

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Bigelow Corners Partnership

Deadline for Proposals: September 15, 2009, 5:00 pm

1. Project Overview:

Request for Proposals to Develop the Evaluation Framework for Bigelow Corners

The following criteria and guidelines pertain only to this request for proposals. Following the development of the evaluation framework, The Bigelow Corners Partnership (BCP) intends to engage in a long-term relationship with an evaluator. Criteria for selection of the on-going evaluator will be determined during the course of the development of the evaluation framework.

Scope of Work

The Bigelow Corners Partnership (BCP) is seeking an evaluator to develop a framework for evaluating; 1) the results of its programs and services for children and families, and 2) the effectiveness of the partnership. The framework will include development and refinement of:

- Hypotheses to be tested
- Program and partnership outcomes and performance targets
- Key data and measurable indicators of success
- Performance baselines for the population served
- Data tracking tools
- Process for collecting, sharing and reporting data between programs and organizations
- Project progress reporting formats
- Compiling and presenting a final evaluation framework report

The evaluator or team will begin working immediately upon award of the evaluation grant - anticipated by October 15 2009.

Length of Contract and Funding Level

The Bigelow Partnership expects the evaluator or team will work with us for approximately three to four months, beginning in October 2009.

Future Evaluation/Research

Depending on program progress and success, there is the possibility of a long-term engagement with the evaluator extending over a period of several years. A selection process for the evaluation partner will be developed and released at the conclusion of the development of the initial framework.

2. Bigelow Corners Partnership

Four organizations – Capital District Child Care Council, Parsons Child & Family Center, Schenectady City School District and Schenectady Community Action Program, delivering services on a 25-acre site called Bigelow Corners where they serve nearly 900 children and their families—have jointly requested and received a Strengthening Families grant from The Schenectady Foundation to support development and

evaluation of a collaborative program model. The project is intended to seed their long-term commitment to support families to raise their children to be competent, productive citizens, capable of some day raising their own successful families.

BCP VISION STATEMENT

The area known as “Bigelow Corners” will be a national model that will illustrate the power of families, when supported by a unified community, to raise their children to be competent, productive citizens who may go on to create their own successful families. Bigelow Corners will concentrate and organize a range of services that will extend from first-rate family-support and early education through university-level research and consultation. It will show that the diverse missions, people, resources and competencies of different nonprofit and educational organizations can join together as servants to the concepts of family integrity and individual development.

BCP GOALS

1. Families will receive support as early as possible—ideally, prenatally.
2. All pre-school services will be organized from birth through kindergarten entry.
3. Children will enter kindergarten prepared in every way for academic success.
4. Academic advantage will be sustained throughout elementary, middle, and high schools.
5. Families will choose to reside in the program area, and their involvement with children’s education will be continuous across Early Head Start, child care, Head Start, and elementary school.
6. Positive impacts on education, finance, and employment will occur for all family members to a measurable degree.
7. Research findings will illuminate the path to continuing improvement of program while quantifying outcomes for entire families and for individual students.
8. Research findings will also illuminate the path to successful collaboration.
9. Program will receive national notice for its innovative aspects and for the demonstrated contributions it will have made to family and educational outcomes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project’s central hypothesis is that when available community resources can be effectively organized to provide comprehensive support to families facing economic, employment, medical or mental health challenges, those families will succeed in supporting their children educationally, and those children will consequently thrive in school.

The secondary hypothesis is that if children perform well in school, they will develop a variety of intellectual and behavioral strengths that will in turn provide them with economic, educational, vocational and social advantages throughout life.

Partner programs will provide services using existing funding from current customers. Each partner will be responsible for their own core resources. At least in the beginning, the function of Bigelow Corners

will be to coordinate the services in the interests of the children and families, not to generate resources for the partners.

