Pilot Study Using Administrative Data to Evaluate "Child Find" Early Identification Systems

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Request for Applications: **Responses Due October 15, 2021**

This funding opportunity is open to universities, state governmental agencies as well as non-governmental organizations.

Background

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) collaborates with The National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement efforts supported by the "*Learn the Signs. Act Early.*" program. CDC's "*Learn the Signs. Act Early.*" program aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need. "*Learn the Signs. Act Early.*" research and evaluation projects funded through partnership with AUCD advance understanding of how to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities, especially among population groups with health disparities.

Purpose

Every state and territory has a system in place to provide low or no cost early intervention services to children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA requires a "Child Find" system for locating all children in need of early intervention services.

This project will support evaluation of Child Find activities in 1-2 states using existing administrative data from the state early intervention (Part C) program and at least one other early childhood program such as preschool special education (Part B of IDEA), Medicaid, and developmental screening registries or a data system that already includes linked data from the Part C program and other early childhood programs.

The funded recipient/s would propose and implement a data analysis plan that includes linking Part C with other data or leverage existing linked data systems to answer evaluation questions most relevant to the state. It is expected that applicants have access to the data needed for the analysis and/or have data use

agreements in place. Evaluation questions will be determined based on the needs of the state and the data available. Lessons learned will be shared through the Act Early Network. Questions might include:

1. What are the demographic and other characteristics (sex, race/ethnicity, geographic residence, type of developmental concern/ disability, insurance status, medical home status, etc.) of children who receive Part C services, compared to children in the general population, or children later identified with disabilities that do not receive Part C services?
2. What characteristics of children are associated with receipt of both early intervention and preschool special education services, compared to those of children only receiving one type of service?
3. Which community programs are most likely to monitor, screen and refer children for developmental concerns?
4. What disparities (geographic, race or ethnicity, other factors?) exist within your state in referral, eligibility, or service initiation for early intervention?
5. What data are lacking or unavailiable that would help to evaluate Child Find? What data are available to assess the role of developmental monitoring or *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* in Child Find?

Key Activities/Deliverables

- Recipient/s will participate in bimonthly or monthly check-ins with AUCD/CDC for technical assistance on the data linkage and analysis plan and implementation, discussing project progress, reporting, etc.
- Recipient/s must develop and carry out a data linkage and analysis plan to answer their evaluation questions.
- Recipient/s will produce actionable data to improve Child Find activities and address disparities in receipt of services in 1-2 states.
- Recipient/s will contribute to the published literature on Child Find by submitting at least one manuscript for peer-review/publication.
- Recipient/s will produce a final report including key findings and recommendations (including gaps to be addressed through future "*Learn the Signs. Act Early.*" activities).
- Recipients will share findings through a webinar with the Act Early Network.

Timeline

RFA Release: August 20, 2021
Informational Call: August 30, 2021 at 4p ET
Application Deadline: October 15, 2021
Notice of Awards: November 1, 2021
Project Start: November 15, 2021

Award

Maximum Number of Awards: 2
Award Ceiling: $228,000
Award Floor: $114,000
Project Period: November 15, 2021 to November 14, 2022

Application Procedure

If you are interested in being considered for this opportunity, please submit a written application, including all required attachments.

Please provide the following information:

1. **Key Project Personnel:**
   a. Provide name, affiliation, position, and contact information of the PI. Include a bio highlighting relevant training and recent professional experience and other relevant qualifications.
   b. Provide name, affiliation, position, of any key project personnel. Include a bio highlighting relevant training and recent professional experience and other relevant qualifications.
2. **Project Plan:**
   a. Project Narrative
      i. Provide a clear and concise description of your proposed project with detailed on how your project will fulfill the purpose of this funding opportunity and carry out key project activities/deliverables. Establish the need and briefly describe the priority population of children birth to 5 for your project in your state/territory.
   b. Data Analysis Plan
      I. Describe the proposed evaluation questions and data collection and analysis methods for your project. Include a description of project objectives, potential data source(s) and data use agreements, plan for securing Institutional Review Board agreements (if needed), sampling strategy, sample size (including plans to conduct a power analysis if needed), list of potential measures and covariates, data-gathering procedures, and analytic approach (including statistical methods).
3. **Evaluation and Data Analysis Capacity**
   a. Provide a clear and concise description of the capacity of your proposed team to conduct project evaluations and data analysis. In your description, summarize the team's training, experience, and any expertise with project evaluation (including developing and implementing a project evaluation plan, logic model, and reporting) and data analysis (including designing, conducting, and reporting data linkage and analyses).
4. **Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative:**
   a. Applicants should prepare a preliminary budget proposal based on anticipated costs (proposed budget).

    b. For each line item indicated in your proposed budget, provide a detailed explanation of how these funds will be used (budget narrative). Line items may include, but are not limited to, such things as: shipping, virtual meeting support, statistical software, evaluation support, staff time.

    c. Please note:

        i. This award is to be issued on a cost-reimbursement basis

        ii. The indirect cap on this award is 25.74%.

        iii. Monthly invoicing will be required.

5. **Letters of Support and Data Use Agreement(s):**

    a. Provide one written letter of support from the host organization.

    b. Provide one written letter of support from a partner organization or group that can attest to the host organization's capacity to successfully carry out this project.

    c. Written letter(s) of support must be provided from the Part C program and other early childhood programs who would be providing access to data, indicating support for the data analysis project and describing the applicant's access to data needed for analyses. These can be additional letters of support or be addressed by either the host or partner organization letters.

    d. If available, provide copies of existing data use agreements or MOUs with the Part C program and/ or other early childhood programs who would be providing access to data.

Please submit all application materials no later than October 15, 2021. Applications must be submitted through AUCD's Application Portal. You will receive a receipt notification of your application within 24 hours following submission. Applicants should expect to be notified of funding by November 1, 2021.

Informational Call

An informational call on the opportunity will take place on August 30, 2021 at 4p ET.
Registration link: https://bit.ly/37YHUrG.

A recording of the call, along with a transcript of all questions received by AUCD regarding the funding opportunity will be made available within 24 hours of the call.

Questions/More Information

Please contact Danielle Webber at dwebber@aucd.org with any questions regarding this opportunity.