THE SUBMITTED RFP

III.2.a. Format

A submission must, at a minimum, include the elements listed below within a document printed double-spaced on one side, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins for text (graphics are an exception to font size).

III.2.b. General Information and Bidder Background

General Information. (Maximum one page.)

- Applicant Organizational Name
- Address
- Contact Person Information (name, telephone number, e-mail address)
- Legal Form of Bidder (e.g. sole proprietor, partnership, corporation)
- Size and Types of Services Offered
- Federal ID Number

III.2.c. Personnel

- A general overview with names and credentials of the team that would work on this project, including general roles and percentage of effort of each person. (Maximum two pages.)
- One-page summaries/resumes of the primary project personnel. (Maximum four persons, with one page for each.)

III.2.d. Project Description

- A narrative outlining the organization's plan for the project (scope of work). This may include innovative ideas that support the effort and that go beyond the required elements. In addition, include the projected number of users within the system as you describe the capacity of the platform. (Maximum eight pages.)

III.2.e. Timeline

- A timeline of all proposed activities. (Maximum one page.)

III.2.f. Agreement to Meet Accountability Requirements

- An indication of willingness to submit semi-annual narrative reports delineating the progress and challenges associated with implementation. Please indicate your willingness to submit annual fiscal accountings of all expenditures. (Maximum one page.)

III.2.g. Sustainability Plan

- A plan delineating your plans to continue, if not expand, this network beyond the 2 years of funding provided in this RFP. (Maximum one page)

III.2.h. Budget and Budget Justification

- A 2-year budget broken out by years and a budget justification for all of the expenses, with in-kind contributions noted and an overhead rate of no more than 10% requested. (Maximum three pages.)

III.3. SELECTION CRITERIA

The award will be made to a responsive and responsible organization(s) based on the best value, the quality of the proposed project, and professional capability that has been described above. The proposal will be judged based on the categories below:

- The overall plan for Early Childhood Policy Web-Based Network, including required components and any innovative ideas presented (40%)
- The education, experience, knowledge, skills, and qualifications to provide the required services (20%)
- The sustainability plan for going beyond the 2-years funded via this grant (20%)
- The competitive cost of services—budget and budget justification (20%)

III.4. ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

Request for Proposal Released: October 1, 2020 at <http://policyforchildren.org/ecpihe/>.

Deadline for Bidders to Submit Questions*: October 20, 2020

Response to Bidder Questions: October 28, 2020

Final Date for Submission*: November 23, 2020

Selection of Top Bidder/Notification to Unsuccessful

Bidders: December 10, 2020

Contract Finalized and Work Begins: January 1, 2021

***Bidder Questions and Final Submission should be sent to:**

- Sharon Lynn Kagan at slk99@tc.columbia.edu
- Kathy Thornburg at thornburgk@missouri.edu

III.5. LEGAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Independent Status:

a) Awardee is not an agent of the College, and therefore is not authorized to transact business or make any commitments for the College unless expressly authorized in writing by an officer of the College. Likewise, the College is not an agent of the Awardee, and therefore is not authorized to transact business or make any commitments for the Awardee unless expressly authorized in writing by an officer of the Awardee.

b) The College does not pay or withhold federal, state, or local income tax or other payroll tax of any kind on behalf of Awardee or Awardee's employees. Neither Awardee, nor Awardee's employees are eligible for, or entitled to participate in any of the College's pension, health, or any other benefit plans. Awardee is responsible for the payment of all required employment-related taxes and fees, payroll taxes, including, but not limited to income taxes, Social Security taxes, Federal Unemployment Compensation taxes, and any other fees, charges, licenses, or payments required by federal, state or local law.

2. Report and Audit: Awardee certifies that he/she meets the applicable reporting and audit requirements of the College and grantor (if any) maintains books and records as required by the Internal Revenue Service. The College, or its authorized representatives will, until seven (7) years after final payment under this Agreement, have access to any of Awardee's records related to this Agreement for the purpose of conducting audits. The period of access for records will continue after all disputes are settled.

