



Peer Parent Mentoring Program
FY 2024-2025 Grant Year
REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS (RFGA)

Posting Date: April 11, 2024

<p>Your application must be submitted in a sealed package if mailed or in-person delivery. RFGA Number and Deadline/Closing Date (see below) must appear on package exterior.</p>	
<p>Deadline for Applications and Questions: SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION BY (Opening Date/Time) May 7, 2024 at 5:00 PM QUESTIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY April 26, 2024 – 5:00 PM See “Deadline” and “Questions and Answers” on page 2 of this document for further information on how to submit your application and questions.</p>	<p>Must Be Received At: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division 1535 Confederate Avenue Ext. Columbia, SC 29201 or dssprocurement@dss.sc.gov</p>
<p>Submit your sealed package to either of the following addresses:</p>	
<p>MAILING ADDRESS: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division Attn: Valerie Williams 1535 Confederate Avenue Ext. Room 421 Columbia, SC 29201-191</p>	<p>PHYSICAL ADDRESS: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division Attn: Valerie Williams 1535 Confederate Avenue Ext. Room 421 Columbia, SC 29201-1915</p>

SCDSS issues this Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) for the funds administered by SCDSS for the State of South Carolina (SC) from the **BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation** grant to fund the development and implementation of the Peer Parent Mentoring program in Greenville, South Carolina. One grant will be awarded through this RFGA to support the implementation of the Iowa Parent Partner approach in Greenville, SC with a potential amount up to \$400,000. Acceptable applications that will be considered as part of this grant program are those that support the activities, goals, and objectives as outlined in the scope of services. Funds may not be used

for any other purpose. SCDSS reserves the right to determine whether a proposal falls within the scope of activities and is eligible under the stated guidelines. Applications are only accepted during the Request for Grant Applications period, will be evaluated by a panel of subject matter experts, and will be scored based on the award criteria stated in the RFGA.

Eligibility: The applicant must have a minimum of 5 years' experience administering family engagement programs or models in South Carolina through contracts, grants, or other arrangements. The applicant's response to the RFGA must clearly demonstrate an effective approach to implementing the Iowa Parent Partner Program in Greenville, SC.

How to Apply: See the Request for Grant Applications (RFGA), starting on page four of this document, for additional details regarding information to be included with your submission. A cover letter should be included and signed by authorized agent or other official agency personnel with the ability to bind the agency with carrying out grant efforts. Eligible applicants must submit the required documents to either the mailing address or physical address listed above.

Deadline: The deadline for all applications is **May 7, 2024 by 5:00P.M. EST**. Applications must be delivered in paper format or by electronic mail at dssprocurement@dss.sc.gov. Please see the physical address instructions, below. Any documents received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Questions & Answers: Questions will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. EST, April 26, 2024. All questions must be submitted in writing to Valerie Williams at Valerie.Williams@dss.sc.gov. Responses will be posted on the SCDSS website by May 3, 2024 by 5:00 PM EST.

Final selection of the successful applicant is anticipated to be made and notifications released and posted on the SCDSS website <https://dss.sc.gov> on **May 23, 2024**. Notice of extension will be posted on this site if more time is required by SCDSS. The Grant Agreement will be effective when signed by both the Provider and SCDSS.

All providers must have a state vendor number to receive reimbursement from SCDSS. To obtain a state vendor number, visit www.procurement.sc.gov and select New Vendor Registration. (To determine if your business is already registered, go to "Vendor Search"). Upon registration, you will be assigned a state vendor number. Providers must keep their vendor information current. If you are already registered, you can update your information by selecting Change Vendor Registration. (Please note that vendor registration does not substitute for any obligation to register with the S.C. Secretary of State or S.C. Department of Revenue. You can register with both agencies at <http://www.scbos.com/default.htm>.)

Additional Physical Address Information:

Visitors arriving at 1535 Confederate Avenue, Columbia, SC will enter SCDSS through the front entrance and deliver their proposal to Security Personnel and have the proposal date and time stamped for receipt.

