

## Request for Proposals

**Evaluation of Capital Region Early Childhood Network**  
**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving**  
**10 Columbus Blvd., 8th Floor**  
**Hartford, CT 06106**  
**(860) 548-1888**  
[www.hfpg.org](http://www.hfpg.org)

### **I. Background:**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford, Connecticut region, dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents. One of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country, the Hartford Foundation receives gifts from thousands of generous individuals, families and organizations, working with them to help them achieve their charitable goals. Since 1925, the Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$650 million and provided a host of other support and training services, to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations.

The Foundation seeks consultant proposals for a small-scale evaluation of the newly-established Capital Region Early Childhood Network. The consultant will work with the Foundation to create an overall evaluation design and to establish project-level outcomes and processes for data collection.

### **II. The Project:**

In December 2017, the Hartford Foundation awarded \$150,000 in grants (over two years) to five agencies to participate in a Capital Region Early Childhood Network to improve the school readiness and school success of young children birth to eight.

The network members have been in existence for over ten years, but had funding reduced or terminated in recent years.<sup>1</sup> The focus of this evaluation will be to generate information regarding the value added from new regional infrastructure to support and enhance the work of the local collaboratives. Evaluation of the regional network would inform the Hartford Foundation's future support for similar efforts at network- and system-building.

The primary evaluation question is:

1) Does being a part of this regional network benefit their work locally?

Related questions for consideration could include:

- a) What components of the regional network were most useful?
- b) What is the value added by system building supports provided by the Hartford Foundation (local consultants, network evaluation and professional development opportunities)?

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<sup>1</sup> Additional detail on the network members is included in Appendix A.

- c) What evidence is there that the network members are moving towards their longer-term outcomes?
- d) How well did collaboratives implement their strategies over the course of the initiative?
- e) Do the local collaboratives provide an effective feedback loop for state policymakers (primarily, Office of Early Childhood) to hear from local voices?
- f) Do the local collaboratives share lessons / results with the early childhood field more broadly?

Projected outcomes for the individual local early childhood collaboratives are also included as Appendix A.

### **III. Anticipated Activities:**

The consultant will develop an evaluation design and technical assistance strategy for the following:

1. Conduct overall assessment of identified network and individual local early childhood collaborative outcomes.
  - a. This would involve coordination with UCLA consultant Pat Bowie, a consultant providing support to the network.
2. Work with the Foundation and the network to articulate realistic collective and individual options for measuring the activities selected for the evaluation, taking into account grantee/partner resources and capacities and including options that would utilize data and results from other evaluation activities. Measures of the work of the local collaboratives could cover:
  - a. Partnership strength (operations, sustainability); Changes in infrastructure and policy (formalization of relationships and plans); partner collaborative actions (within communities and across the network); measures of improved practices; measures of improved experiences for children and families within each community
3. Provide measures of network and collaborative outcomes, including baseline data, interim data at year 1 and at the conclusion of the project at year 2. The proposal should also describe the extent to which it is possible to construct a comparison group from outside the network.
4. Support individual and network meetings (at least two per year) to work with Hartford Foundation staff and the individual collaboratives to identify goals and coordinate data collection across partnerships.

The proposal should draw on past evaluations of local Connecticut local early childhood collaboratives and other similar groups nationally. A partial list of relevant research is included as Appendix B.

### **IV. Proposal Content:**

1. Consultant's name, title, business address, phone and fax numbers, email address and web address.

2. Methodology – describe the process by which you propose to meet the requested activities and outcomes. Include any preliminary questions you conclude we are trying to answer with the evaluation of the network.
3. Budget and cost – provide hourly rates for the personnel assigned, estimated hours to be assigned, and an estimated fee for the entire project.
4. Summary of relevant experience – summarize your qualifications to this project and include relevant experience. This may include a copy of a report done for a similar project as this one.

**V. Anticipated Timeline:**

April 20                      Proposal deadline (5 PM)

April 25                      Final Selection Announced

**VI. Submission:**

Please submit your proposal to the Research and Evaluation Unit by April 20 at:

[evaluation@hfpg.org](mailto:evaluation@hfpg.org)

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
10 Columbus Blvd. 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hartford CT 06106

## Appendix A

**Local Early Childhood Collaborative Projected Outcomes**

<b>Collaborative</b>	<b>Grant specific Outcomes</b>
<b>Enfield KITE</b>	<p>A new KITE Marketing and Communication Specialist who will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement strategies for gaining traffic and attention through social media sites relative to early childhood development</li> <li>• Establish a relationship with local print sources</li> <li>• Research and write 3-5 stories that support the work of KITE</li> <li>• Form and lead a Communications Committee to increase partner engagement in the communication efforts.</li> </ul>
<b>The Bridge Family Center Great By 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist families in pre-K enrollment process to increase town-wide pre-K experience to over 90%</li> <li>• Increase membership with broader cross-section of partners</li> <li>• Focus on infant toddler quality care by creating a video for parents</li> <li>• Develop and coordinate Book Buzzes for parents/providers in partnership with library</li> </ul>
<b>Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build infrastructure by creating a new full-time early childhood position within the Board of Education</li> <li>• Build infrastructure by supporting the continuation of a part-time early childhood position but moving it under the Board of Education</li> <li>• Strengthen the partnership and coordination between the Town and Board of Education through shared services and activities</li> </ul>
<b>Manchester School Readiness Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardize the use of social/emotional screening tools across early childhood programs</li> <li>• Provide all Manchester preschools with tools to implement a seamless kindergarten transition</li> <li>• Offer a monthly grandparent and teen mom support group</li> <li>• Increase family member leadership opportunities by providing two stipend positions for family member representation</li> </ul>
<b>Alliance for Bloomfield's Children (ABC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and implement an evaluation system for the work of ABC</li> <li>• Develop communication campaign and tools</li> <li>• Increase parent education, engagement, and leadership by offering new opportunities to families</li> <li>• Increase coordination with home visiting by creating a subcommittee to improve communication and referrals</li> </ul>

## Appendix B

**Related work to consider:**

<b>Work</b>	<b>Description</b>
<a href="#"><u>Summative Evaluation of Discovery Communities (2011)</u></a>	Summative evaluation of Discovery Communities from 2004 – 2009, through funding from Graustein Memorial Fund.
<a href="#"><u>Colorado's Early Childhood Councils: 2016 evaluation report</u></a>	Evaluation of state-mandated Councils from Colorado.
<a href="#"><u>Framework for Connecticut's Statewide System of Early Childhood State and Local Partnerships</u></a>	Reviews the structure and experiences with local partnerships nationwide and in Connecticut, makes recommendations for state network of partnerships and local functions and structure.
<a href="#"><u>Advancing the Measurement of Collective Community Capacity to Address Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience</u></a>	Evaluation of Family Policy Councils from Washington State, including information on instrument (APPI) for network assessment.