

Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Early Learning Programming Request for Proposal

RELEASE DATE: July 14, 2021
REVISED: July 30, 2021 (see page 10)

PLEASE NOTE

The deadline for all proposals is: August 27, 2021, at 1 p.m.

**This deadline is firm, no exceptions.
Any submission received past this deadline will not be
considered.**

Please see Section Three for proposal submittal instructions.

Do not deviate from the format of this RFP.

**If a proposal does not include all components, it may be
considered incomplete and will not be eligible for funding.**



Supported by the Kent County Ready by Five Millage

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. About the Ready by Five Millage

On November 6, 2018, Kent County voters approved the Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage for 0.25 mills over a six-year period to provide dedicated and sustainable funding for programs that improve the health, school readiness and well-being of children ages 0-5.

Funds are being strategically invested in programs that contribute to what has been identified in Kent County as four “contributing indicators” of Kindergarten success that are defined below.

Objective to ensure K-Readiness	What the result be in Kent County
Parents will have increased access to resources and information	All parents have access to resources and information that impart knowledge and skills about their child’s development or health as well as assist with a wide variety of family needs. Programs offer timely support with navigating resources to ensure basic needs such as shelter, clothing, food, and other necessities are accessed by families in need.
Healthy Expectant and New Parents Programming - Increasing Mother’s Health & Well-Being	All mothers receive adequate prenatal care ¹ . Programs address prenatal smoking and non-prescription drug use during pregnancy with all expectant mothers. Programs funded contribute to improved mother/baby bonding. As new mothers are supported, there is an increase with breastfeeding and new mothers are reporting fewer concerns about their emotional wellbeing.
More Children Developmentally on Track -Increase in Developmental and Social Emotional Screening and Connections	All young children are universally screened for developmental concerns using the ASQ and ASQ-SE screening tools. Children with identified concerns are connected to services and interventions that support receptive and expressive language, socioemotional development, fine/gross motor development, and other developmental concerns.
More Children are Healthy - Healthy and Safe Home Environment	There are no children with high blood lead levels and thus children are less at risk for learning, behavior and health complications caused by lead poisoning.

Ready by Five investments will support an early childhood system that helps all children and families thrive will lead to a community in which everyone can fully participate and contribute. Ready by Five funded programs have an important role to play in this process.

¹ Adequate prenatal care is defined according to the Kotelchuck Index.

II. Funding Details

The Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funding seeks proposals for quality programming meeting specifications in one of the four Request for Proposals (RFP) to serve expecting mothers and children from birth through age five in all of Kent County’s communities.

The Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board will review and recommend proposals to be awarded funding.

Agencies will be reimbursed on a monthly basis for expenses up to the total amount of funds awarded. Reimbursement will be only for the actual, reasonable, and allowable costs of programming. Agencies awarded funding will agree to expend any and all payments solely for the purpose(s) as specified in the Service Provider Agreement.

All amounts are contingent on the actual annual Kent County tax capture and are subject to appropriation by the Kent County Board of Commissioners through the Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 budget year.

Contracts will begin January 1, 2022, and continue through December 31, 2023.

Agencies awarded funding will provide an implementation timeline during the contracting process. Services are expected to commence January 1, 2022 in accordance with this timeline.

For this round of funding, the following estimates are available at this time:

Year 1	Year 2
\$8,000,000	\$8,000,000

Note: These figures represent a best estimate of the total maximum set of funds to be allocated across providers awarded funds. All figures above are rounded. Actual amounts available to award may vary as they are contingent on the actual annual Kent County property tax capture.

III. Overview of Request for Proposals

This round will be deployed across four separate funding opportunities. Only one program type may be selected for each proposal submitted. Agencies may apply for more than one opportunity.

For more information and specifications, see Section Two of the respective RFP listed below.

RFP 1: Outreach and Navigation Services

Outreach and Navigation programs ensure that parents know what resources and services are available to support the healthy development and early learning of their young children and have access to the service(s) of their choice that are appropriate for the level of their need. Outreach services reach out to and engage expectant parents and parents of young children to support engagement, with a strategic focus on those with the highest needs. Navigation services identify needs and bridge all families to early childhood information and services.