It will take several minutes to obtain building access and have your application date and time stamped. Please allow at least thirty (30) minutes for this process of obtaining building access and getting your application stamped in. The deadline for applications is identified on this Cover Page. Please plan accordingly as deadline times will not be adjusted and proposals will not be accepted after the deadline stated.

1 BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (“Department”) is South Carolina’s lead child welfare agency. The Department’s charge is to protect the state’s most vulnerable populations; its mission, to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while strengthening families. To fulfill its objective, the Department envisions a system that is trauma-informed, family-centered, strengths-based, culturally responsive, and recognizes that children belong in the least restrictive, most family-like, and trauma informed settings possible, where they can thrive and grow.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) recently received a grant from the BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation to fund the development and implementation of a Peer Parent Mentoring program. SCDSS will utilize the Iowa Parent Partner Approach model to implement the Peer Mentoring program in Greenville, SC with the objective of expanding to all 46 counties in South Carolina.

2 SCOPE OF GRANT PROPOSAL

In an effort to support the South Carolina Department of Social Services’ (SCDSS) implementation of the Peer Parent Mentoring Program the Department is requesting applications from qualified community agencies. The Peer Parent Mentoring program will be dedicated to providing support for parents who are currently involved with SCDSS.

Iowa Peer Parent Program:

Parent Partners promotes an innovative change in social work practice that is unique because it not only celebrates individuals who have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability, but also uses their skills to mentor families that are currently navigating through the Agency as their children are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy and effective communication while holding families accountable in meeting their case plan goals.

The Parent Partner Approach is a key strategy to improving practice with families, but it cannot stand alone. Parent Partners network within communities and collaborate with social workers and providers to meet the needs of families, assist in policy and program development, change perceptions in communities, and facilitate trainings and learning opportunities.

Parent Partners are selected based upon their interpersonal skills, successes, and proven abilities to overcome obstacles. Parent Partners have been involved with the Agency due to child safety concerns and protection issues. Parent Partners have experienced removal of children from their primary care and have since experienced successful reunification or resolution around termination of their parental rights. It is these experiences that make Parent Partners so beneficial to families that are currently receiving services due to child protection issues. Parent Partners are able to offer hope, realistic advice, and advocacy for families. In addition, Parent Partners form a critical link between the Agency worker, other professionals, and the family. For more information on the Parent Partner Approach see Attachment F.

The Parent Partner Approach is designed to deliver a flexible array of Culturally Responsive supports to parents who are involved in child protection services. The target population and priority for these mentoring supports are families whose children have been removed from their parents’ care and/or parents who can only reside with their children under special conditions directed by the courts (i.e. substance abuse treatment or relative care is present).

During the initial stages of a case, the Parent Partner averages four face-to-face visits per month and phone contact between visits. The frequency of contact may vary after two to three months as the family works through their case plan. The number of visits is based on a family's needs and case consultation with the Parent Partner Coordinator.

This program will remain flexible by providing the Parent Partner an opportunity to determine the amount of time they will commit to the Parent Partner role. For example, one Parent Partner may be going to school and wants to only mentor two or three families, but another Parent Partner may want to mentor 10-15 families.

3 SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Required Activities

The Contractor awarded under this grant shall:

Iowa Peer Parent Program:

