

**\*\*\*UPDATED 9/19/2018**

**Project Name or Description:** NOEEN City Seats Program Evaluation

**Client:** Agenda for Children and the New Orleans Early Education Network

**Address:** 8300 Earhart Blvd, Suite 201; New Orleans, LA 70118

**Contact Person:** Jen Roberts, Executive Director of NOEEN ([jen@noeen.org](mailto:jen@noeen.org))

**Rolling Applications; Due by:** **Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m.** (new deadline)

### **Background/Introduction.**

In December 2017, the Mayor of New Orleans and the New Orleans City Council committed to providing a historic allocation of \$750,000 to fund early childhood education seats for children ages zero to three in the city. This historic investment represents the first time the City of New Orleans has made public investment in the creation of new “seats” for early childhood education and is a remarkable first step to ensure that every child in New Orleans receives access to quality care and learning opportunities, ages 0-5.

Six high-quality childcare centers were selected in summer 2018 to participate. They each represent a child care center in a City planning district. They include: Children’s Palace Learning Academy; Cuddly Bear Child Development Center; Hoffman Early Learning Center; Open Minds, Open Hearts Daycare; Royal Castle Child Development Center; and Wilcox Academy for Early Learning. Each center receives approximately 8-10 seats which are spread across infants, 1 year old, and 2 year old classrooms.

This project is an initiative of the New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN), who acts as the grantee and primary manager of this project. Partners include Agenda for Children, which provides coordination support of the project, training and coaching to every teacher in every classroom of the selected centers, and the administration of the ITERS and/or CLASS-Toddler assessment in each classroom. Other partners include the New Orleans Speech and Hearing Center, which conducts a vision and hearing assessment of every child in the program; EnrollNOLA, which provides program enrollment and re-enrollment support to the families and centers; and the New Orleans City Council and Mayor’s Office, who provided the initial funding and ongoing counsel for the project.

This public investment also leveraged additional support from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation to support the creation and evaluation of new learning opportunities in both licensed settings and informal play spaces that aim to provide quality early experiences for children ages 0-3 from low-income families. These resources enable partnerships with the Tulane Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Support Services (TIKES) and TrainingGrounds, Inc. TIKES provides mental health coordination services to the participating centers and child-level assessment services of each child including the administration of the DECA and the Working Model of the Whole Child Interview. TrainingGrounds provides parents, caregivers and teachers with formal training (workshops) as well as informal learning opportunities on child development through the expansion of their We PLAY Center.

This project is currently funded from August 1, 2018 through July 31, 2018. Although we hope that funding will be available for these seats beyond the 2018-19 school year, the current agreement with the City of New Orleans is for one year only with an annual budgeting process beginning each November. We are hopeful and optimistic that this project, *and potentially this evaluation project*, will be extended for multiple years.

### **Research Project Objectives + Goals.**

Given this historic investment, it is necessary, *to the extent possible on the timeline provided*, to assess the impact of these new seats on children, families, and the centers who are participating. Our guiding research questions include (in priority order):

- How/Did the program increase low-income children's access to high-quality early childhood education, if at all?
- How did participation in the program affect parents' understanding of child development, confidence in their role as their child's first teacher and/or effective parenting practices?
- How did participation in the program affect parents' ability to get and/or maintain employment?
- How did program interventions affect teachers in the participating centers, if at all?
- How has the program impacted the participating early childhood centers, if at all?
- How did the extra supports provided through NOEEN partnerships (TrainingGrounds, Tulane TIKES) affect the experiences of centers, families, and students?

In addition, we are also interested if there are any emerging themes for our secondary research questions:

- How has the program potentially impacted the early childhood education ecosystem?
- How is the City's investment in publicly funded childcare access perceived by childcare providers and/or the general public?
- How/Did the program increase the school readiness of the participating children?

We are eager to see additional questions presented by a Research Team should these be incomplete.

### **Timeline.**

Students and centers enrolled in the pilot project on August 6, 2018 and programming is in progress. Submissions to this request for proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, October 5, 2018. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and questions/clarifications will be sent upon review. The evaluator will need to begin work immediately upon selection. We aim to have a contract in place no later than mid-October. The project must be completed in July 2019.

### **Required Deliverables.**

The research team will provide a report of findings following a schedule of partial submittals to be established in conjunction with NOEEN. Those submittals will include:

#### **a. Written Report + Presentation**

- A preliminary progress report in November 2018. This will be used to guide the City's budgeting request on the project's impact to date.
- A progress report on research findings and analysis in March 2018.
- A final report on findings and presentation slide deck, to be submitted in early July 2018.