RFP 2: Healthy Development Services

Healthy Development Programming follows evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that demonstrate success in supporting positive health behaviors and that drive better health outcomes for children from birth through five years, as well as expectant parents. Programming in this area will specifically focus on improving outcomes related to healthy births, child health, well-being and ensuring children are developmentally on track. This Request for Proposal will require programs work in tandem or complementary to home visiting programming. (Home visiting program proposals applying under this category will not be considered.) Proposals may include one of the following three types of programming:

- **Healthy Expectant and New Parent Programming:** As a result of services, expectant mothers and new parents will have access to the information and social support they need to be more informed, confident, and empowered to make healthier choices for themselves, their children, and their families.
- **Developmental and Social Emotional Screenings and Connection:** Children through the age of five years and their caregivers have access to services that maximize the child's physical and emotional health and ensures children have regular developmental screenings to identify developmental delays, disabilities, and emotional challenges. Also included in this program type are services ensuring children and their caregivers will have access to clinical interventions that specifically supports a healthy parent-infant attachment, as well as address positive social/emotional development of children. These programs may also address parental well-being through facilitated group supports to support the acquisition of new coping skills and resources to strengthen the parent's overall well-being.
- **Healthy and Safe Home Environment Programming:** Families have access to supports that address environmental home health in Kent County. Services could include, but are not limited to, environmental home health screening (to reduce home-based environmental health hazards regarding lead, asthma, accidental injury, etc.), child blood lead screening, and case management for addressing lead and environmental hazards, including referrals to lead remediation resources. (Note: funds may not be used to cover costs related to home repairs or lead remediation services)

RFP 3: Early Learning Programming

A separate RFP will fund programming supporting early learning and development that responds to the diverse families and children residing in Kent County. All programming will incorporate elements from the [Early Childhood Standards of Quality](#) (ECSQ) as provided by the Michigan State Board of Education.

Agencies may apply under one of two program types:

- Play and Learn Community programming: offers age-appropriate activities to nurture cognitive, social and emotional development. Play and Learn Communities provide supports for caregivers and to offer linkages to developmental screenings and early intervention services.
- Early Literacy and Learning Programming: A new area of service being introduced for 2022 will fund evidence-based programming supporting improved language ability, listening and communication skills in young children. Programming will include one or more of ECSQ expectations including creative arts, language and early literacy development, early technology literacy as well as early learning in the areas of mathematics, science, and social studies.

RFP 4: Parent Education and Support

A separate RFP will fund programs offering parent education through home visiting as well as ancillary supports addressing the preventable causes of infant mortality. As a result of services, expectant mothers and parents 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. Proposals may include one of the following two types of programming:

- Home Visiting Programming: Home visiting programming recognized by the [HomVee \(USDHHS\)](#) or [State of Michigan MIECHV](#) as an evidence based home visiting model. Evidence-informed home visiting models will also be considered.
- Child Safety Initiatives: A new area of service being introduced for 2022 will fund services to support child safety – specifically safe sleep and automobile safety for children birth through five years of age who are currently living in Kent County. Services will ensure there is increased availability of cribs for families who are unable to afford a safe environment. Professionals will provide education to parents so they can learn the ABCs of Safe Sleep (1. Baby is sleeping Alone, 2. on their Back, and 3) in a Crib) in an effort to reduce the number of infant deaths due to unsafe sleeping environments. Services will also ensure babies, infants, and children (through age 5) are secure in the appropriate car seat when being transported by automobile. In addition to providing families who are unable to afford a car seat, a professional will be available to train parents on proper installation of the car seat.

IV. Funding Mechanisms

First Steps Kent (FSK) is committed to improving outcomes while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. For agencies funded under specific Service and Program Types, FSK is offering a performance-based funding mechanism in which a portion of payments will be linked to the provider's ability to achieve select process and performance objectives.

Service and Program Types eligible for this option:

- All Healthy Development Program types (as described below in RFP 2)
- Parent Education and Support – Home Visiting Programming (as described in RFP 4)

Payments from this procurement will come from two sources:

- **Fee-For-Service Payments**, which will be paid on a reimbursement basis as a service is provided and invoiced each month.
- **Milestone Payments**, which will be made based on the extent to which the provider is able to achieve pre-determined programmatic milestone metrics that are consistent with quality implementation and fidelity to its program model. Milestone metrics will be contract-specific to fit the varying specification of each program model.

Providers will be reimbursed through Fee-For-Service Payments, invoiced on a monthly basis, during Year 1. Additionally, providers may earn Milestone Payments in excess of their Fee-For-Service Payments. These milestone payments will be capped at 2% of their Fee-For-Service billings for the performance period.

V. Requirements of all Funded Agencies

Program Modifications Due to Social Distancing Requirements

- A. All proposing agencies will have a plan to offer modified programming to addressing physical distancing requirements, as needed. This includes being flexible to meet parent preference to have alternatives when in-person supports are not an option due to circumstances such as a family is quarantining or remote services is still desired by parents, as needed.

