This Request for Proposals includes four sections:

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Background Information

Purpose of Child Care NEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic brought chaos and devastation to our nation’s child care system, and with it, the lives of children, families, providers, and early childhood educators. As many have said, the challenges experienced in families and communities were not caused by the pandemic. They are a direct result of poor policy and investment choices our country has been making for decades – choices that reflect our nation’s racist and sexist beliefs about the worth of early care and education, who should do this work, and whose responsibility it is to secure child care that is responsive to the needs of young children and their families. It is no surprise that the impacts of the pandemic fell disproportionately on providers, educators, families, and children in communities that have been marginalized because of their racial and/or economic background.

If our policy choices created the vulnerabilities and inequities we witnessed in the child care system during the pandemic, we can undo them and put in place stronger policies and systems. To do that, we cannot continue to tinker around the edges and settle for marginal improvements. We need to mount sustained advocacy campaigns that demand a more ambitious and bolder future.

Child Care NEXT will fund up to 5 states that are ready to take this on. At the core, Child Care NEXT will support these states to:

- Authentically listen, engage, and share leadership with people who are most affected by child care policies and systems;
- Advocate for transformative state policies and investments that will serve children, families, providers, and educators effectively and equitably; and
- Build a sustainable base of political power in communities and states that will ensure progress is durable.

Below is more background and basic information about Child Care NEXT. More information can be found on the project website. After reviewing the RFP, if you have any questions, you can attend the “Child Care NEXT Office Hour” on Thursday, April 1, at 11:30am ET. Please register in advance. You can also send questions to ccnext@earlysuccess.org.
Who is behind Child Care NEXT?
Child Care NEXT is managed by the Alliance for Early Success, with the support of a Steering Committee made up of 14 national organizations.

Who is eligible to apply?
Applicant organizations must have status as a nonprofit organization that is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have a nonprofit fiscal agent.

When is the proposal due, and what will the review process entail?
Interested organizations should assemble a state team to collaborate on their proposal. The proposal is due on April 30 at 5pm PT/8pm ET. Child Care NEXT will invite a select number of proposals for interviews in mid/late May. The interviews will involve at least some members of the state team. We may request to talk to people who are not on the team and will likely reach out to other individuals in the state as well. Topics for the interview will be provided to those state teams that are invited for that phase of the process.

Our goal is to announce the selected states by the end of June.

Who should be in the state team?
See pp. 6-7 of the Application.

What goals and activities does Child Care NEXT support?
This grant opportunity supports ambitious, long-term campaigns. In the first year (roughly June 2021 through June 2022), the grant will help the state teams accomplish the following:

- **Articulate a transformative vision and policy agenda for the campaign.** The team will articulate a vision for the state’s child care system that it aims to reach in about 10 years. The vision should address the major areas of change, include a phased approach for implementation, and be represented by a compelling, public-facing, easily digestible message.¹

- **Develop an advocacy roadmap.** This is a set of key strategies and tactics, “backwards planned” to win adoption of the vision by the target year. The roadmap will lay out the resources, partners, and capacity required to accomplish the task, which may include steps toward building out new advocacy and organizing capacity/partnerships not currently in existence. The roadmap should also acknowledge contextual political realities in the state that may make success more or less likely, and strategies to address those challenges and opportunities. We expect the roadmap to be more specific about the team’s goals, plans, and activities in the first few years of the campaign, while the work in the latter years will be described at a higher level.

- **Conduct policy and political analyses.** With support from national experts from the Alliance network and Child Care NEXT partners, state teams will conduct the policy and political research and analyses needed to inform the campaign vision, policy agenda, and advocacy roadmap.

- **Strengthen the political base for change.** State teams will strengthen leadership and advocacy capacity among stakeholders at all levels – from the neighborhoods to the state capitol – and

¹ State teams in the Child Care NEXT initiative can develop their own campaign plan, or model theirs after the British Columbia “$10aDay” plan, the Child Care for Working Families Act, or the United Kingdom’s “30 Hours Free” plan. The Alliance for Early Success Build Stronger Policy Roadmap could also serve as a template.
ensure their campaign vision, goals, and strategies reflect their voices and experiences, especially those most impacted by child care policies and systems.

Before the end of the first year of the project, state teams will also develop a more specific strategic plan and budget for the launching and implementation of their campaigns, beginning around the summer or fall of 2022.

**What will states receive if selected for this initiative?**
In the first year, each state will receive up to $200,000 for start-up and planning activities described above. In 2022, each state will receive up to $500,000 for campaign launch and implementation. States will also receive technical assistance and consultation from national child care policy experts and campaign advisors.

