



Request for Inquiries

Diversifying Early Education Leadership Fellowship Program

William Penn
WILLIAM PENN
FOUNDATION

Project Need and Overview

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a longstanding interest in investments that help to ensure that children from low income families have access to high quality early learning opportunities. As part of that effort, the Foundation supports the development of model programs and pathways that prepare, develop, and retain early childhood education (ECE) professionals at the classroom, center, and system levels.

With our focus on Philadelphia's ECE landscape, we are conscious of the changing demographic composition of children in our city and want to be sure that the professionals engaged in ECE reflect the students and families they serve. While 75% of infants and toddlers, and 75% of local ECE teachers and directors are people of color, only 42% of local ECE policy leadership positions are filled by people of color.¹ As a city, we need to ensure that our systems are intentionally preparing for our future.

One way in which WPF seeks to prepare the ECE field to meet the needs of our professionals, families, and children is by creating an ECE leadership fellowship program, to be known as the Diversifying Early Education Leadership (DEEL) Fellowship Program. The fellowship program will build on the existing knowledge and skills of ECE professionals of color and will help organizations develop the inclusive practices needed to further diversify the local ECE leadership cohort.

In 2017, Philadelphia's Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity, with support from the William Penn Foundation, conducted a planning process for the creation of an early childhood education policy fellowship. Input was collected from an advisory committee of local stakeholders and from fellowship program directors around the country. The resulting recommendations informed the key components of the DEEL Fellowship Program.

The goals of the DEEL Fellowship Program are to:

- Increase leadership and policy expertise for professionals of color who work within Philadelphia's early childhood sector.
- Support participating agencies to design organizational policies and practices that support equity among the diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups represented by their workforce and the families they serve.
- Provide opportunities for leaders and organizations to complete a project that will advance ECE opportunities in Philadelphia.

¹ These percentages are based on a survey conducted in February 2018 by a Running Start to assess the landscape of ECE policy in Philadelphia.

Program Elements

WPF requests Letters of Inquiry to develop and implement a fellowship program for mid-career ECE professionals of color. The fellowship will offer participants and host organizations the opportunity to develop new knowledge and skills related to ECE leadership and to explore workplace issues that promote equity. In addition, establishing an ECE policy fellowship will give local non-profit organizations or government agencies the opportunity to undertake specific projects that align with the goals and objectives outlined in *A Running Start*, Philadelphia's plan to improve early learning supports for children from birth to age five.

The fellowship program will provide participants with instruction, workplace experience at a host agency, mentorship, project development, leadership development opportunities, and career pathway support. The cohort-based fellowship will include professional development, culminating in a certificate from an institute of higher education. Instruction will include participation from leaders with extensive experience in the ECE leadership and policy landscape locally and nationally. Fellows and host agencies will have the opportunity to engage collectively in transformative practices that address gaps in racial diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace. Throughout the fellowship experience, fellows will work with host agencies to conduct a culminating project that addresses a specific challenge within the local ECE sector. The culminating project will be documented and disseminated to catalyze action among local stakeholders.

Eligibility

Organizations with extensive experience in leadership development with diverse professional audiences will be considered. Organizations must possess the capacity to manage or coordinate:

- fellowship program design
- host agency recruitment and selection
- fellow recruitment and selection
- fellowship program implementation
- evaluation

The applying organization will also have experience with (or will collaborate with an agency that specializes in) helping organizations to learn about and implement efforts to address staff diversity, equity, and inclusive practices. Examples of the types of organizations that could apply would include organizations and agencies with a focus on advancing the educational needs of children, universities with a strong early childhood education or education policy component, leadership development organizations, and government entities. Collaborations among multiple organizations are encouraged.

Goals & Objectives

The inquiry should describe how the applying organization would:

- **Design a fellowship program for mid-career professionals of color in ECE**
 - Solicit input from local stakeholders to inform program development.
 - Recruit ECE and higher education leaders to develop a curriculum that will result in a certificate from an institution of higher education.
 - Develop a formal evaluation plan to assess progress and outcomes.
 - Develop a funding and sustainability plan.

- **Recruit and coordinate host agencies that have a history of providing services within the local ECE policy and leadership environment (birth-5)**
 - Ensure fellowship placement where the fellow is supported by staff members, has access to the tools and resources to complete a project, and has the ability to engage in professional and career development programming.
 - Provide opportunities for fellows to apply what they are learning, in sequence with the fellowship curriculum.
 - Assign a senior level staff member at each agency to provide consistent mentorship to fellows, over the course of a 2-year fellowship.

- **Recruit and support fellows, using a competitive process, with the following qualifications:**
 - Professionals of color with 10-15 years of experience in the early childhood sector including at least 5 years of direct service.
 - Professionals from a select group of related sectors (e.g., social work, public policy, law) with a demonstrated interest in ECE should be considered for participation; however, priority selection should be given to early childhood professionals.

