

Request for Proposals: Early Childhood Teacher Professional Development in Language Acquisition and Literacy

Our Goal

Helios Education Foundation's Request for Proposals (RFP) is designed to strengthen the literacy and language acquisition knowledge and education of early childhood teachers, professionals and other providers working with children birth to five.

Research demonstrates a direct correlation between teacher professional development levels and the effectiveness of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. Our experience points to a lack of quality professional development opportunities for ECE teachers and practitioners, specifically in the areas of language acquisition and literacy. This lack of teacher awareness and skills contributes to the pervasive problem of students beginning kindergarten with limited knowledge and competencies to be successful in reading and writing. In effect, many students' ability to succeed academically is hampered early on by challenges in mastering these fundamental gateway skills. It is our belief that providing children with the opportunity to learn about reading and writing through experiences with oral and written language is critical so they enter kindergarten with the foundational skills essential for reading and writing success.

This RFP encourages innovative pilot, developmental, and promising project ideas in professional development that foster knowledge and education in the area of language acquisition and literacy for ECE teachers and practitioners.

Who Can Apply?

Local, regional and national organizations that provide services to an ECE organization(s) or ECE teachers/practitioners in Arizona and/or the Florida Tampa Bay area (comprised of eight counties: Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, and Manatee) are invited to apply. Parties interested in submitting a proposal must meet the Foundation's basic application criteria (<http://www.helios.org/how-we-partner.aspx>).

National and regional organizations who apply, regardless of location, must partner with a local organization in Arizona or the Tampa Bay area to be eligible.

Who is this Proposal Targeting?

The Foundation's grants will support programs that benefit early childhood educators, professionals and other providers who care for children in underserved, under-resourced centers of high need in low socio-economic areas in Arizona and the Florida Tampa Bay area. The primary target is teachers and practitioners of children birth to five (before kindergarten), regardless of their official title (i.e. lead teacher, assistant teacher, etc.).

We anticipate making several grant awards between \$100,000 and \$250,000 per year contingent on a program's depth and scope of service delivery. Grant awards will be limited to no more than \$550,000, in total, with a maximum period of three years.

Key Dates

- January 2010** Launch RFP process. Host Webinars. Begin accepting Letters of Intent.
- February 2010** Deadline for submission of Letters of Intent. Full applications due.
- July 2010** Successful applicants notified of grant award

Questions?

For general information about Helios Education Foundation or to access additional Request for Proposal information, please visit our Foundation's website at www.helios.org.

For specific questions about the content of the Request for Proposal, please contact either: Karen Ortiz, Vice President and Program Director Early Childhood Education for Arizona and Florida at kortiz@helios.org or Stacy Carlson, Vice President and Program Director for Florida at scarlson@helios.org.

For technical questions about the Letter of Intent or the Application process, please contact: Linda Thompson, Vice President and Director of Grants Administration lthompson@helios.org.