- (a) Maintain the fidelity of the Iowa Parent Partner Approach and meet the standards set forth in the Iowa Parent Partner Approach Handbook: *Governing Philosophy, Policy & Protocol and the Iowa Parent Partner Approach Practice Manual*.
- (b) Hire two Local Peer Parent Coordinators to provide oversight of services and day to day tasks such as compensation for Peer Partners, job assignments, and resolving programmatic issues. Peer Partner Local Coordinators will also be responsible for recruitment and retention of Peer Partners.
- (c) Contract with parents who have prior Child Welfare involvement and meet the requirements set forth by Iowa Parent Partner Approach and ensure Peer Partners are paid once per month.
- (d) Contract with a licensed master-level clinician to facilitate monthly group support sessions for Parent Partners. The focus of the clinical support will be on Parent Partner issues as related to families served. The clinician will help Parent Partners identify potential "triggers" and provide consultation and/or tools to address issues. They will promote self-care and an understanding of compassion fatigue/vicarious trauma.
- (e) Implement a referral process for families that is easily accessible to potential participants and coordinated with SCDSS staff. Referrals shall be provided by Agency staff and/or an Agency-approved entity. If the Contractor receives referrals from an entity not approved by Agency, the Contractor shall receive approval from the SCDSS Peer Parent Program Manager prior to accepting the referral.
- (f) Match a Parent Partner with the family no later than two working days after receiving the referral. The Parent Partner must meet with the family within two working days of being assigned and at least twice with the participant One-On-One before the intake is completed. Contractor has up to 90 days to complete the Participant Profile form.
- (g) If the SCDSS staff request a Parent Partner to attend a Child and Family Team meeting before a formal referral is made, the Parent Partner Coordinator must assign a Parent Partner to attend this meeting if the potential participant agrees. This could be considered a referral for on-going mentoring supports per participant's request.
- (h) Shall meet with the family within 90 days of the initial referral date and complete the Family Profile (Referral/Intake) form per instructions. To be completed by the coordinator and/or Lead Parent Partner. The information obtained is entered into the database within 30 days of

completing the form. Contractor shall utilize a voluntary intake that is engaging, and strength based.

- (i) Parent Partner must meet with Participant at least two to four times per month based on the Participant's needs, after the intake is complete. Contractor shall ensure the Parent Partner meets with the assigned Participant and offers supports. The Contractor shall be responsible for assuring the Parent Partner works with the family to complete the Family Self-Assessment Form (Entry) per instructions no later than 30 days after intake and the information obtained is entered into the database within 30 days of completing the form.
- (j) Shall remain flexible with the number of One-On-One and other face-to-face Parent Partner contacts. The Coordinator/Parent Partner case consultation and the family's needs shall determine frequency and types of contacts. Contractor shall track Parent Partner activity on the Parent Partner Activity Tracking form per instructions and ensure that relevant information is entered into the database within 30 days of completing the form.
- (k) Shall complete the Family Self-Assessment Form (Exit), Family Feedback form, Fidelity Checklist and Family Outcomes forms per instructions and enter relevant information into the database within 30 days of completing the form, when a family is exiting the program.
- (l) Shall be available for bi-weekly meetings with the SCDSS Peer Parent Program Manager to support the implementation of The Iowa Peer Parent Program.

4 GRANT REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Grantee must be approved by model trainers to begin training within 30 days of grant award date.
- 4.2 The applicant must allow SCDSS on-site for site visits and/or audits and make records available for financial, programmatic, quality management and other grant-related visits, as requested by SCDSS.
- 4.3 The applicant must be prepared to provide, upon request by SCDSS, specific documentation of expenditures included on submitted invoices. The following areas will be reviewed and/or audited:
 - (a) Financial Management: Financial records will be reviewed to ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The records should provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financial results. Records must identify the source and application of funds and must be supported by invoices and another source documentation.
 - (b) Program Progress: Review progress in service delivery and implementation of the Iowa Peer Parent Program. Review progress in supporting the Iowa Peer Parent Program work including an increase in participants, increase in meetings and events attended, and total amount of stipends issued.
 - (c) Program Outcome and Performance Measure: Performance and outcome measures will be tracked by the provider to help DSS evaluate eligibility for Y2 and Y3 grants for ongoing assistance. Reporting requirements are listed below (see Section D. Grant Reporting Requirements).

5 FUNDING RELATED GRANT REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The full amount of the award must be expended no later than one year from the award date.
- 5.2 Annual submission of report certifying compliance with Iowa Peer Parent model standards.
- 5.3 The selected provider must provide a 5% in-kind match.

