

ARRA STIMULUS FUNDS
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES
PART C EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ARKANSAS EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Request for Application

Application deadline: October 1, 2009

The Arkansas Early Intervention Program (Part C of IDEA) has received recommendations from the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Federal Technical Assistance Programs (Ex: Southeastern Resource Center (SERRC) and , National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) to have a task force review the current early intervention system in Arkansas. This task force would evaluate the program, review the system through the referral process and level and quality of services and their delivery.

ARRA stimulus funding provided a budget of \$ 252,290 which will be used as a process review with recommendations on how the early intervention can meet the federal guidelines for providing services to children in the most timely and effective way to provide needed outcomes.

Programs funded under this RFA will be selected based on their understanding of Part C of IDEA, their experience with other state systems of early intervention, and their proposal of intent for Arkansas.

Recommendations include:

- A systematic review of the Arkansas Part C Program
- Reporting of program effectiveness
- How Arkansas would use what is in place, and making needed changes
What changes can be made in present system that is in line with Federal requirements and what has been found to be effective in other states
- Development of a plan for sustainability as we move forward

The application process includes all phases, issuance of grant application, review, selection, notice of grant award, grant development, monitoring and technical assistance. The Grant is projected to commence by the fall of 2009.

A bidder's conference call is scheduled for **September 15, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.** **The conference call-in number is 1-800-643-8258.** The call will last no more than one hour. Questions may be sent prior to the call to: tracy.turner@arkansas.gov

I. Background/Early Intervention Program:

In 1986, Congress amended Public Law 94-142 with Public Law 99-457. Part H of this Legislation was known as the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was again amended in 1997 and Part H became Part C. This program provides guidelines for states to establish a statewide comprehensive, interagency, multidisciplinary, coordinated system of services to children, from birth to age thirty-six months, who are disabled or who are at risk for developing disabilities, and their families. The Arkansas Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS), a division within the Arkansas Department of Human Services, was designated the leadership role for coordinating and assuming the development and implementation of this program.

Since its inception the Part C Program in Arkansas has maintained the same data system and the same funding system. Research from other states show improved service systems with accountability, a more accountable funding systems for direct services, and more efficient data collection system. Recommendations from the federal monitoring program and the federal technical assistance programs have been given to Arkansas to seek an independent evaluation by experts in this field who could help restructure the program.

In order to build a better system which will support higher levels of referrals and provide appropriate levels of services with less funding Arkansas must seek a way to restructure that will build on a program already established.

II. Purpose of the Request for Application

The purpose of this RFA is to establish a plan to restructure the present system so that it runs efficiently and effectively in providing services to the birth to three year old children in the state of Arkansas.

This RFA will facilitate an approach to best practices in the present system while preparing it for a future with less funding and more referrals.

III. Schedule of Events related to the RFA

Request for Application issued/Advertised: August 20, 2009

Bidder's conference call: To be announced

Request for submission application date October 1, 2009

Notification of selection of grant applicants: October 15, 2009

Grant award effective: October 15, 2009-September 30, 2010

IV. Project Duration/Availability of Funding

The program funds are available for the one time project through September 30, 2010.

V. Notice of Grant Award

Notification of proposal selected will be made on October 15, 2009 and will be posted on the DHS Web site.

VI. Termination of Grant

Failure to comply with the terms of the grant may be grounds for termination of grant funding.

VII. Grant Review Procedure

A three member review panel will review, rate and evaluate applications and recommend those to be awarded based on the following criteria:

Compliance with AR Mandatory requirements (15 points)

Scope of Work (50 points)

Staff Qualifications (15 points)

Assurance (15 points)

Past partnerships (15 points)

Sustainability (Will this plan hold us through future federal changes, etc.) plan (15 points)

Financial criteria (50 points)

VIII. Selection Criteria/scoring availability and Format for submission

1. Executive Summary (required 1 page overview of the proposal, will not be evaluated or scored)
2. Applicant Information/eligibility to apply (complete cover sheet)
Specify the applicant type and provide background on the organization making application, their history and capacity to implement this request.

