

WilliamPennFoundation

Request for Proposals

Caregiver Supports and Opportunities for Early Learning

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Purpose of this Request for Proposals

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve quality of life for residents of the Philadelphia region. The Foundation's Children and Families program seeks to expand access to programs and resources that support the healthy development and academic success of young children, ages 0 to 8, in Philadelphia. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goals, and all of its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website.

This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

By 2035, the Foundation will fund programming that provides caregiver supports and opportunities for early learning for 15,000 pregnant and parenting families with young children.

Why is WPF prioritizing this objective?

All families can benefit from increased resources and opportunities that help maximize their ability to support their children's early development. Local families affirm this approach. In conversations over the past couple of years, Philadelphia families emphasized the value of community-based programs that provide parent education, build children's social-emotional skills, and create enrichment opportunities.

Research demonstrates that the well-being of caregivers and children is deeply interconnected. Programs that serve young children and their families together help build “protective factors, resiliency, and parental capacity to enhance child and family well-being and prevent child abuse and neglect.”¹ Because gains for one generation reinforce gains for the other, programs that support caregivers and children jointly can produce greater benefits than those that focus on parents or children alone.



What types of projects will get funded?

WPF seeks to support approaches that improve outcomes for young children, ages 0 to 8, and their families in Philadelphia through coordinated programs and services. This approach requires early learning experiences for children and programs/supports for parents/caregivers that are intentionally designed and advance clearly articulated goals for each generation.

For this RFP, WPF will prioritize proposals that focus on direct service. Proposals must include at least two of the following activities:

- Develop adults' ability to support their children's healthy development.
- Offer ongoing, interactive, intergenerational programming and services that include an early learning component (social-emotional, STEM, math, literacy, etc.) for children ages 0 to 8.
- Peer-to-peer supports for caregivers (e.g., support groups, mentoring).
- Provide resources, material supports, and referrals for caregivers and families as needed.
- Other ideas not mentioned here that improve services, access to resources, and academic and/or social-emotional outcomes for young children and families.

Programming can take place in a variety of settings and with varying frequencies. See the chart on the next page for examples.

¹ [Child Welfare Information Gateway. Two-generation approaches. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.](#)

	Eligible for Funding	Not Eligible for Funding
Location	Homes, health care settings, community-based settings, libraries, recreation centers, etc.	Programming/services that take place solely in a virtual setting.
Frequency	Programming/services that take place weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly are all eligible.	Programs/ services that only consist of one-time programs or workshops (e.g., book fair, concert).
Dosage	Programs/services proposed for funding should include a minimum of four meetings/sessions.	Programs/services that do not include an expectation of ongoing connection with families.
Age Focus	Expectant parents; Families with children ages 0 to 8 (or a subset in that range).	Programming that primarily serves children ages 9 and above.
Geography	Programming/services must take place in Philadelphia and serve Philadelphia residents.	Programming that serves families located outside of the city of Philadelphia.

Please note, under this RFP, the Foundation will **not** consider proposals to support the following:

- Physical health services such as well child and adult exams or treatment
- Early intervention services
- Mental and behavioral health services (e.g., one-on-one therapeutic sessions)
- Full-day childcare

What has to be in my proposal?

We are requesting proposals for **up to 36 months of funding**. The Foundation recognizes that there are many different tactics or approaches that could be used to advance the objective stated above and align with the expectations above. All proposals that meet these expectations as well as the review criteria described below are encouraged.

Programs proposed for funding must advance outcomes for both generations - caregivers and their child.

Programs/services proposed for funding must advance outcomes for both generations - caregivers/family and their child. Programs may serve adults and children, or adults only, but **defined outcomes for each age group must be clearly identified**.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that the work necessary to make significant progress on the objective will be complex and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise.

Quick Check: Is This Opportunity a Good Fit?

Before you apply, please review the questions below. If you can confidently answer “yes” to the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond “no” to **any** of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your project, and you should not apply.

	Yes	No
Does your proposed program exclusively serve families in Philadelphia?	☐	☐
Does your program serve pregnant and/or parenting families with children ages 0 to 8?	☐	☐
Does your program strengthen families and early learning?	☐	☐
Does your program engage with families at least four times to achieve defined outcomes?	☐	☐
Is your program provided to families at no or low cost?	☐	☐

! Also review **all** the criteria on the following pages to make sure your program aligns with those before you apply.