6 GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

6.1 The successful applicant will provide programmatic and financial reports as required by the Division of Family and Community Services. These requirements are:

- (a) Monthly Report due by the 15th of the following month: the monthly report will contain the following:
 - i. Number of Peer Parents Trained
 - ii. Number of Peer Parents Currently Serving Families
 - iii. Number of referrals received for Peer Parent Program
 - iv. Number of referrals accepted by Peer Parent Program
 - v. Number of parents served through Peer Parent Program

The successful applicant may also be requested to provide other data metrics, as the program/grant progresses, and will be required to provide that information, upon request.

7 GRANT BUDGET

The grant project period is from the effective date of the grant agreement up to 1 full year of services. The total dollar amount available is up to \$400,000 and will be dependent on approval by SCDSS which shall be based on performance over the aforementioned project period. Determination of award will be based on the merits of the proposed projects as put forth in the grant applications.

8 INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO SUBMIT/EVALUATION

To be considered for award your proposal must include, at minimum, responses to the information requested in this section. The maximum points allotted for each section are noted in parentheses.

Proposals are limited to 20 pages for the narrative. The cover page, budget, budget narrative, resumes, appendices and attachments are not counted against this 20-page limit. Do not include attachment unless requested as they will not be evaluated as a part of your offer. Format your proposals with 1-inch margins, 12-point font, and sequentially numbered pages. Single spacing is permissible.

Proposals will be rated on a 100-point scale (Program Description points available = 30, narrative points available = 50; financial points available = 20).

You should restate each of the items listed below and provide your response immediately beneath item.

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE PRESENTED IN THE LISTED ORDER:

TABLE OF CONTENTS – Provide a one-page table of contents document that includes all the items listed below.

8.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (30 POINTS TOTAL)

- (a) Describe the history of the organization within the community and provide evidence that it has the capacity to serve and reach the target population.
- (b) Describe the organization's experience working with children and families with a focus on family engagement and supporting individuals with Lived Expertise.
- (c) Describe how staffing patterns will be developed to ensure the delivery of the Iowa Peer Parent Program.

- (d) Describe who will oversee the administration and supervision of the services and their qualifications.
- (e) Include an organizational chart showing how the proposed program will fit into the organizations structure.

8.2 WORK PLAN NARRATIVE (50 POINTS TOTAL)

The applicant must demonstrate the proven ability to accomplish the tasks set forth in the Scope of Work.

- (a) Describe the agency's participation in and understanding of the Department's Guiding Principles and Standards Practice Model as Attachment 2.
- (b) Describe the target population the applicant seeks to serve through the Iowa Peer Parent Program.
- (c) Describe the applicant's plan to successfully implement the Iowa Peer Parent approach and to provide services to the target population.
- (d) Describe the agency's collaboration with existing service providers, community stakeholders, and the child welfare agency.
- (e) Describe strategies to promote a cohesive relationship between the Peer Parent program and the Department of Social Services staff.
- (f) Describe the use of culturally appropriate and responsive services.
- (g) Describe the trauma-informed model and structure.
- (h) Applicants must provide a clear, concise, and well-supported statement identifying the service development needs and barriers in the community and how the provider will work collaboratively to build and enhance necessary structures, supports, and services.

8.3 REPORTING, BUDGET NARRATIVE, AND EVALUATION (20 POINTS TOTAL)

- (a) Describe the system your agency will use to collect data to show the implementation of the Iowa Peer Parent model.
- (b) Describe how you will track outcomes of children and families who receive the model for which this grant is being awarded.
- (c) Describe how you will track outcomes for the Iowa Peer Parent model.
- (d) Describe how your organization will approach continuous quality improvement.
- (e) Describe your organization's budget template for the use of grant funds in narrative format and include a detailed itemized budget.