3. Conflict of Interest:

a) Awardee will disclose any known or potential conflict of interest during the Term of the Agreement. This disclosure will initially be made in writing to the Office of

General Counsel by completing the Conflicts of Interest form prior to executing this agreement. Any subsequent conflicts or any situations or activities that might give the appearance of a conflict of interest must be immediately reported to the Office of General Counsel, by emailing the office at generalcounsel@tc.columbia.edu.

- b) For purposes of this paragraph, the term “conflict of interest” or “potential conflict of interest” means any situation or circumstance in which Awardee, or Awardee’s employees, or any of Awardee’s family members or any affiliated business or associate either (i) has an existing or potential financial or other material interest that impairs or might appear to impair the individual’s independence or objectivity of judgment in the discharge of responsibilities to the College, or (ii) receives a financial or other material benefit from knowledge of information obtained from or confidential to the College, or (iii) has the opportunity to influence business decisions internal or external to the College in a way that could lead to personal or other gain or advantage, or (iv) have any other relationship with the College.
 - c) If, at any time, the College determines that Awardee is in violation of any representation under this Paragraph, College may immediately terminate this Agreement upon written notice to Awardee, and the College will have no further obligation to Awardee under this Agreement. The College reserves the right to take any other lawful action against any Awardee who has failed to fully disclose any conflict or potential conflict of interest.
4. Assignment: Awardee may not assign, delegate or subcontract the Services to be performed under this agreement, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the College, which the College may grant or withhold in its discretion.
5. Indemnification and Limitation on Liability:
- a) Awardee agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the grantor (if any), College and their respective affiliates, trustees, officers, agents and employees from any liability or loss arising from Awardee’s performance under this Agreement. The College reserves the right to retain funds, which would be due to Awardee under this Agreement until all disputes are settled.
 - b) No limitation on liability will apply to Awardee's obligation to defend, indemnify **the grantor (if any), Teachers College, Columbia University, and their respective affiliates, trustees, officers, agents and employees, volunteers, and representatives**, or to Awardee's obligation to provide insurance, nor will it reduce the payment of proceeds from any insurance coverage that Awardee is obligated to furnish under this Agreement.
 - c) There will be no limitation on liability for any violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) or The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”).
6. Confidentiality:
- a) If Awardee receives or has access to confidential or proprietary information of the College, Awardee will hold such information confidential and will not, disclose or use the information in any way other than to complete the Services. The Term “Confidential or Proprietary Information” means any nonpublic information concerning the College or its officers, directors, trustees, alumni, students or its programs.

- b) Awardee's confidentiality obligations include maintaining appropriate safeguards to avoid loss or damage and prevent unauthorized access to or disclosure of any Confidential or Proprietary Information.
- c) Awardee agrees to comply with any applicable confidentiality provisions of FERPA and HIPAA.
- d) Upon completion or Termination of this Agreement, Awardee will return or destroy all such Confidential or Proprietary Information as instructed by the College, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

7. Force Majeure and Measures to Prevent the Spread of Infectious Disease:

- a) Neither Party will be liable for any delay or failure to perform its obligation under this Agreement if prevented from doing so by acts of God, acts of war, acts of civil disturbance or terrorism, governmental restraints, outbreaks of infectious disease (including quarantines and limitations on activities that result therefrom), utility or communications failures, or any other causes that the affected Party could not, with reasonable care, control or prevent. If such an event occurs, the affected Party will notify the other Party, and both will use their best efforts to resume their obligations under this Agreement. If the delay or failure continues for longer than thirty (30) days, the unaffected Party may terminate this Agreement upon not less than five (5) days written notice to the affected Party.
- b) The College agrees to abide by all governmental advice and orders for closure and the Awardee agrees to abide by all applicable governmental advice or orders for quarantine, self-quarantine, isolation or self-isolation designed to reduce the spread of epidemic disease. If this situation occurs and affects performance under this Agreement, the affected Party may invoke this Force Majeure Clause.

