



Request for Inquiries

FAMILY LITERACY INITIATIVE

Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in programs that support early development and improve school readiness and academic success for children. Recognizing that primary caregivers* play an essential role in supporting social, emotional, and academic outcomes for children, WPF seeks to increase opportunities to support adults in their role as their child's first teacher.

The Family Literacy Initiative will increase access to two-generation literacy programming in Philadelphia. This initiative will help organizations deepen and expand the connections between adult and child literacy programming and improve language and literacy skills and practices for adults and children.

Background

Family literacy programs (also known as family learning, intergenerational literacy, or, more recently, two-generation programs) are based on the premise that caregivers play a crucial role in their children's language and literacy development and academic achievement, and that both adults and children need access to educational services.

* Throughout this document, the term caregivers will be used to refer to the parents, other adult family members, or guardians who have primary responsibility for raising a child.

Family literacy emerged in the late 1980s with the federally funded Even Start Family Literacy Program, which was designed to “integrate early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic and secondary-level education and instruction for English language learners), parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities for low-income families.”¹ Family literacy is still funded in several states and local communities.² It remains a critical strategy to increase the education levels of caregivers and their children. Research has shown that overall, family literacy programming strengthens children's literacy skill development³ and parental education outcomes.⁴ Family literacy programs take many forms, but they share a common goal of providing some form of adult and early childhood education and equipping caregivers to support their children's learning.

Family Literacy Initiative

Overview

WPF requests Letters of Inquiry for three-year projects that embrace a **two-generation approach** to engaging children and families in literacy building activities.

WPF seeks to fund 5-7 programs in Philadelphia that focus on implementing best practices from the field of family literacy and include explicit programming for adults and children as well as intergenerational literacy activities.

Eligibility

- **Community-based organizations:** social service organizations, neighborhood associations, religious institutions, childcare centers, medical providers, community development organizations, recreation centers, and others that are firmly rooted in their communities and serve families with young children.
- **Public institutions** such as libraries, government entities, K-12 schools, and colleges.
- **Organizations with** experience providing literacy-based programming to adults and/or children.

Objectives

The objectives of the three-year (December 2018-December 2021) initiative are to:

- **Implement** high-quality, linguistically and culturally responsive family literacy programs in low-income communities in Philadelphia;
- **Develop or strengthen** partnerships between current adult and children's literacy initiatives;
- **Identify** program practices and strategies that successfully reach low-income families and young children ages 0-8 in high-quality literacy experiences;
- **Evaluate** the impact of family literacy programming on children and adults;
- **Build** a network of family literacy professionals and educators to foster peer learning, collaboration, and resource sharing; and
- **Disseminate** evaluation findings to relevant stakeholders, including educators, practitioners, policy makers, researchers, government officials, and community organizations.

Project Criteria

Proposed projects should be informed by research and evidence. Although the project design is flexible and will be tailored to the community and target audience, all proposed projects should address the following criteria:

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| Community Need | The inquiry demonstrates a clear understanding of community and family needs and the likely pool of participating families. The project focuses on a population and/or neighborhood or geographic area where there is demonstrated need for family literacy services. |
| Participant Involvement | The inquiry describes how families were consulted in shaping the proposal; how they will be involved in informing program planning, implementation, and evaluation; and how high levels of family engagement and participation will be maintained. The inquiry describes how partners have successfully undertaken efforts to engage caregivers in the past. |
| Three Integrated Program Components | The inquiry describes three integrated programmatic components that have a strong research base and will have sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the desired outcomes: (1) Adult Education: develop adults’ ability to support their children’s literacy and education, engage with their children’s teachers and schools (daycare, preschool, K-12), and develop their own language and literacy skills. The adult education component does not need to be a traditional GED®, ABE, or literacy class, but it should include activities that enhance parents’ language and print and digital literacy development. (2) Interactive Literacy: offer interactive, intergenerational literacy activities and help caregivers apply the strategies they have learned with their children. (3) Early Childhood Education: provide language- and literacy-focused educational activities for children age birth to 8. (Families may bring children older than 8, but child outcomes will only be measured for the target age group.) |
| Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness | The inquiry demonstrates how the intervention will be culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate, including the provision of interpreters and translation, if needed. |

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| <p>Support Services and Participant Resources</p> | <p>The program will provide adequate support services so that participants can attend activities and access resources needed to implement learning activities at home (e.g., transportation, childcare, learning materials, incentives, food during program activities, social service referrals). Include information on staffing related to providing support services and making referrals. The applicant must also describe a plan to provide the intervention during convenient times for families and describe how families will be recruited.</p> |
| <p>Organizational Resources and Capacity</p> | <p>The inquiry has a preliminary plan for implementation, including identifying existing or new staff members who have the necessary qualifications and other resources needed to effectively deliver the intervention.</p> |
| <p>Partnership</p> | <p>The project builds on and connects with relevant resources, initiatives, and organizations in Philadelphia to provide the educational and support services such as Read by 4th, myPLACE, school initiatives, early childhood education, and home visiting programs.</p> |
| <p>Sustainability</p> | <p>The inquiry identifies ideas about how the intervention will be sustained beyond the grant period.</p> |

