



Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage

Resident Proposal Review Board Funding Recommendation Summary

Proposed for Approval by the First Steps Kent Board of Commissioners

June 27, 2024

The Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board (RPRB) met June 20-21 and June 24-26, 2024, to review 42 proposals totaling \$13,105,440 in requests submitted under the following RFP opportunities:

- Outreach and Navigation Services: a. Coordinated Outreach, Screening and Navigation, and b. Outreach and Navigation to Early Care - Early Care Connection
- Healthy Development Services: a. Developmental, Social Emotional Screenings & Referral, b. Healthy and Safe Home Environment Programming, c. Niche Family Supports, and d. Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network Lead
- Parent Education and Support Services: a. Home Visiting Programming, and b. Translation and Interpretation Supports
- Early Learning Services: a. Play and Learn Community Programming, and b. Early Literacy and Learning Programming
- Healthy Development Training - Ready by Five Training and Education Leads

On June 26, 2024, the RPRB recommended allocating \$10,059,999 that will fund a total of 31 contracts for the upcoming fiscal year that begins on October 1, 2024, and end on September 30, 2025.

The breakdown of funding recommendations FY 2024-2025 are as follows:

Outreach and Navigation

Ready by Five millage funding has allowed for the creation of an Outreach and Navigation network by developing a multi-agency strategy to reach and engage families in a coordinated way. This network serves as the “right door” for families to find available resources, information, and programs.

Outreach aims to increase the usage of early childhood programs and community resources by engaging future parents and families with young children who are not currently engaged in services or are unaware of services. As families are engaged, programs work to identify the needs of families through formal screening as well as conversation with the individuals served. As needs are identified, navigation will address barriers to accessing services, information, and resources to ensure families are successfully connected to referrals and information.

One agency will be selected to develop enhanced infrastructure that will provide up to date information about the current child care openings available in Kent County ensuring families are accessing available child care spaces. Programming in this area will leverage technology to foster better connections between families and child care providers by organizing and providing access to information related to current child care openings in Kent County.

<u>Outreach and Navigation</u>	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding - Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024 (unless otherwise noted)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
Childcare Navigation (Kent ISD) *	\$ 486,092	\$ 720,714	\$ 605,000
Outreach and Navigation Services (Health Net)	\$ 771,387	\$ 1,033,402	\$ 1,033,402
Connections - Outreach and Navigation (Family Futures)	\$ 902,442	\$ 1,213,951	\$ 1,200,000
<i>*Allocation for 2023-2024 represents a 12 month period</i>			
TOTAL	\$ 2,159,921	\$ 2,968,067	\$ 2,838,402

Healthy Development

Healthy Development programming will focus on improving outcomes related to healthy births, child health, and well-being as well as ensuring children are developmentally on track. Programming will demonstrate success in supporting positive health behaviors that drive better outcomes for children from birth through five years, as well as expectant parents.

One agency will be recommended to provide services that focus on analyzing the social, equity, economic, and health factors that contribute to healthy births in Kent County. Ready by Five is requesting proposals to select one (1) organization to lead the implementation and ongoing management of the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Network for Kent County.

<u>Healthy Development</u>	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding - Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024 (unless otherwise noted)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
<u>Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network</u>			
Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network Lead (Kent County Health Department)	\$ 108,866	\$ 168,315	\$ 164,000
<u>Developmental, Social Emotional Screenings & Referral</u>			
Infant Toddler Development Services - ITDS (Arbor Circle Corporation)	\$ 196,121	\$ 370,985	\$ 262,000
Keep Early Education Positive - KEEP (Arbor Circle Corporation)	\$ 579,133	\$ 880,402	\$ 772,000
<u>Niche Family Supports</u>			
Hands Connected Early Childhood Navigation and Parent Support Services (Bethany Christian Services)	\$ 91,063	\$ 167,863	\$ 121,000
Niche Family Supports (Family Promise)	\$ 252,536	\$ 561,420	\$ 337,700
Healing Through Play (The Playgroundgr) (new)		\$ 45,690	\$ 36,552
Child Family Advocate Program (The Young Men's Christian Association of Greater Grand Rapids)**	\$ 201,488	\$ 321,200	\$ 321,200
Family Support Services (Hispanic Center of Western Michigan)	\$ 40,625	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000
<u>Healthy and Safe Home Environment Programming</u>			
Lead Program Expansion (Kent County Health Department)*	\$ 1,081,160	\$ 1,208,531	\$ 1,062,291
Healthy Homes Ready by Five (Healthy Homes Coalition West Michigan)*	\$ 379,083	\$ 376,052	\$ 376,052
Healthy Development - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (Kent County Health Department) (new)	\$ -	\$ 140,661	\$ 138,000
<i>*Allocation for 2023-2024 represents a 12 month period **Allocation is for a 6 month period.</i>			
TOTAL	\$ 2,930,075	\$ 4,145,458	\$ 3,635,795