A state match of $100,000 will be required each year both to show state-based investment in the work, and to acknowledge that additional resources will be necessary to launch and sustain a campaign that aims for bold change. If needed, the Alliance and the Child Care NEXT Steering Committee will work with the state teams to meet this challenge. For further details, see Section V of the Application below.

After the second year of the project, pending additional funding for the project, states will continue to receive a similar level of funding to sustain the campaign. The Alliance and its partners are currently in conversations with several donors to raise the remaining funds.

**What are the criteria for state selection?**
In addition to the information requested in the RFP, Child Care NEXT is interested in selecting a group of states that can serve as “proof points” to demonstrate to policymakers, funders, advocates, etc. that transformative change is possible in different kinds of states. As such, our intent is to support a range of states that are diverse in ways such as: geography; political climate; economic context; racial, linguistic, and cultural communities; urban and rural environments; and others.
Child Care NEXT Core Principles

The following are Core Principles that anchor the Child Care NEXT initiative. Competitive proposals will demonstrate the state’s experience, competencies, and commitment to these principles and ways of working throughout their responses – from the composition of the state team to the budget narrative.

- Child Care NEXT believes that transformative social change requires **building and sustaining political power, organizing, and advocacy capacity at all levels** – from neighborhoods and communities to the state capitol, and everywhere in between. Successful campaigns facilitate collective and coordinated action among everyday community members, institutional leaders (e.g., civic, faith-based, business, education), advocacy organizations, policy researchers and experts, elected officials and other government leaders, and others in order to change public policies, as well as the social and cultural beliefs and norms that influence how policies are made.

- Child Care NEXT seeks to **transform child care policies and systems** in states so that they serve children, families, providers, and educators effectively and equitably. This requires breaking away from current narratives of child care as a private family responsibility to recognizing it as a public good that benefits our entire society, and therefore, is firmly within the role of government. In this light, transformative change means rethinking current policies in every part of the system – access, quality, workforce, financing, etc. It means putting a stake in the ground about the changes that are needed, rather than doing only what we can afford or what’s politically feasible.

- Child Care NEXT believes it’s critical for **those who are most impacted by child care policies and programs to have a meaningful role in shaping the solution and campaign**. The experiences and interests of families, children, early childhood educators, and providers should drive the policy agenda and the advocacy strategies. Successful campaigns authentically engage the voices and leadership of people who reflect the diverse range of the state’s communities and mitigate barriers these individuals face in joining and participating fully at policy and advocacy tables.

- Child Care NEXT believes transformative campaigns **center racial equity in their work**. We will look for an understanding and recognition of how institutionalized racism and white supremacy shaped and continues to shape American public policy, institutions, systems, culture, and narratives - including those found in early care and education - and a commitment to dismantle the legacies of racism by ensuring that increasing racial equity is at the center of what goals advocates and policy leaders pursue, who is at the table and leading such efforts, and how advocacy goals and strategies are developed and implemented.

*The Child Care NEXT Application, including instructions for filling out and submitting the proposal, starts on the next page.*
Child Care NEXT Application Instructions

The deadline for submission is April 30, at 5pm PT/8pm ET.

This application has six parts:
- Applicant Information
- Composition of the State Team (25% of total points)
- Relevant Experience and Competencies (30% of total points)
- A Transformative Policy Vision and Agenda for Child Care (30% of total points)
- Philanthropic Match
- Budget (15% of total points)

1. Please read each section of the Application carefully, along with the Core Principles above.
   - After reviewing the application, if you have any questions, you can attend the “Child Care NEXT Office Hour” on Thursday, April 1, at 11:30am ET. Please register in advance. You can also send questions to ccnext@earlysuccess.org.

2. When you are ready to work on your proposal...
   - Download the pre-formatted Response form, the Budget Spreadsheet form, and the Budget Narrative form from the RFP page at www.earlysuccess.org/childcarenext. Your team will respond to the application questions on the Response Form.
   - Also download the Proposal Review Framework for the RFP page, which provides more details about what reviewers are looking for in the responses.

   We estimate that a full proposal should be about 10 pages, single-spaced, or about 5,000 words, not including the budget documents and attachments. This is only a guideline, not a strict requirement or limit. It is acceptable to submit a slightly shorter or longer proposal, as long as you adequately address all the questions.