Evaluation

Funded projects will participate in an external, outcomes and formative evaluation. The evaluation will assess whether the family literacy programs influence:

a) Children's outcomes

- Language and literacy growth (e.g., development in phonological awareness, oral language, vocabulary, alphabetic awareness).
- Educational and literacy outcomes in school (e.g., reading at grade level, kindergarten readiness, reading gains) and/or out-of-school settings (e.g., reading frequency and enjoyment, library usage, literacy practices at home).

b) Caregiver outcomes

- Support for and involvement in their child's language and literacy growth.
- Involvement in their child's education (e.g., engagement with schools/centers, supporting learning and literacy at home).
- Involvement in everyday literacy practices (e.g., ability to access and enjoy reading, library usage, reading at home).
- Development of their own language and print and digital literacy skills.

c) Implementation

- Project structure and staffing
- Building on and connecting with pre-existing resources and initiatives.
- Participant demographics and experiences.

Participation in the program evaluation will be expected through data submission, communication with evaluators, and site visits. Information collected in the formative evaluation will be shared with sites for continuous improvement.

Budget

Project budgets should cover three years of funding and may include up to six months for planning and professional development. Organizations are welcome and encouraged to build on existing programs, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts. Preliminary project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the Inquiry Form narrative.

The most competitive inquiries will have total project budgets under \$350,000. Total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of participating organizations' operating budgets during the grant period.

All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, and implementation, are eligible for funding.

Professional development, technical assistance and external evaluation costs should not be included, as this will be covered by WPF separately.

Timeline

June 5, 2018

Inquiry submission period opens

June 14, 2018

Informational Webinar (see below)

June 29, 2018

Inquiry forms due by 5:00 PM EST

July 16, 2018

Select applicants invited to submit proposals

August 10, 2018

Proposals from invited applicants due by 5:00 PM EST

November 3, 2018

Board review of selected proposals

December 2018 – December 2021

Program implementation and evaluation

Process

The application process begins by submitting an [Inquiry Form](#) through the WPF website by **June 29, 2018**. The [Portal Resource Guide](#) can help walk organizations through the process of using the Foundation’s grant portal. A team will review all Inquiry Forms and invite select applicants to submit a full proposal.

In addition to completing the Inquiry Form, please attach a brief summary as “additional documentation” describing the project’s key staff, target age group, number of children to be served, and program duration and frequency of services.

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 Jennifer Stavrakos at jstavrakos@williampennfoundation.org.

Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an informational webinar on Thursday, June 14th at 3:00 PM EST.

Please use this [link](#) to register for the webinar.

Citations

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/index.html>

² <https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/policy/changing-the-course-of-family-literacy>

³ For example: van Steensel, R., Herppich, S., McElvany, N., & Kurvers, J. (2012). How effective are family literacy programs for children's literacy skills? In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (2nd ed., pp. 135-148). New York: Routledge.

⁴ For example: Sabol, T. J., Sommer, T. E., Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Brooks-Gunn, J., Yoshikawa, H., King, C. T., . . . Ross, E. C. (2015). Parents' persistence and certification in a two-generation education and training program. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 58, 1-10.

Resources

Family Engagement Resources

- Parent Engagement and Leadership Opportunities: <https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/professional-development/practitioners-guide-6>
- Participatory Practices in Adult Education: <https://www.amazon.com/Participatory-Practices-Adult-Education-Campbell/dp/0805837051/>

Adult Education Resources

- Adult education and literacy resources (LINCS): <https://lincs.ed.gov/resource-collection/topic-areas>
- Adult education: What makes teaching effective? https://www.calpro-online.org/documents/CALPRO_BRIEF_13_508.pdf

Early Childhood Education, Language, and Literacy Resources

- National Association for the Education of Young Children: www.naeyc.org
- Phonological awareness is child's play: http://teachingcommons.cdl.edu/tk/modules_teachers/documents/PhonologicalAwarenessIsChildsPlay.pdf

Interactive Literacy Activities

- Practitioner Guides: <https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/professional-development/ila-guide>
<https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/professional-development/practitioner-guide-2-8-24-12>

Programmatic Examples

- Implementing an intergenerational literacy program with authentic literacy instruction: Challenges, responses, and results: <http://educ-lled2016.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/02/201009AndersonPurcell-GatesFullReport.pdf>
- Literacy for Life: An Intergenerational Literacy Program (A Handbook for Practitioners) <http://educ-lled2016.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/02/201009AndersonPurcell-GatesGagneCollierHandbook.pdf>

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Program Resources

- Head Start cultural and linguistic responsiveness resource catalog: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/resource-catalogue-cultural-linguistic-responsiveness.pdf>
- Literacy for Life (see above)
- Working with preliterate and beginning literacy level parents in family literacy and parent involvement programs: <https://ed.psu.edu/goodling-institute/professional-development/practitioner-guide-3-11-27-12>