Parent Education and Support – Translation and Interpretation

Translation and Interpretation Supports offer the opportunity for agencies that specialize and provide interpretation and translation services (in-person, telephone, and written) to apply for Ready by Five millage funding. Services are intended for families enrolled in all Ready by Five funded services. Language needs include, but are not limited to Spanish, Nepali, Kinyarwanda, Serbo-Croatian, Swahili, Burmese, American Sign Language, Vietnamese, and Karen.

Translation and Interpretation Support	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding (Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
Bethany Christian Services	\$ 15,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 20,000
Hispanic Center of West Michigan	\$ 60,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 80,000
TOTAL	\$ 75,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 100,000

Early Learning

Early childhood research substantiates the rapid development of emergent literacy and language skills that occur in a child’s first three years of life. In combination with key skills in the socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive domains, these skills are the foundation for lifelong learning beginning in kindergarten and continuing into subsequent school years. Programming in this area will ensure all children have access to quality early learning programming. (Note: this category does not fund child care or preschool programming.)

Early Learning	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding (Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
<u>Play and Learn Community Programming</u>			
Therapeutic Playgrounds (Comprehensive Therapy Center, Inc)	\$ 16,725	\$ 16,725	\$ 16,725
Little Learners (Vibrant Futures)	\$ 128,376	\$ 168,652	\$ 168,650
Bright Beginnings Playgroups (Kent ISD)	\$ 131,505	\$ 240,514	\$ 240,500
Play and Learn GRCC (Grand Rapids Community College)	\$ 404,170	\$ 573,030	\$ 507,227
TOTAL	\$ 680,776	\$ 998,921	\$ 933,102

Parent Education and Support

Parent Education and Support programming ensures parents have the knowledge and skills to support their children’s health, development, and learning. Services provide in-home and/or community-based support and education. This RFP will fund programs offering parent education through home visiting as well as ancillary support that addresses the preventable causes of infant and child mortality. As a result of services, expectant parents and families with young children will have access to the information, resources, and social support they need to be more confident and empowered to make informed choices for themselves, their children, and their families.

Parenting Education and Support	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding (Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
<u>Home Visiting</u>			
Maternal and Infant Health Program (Cherry Street Services, Inc)	\$ 213,829	\$ 290,791	\$ 285,105
Early Childhood Attachment (D.A. Blodgett - St Johns)	\$ 96,131	\$ 95,862	\$ 95,862
Bright Beginnings Home Visiting (Kent ISD)	\$ 620,893	\$ 842,745	\$ 658,000
Postpartum Support (Momsbloom, Inc)	\$ 187,580	\$ 239,439	\$ 239,438
Baby Scholars (Corewell Health)	\$ 96,441	\$ 185,040	\$ 129,000
Strong Beginnings (Corewell Health)	\$ 537,670	\$ 778,433	\$ 717,795
Little Scholars (Vibrant Futures)	\$ 113,406	\$ 162,195	\$ 151,500
TOTAL	\$ 1,865,950	\$ 2,594,504	\$ 2,276,700

Healthy Development Training

Funding under this RFP will increase knowledge in the Ready by Five professional network. Training will be for all direct professionals funded by Ready by Five. First Steps Kent requests the delivery of training by professionals with expertise in each topic.

