

**Connecticut Public
RFP Community and Family Engagement
Questions and Answers**

Program Strategy

1. Are there any grant-required performance measures, reporting requirements, or outcome targets established by the U.S. Department of Education that proposers should consider when developing their measurement and evaluation approach? The DOE grant establishes one overall goal: to increase the number of people (families, educators, community members) served by CT Public's educational programming. Current performance measures include establishing a Year 1 baseline and tracking in areas like: website users, Nielsen cum audience, newsletter subscribers, and event attendance. CT Public's Digital Services Bureau will track these metrics and will work with the contractor to identify the method for collecting data from community and family engagement activities. As part of our goal to build our capacity and set a foundation for implementation during and post the grant period, the chosen contractor should propose a practical measurement and evaluation approach that supports the RFP's emphasis on continuous learning, sustainability, and improvement.

2. Beyond the deliverables outlined in the RFP, are there specific quantitative goals related to family engagement, educator participation, community partnerships, or usage of CT Public/PBS KIDS resources that will be used to evaluate the success of this initiative? No, we have not established additional quantitative targets beyond those initially mentioned through the grant and RFP. The grant's overarching goal is to increase the number of families, educators, and community members engaging with our PBS KIDS educational programming and supplemental resources. That said, we hope proposers recommend appropriate success measures in each of the areas as part of their approach. Measurement should include both quantitative indicators and qualitative feedback that can help the organization understand not only reach, but the effectiveness and sustainability of the engagement model.

3. What aspects of the Norwalk pilot does Connecticut Public consider most successful, and are there specific outcomes, engagement levels, or implementation practices that proposers should use as a foundation for this next phase of statewide expansion?

There are several aspects of the Norwalk pilot we saw as valuable, such as using a listen first approach, working with community partners, direct family engagement, parent feedback, bilingual resources, and available childcare to reduce participation barriers. We also discovered the importance of ongoing communication with participating families, the need for parent voice, professional development needs, and connections with ECE councils. Many of these lessons informed the scope of the current RFP.

There are no participation level or numerical outcome that proposers are required to replicate. Proposers should use the pilot's relationship-based, community-informed

approach as a foundation while recommending methods appropriate to the communities they propose to serve.

4. What level of statewide scaling is expected by the end of year two? During the two-year engagement we hope to establish a replicable and sustainable model that can ultimately be expanded statewide, but the primary focus is on those three priority regions (Hartford, New Haven including Waterbury and New London) with an expectation that contractors will implement in at least two of the three regions. The selected contractor will be expected to develop a final two- to three-year implementation roadmap that fully incorporates lessons learned from the initial work and recommendations for sustainability, funding, partnerships, and future statewide scaling. There is no expectation to have fully implemented any model statewide by the end of the contract

5. Can an out-of-state lead consultant meet the Connecticut-network requirement through a local partner? Yes. It is possible that an out-of-state consultant with deep ties to the state may demonstrate the required Connecticut knowledge and relationships through a qualified local partner. If this is the chosen method it would be important to identify key areas in the proposal:

- o The local partner and role.
- o The partner's relevant Connecticut relationships and experience.
- o Who/which organization will lead community outreach and relationship development.
- o How responsibilities and decision-making will be divided.
- o How the partnership will be staffed and managed throughout the two-year engagement. As another key indicator, the proposal should provide credible evidence that the team has the relationships necessary to work effectively in the proposed communities.

6. What resources, data, and Norwalk pilot materials will Connecticut Public provide? We will make available relevant existing materials and information, which may include:

- An overview of Norwalk pilot's design, activities and key lessons.
- Available participation, engagement, feedback, or outcome information from the pilot.
- Existing CT Public and PBS KIDS educational resources.
- Branding standards and promotional materials.
- Relevant grant requirements, deliverables, and reporting expectations.

Geographic Scope

1. Does Connecticut Public have a preferred strategy or level of regional coverage that would be viewed more favorably during proposal evaluation? No, we do not have a predetermined implementation strategy beyond what was stated in the RFP. Proposers may recommend an approach that reaches at least two of the identified regions (Hartford, New Haven including Waterbury, New London) during the contract period or propose a phased strategy encompassing all three. Proposals will be evaluated based on a holistic effort of the above and we feel proposers should explain why their recommended geographic strategy is appropriate.