Ready by Five Service Provider Manual

- A. The Ready by Five Service Provider Manual lays out all policy expectations and guidelines for programs funded with Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funding. All agencies awarded funding will be expected to comply with all the policies, procedures, responsibilities, guidelines, terms, and conditions stated in the Manual.

Program Monitoring Requirements

- A. All agencies will attend all scheduled Service Provider meetings as well as participate in the Ready by Five Provider Network Quality Improvement Consortium meetings and initiatives.
- B. Child and expectant mother data will be submitted monthly and at the individual level to Kent County Health Department via a secure link.
 - a. Information includes demographics, service file and referral tracking (if applicable to your program)
 - b. This data submission follows a very specific .csv file format with required fields and codes as defined in the [Ready by Five Standardized Data Definitions](#).
 - c. Agencies will be required to sign a data agreement with First Steps Kent and Kent County Health Department as part of the contracting process.
- C. Agencies awarded funding will be required to report actual costs for reimbursement purposes, as well as monthly individual-level data and quarterly reports as follows:

	Monthly Invoice (By the 7 th of the month)	Monthly Client, Service, and Referral Data Submission (by the 15 th of each month)	Quarterly Report (By 15 th of April, July, October, and January)	Additional Details
How Submitted:	<i>Submitted through e-Clmpact</i>	<i>Submitted to KCHD</i>	<i>Submitted through e-Clmpact</i>	
Actual Expenses	★			<i>Program financials provided approximately every 6 months</i>
Number Served		★	★	
Number of Encounters		★		
Ready by Five Indicators		★		
Program Specific Outcome			★	
Narrative Explanation of Variances & Implementation Timeline Update			★	

- D. All agencies are required to participate in an annual program assessment. During the assessment, compliance with specifications in the Service Provider Agreement and the [Ready by Five Service Provider Manual](#) will be reviewed.

E. Each year First Steps Kent will conduct one fiscal assessment of Service Provider’s performance to assure financial compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and all financial policies as outlined in the [Ready by Five Service Provider Manual](#).

F. From data and reports submitted as described above, contract metrics will be tracked as follows:

a. Service Provider will be required to provide narrative to explain why there is a deviation from the 1/12 monthly amount (specifically, the annual award/12) of projected expenses if 10% or greater. Service Providers may invoice for amounts higher. First Steps Kent uses the 1/12 amount to identify programs that may be underspending or overspending.

$$\frac{\text{Actual Spent To Date}}{\text{Total Annual Projected}} = \% \text{ Annual Spending To Date}$$

b. Actual numbers served will be compared to projected served. Service Provider will be required to provide narrative to explain why there is a deviation in the estimated number of individuals served if 10% or greater.

$$\frac{\text{Actual Served Individuals To Date}}{\text{Projected Served Individuals To Date}} = \% \text{ Served Individuals To Date}$$

c. Encounter Units will not be used for invoicing but will be tracked as part of the contract monitoring process. Actual encounters will be compared to projected number of encounters per individual served stated in the Service Provider Agreement. (Number of encounters will be confirmed during the contracting process.) Service Providers will be required to explain why there is a deviation in the amount if 10% or greater.

$$\frac{\text{Actual Total Encounters To Date}}{\text{Total Projected Encounters}} = \% \text{ Encounters Completed}$$

SECTION TWO: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

I. Overview of Early Learning Programming

The goals of the Early Learning RFP are to offer programming for all Kent County children through age five that will:

- **Increase early learning opportunities** by offering children high-quality early learning experiences that nurture their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Programs will ensure caretakers have the knowledge to best support early learning as well as provide linkages to developmental screenings for all children in Kent County.
- **Reduce outcome disparities** across specific target populations by increasing provider capacity and offer culturally relevant services inclusive of all populations and to support programs that serve traditionally underserved community members based on their racial background, zip code of residence, or cultural factors.

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.

Within Kent County, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) has given recent insights into how ready students are when they first enroll in kindergarten. For the purposes of the KRA, children demonstrating readiness, “consistently demonstrate the foundational skills and behaviors that enable a child to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum.”² In 2019, KRA data collected by Kent ISD showed that 43% of students were demonstrating readiness at kindergarten entry. Disaggregated by race and ethnicity children demonstrating readiness stood at 23% for African American students, 25% for Hispanic students, 53% for White students. Based on income alone, 27% of low-income students demonstrated readiness.³

There are a number of reasons for why not all children are demonstrating readiness at kindergarten entry, access to enriched educational experiences at home or while in high-quality child care settings being one reason.