- **Coordinate fellowship projects that will:**
 - Address a specific need in the local ECE community, aligned with goals articulated in *A Running Start*.
 - Promote solutions to barriers that discourage equal access to leadership roles within the workplace.
 - Build the host agencies' capacity to develop or reform policies and systems that support the children within their service community.
 - Create a product or process that will be shared among local stakeholders.

Review criteria

The Fellowship Program should address the following criteria:

Intensity	The fellowship should promote substantive fellow learning and host agency engagement opportunities, over a 2-year period. Professional development opportunities should include interaction with senior-level sector and organization leaders.
Purpose	The proposed fellowship program is very clear about its goals and the competencies that fellows and host agencies will be expected to master.
Local ECE Interest and Contribution	The fellowship should elevate local policy and system-building goals and fellows' projects should align with <i>A Running Start Philadelphia</i> agenda.
Career Enhancement	The fellowship should strengthen the capacity and leadership of fellows, by providing them with exposure to ECE leaders and decision-makers.
Equity Focused Impact	The fellowship should have a sustainable impact on the host agencies' ability to implement high quality diversity and equity focused practices.
Coordination	The scope and sequence of the fellowship should reflect coordination between lessons in the training curriculum and interaction with host agencies.

Applying organizations should demonstrate the following attributes:

Local knowledge	Organizations should be familiar with the local ECE landscape and have the ability to connect with local stakeholders in the development of project deliverables.
Capacity	Preferred organizations will exhibit experience coordinating projects that involve multiple entities.
Higher education	Organizations should have the ability to establish a rigorous fellowship curriculum.
Evidence-based	Organizations should be informed about current research, evaluation, and state and city objectives that support high quality early childhood education for children from birth to five.
Expressed Cultural & Ethnic Interest	Organizations should possess interest, aptitude, and experience in workforce development opportunities for under-represented populations. Preferred organizations will be able to demonstrate authentic engagement with a network of mid-career professionals of color within ECE.
Organization Leadership Support	Expressed support for the fellowship program by organization or board level leadership is preferred.

Budget

The proposed project budget should reflect expenses associated with the design and implementation of two cohorts of a two-year fellowship program. Each cohort should include 10 fellows, with a total of 20 fellows completing the program at the end of the grant period. Proposed budgets should include costs associated with all aspects of project planning and implementation. Interested parties are encouraged to consider other sources of support that may also be leveraged for this project. (These could include public and private sources, in-kind support from participating organizations, and available educational scholarships and stipends.) Total maximum grant amount requested should not exceed \$800,000 for the duration of the four-year project.

Total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of participating organizations' total operating budgets during the grant period.

Timeline

Inquiry submission period opens	2/12/19
Letters of Inquiry due by 5:00 PM EST	3/8/19
Finalist identified and invited to submit full proposal	3/15/19
Full proposal due by 5:00 PM EST	4/5/19
Board review of selected proposal	7/19/19
Program implementation and evaluation	8/30/19-8/30/23

Process

The application process begins by submitting a response to the four inquiry questions below by March 8, 2019. The inquiry should be a maximum of 2,000 words. Inquiries should be submitted as an attachment to an email and sent to kbrown@williampennfoundation.org.

A team will review all responses submitted by the deadline and, by March 15, will select one applicant to submit a full proposal. The full proposal must be submitted to WPF no later than April 5, 2019. The WPF Board will review the proposal and the grantee will be notified regarding the final decision on July 19, 2019.

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 throughout the process, please contact Kellie Brown at Kbrown@williampennfoundation.org

Inquiry Questions

1. **Proposed project.** Describe the proposed project, including key activities. This section should describe the full scope of work, even if aspects are funded through other sources.

Please remember to include:

- i. Your approach to recruiting host agencies and ECE fellows
 - ii. Description of the role of any participating organizations, agencies, or institutions of higher education (including specific departments or schools)
 - iii. The content of coursework and focus of mentoring/support competencies
 - iv. Structure of fellowships (including intensity and duration)
 - v. Description of how host agencies will be helped to strengthen their approach to creating and sustaining an inclusive workplace
 - vi. Discussion of how the fellowship may affect service delivery of host agencies
 - vii. Information about how fellows' projects will advance the local ECE agenda
2. **Budget.** Total amount requested and total project budget. Please provide a budget estimate and bulleted list of budget items/categories that summarizes how funds will be used (e.g., staff time, meeting expenses, stipends, consultant fees, etc.)
 3. **Organizational capacity.** Describe current or past projects and other relevant experiences that exemplify your organization's ability to implement this project. Please include descriptions of how you have evaluated success of those efforts. Also describe how issues related to equity in workforce development opportunities fit within your organization's mission and vision.
 4. **Key staff.** Please provide descriptions of relevant experience for the staff members who will play key roles in this project and a brief description of their role.