2. Are there target communities within each county? No, outside of what was mentioned in the RFP. Proposers are encouraged to recommend communities based on demonstrated need, opportunities for partnership, reach, and the presence of trusted organizations serving children and families.

3. Does Connecticut Public currently have established relationships with community organizations, schools, libraries, early childhood councils, or other trusted partners in the target regions, and if so, to what extent will introductions and coordination be supported by Connecticut Public staff? Yes, we have a number of wide-ranging relationships and will work collaboratively with the selected contractor to identify and leverage relevant relationships where appropriate. It's important to note that we do not carry relationships in every corner of the state. That is an important component of the scope-of-work. CT Public staff will participate as partners and facilitate introductions to existing relationships where appropriate, but there is an expectation for the contractor to forge new connections.

Community Engagement

1. Can Connecticut Public provide guidance regarding the anticipated number, type, and scale of community engagement activities, family events, focus groups, listening sessions, and educator engagement activities expected during the two-year contract period? We intentionally did not prescribe a fixed number. Proposers should recommend an appropriate mix and frequency based on a number of factors, including regional coverage, resources, needs, budget and the overall strategy.

2. Please clarify the respective roles of Connecticut Public and the selected contractor regarding event promotion, participant recruitment, outreach, and marketing activities. The contractor is expected to provide the engagement strategy, community relationships, outreach guidance, implementation support, and recommendations necessary to effectively reach families, educators, and community partners.

Our organization will work in partnership with the contractor and provide access to necessary resources, including staff, as appropriate, but the contractor should anticipate playing an active role in identifying other channels, rather than solely rely on CT Public

resources. We'll have a Director of Education and a VP of Community Engagement who can provide overarching thought partnership and can connect with resources in the organization to support areas such as promotion, outreach and marketing activities to ensure brand alignment and provide access to promotional tools such as email blasts, our website and other platforms.

3. What communications, branding, outreach materials, bilingual resources, and promotional assets will Connecticut Public provide, and what materials are expected to be developed by the selected contractor? CT Public plans to provide educational resources, brand assets, and relevant existing family-facing materials. The grant includes continued development of resources in a number of categories and we would expect the proposer to consider how they would approach this. We can be helpful with marketing and communications. The contractor is not expected to assume responsibility for content production. However, proposers should identify materials they believe are necessary to implement their proposed strategy. Any materials representing CT Public or PBS / PBS KIDS would be developed or used in coordination with CT Public and in accordance with our brand standards.

4. To what extent is the selected contractor expected to recruit, manage, and support parent advisors, community ambassadors, volunteers, or other engagement participants? This is an excellent partnership question and we believe the relationship for the contractor is to design and implement approaches and to recommend the structure, recruitment strategy, roles, expectations, and supports needed for those models. There is an expectation that our selected contractor is actively involved in identifying and engaging participants during the implementation period. However, because sustainability and capacity building are central to the project, models should be designed so that CT Public can maintain and support successful approaches beyond the contract.

Educator Engagement

1. Does Connecticut Public already have relationships with RESCs, school districts, and early childhood networks? Yes, but limited. We have some relationships within our existing ecosystem and it makes sense to leverage relevant relationships where appropriate. That said, the contractor will also be expected to help identify and develop additional relationships necessary to reach educators and families in the selected communities.

2. Does Connecticut Public envision accredited professional learning opportunities that offer CEUs or continuing education credit? No. We are not an accredited/accrediting institution. There is no requirement that PD sessions provide continuing education credit.

Proposers are encouraged to recommend a format that will provide meaningful value to educators and ECE providers and support increased awareness and effective use of our PBS KIDS and supplemental educational resources. If a proposer recommends an

accredited or credit-bearing model (like SHRM, for example), the proposal should identify any associated requirements, partnerships, costs, or administrative considerations.

Data & Reporting

1. What reporting cadence is expected? During the project launch, we will work with the selected contractor as to the timing and approach for regular project-management meetings and periodic written progress reports with agreed upon goals that may be amended with mutual consent. We welcome proposers' recommendation as to reporting structures appropriate to their proposed methodology. At minimum, there is an expectation for regular progress updates addressing the varied components from the RFP, as well as detailed progress toward established measures and deliverables.