Healthy Development - Network Training Lead	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding (Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
Care Model Training Series (Health Net of West Michigan)	\$ 24,400	\$ 20,100	\$ 16,000
TOTAL	\$ 24,400	\$ 20,100	\$ 16,000

Additional Funding Recommendations

The Ready by Five Evaluation is examining data collected by all programs funded with millage funds and will provide information about the impact of Ready by Five services on health and academic outcomes, including what types of services work, for whom, and under what conditions. The results will provide local early childhood leaders with information about the types of services that need to be retained or expanded in Kent County and evidence of impact on health and academic outcomes that contribute to the cost-effectiveness of early childhood services, as well as the overall community value of the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage.

Additional	FY 2023 - 2024 Approved Funding (Jan 1 - Sep 30, 2024)	FY 2024-2025 Agency Requests (Oct 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2025)	FY 2024-2025 Recommendations
Data Services (KCHD)	\$ 45,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
Evaluation Support (Basis)	\$ 112,500	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000
Evaluation Support (ACE)	\$ 37,500	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
TOTAL	\$ 195,000	\$ 260,000	\$ 260,000

PROGRAM AND SERVICE ALLOCATIONS - GRAND TOTAL \$10,059,999

Proposals Not Recommended for Funding

During this most recent round of funding, the following fourteen (14) proposals were not funded. Requests from all agencies totaled \$13,105,440. The RPRB had \$10,060,000 to allocate for the upcoming fiscal year.

Agency	Program Name	Amount Requested	Reason for Non-Funding
Bethany Christian Services	Hands Connected - Parent Safety Services (new)	\$ 199,790.00	Proposal did not meet all specifications of the Program Type as described in the RFP.
Bethany Christian Services	Hands connected Early Childhood Language and Literacy Support (new)	\$ 161,273.00	The proposal fell outside the scope of programming that is typically funded under the Program Type applied under.
Cherry Street	Improving Access to Early Childhood Developmental Assessments & Treatment Services	\$ 58,275.00	RPRB focused on funding programs that had strong partnerships to ensure children with identified developmental concerns were successfully connected to intervention services and resources.
Cultivating Futures	Cultivating Futures Holistic Maternal and Child Wellness (new)	\$ 313,668.00	Agency requesting funds is very new. Requested financial statements were not available for the RPRB to review during the allocation process.
D. A. Blodgett -St. John's	Incredible Years Parent Education (new)	\$ 50,000.00	Ready by Five has funded this model previously with a different agency and found there to be little interest from the community to participate. The model did not resonate with Parent Leaders on the RPRB.
Early Bird Books	Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of West Michigan - Birth Registration Program (new)	\$ 70,568.00	The RPRB focused on funding programming that offered direct in-person support rather than delivery of a "good". Many programs are offering book distribution within their program models. This seemed duplicative with efforts happening in other programs.
Family Futures	Prevention Pathway (new)	\$ 83,372.00	The RPRB focused on funding navigation type programs that had a strong record of providing programming.
Family Futures	Healthy Families Kent County - Parent Education & Support	\$ 166,818.00	The RPRB focused on funding programs that served families across all Kent County communities. This program focused on serving families in the urban/suburban communities where many home visiting options are currently available.

Family Futures	Learning Kits	\$ 59,184.00	The RPRB focused on funding programming that offered direct in-person support rather than delivery of a “good”. Many programs are offering book distribution within their program models. This seemed duplicative with efforts happening in other programs.
Health Net of West Michigan	Hybrid Supervisor Learning Cohort	\$ 13,000.00	The RPRB prioritized funding programs for families and training options that would have a sizable cohort.
Marvelous Lifestyles Outreach Corporation	Bright Horizons Marvelous Kidz Learning Center (new)	\$ 100,000.00	Agency is in the process of opening child care center where proposed services would be delivered. RPRB focused on funding proposals for services in locations that currently operating and had a strong record of providing quality early childhood programming.
Ready for School	Reach Out and Read Michigan	\$ 391,496.65	The RPRB focused on funding programming that offered direct in-person support rather than delivery of a “good”. Many programs are offering book distribution within their program models. This seemed duplicative with efforts happening in other programs.
The Refugee Education Center	Hands Connected Early Childhood Education (new)	\$ 500,000.00	The proposal fell outside the scope of the RFP. Ready by Five does not fund early care and education operations currently.
Wimage	Wimee's World (new)	\$ 400,000.00	The RPRB focused on funding programs that have a strong record of providing programming. While this proposal was very innovative, the RPRB felt development of the product should be more complete before it is funded.