3. When you are done...
   - Upload the Response Form, Budget Spreadsheet, and Budget Narrative, along with other required or optional attachments through the Alliance website by April 30, 5pm PT/8pm ET. Below is the list of attachments that are required or optional to include with the proposal.
     - (Required) Letters from each state team member (individual or organization) confirming their participation in this project should the state be selected for this initiative. (See Question II.5)
     - (Optional) Documents related to the state’s past actions taken that demonstrate movement towards more transformative change in child care systems and policies (See Question IV.2)
     - (Required) Letter(s) from one or more funder committing to help the state team meet the state match for this initiative (See Section V)
     - (Required) Budget Spreadsheet and Narrative for Year 1 of the initiative (See Section VI)
   - Make sure you label all the documents with names that describe the contents clearly (e.g., “Report on Compensation Standards,” not “Attachment 1.”).
   - Send a confirmation email to ccnext@earlysuccess.org. We will send an email to confirm we’ve received the proposal.
Child Care NEXT Application

Your team should respond to the questions below using the pre-formatted Response Form, which can be downloaded here.

I. Applicant Information

Applicant organizations must have status as a nonprofit organization that is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or have a nonprofit fiscal agent.

1. Primary Contact(s). The primary contact is the organization that will serve as the main point of contact for the Alliance and other Child Care NEXT national partners. They are responsible and accountable for the development and implementation of the campaign. Each proposal can designate up to two primary contact organizations if the state is submitting the proposal jointly.
   • Name
   • Title
   • Organization
   • Email
   • Phone

2. Fiscal Agent (if different from above)
   • Name
   • Title
   • Organization
   • Email
   • Phone

II. Composition of State Team (25% of total points)

The role of the state team is to lead the campaign planning and stakeholder engagement process during the first year, manage the implementation of the campaign once it’s launched, and ensure that the initiative’s Core Principles anchor all aspects of the work.

Who should be in the state team?

- We expect that successful teams will have to engage a broader coalition and other stakeholder groups in order to be successful. As such, individuals on the state team should be a part of networks, organizations, and/or professional associations (which could include unions), which allows the state team to engage in dialogue and collaboration with critical stakeholder groups and communities throughout the work of the campaign – from the campaign’s conception; to the development of its vision, policy agenda, and advocacy strategies; to its implementation. Individuals who are not formally part of an organization or association could be in the team if they can play the role described above.
- The state team should include and share leadership with individuals who are most impacted by child care policy and advocacy (educators, owners and directors, family members) and reflect the diversity within these groups that exists in the state’s population and its child care system (e.g., race, geography, language background, immigrant/refugee status, tribal communities,
income levels, special needs, provider types, etc.). This includes individuals with lived experience with child care systems and policies who traditionally have not participated in state advocacy or policymaking tables.

- The state team should include individuals who work in organizations that have the capacity to build political power and advocacy capacity at all levels to advance transformative change in state policy, from neighborhoods and communities to the state capitol, and everywhere in between. These organizations can include those that historically have not focused on early childhood issues (e.g., allied groups that advance civil and human rights, racial justice, gender justice, economic justice, etc.) The team’s leadership should be shared between organizations who bring diverse approaches and skill sets to building political power and advocacy capacity, especially those led by or represent those who are most impacted by child care policy and systems.

- We do not have a prescribed size for the state team. We leave it up to the team to decide how many people are needed to perform the above roles and functions effectively and efficiently. For example, a state team may decide that they need more than one person to represent a certain stakeholder group or type of organization. State team members can also come from existing early childhood coalitions. (Note that we request a letter from each state team member confirming their agreement to participate should the state be selected for this initiative.)

1. Please provide the name, position/title, race/ethnicity, and organization of each individual in your team.
   a. Which individual(s) will lead the team? Briefly describe why this person(s) and the organization(s) represented is suited to play this role, including their ability to ensure shared leadership in the campaign and operationalize the Core Principles of Child Care NEXT.
   b. Describe the role each organization will play in this grant. What assets and skills sets to the proposed work does each bring to the table?

2. Please describe how this team represents the kinds of diverse voices and lived experiences that are critical for creating an effective campaign and ultimately, an equitable child care system in your state, including those families, providers, and educators who traditionally are not included in state advocacy or policy-making tables.

3. Attach letters from each individual or organization demonstrating their agreement to serve on the state team.

III. Relevant Experience and Competencies (30% of total points)

1. Please provide examples of past organizing and advocacy efforts led by members of your state team that demonstrate your collective competencies and experience (successes, challenges, lessons learned). Your examples could be about any policy issue, not only in early care and education, and could be in any or all of the following areas of work:
   - Building political power and advocacy capacity at all levels of the state, from neighborhoods to the capitol, and everywhere in between
   - Leading coalitions with diverse perspectives and backgrounds (e.g., race, politics, issues), including building trust and sharing leadership across organizing and advocacy organizations that have different approaches to making social change.
   - Centering racial equity in the development of campaign goals and strategies, and how they are implemented.
• Centering the experiences of and sharing leadership and power with those most impacted by policy changes, especially those whose voices are usually not represented at the policy and advocacy tables.
• Securing policy and funding wins

2. While the state team will lead the work, we expect it will work with a broader coalition to execute the campaign plans and accomplish its goals.
   a. Please list the organizations that will be, or are likely to be, part of your coalition for this campaign.
   b. Describe the competencies and experiences these organizations bring that will be critical to a campaign that builds the political power needed to create transformative change in your state’s child care system while centering racial equity and the experiences of those most affected by the system. Also, include a discussion about how the organizations reflect the diversity that exists in the state’s population and its child care system (e.g., race, geography, language background, immigrant/refugee status, tribal communities, income levels, special needs, provider types, etc.).

