

Request for Proposals Mitigating the Effects of Poverty on Young Children

Proposals are due no later than September 1, 2023, 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time.

Background

How might we reduce the impacts of poverty on young children by increasing income to families and supporting parents?

Research shows that poverty can hinder language acquisition, memory retention, and self-regulation skills in children, and can have long-term consequences in adulthood such as lower earnings and increased health problems. Additionally, we know poverty impacts parenting capacity through family stress and that limited economic and time resources can impact families' ability to invest in their children's development.

Increasing income has been identified as a key factor in improving child development and future adult outcomes, especially when targeted during the early years. While various initiatives are underway to provide direct cash assistance to families, those strategies may not support parents in their parenting role. Similarly, existing parent programs that provide parenting classes and home visitation may, beyond referrals, leave basic needs unmet. Additionally, there is a lack of information on effective strategies for supporting BIPOC families in terms of income and parenting support. This RFP explores the potential power of the combination of these two specific components.

Objectives

The objectives of this RFP are to:

1. Identify ways to bridge the gap across income and parenting support strategies so that families have the financial resources they need and the parenting supports that promote healthy child development.
2. Refine our theories on how to address the impacts of poverty on child development.
3. Strengthen impact and impact measurement strategies.
4. Lay the foundation for potential next investments in potential high-impact strategies and/or needed policy changes.

Description

Gary is seeking to identify 8-10 partners across Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson counties that are serving primarily BIPOC families who are interested in participating in a community of practice to explore how to connect family economic security and child development by addressing income and parenting support at the same time. For this RFP, income includes tax credits, public benefits, emergency assistance, direct cash assistance, mutual aid, and/or paid family leave. Parenting capacity includes strategies such as home visiting, parenting circles, parenting classes, parent skills training, and/or parenting groups with direct contact with parents.

Selected partners will work across a 13-month period (December 2023 through December 2024) as part of a Community of Practice to:

1. Gather and evaluate insights from families and staff on current programming, needs, and opportunities as it pertains to income and parenting supports;
2. Learn from each other and external partners and experts on effective ways to blend income and parenting supports for families;
3. Develop, test, and refine new strategies in income and parenting that show promise in mitigating the effects of poverty on young children's development (each organization will be expected to test at least one to two new strategies or partnerships to strengthen their services);
4. Share and strengthen impact and impact measurement strategies to understand what strategies are making a difference; and
5. Identify next steps in program design, program implementation, or policy change that are needed.

Gary is partnering on a number of strategies to support children's readiness for school and family economic mobility. Visit the [School Readiness](#) and [Family Economic Mobility](#) pages to see the full scope of Gary's focus in each respective outcome area.

Proposal Requirements

We anticipate funding a cohort of nonprofit, educational, and/or governmental organizations that may include more established organizations, early stage organizations, and/or organizations working in a related field that want to focus on income and parenting. Organizations that are focused in one area or the other are welcome to apply and will be expected to develop potential strategies for partnership or program enhancement to address the dual outcomes of this RFP. Examples of organization types that might apply include but are not limited to two-generation programs, parent support organizations, and/or family economic mobility organizations including benefit navigation or benefit access organizations. Organizations must serve families with young children ages 0-5 within the geography of Denver, Adams, Arapahoe and/or Jefferson counties.

Priority will be given to organizations that:

- Are BIPOC-led, or if not, with consideration going to organizations that are BIPOC-directed at the program level, with a majority of services to BIPOC families. A minority of organizations will be selected that may not meet this criteria but must have an equity commitment they are actively pursuing.
- Serve majority BIPOC children and their families
- Operate with a culture of innovation and learning
- Have an orientation to partnership

We will not consider funding proposals that:

- Proposals outside of the four county area
- Do not address the objectives of this RFP

- Focus primarily on workforce development or child care
- Are primarily tech apps that parents might use
- Request funds for capital expenses (buildings, vehicles, etc.)

Grant Awards

We anticipate awarding approximately 8-10 grants of \$35,000 for successful proposals. No project budget is required. The \$35,000 award is designed to cover the costs of the required activities of grant recipients which are outlined below.

Required Activities of Grant Recipients:

Applicants that receive this grant will be expected to:

- Participate in up to 6 in-person and/or virtual meetings of the Community of Practice that might include research grounding, impact sharing, or design sessions with some meetings anticipated to be half or full day. At least one participant from the grantee organization must attend all sessions. Grantees will be encouraged to bring 1-3 members of their team, as appropriate. Content will be shared during these meetings and participants will then have specific tasks that they are completing in between meetings (see bullets below). A full schedule will be provided with grant award letters.
- Gather insights from families and staff to assess program needs and opportunities (this could include surveys, focus groups, interviews, home visits, etc.).
- Develop and test one to two strategies and/or partnerships designed to bridge income and parent supports (strategies will be identified from a combination of the data gathered from families and staff and through insights and ideas shared through the community of practice).
- Share current impact data and measurement approaches, consider new measurement strategies, and monitor the impact of the tested strategies that are implemented.
- Collaborate with other organizations as needed to address both income and parenting supports together.

Support from Gary to Grant Recipients

Gary Community Ventures will provide the following services and support to grantees in this cohort:

- Oversight/management of the Community of Practice, including convenings, access to experts and research, and opportunities to share learning and expertise
- Access to consultants as needed to support data analysis, impact measurement, implementation efforts, etc.
- Tailored grantee support as needed which may include 1:1 check-ins, networking, consultancies, etc.

Application

To complete the online application and or obtain a copy of the application questions to share with your team, view the Application Process section of the [RFP landing page](#).

RFP Process

Applications are due at 5:00 pm MT on September 1, 2023. Applications will be reviewed during the month of September. Finalists will be notified no later than October 4 and may be asked for additional information, which could include interviews and/or site visits. All applicants will be notified of final decisions by 5:00 pm MT October 20, 2023.

Questions

For questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

- Brian Firooz at bfirooz@garycommunity.org
- Steff Clothier at sclothier@garycommunity.org

Informational Webinar

There will be an optional information webinar where you can learn more about the RFP and ask questions on August 10 at 11:00 am. Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85201921454>

Office Hours

Office hours are an optional opportunity to seek assistance and ask questions about the RFP. It will be held on August 25 at 10:00 am. Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84383681161>