What types of organizations are eligible for funding?

Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Existing grantees currently receiving funding to advance this objective cannot request additional funds for their current projects.

Proposal Review

! Applicants must address these criteria in their responses within the Project Narrative section of the application. Proposals will be judged on the criteria and additional expectations below.

Alignment with Objective			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Project conveys no meaningful connection to the objective.	Project would make a marginal and/or uncertain contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear and significant contribution to advancing the objective.
		Developing or Strong Required	
Program Design and Feasibility			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Proposal does not provide a clear approach to the work. Anticipated outcomes and success are not well-defined.	Proposal describes an approach to the work, but some aspects are vague, difficult to understand or seem unrealistic. Anticipated outcomes are defined, but are of uncertain achievability, based on the details provided.	Proposal provides a clear approach but could be more specific. Anticipated outcomes require further clarification to assess feasibility.	Proposal provides a clear and feasible plan to implement the work and includes a solid justification for anticipated outcomes.
		Developing or Strong Required	
Partnerships and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No potential partners or plans for collaboration.	Potential partners relevant to the project are identified but there are no clear commitments.	Some committed partnerships relevant to the project, a plan to build any necessary new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role.	Sufficient committed partnerships relevant to the project, a description of each partner's role, and a track record of successful collaboration.
		Developing or Strong Required	

Organizational Experience			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No implementation experience and no track record of success.	Less than three years of experience with advancing the specified objective and a limited track record of success.	Three to five years of experience advancing the specified objective and success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.	More than five years of experience advancing the specified objective and an extensive track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.
← <i>Emergent, Developing, or Strong Required</i> →			
Community Knowledge and Engagement			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and no plan for future engagement.	Minimal evidence of familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed project, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.	Evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing stakeholder engagement during implementation.	Key components of the project were informed by the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation.
← <i>Developing or Strong Required</i> →			

What else will be expected in my proposal?

Outcomes	Clearly describe the goals of the program and provide evidence (e.g., evaluation data, survey results, family testimonials, etc.) that the program has a positive impact on families and directly affects children's academic and/or social-emotional learning and development.
Evidence Base	Clearly describe elements of your program that research has shown work effectively.
Demand	Demonstrate demand for the proposed services (feedback from current or intended participants, waitlists, etc.).
Past Performance	Provide specific information about your organization's current programs supporting families including number of families served, lessons learned, successes, and challenges. Demonstrated progress on existing WPF grants (if applicable) will be a factor in evaluating requests for funding.
Focus Population	Program should focus on providing supports for traditionally marginalized communities including low-income groups, people of color, and non-English language speakers.
Cost to Families	Programming and services are provided at no or low cost to families.
Accessibility	Planned services should take place in accessible locations, during convenient times, with consistently available language supports for non-English speaking individuals.
Budget	The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities, numbers of families served, and the stated results.

Budget

How much money is available?

The maximum amount of funding that organizations may request for direct expenses is \$800,000 total over three years. Requests of any size up to the maximum amount are welcome. Regardless of request amount, a clear justification must be provided in the budget narrative.

WPF has allocated \$4.5 million to advance this objective through this RFP.

What should I include in my proposed budget?

Project budgets should cover up to 36 months of funding. Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any regrants to partner organizations or fees to consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget. All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, professional development, and implementation are eligible for funding.

Anything else I should know?

If you are awarded funding, you will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how you have made progress toward the objective above and what you have learned during the year.

Organizations funded through this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.

How to Apply

If you answered “yes” to all the questions in the “Quick Check” on page 5 and meet all the review criteria on pages 6-8, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at <https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by **5:00PM ET on October 22, 2026**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please [click here](#).**

Selected organizations will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants’ work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact **Amanda Charles, Senior Program Officer, Children and Families** at acharles@williampennfoundation.org.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 1:00PM ET.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/williampennfoundation>.

Timeline

September 9, 2026

Proposal submission period opens.

September 16, 2026

Informational Webinar (see bottom of this page)

October 22, 2026

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

November 11-16, 2026

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

November 16-December 14, 2026

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

February 5, 2027

WPF Board review selected proposals.

February 8, 2027

Project implementation can begin.