3. A Transformative Policy Vision and Agenda for Child Care (30% of total points)

Child Care NEXT believes that transformation requires (1) changing, cultural, social, and political norms, beliefs, and narratives that perpetuate inequities and ineffectiveness in the child care system and (2) putting in place policies - including stable, equitable, durable and robust funding mechanisms - that ensure all families can access universally affordable, high-quality, diverse child care programs that are responsive to families’ and children’s varied needs and contexts and provide professional salaries and benefits for educators and staff. Below are the major areas of policies that Child Care NEXT considers critical for achieving transformative change in child care systems.

• Equitable Access – expanding eligibility for child care assistance, building a supply of diverse provider types (including family friend and neighbor (FFN) and programs that provide care during non-traditional hours), particularly in places with few or no child care options.
• Affordability – reducing families’ out-of-pocket costs to an affordable percentage of income or per-day amount; ensuring that any family contribution to child care cost is equitable across income levels; providing fully subsidized care at least for families under a certain income level and households for which such assistance is critical for the well-being of children and parents.
• Workforce – ensuring professional salaries, health insurance and retirement benefits commensurate with competencies; setting compensation standards that are in line with at least doubling the current state median income of child care teachers or achieving pay parity with public school teachers; preserving/increasing diversity; investing in equitable access to higher education, degrees, and/or professionally-recognized credentials; ensuring equitable advancement opportunities and working conditions; creating unified voice/collective power; developing a pipeline of diverse leaders.
• Funding – increasing funding to reflect the cost of quality, creating more stable and equitable funding distribution mechanisms (e.g., contracts, payment by enrollment), advancing a revenue strategy to increase new funding

State teams in the Child Care NEXT initiative can develop their own campaign plan or model theirs after the British Columbia “$10aDay” plan, the Child Care for Working Families Act, or the United Kingdom’s “30 Hours Free” plan. The Alliance for Early Success Build Stronger Policy Roadmap could also serve as a template.
• Quality and Equity – Supporting all providers (including home-based programs) to attain research-informed standards and practices; implementing culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices; addressing inequities among providers and educators (by race, by setting, by age-group served); responding to families’ needs – especially those who live in low-income households and face other systemic barriers to success because of their race, immigrant status, language, etc.

1. Child Care NEXT will support state teams to develop a vision for change and campaign agenda by the end of Year 1. At this moment, how would your team describe your guiding vision for transforming any of the above five aspects of the child care system? Include in your response how this vision addresses the diversity of families, educators, and providers in your state.

2. Describe the current strengths and weaknesses in any of the above five areas in your state’s system, including any past actions taken that demonstrate movement towards more transformative change. This could be work done by organizations in your state team, a coalition, elected officials, state agencies, or other stakeholders. Consider policy and funding changes, legislative proposals, statewide plans, reports and recommendations, etc. (Provide links and attachments when possible.)

V. Philanthropic Match

Child Care NEXT believes that ambitious, sustained campaigns should not rely solely on external funding. Therefore, we require each team to raise $100,000 per year, and we are committed to helping states that are part of this initiative reach this goal. As part of the proposal, please attach letter(s) of support from at least one philanthropic source (local, state, or national) indicating their commitment to (1) raising this match by the end of the first year of the grant (Summer 2022), and (2) supporting the state team to identify sustained sources of matching funds in future years.

If the state team’s good-faith efforts, along with support from Child Care NEXT partners, are not successful at raising these funds within the first year, we may consider allowing the team to leverage existing funds from other projects as part or all of the match, as long as the team can demonstrate that those funds support activities or staff that work toward the goals of this initiative.

VI. Budget (15% of total points)

Please download and submit a Budget Form and a Budget Narrative for the first year that explains how funds will be allocated to help the team articulate a vision and agenda for change and an advocacy roadmap. The budget should reflect how resources are allocated to support the Core Principles of Child Care NEXT. Grant funds can only be used for activities that are within the meaning of and as permitted by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

If your team plans on leveraging existing funds from related initiatives to support activities in the first year, please include that in the appropriate column in the budget form and provide more information in the narrative.

States selected for the project will submit a budget for Year 2 by the end of the planning process in the first year.