9 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicant shall submit a signed Cover Page and Application addressing all of the above noted points. Application must include one (1) original and three (3) copies of:

- (a) Signed Cover Letter
- (b) Table of Contents
- (c) Program Description
- (d) Work Plan Narrative
- (e) Reporting, Budget Narrative, and Evaluation

ATTACHMENT 1

Procedures for Dispute Resolution

I. DISPUTE PROCEDURES FOR GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The following dispute procedures are available to any community-based organization, local or county program or any other applicant that objects to any requirement(s) as outlined in a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA), amendment to RFGA or does not receive a distribution of funding as a grantee under a federal, state, or combined federal/state grant program. An applicant or grantee that disagrees with any element of the grant requirements or with the distribution of funding is also referred to herein as a “requestor.”

- A. **Request or Application for Funding.** Subject to conditions set forth in these procedures, any prospective applicant desiring to file a dispute concerning DSS’s proposed evaluation of applications or proposed manner of distribution of funds (as outlined in the RFGA) shall e-mail or fax a Notification of Appeal to the SCDSS Procurement Manager within *three (3) business days* of the posting date of the RFGA or any amendment thereto. The notification of appeal must clearly specify the grounds of the dispute and the relief requested. Within *seventy-two (72) hours* of receipt of a notification of appeal, the Procurement Manager shall render a decision as to the disposition of the dispute and will e-mail or fax written notification of this decision to the prospective applicant. If the prospective applicant is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Procurement Manager, the applicant shall e-mail, or fax written notification to the DSS Program Area Director* within *two (2) business day* of the date of the written notification of decision from the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will conduct a review and e-mail or fax a written decision to the prospective applicant within *three (3) business days*. The written decision will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.
- B. **Award to a Provider.** A requestor with a dispute regarding the Notification of Award shall e- mail, fax or mail a Notification of Appeal to the Procurement Manager within *three (3) business days* of the date of posting of the Notification of Award. The notification of appeal must clearly specify the grounds of the dispute and the relief requested. Within *seventy-two (72) hours* of receipt of a notification of appeal, the Procurement Manager shall render a decision as to the C. of the dispute and will e-mail or fax written notification of this decision to the requestor. If the requestor is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Procurement Manager, the requestor shall e-mail, or fax written notification to the Program Area Director within *three (3) business days* of the date of the written response from the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will conduct a review and e-mail or fax a written decision to the requestor within *three (3) business days*. The written decision will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.
- C. **Notice of Decision.** A copy of all correspondence or decisions under this dispute resolution procedure shall be mailed or otherwise furnished immediately to the requestor and any other party intervening.

II. PROCEDURES FOR GRANT DISPUTES OR CONTROVERSIES REGARDING DSS'S EVALUATION OF A GRANTEE'S EXPENDITURES IN THE POST-AWARD PHASE

- A. Applicability. These procedures shall apply to controversies between SCDSS and a grantee when the grantee disagrees with SCDSS's evaluation of an expenditure by the grantee as "not allowed" under the grant program requirements. These procedures constitute the exclusive means of resolving a controversy between SCDSS and a grantee of an awarded grant.
- B. Grievance. No later than thirty (30) calendar days after receiving notice that the agency's grant program area has denied an expenditure, a grantee must e-mail, or fax written notice identifying any dispute or controversy to the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will, within thirty (30) calendar days thereafter, review and attempt to informally resolve the dispute or controversy. If the dispute cannot be mutually resolved within that timeframe, a grantee wishing to continue pursuit of the dispute must e-mail or fax written notice of the dispute to the Procurement Manager within five (5) business days following the 30-day review period. The Procurement Manager or his/her designee will, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a written notice of the dispute, meet or hold a conference call with the grantee. Within ten (10) business days after such consultation with the grantee, the Procurement Manager will e-mail or fax the grantee with a written determination as to his/her decision regarding the disposition of the expenditure. The decision of the Procurement Manager will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.

<p><u>Procurement Manager</u> Valerie Williams, Procurement Manager Email: Valerie.Williams@dss.sc.gov Phone: (803) 898-7401</p>	<p><u>Grants Program Manager:</u> Lauren Tinman, Director of Family and Community Services and Strategic Projects Email: Lauren.Tinman@dss.sc.gov Phone: (803) 898-0956</p>
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