2. Are there federal grant-specific reporting requirements, performance measures, data collection protocols, or documentation standards that the selected contractor will be expected to support? The grant currently identifies measurement of growth in people served through our educational programming and establishes measures including the following: website users, Nielsen cumulative audience, newsletter subscribers, and event attendance, with a Year 1 baseline, as mentioned earlier. It is an organizational (not a contractor) responsibility to complete formal federal grant reporting. The selected contractor will be responsible for supplying information associated with its scope of work in a format and cadence established in partnership between the contractor and CT Public.

3. Does Connecticut Public currently utilize a CRM, participant management system, or other platform for tracking engagement?

CT Public's Digital Services Bureau will track the project's metrics and will work with the contractor to identify the method for collecting data from community and family engagement activities. Proposers should describe the tools and processes they recommend and the organization can work appropriately to either support the recommended approach or consider other processes or tools.

4. Who is the contractor's primary reporting recipient? The VP of Community Engagement will oversee this work and, during the project onboarding, will provide direction as to the cadence of meeting and reporting. A Director of Education/Project Manager will be hired and will be the primary liaison for the contractor.

5. What reporting cadence, data elements, templates, or federal grant requirements must be followed? Connecticut Public is responsible for reporting to the Department of Education on project progress. We will provide any required federal reporting instructions, measures, or templates that apply to the grant. It's important to note that proposers are not expected to independently interpret federal reporting requirements that have not been included in the RFP. However, they should demonstrate the ability to maintain accurate documentation and adapt their reporting approach to applicable grant requirements. Contractor will be required to provide a signed Conflict of Interest Form, Funds Use

Certification, and Equal Opportunity Employment Statement. As relates to ongoing reporting, during the project launch, we will work with the selected contractor as to the timing and approach for regular project-management meetings and periodic written progress reports with agreed upon goals that may be amended with mutual consent.

Budget

1. Is the \$129,600 budget intended to cover all project-related costs, or primarily consulting and implementation services? Yes. That amount represents the total amount available over the two-year period and proposals should be all-inclusive. It's our suggestion that costs include all expenses necessary to support the implementation strategies, to include translation, travel, and venue rental.

2. Is sponsorship development, fundraising, or partner resource development within the intended scope? No. Fundraising and sponsorship development are not within the scope of work. We would love to see proposers identify partnership models, in-kind resources, funding opportunities, or other strategies that could help us sustain or expand successful engagement activities beyond the initial grant period.

3. What specific event volume and related costs should be included in the budget? There are no currently established required number of events beyond the activities and deliverables identified in the RFP. Proposers should recommend a realistic event and engagement plan based on the available two-year budget, the proposed geographic coverage, and the intended program outcomes. We mentioned this in the ZOOM session, but the \$129,600 budget should be treated as the total available amount for the two-year scope unless CT Public identifies a particular cost that it will cover separately. For example, CT Public will cover the cost for materials such as crayons, coloring books, educational handouts to be included in Curiosity Kits for distribution

Sustainability

1. Can Connecticut Public provide an overview of the staffing resources currently dedicated to community and family engagement? This is not a stand-alone contractor-led program. Our staff can support in many ways including leadership by our VP of Community Engagement. In addition, the grant provides for an Education Director | Project Manager who will oversee the education plan and will serve as both a support to the community and family engagement component and a liaison to the multi-departmental team implementing the full scope of the project. We believe the contractor will bring specialized expertise, strategic guidance, relationships, implementation support, and capacity building specifically in community and family engagement. Specific roles, workflows, and points of responsibility will be established with the selected contractor during project planning.

2. What level of responsibility does Connecticut Public envision transitioning to internal staff by the conclusion of the two-year contract period? This is an important question. Our objective is to develop internal capacity to sustain the core model following contract completion. That means the contractor is not simply implementing, but also, in partnership with CT Public, building processes, tools, relationships, documentation, and organizational knowledge for future use. At the end of two-years, we hope to have a practical and replicable engagement framework, community partnership approaches, family engagement/advisory structures, measurement and feedback processes, implementation practices as a roadmap for expansion. Maybe the best approach is to consider this RFP as a capacity-building partnership rather than an outsourced, stand-alone program.