The service partners have created an Executive Council with the principal charge to build a platform for collaborative activity involving the Bigelow Corners participants. Eventually the structure will include other community partners and services. Initial functions of the Executive Council will be:

1. Create its own preliminary organization and self-governance procedures.
2. Establish a central intake process, assuring that entry into any single service partner's program constitutes entry into all partners' services.
3. Assure that core services—child care, education, pediatric care, dental care, etc.—are identified and provided.
4. Assure that families and children have the ability to cross partner barriers smoothly according to need.
5. Create a "Bigelow Corners" marketing and recruiting service.
6. Apply for funding that will allow the project to access professional consultation and university-based research.
7. Create data collection and analysis procedures.
8. Identify and access other funds as necessary for Bigelow Corners administration.

3. BCP Project Evaluation

We expect that the evaluation framework will provide a methodology and tools for an on-going evaluation of the following program components:

1. Is the partnership functioning effectively with regard to its executive structure and the implementation and coordination of its programs?
2. What are the costs, benefits and return on investment of the partnership (to children, families, partners, investors and the community)?
3. Does the BCP improve results in key outcome areas: prenatal care, healthy births, child health, child development, educational achievement, family functioning?

4. Guidelines for Submitting BCP Evaluation Proposals

There are no specific eligibility criteria for individuals or organizations interested in submitting a proposal under this RFP. Consultants, nonprofit organizations, college or university programs will be considered. A solid track record of developing and implementing evaluation models is essential. The applicant's capacity to sustain a long-term relationship with the project will also be a factor.

Proposal Narrative

All proposals must be received by email no later than 5:00PM on Tuesday, September 15, 2009.

Proposals should be sent to nmp@nycap.rr.com and will be acknowledged by a return email within 24 hours.

Proposals should include the following separately numbered sections/subsections and should not exceed 8 pages in 12 point font with one inch margins (required and optional attachments are excluded from the page limit):

Background and Qualifications

- a. Describe, *no more than two paragraphs*, the organization – business, University/College Department – you or the team is associated with.
- b. Summarize, *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 the project. Include as **Attachment I** of your proposal resumes/CV's for these individuals.
- c. List specific skills and experiences that qualify you/the team to sufficiently understand and develop an evaluation methodology for the BCP's overall vision and desired outcomes (1 page maximum). Provide as attachments relevant samples of your work (evaluation reports, evaluation models, etc.).
- d. Demonstrate using examples from past experience, your ability to relate to and work with the organizations similar to the BCP partners. Include a brief description of the relevant experience(s), levels of staff interacted with and outcomes that were achieved. Note: examples can include non-evaluative experiences (1 page maximum).
- e. Discuss the capacity of your business or organization to work with the BCP over a period of time, providing on-going support for implementation of the evaluation framework, consulting on program enhancements toward improving results, identifying best practices for integration with BCP programs, and leveraging additional resources to benefit the project and the population served (e.g. internships, scholarships, grants, etc.)
- f. Innovative and/or constructive ideas with regard to BCP's draft vision, goals and intentions.

2. Evaluation Approach

- a. Summary of your overall strategy for the BCP project (1 page maximum).
- b. Describe the specific approach you would take in planning and implementing the project. Identify any expertise or outside assistance you may require to supplement your/the team's skills and experience during the course of the evaluation.

3. Budget and Contractual Requirements

- a. Provide a budget and budget narrative which supports the funding requested for development of the proposed evaluation framework and tools. Travel and indirect costs should be included in the budget.
- b. Identify, if appropriate, any contractual requirements of your business, organization or university that apply to this proposal.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance/suitability of applicant qualifications - background, skills, experiences - to understand and appropriately implement the project:
 - a. success working in public school environments and community-based nonprofit programs is desirable
 - b. expertise with multi-organization/program initiatives
 - c. proposal provides examples of specific evaluation tools and processes, and success in measuring program results
 - d. evaluation team possesses work history that demonstrates their capacity to accomplish the project goals
- Feasibility of the proposal and the associated costs
- Capacity of the evaluator to engage in a long-term relationship with the BCP.

Invitations for in person meetings with BCP representatives will be made by October 1, 2009.

Those evaluators invited to meetings will be required to have all individuals that would work on the evaluation available. The meetings are not anticipated to exceed one hour and will provide an opportunity to meet BCP representatives, provide additional information and clarify project expectations.

Announcement of the selected evaluator or team is expected by October 15, 2009.

Attachment I

All resumes and or CV's of individuals to be involved in the project