

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)
Rolling Applications; Due by: ~~September 6, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.~~

Due to Interruptions caused by Tropical Storm Gordon, this deadline has been extended until 12:00 p.m. on Monday, September 10th.

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 in this historic project. 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; 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 TrainingGrounds and the Tulane Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Support Services (TIKES). 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 opportunities to acquire knowledge needed to prepare children with skills necessary to be successful in school and beyond and offers We PLAY Centers and workshops for parents and professionals.

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, but are not limited to:

- How/Did the program increase low-income children's access to high-quality early childhood education?
- How/Did the program increase the school readiness of the participating children?
- How did participation in the program affect parents' ability to get and/or maintain employment?
- 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 program interventions affect teachers?
- How has the program impacted the participating early childhood centers?
- How has the program potentially impacted the early childhood education ecosystem?
- How did the extra supports provided through NOEEN partnerships (TrainingGrounds, Tulane TIKES) affect the experiences of centers, families, and students?
- How is the City's investment in publicly funded childcare access perceived by childcare providers and/or the general public?

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 Wednesday, September 5, 2018. Proposal applicants may need to conduct a telephone call on Friday, September 7 for any clarifications regarding their proposal and/or to conduct a final interview. The evaluator will be selected no later than the week of September 11, 2018 with work to begin immediately. 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 report, including an overview of the project goals, tasks, and methodology and findings to date to be submitted in November 2018.
- Progress reports on research findings and analysis in March 2018.
- A final report on findings, including identified correlative factors if found, and analysis, with 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-weekly, 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 will 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 of Research Questions – what are the research questions? This should include, but not be limited to, the guiding questions proposed in the section above.
- b. Methodology – how will the team answer the research questions?
- c. Proposed Project Schedule
- d. Anticipated Roles and Responsibilities of Partners, specifically details related to responsibilities and roles of all partners including Research Team/evaluator, Agenda for Children/NOEEN, childcare partners, families, etc. – what will the research team need from each partner to ensure appropriate data collection?
- e. Brief description of potential anticipated challenges + mitigation strategy
- f. Budget and desired payment schedule/terms
- g. Brief bios of Research Team member(s) inclusive of details of similar work conducted in the past
- h. Contact info for two prior clients that can speak to research team’s capabilities – *note: This is requested to expedite the review process and references will not be contacted without the research team’s prior knowledge*

Please submit these materials electronically no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 5 to jen@noeen.org. *Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis and applicants may be contacted for clarifications or additional information upon submission.*

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 with respect to the disciplines and issues covered in the Research Project. The research team’s experience working with education partners, nonprofit partners, and vulnerable populations is clear.	20%
Organizational Capacity	The Research Team’s organizational capability and the clear definition of roles and duties of the members of the Team, as well as clear lines of communication among them, particularly with regard to interdisciplinary and practitioner input.	40%
Approach and Methodology	The Research Team’s approach to the Research Project and methodologies proposed.	30%
Cost	Cost of Evaluation is commensurate with local market rate and appropriate for scope provided.	10%

Budget Scope.

The research team will complete the above described work for a fee to be provided in response by applicant. 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 strongly preferred.
- 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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