

Support for Early Childhood State Systems Through the Act Early Network to Support Recovery and Strengthen Resilience Skills, Behaviors, and Resources of Children, Families, and Communities

Request for Application: Responses Due August 11th at 5:00pm ET

This funding opportunity is open to AUCD/CDC supported Act Early Ambassador-led or co-led state teams with representation from AUCD member centers and other key public health and early childhood partners.

About

Through a cooperative agreement, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will provide support to early childhood state/territorial programs and systems through the [Act Early Network](#) to support COVID-19 recovery and strengthen resilience skills, behaviors, and resources for children, families, and communities.

This funding opportunity is open to AUCD/CDC supported Act Early Ambassador-led or co-led state/territorial teams with representation from AUCD member centers and other key public health and early childhood partners.

A list of all current Act Early Ambassadors is [available here](#). If your state or territory is not currently represented by an Act Early Ambassador or is eligible (based on a population of over 10M) for representation by a second Act Early Ambassador, **a competitive Act Early Ambassador RFA is also available in conjunction with this funding opportunity.**

States and territories not currently represented by an Act Early Ambassador, and therefore eligible to apply include American Samoa, Guam, Michigan, Northern Mariana Islands, and West Virginia. States and territories currently represented by one Act Early Ambassador and eligible for a second based on population over 10M include: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Timeline

RFA Release: July 7, 2020

Informational Call: July 14, 2020 at 4:30pm ET

Application Deadline: August 11, 2020 at 5:00pm ET

Notice of Awards: September 1, 2020

Grant Objectives

This support opportunity is expected to bolster the 4 steps of early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, including the first step of parent-engaged developmental monitoring. A needs assessment should identify CURRENT barriers and opportunities across various early childhood systems/programs to improve each of the 4 steps of early identification, and a resulting plan should be developed, implemented, and evaluated to ameliorate barriers and realize opportunities for improvement in targeted systems/programs.

Additionally, this grant should advance the promotion and distribution of existing, relevant tools, materials, and programs to improve resiliency among families with young children during COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts. Though best defined as part of the needs assessment, resiliency promotion is likely to include the promotion of CDC and CDC partner resources to improve social determinants of health such as parental mental health, food security, parenting support, affordable quality childcare, medical home, and engagement and empowerment of families through information on early childhood and navigation of systems of care.

Grantees will:

1. **Develop and coordinate an [Act Early Ambassador](#)-led (or co-led) state/territory team** of key stakeholders. In addition to the Act Early Ambassador(s), teams must also include certain state/territory-level stakeholders:
 - Title V programs
 - Part C (Child Find efforts)
 - Help Me Grow (if applicable)
 - Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grants (if applicable)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Early Childhood Chapter Champions or other state AAP representative (if applicable),
 - a disability advocacy organization, and
 - state/territory and local leadership of at least one state/territory-wide program serving families with young children (birth to age 5) such as WIC, Child Welfare, Home Visiting, Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS), general early care and education programs, or others.
2. **Engage the state/territorial team in conducting a needs assessment** to identify CURRENT (during COVID-19) barriers and opportunities to the 4 key steps of early identification: (1) parent-engaged developmental monitoring, (2) developmental and autism screening, (3) referral, and (4) receipt of early intervention services for children birth to 5, across early childhood systems.
3. **Develop, implement, and evaluate a plan to address the identified barriers and realize the identified opportunities** related to the first step (parent-engaged developmental monitoring) AND any of the additional 3 steps of early identification.

Addressing step 1 (parent-engaged developmental monitoring) should include working to integrate the use of [“Learn the Signs. Act Early.” \(LTSAE\)](#) into at least 1 high-reach state/territory-wide program

serving families with young children (birth to age 5) such as WIC, Primary Healthcare, Home Visiting, IDEA Child Find activities (community/provider outreach activities to enroll children in Part C or Part B, section 619 programs), Childcare, Head Start/Early Head Start, and/or Child Welfare.

4. **Identify, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve resiliency of very young children (birth to age 5) and their families** by
 - supporting well-child care, developmental promotion, early detection of developmental delay, timely referral, and connection to early intervention services, linkages to services (e.g. WIC) for family support,
 - and advancing the promotion and distribution of relevant, existing CDC and CDC Partner tools, materials, and programs to improve resiliency among families with young children during COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts.

Award

Up to 56 Act Early Ambassador-led or co-led state or territorial-level teams will be selected to receive a minimum award of \$75,000 for a twelve-month project period beginning September 1, 2020. Should additional funding (greater than \$75,000) become available, a new budget may be requested.