Eligible Applicants:

- Legally incorporated not for profit organizations with 501c3 tax exempt status
 - Community-based organizations
 - Faith Based Organizations
 - Arkansas Institution of Higher learning (colleges and universities)
 - A Consortia of groups may apply, but a single organization must be named as the primary responsible applicant
3. Compliance with Mandatory Requirements (15 points)
Fully address and provide documentation on each of the 5 items under mandatory requirements. These items must be provided for the proposal to be considered for funding.

- A. Director of Consultation Proposal: A Coordinator/director of the consultation proposal shall be identified. This director shall be responsible for quarterly reports to the Part C Program detailing planning, evaluation, and resulting report. Provide information on the director's educational attainment, past experience, and current responsibility.
 - B. Program/Business Requirements: Past experience in assessing programs such as the Part C Program in Arkansas, experience with IDEA requirements, and documentation of abilities to evaluate and present results of evaluation.
 - C. General requirements for Part C: Each applicant must demonstrate the ability to understand the components of a system such as Part C in Arkansas and what elements of that system are critical to its success given the Office of Special Education Program reporting requirements and monitoring process.
 - D. Geographic Location: Applicant should identify method that will be employed in evaluating different geographic regions of the state.
 - E. Consultation Presentation: Applicant should be able to present findings evidence in a written format that may be used by the state to make improvements and be able to include provide training and technical assistance if that evaluation information is used for improvements.
4. Scope of Work (50 Points)
- A. Establish and define recommended outcomes for each area targeted (20 points)
 - B. Describe in detail activities which will result in outcomes, describing in details hours related to each category. (30 Points)
5. Staff Qualifications (15 Points)
Describe staff needed for evaluation and their responsibilities.
6. Assurances (15 Points)
Applicants must provide assurances that they will consider the demographics, history, program make-up, and other factors specific to Arkansas when they began their examination.
7. Partnerships (15 Points)
Applicants must provide Arkansas with links to organizations which will assist in making recommended changes.
8. Sustainability (15 Points)
Applicants should be cognizant of future funding issues, will Arkansas be able to use the evaluation in such a way that it will carry them into the future regardless of the funding levels.
- IX. Financial Criteria (50 Points)
All budgeted items are to be directly related to the evaluation scope described in the proposal.
- Demonstration of Experience (20 Points)
Sufficient information should be provided to support stability of the applicant.
 - Budget justification (30 Points)
Applicant shall submit a line item budget and budget justification to identify the specific calculation for each budget line item.
- X. Submission of Proposal
- 1. Each item must be addressed.

2. Use the same numbers, numerals and letters in the same order as in RFA to ensure completeness of application.
3. Cover sheet must be completed, signed and attached to each copy of the proposal
4. Submit one original and 3 copies of the proposal. All budget/financial information is to be submitted in a separate envelope with original and 3 copies.
5. Program proposals shall not exceed a maximum of 15 pages double spaced, including the cover page and all attachments. Financial proposal (budget and budget justification) shall not exceed a maximum of 5 pages.
6. Proposal or to be hand delivered or mailed to:
ATTENTION: Tracy Turner, DDS Children's Services, P. O. Box 1437, Slot N504, Little Rock, AR 72203 or Donaghey Plaza North, 5th Floor. Must be received (whether hand delivered or mailed) no later than at 4 p.m. October 1, 2009.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

Evaluating the critical components of a state early intervention system

Applicant (Agency) _____ Tax ID # _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____ Phone _____

E-Mail Address (required) _____ Fax _____

Agency type (University, non-profit, etc.) _____

Proposed timeframes for initiation and
completion _____

Director/Coordinator _____ Education _____

Name of Person Submitting Application _____ Title _____

Date _____