*Note: The schedule should allow time for review and comments by Agenda for Children/NOEEN.*

#### **b. Meetings + Communication**

Periodic meetings with NOEEN and Agenda for Children staff will be scheduled to address questions and interim findings of the team. It is expected that meetings will occur, at a minimum,

bi-monthly, but may be scheduled more or less frequently as required and can be conducted via teleconference.

**c. External Presentations + Dissemination of Results**

Given the high profile nature of this project, external reports on findings, both preliminary and final, may be required as the project progresses and may need to be subject to embargo as needed. Research team, or designee, should be prepared to present findings, as needed, to City Council, City of New Orleans representatives, and external stakeholders, as warranted.

**Elements of Proposal Required + Submission.**

All proposals should include the following components:

A.	Definition/Expansion of Research Questions	What are the appropriate research questions that can be effectively answered on the timeline and budget provided?
B.	Methodology	How will the team answer the research questions on the timeline and budget provided? How does this align with the deliverable schedule?
C.	Proposed Project Schedule	What activities will be conducted and when will they occur? This should include reference to the deliverable schedule mentioned in the above section along with a clear description of Activities.
D.	Anticipated Roles and Responsibilities of Partners	What will the research team need from each partner to ensure appropriate data collection or support? As several partners are included on this project, what will the team need from them to help glean the best information?
E.	Challenges and Mitigation Strategy	What are some potential or anticipated challenges that might occur in the evaluation and how will your team mitigate them?
F.	Budget	How much will this cost? The budget should be clearly line itemed with each item clearly corresponding to the proposal. You should also include information on your payment terms corresponding with deliverables.
G.	Bios and Team Experience	Who is on the research team? Include a brief bios of Research Team member(s). This should include details inclusive of details of similar work conducted in the past, if not clearly apparent based on bio. It should also include who is responsible for each component of your RFA proposal.
H.	References**	Contact info for two prior clients that can speak to research team's capabilities

\*\* This is requested to expedite the review process. References will not be contacted without your prior knowledge.

Please submit these materials electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 12 to [jen@noeen.org](mailto:jen@noeen.org). Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis and applicants may be contacted for clarifications or additional information upon submission. **We urge you to submit early as we are aiming to begin quickly and will select a contractor as soon as possible.**

**Evaluation of Scopes and Proposals.**

Proposals in Response will be evaluated on the basis of criteria set forth below:

Experience	The research team's background and experience in early childhood, research and evaluation, and program assessment is clear. The research team has clear experience running high profile program evaluations. The research team's experience working with	30%
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	education partners, nonprofit partners, and vulnerable populations is clear. The research team appears to have significant credibility with external stakeholders.	
Organizational Capacity	The Research Team's organizational capability is clear. The timeline proposed makes sense and corresponding roles and duties of the members of the Team are evident. The proposed project activities look doable given the team's strengths and bios.	20%
Approach and Methodology	The Research Team's approach to the Research Project and methodologies proposed are sound. The Proposal has a good understanding of the potential challenges with clear problem solving strategies. Centers and Partners do not appear burdened by the evaluation. Efforts are made to fully answer the research questions in direct or creative ways. Approach can be built on for future years should project funding be renewed.	40%
Cost	Cost of Evaluation is commensurate with local market rate and appropriate for scope provided.	10%

**Budget Scope.**

Not to exceed \$50,000. Payment will be issued according to payment terms negotiated by NOEEN and the research team.

**Other Considerations.**

- Commitment to values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential and must be demonstrated.
- The proposed project team shall bring together expertise in early childhood education and/or related fields. Experience with childcare facilities, nonprofit organization partners, and vulnerable populations is required.
- The proposed research team should have clear demonstrated experience with high profile evaluations. Previous experience related to assessment of public funding is optimal but not required if experience is deep in other areas.
- The proposed research team should have at least one member with an advanced degree in a related field or clearly identified commensurate experience indicating expertise in program development and assessment.
- It is expected that the Research Team will leading and executing on the evaluation work, not simply facilitating the solicitation of information from partners. Research proposal should ensure that the focus of partners remains on education and care of young learners, not "responding to evaluation requests".
- Given the high profile nature of this project and the timeline, flexibility and comfort with a fast paced nature of the project will be essential.

**Basis of Award.**

Agenda for Children and NOEEN will select an evaluator to the Team/Consultant whose proposal in response is determined to be the most advantageous to and in the best interest of the project, taking into consideration the aforementioned criteria and considerations. Final contracting is subject to successful negotiation of terms.

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