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. **Team Composition:**
 - a. CDC/AUCD funded Act Early Ambassadors are expected to lead or co-lead the proposed team.

A list of all current Act Early Ambassadors is [available here](#). If your state or territory is not currently represented by an Act Early Ambassador or is eligible (based on a population of over 10M) for representation by a second Act Early Ambassador, **a competitive Act Early Ambassador RFA is also available in conjunction with this funding opportunity.** (This work is not intended to replace current Act Early Ambassador program commitments; it is intended to be complementary and increase capacity.)

States and territories not currently represented by an Act Early Ambassador, and therefore eligible to apply include American Samoa, Guam, Michigan, Northern Mariana Islands, and West Virginia. States and territories currently represented by one Act Early Ambassador and eligible for a second based on population over 10M include: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Clearly identify the team lead(s). Provide name, affiliation, position, and contact information of the team lead(s). Include a bio highlighting relevant training and recent professional experience and any qualifications. Include a CV (Word or PDF format) of the individual(s) performing the project lead duties as a separate attachment.

- b. Provide a list of the team members that will represent the required stakeholder groups (if applicable to your state/territory) and provide a brief written statement of commitment from each. Consider a diverse range of additional partners and stakeholders with particular attention to programs and populations especially affected by COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts.

2. Project Plan:

Project plan must not exceed ten (10) pages.

- a. Project Narrative
 - i. Provide a clear and concise description of your proposed project for achieving the 4 grant objectives described above. Establish need and briefly describe the population of children birth to 5 that will be targeted by your project in your state/territory.
- b. Implementation Plan
 - i. Describe in detail how your team will achieve each of the 4 above-stated objectives of this initiative. Give specific details about how you will:
 - a. Deploy efforts quickly and efficiently
 - b. Engage and collaborate effectively with all stakeholders
 - c. Prioritize strategies that will have a sustainable impact (beyond the funding period)
 - d. As well as evidence for why you are likely to be successful
 - ii. List proposed target systems and strategies to engage these target systems, including past collaborations and support
 - iii. Provide an overview of your proposed timeline with project milestones. List potential meetings, project start/end dates, trainings, and proposed project activities. Specific task deadlines and project timelines will be formally set after award.
- c. Evaluation Plan
 - i. Develop a preliminary, high-level plan for a process and outcome evaluation and a monitoring and quality improvement plan. Professional evaluation support will be provided by AUCD for all awarded states and territories, as well as a standardized template for the needs assessment component.
 - a. The high-level evaluation plan should include a draft logic model OR a table listing intended program activities and outcomes (the specifics of which will be finalized after the needs assessment). The [CDC Evaluation Framework](#) may be helpful in guiding your plan.

- b. Also be sure to describe the communication and dissemination plan for the evaluation, as sharing the findings of the project is a critical component for systems change.
- j. Describe process and outcome indicators with a focus on the integration of developmental monitoring using LTSAE and other steps of early identification, as well as increased numbers of families/children connected with resources to improve resiliency. Please use the CDC Evaluation Framework guidance for [indicator development](#).
 - *Process indicators might include number of LTSAE materials customized and printed locally, number of systems/programs integrating developmental monitoring, number of other resiliency resources promoted, and more.*
 - *Outcome indicators might include number of children monitored, number of children referred for screening, EI evaluation, number of children evaluated, receiving services or other support, number of policies developed to improve practices within and communication across systems to ensure children are screened, evaluated, and receive services, and more.*

3. 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:
 - i. Printing and Ordering Materials
 - ii. Shipping
 - iii. Virtual Meeting Support
 - iv. Customization Support
 - v. Evaluation Support
 - vi. Staff Time
- c. Please note:
 - i. These will be cost-reimbursable contracts.
 - ii. Payments and invoicing will be monthly.
 - iii. A copy of the most current audit will be requested upon award of your fiscal agent.
 - iv. The indirect cap on this award is 25.74%.

4. Letters of Support:

- a. Provide one written letter of support from the host organization of the team lead(s).
- b. Provide brief (< 300 words) statements of support and commitment from all members of the state team.



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Please [submit all application materials](#) no later than Tuesday, August 11th, at 5:00 pm ET. 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 Tuesday, September 1, 2020.

Informational Conference Call

An informational call on the opportunity will take place on July 14 at 4:30pmET. No pre-registration is necessary. The link to join this informational session is:

<https://zoom.us/join/92360179823>

A recording of the call, along with FAQs reviewed, will be made available.

Questions/More Information

If you have any questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Danielle Webber at dwebber@aucd.org