8. Payments to Employees and Solicitation of Gratuities: Awardee agrees that no part of any amount paid to Awardee under this Agreement will be paid directly or indirectly to an employee of the College as wages, entertainment, compensation, or gifts.

9. Choice of Law/Jurisdiction: This Agreement will be governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of New York without regard to conflict of law principles. The location and jurisdiction for the resolution of any disputes arising under this Agreement will be in the State or Federal court located in the County, City and State of New York.

10. Legal Fees: If any legal action arises out of this Agreement the prevailing Party as determined by the court, arbitrator or administrative agency, will be entitled to reasonable legal fees, costs and expenses incurred in the action.

11. Use of Name: Neither Party to this Agreement will make use of the other's name, logo, symbol, image or that of any member of the other's staff for any purpose, including but not limited to publicity or advertising purposes without prior written approval of the other Party in each instance.

12. Rights in Data and Work Product:

- a) Work Product is all work created under this Agreement, including all information and material (in any form) relating to the Services (“Work Product”). Work Product includes but is not limited to data obtained, customized work product conceived, developed or reduced to practice, and all other information of a scientific, technical or artistic nature. The Awardee will retain exclusive intellectual property rights in all Work Product created by Awardee. The term Work Product herein does not include work previously created or copyrighted by others and not created under this Agreement. Awardee will make all work product available to the College in accordance with the Request for Proposal.
- b) Awardee will assure that work product will not infringe on the intellectual property right of any third party. Awardee shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the College, its trustees, officers, directors, employees and agents for any liability and any related costs and reasonable attorney’s fees incurred due to any actual or alleged infringement.
- c) Awardee agrees that all Services will be conducted in a lawful and ethical manner. Awardee will not distort or give false information or act in any other fraudulent or criminal manner in the gathering of information under the Agreement.

13. Quality of Work: Awardee agrees that all work performed will conform with this Agreement and the RFP, be free from errors, and be of professional quality according to applicable industry standards.

14. Compliance with Americans Disabilities Act, other Applicable Laws and College Rules:

- a) Awardee must certify via the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (“VPAT”) that its electronic and information technology products and services are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”). Additionally, the College uses the completed VPAT to assess the accessibility of electronic and information technology products and services. At a minimum, the Awardee must specify how the features and functional characteristics of its products or services meet the Section 508 Standards. The VPAT template is available at <https://www.itic.org/policy/accessibility/>. Awardee shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the College, its trustees, officers, directors, employees and agents for any liability and any related costs and reasonable attorney’s fees related to any claim that its products or services do not comply with the ADA.
- b) Awardee will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, orders, requirements, policies and procedures in performing the Services, including the requirements of any funders.

15. Severability and Modifications:

- a) If any part of this Agreement is unenforceable, but would be enforceable if appropriately modified, then the provision will apply with the minimum modification necessary to make it valid.
- b) If any part of this Agreement is unenforceable and cannot be modified, the remaining portion of this Agreement will continue in a manner that is consistent with the intentions of the parties.

16. Termination and Return of Materials:
 - a) The College may terminate this Agreement immediately in the event of a material breach by Awardee or if funding from the grantor is no longer available.

17. Effect of Termination: Upon the expiration of this Agreement, each Party will be released from all obligations after the date of such termination, except (1) that any termination of this Agreement will not release Awardee's obligations under Sections 5, 6, 9, 11, 12 14 of this Agreement, nor will any such termination relieve Awardee or the College from any liability arising from any breach of this Agreement; and (2) Awardee will be reimbursed for all approved costs incurred prior to notice of termination in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

18. Amendments: This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the Parties. Changes to the terms and conditions of this Agreement must be made in writing and signed by authorized representatives of each Party.