Antidotally, First Steps Kent hears from parents the challenges related to finding quality child care include locating a program in a reasonably convenient location as there are many areas of the County,

² Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Fact Sheet accessed at:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v_Jms3FupWfGl3W12_p6wDdQAdJSbfbU/view

³ Source: K-Connect Kindergarten Readiness Data Dashboard available at
<https://data.johnsoncenter.org/kconnect/successmeasure.jsp?SuccessMeasureID=8>

including areas within the City of Grand Rapids where early learning programming is not available. Additional contributing reasons why children are not enrolled in quality early learning opportunities include, but are not limited to, cost of child care, child care is not as available for second or third shift working parents, and there is a family preference including the cultural norms of many immigrant families who tend to favor children remaining in the care of an immediate family member.

For these reasons we have a significant number of children in regular care with stay-at-home parents, relative care givers and some in regular care with friends and neighbors of the child's family. Local estimates are difficult to confirm, national estimates show as many as half of all children are cared for by members of their extended family while their parents are at work.

First Steps Kent is seeking proposals that that ensure all children in Kent County have access to quality early learning programming. We are asking agencies to consider the varying circumstances of families in Kent County and propose programming that can respond as follows:

1) the shortage of quality early learning services by targeting programs to communities where children do not have access to programs such as Great Start Readiness Program, Head Start or quality child care, -and/or-

2) emphasize inclusive and responsive programming to reach and engage distinguished groups in Kent County including, but not limited to families of color, children with special needs, families living in rural areas of the county, and families in households with incomes at or below 200% Federal Poverty Level. This is not an exhaustive list; all proposed groups will be considered.

II Attributes of Requested Services

Providers applying for Early Learning programming funds will offer any number of nationally recognized, evidence-informed services to expectant mothers or children through age five.

Early Learning programs will:

- Systematically connect caregivers to information about county-wide initiatives (i.e. [Success Basics](#) and similar county-wide initiatives).
- These services may not have a navigation focus but will promote linkages between caretakers and [Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation Services](#) for families to be connected to additional resources.
- These services may not be conducive to providing developmental screenings but will promote linkages between caretakers and Ready by Five programs offering developmental screening.

All programs applying under this RFP will increase access to information that imparts knowledge and skills to parents and other adult caregivers about their child's development thus impacting one or more of the following Ready by Five Result Indicators:

- Increase in the number of new children with access to developmentally appropriate activities that promote early learning and literacy.
- Programs may propose additional objectives and results that support in this area.

All programming will incorporate [Early Childhood Standards of Quality \(ECSQ\)](#) as provided by the Michigan State Board of Education as well as appropriate incorporate materials developed by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrator's [Early Learning Task Force](#). First Steps Kent highly suggests each agency reference how the proposed programming aligns and incorporates these standards in the proposal narrative.

For the purposes of this RFP, First Steps Kent encourages proposals to consider how programs will be culturally responsive in reaching and engaging any defined community/neighborhood who would benefit from early learning programming. For example, how this program could be modified to serve families whose primary language is Spanish or families in the rural areas of Kent County.

All models must employ professionals with expertise who are educators, social workers, parent coaches, or other similarly trained professionals who can provide culturally appropriate services and who have completed a background check.

Agencies responding to this RFP will consider how their proposed program works in tandem or complements [programs currently funded by the Ready by Five Millage](#).

Providers may apply for Early Learning Programming funds to support programming that focuses on one of the following two (2) types of programming:

Please note: Proposing Agencies may apply under one program type. If an agency is interested in applying for a program qualifying under more than one program type, they must submit separate proposals under each program type as these program types cannot be combined into one proposal.

Program Type 1: Play and Learn Community Programming

Play and Learn Community Programming offers children ages birth through five an avenue to community-based early learning programming outside of childcare and/or preschool. Programs are available to children in the care of any types of caregiver (e.g., parents, relative-aide providers, licensed providers, child care center staff, preschool teachers, and teachers of grades K-3).

Programs are designed for the purpose of reaching and connecting with all types of caretakers to strengthen their understanding of child development to increase opportunities for all children to receive age-appropriate activities that enrich holistic development of a child's social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Typically, Play and Learn Community programs offer play-based sessions once a week for at least 90 minutes in public neighborhood locations such as community centers, elementary

schools, public libraries, and public or transitional housing. Programs are designed to be attended on a drop-in basis and welcoming to all children and their caretakers who attend a session.

Each program offers information to support a caretaker’s understanding of how they can support their child’s early learning development. At each session, caretakers have an opportunity to connect and learn from professionals who have early childhood expertise on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, basic math skills, literacy skills, and social emotional development. During each session, the child engages in play with their caretaker that is set up in stations to reflect many of the learning domains that are linked to the Michigan Department of Education Learning Expectations for three and four-year-old children. Each session contains defined, essential learning objectives for the child and their caretaker. Each child who attends generally leaves with a small takeaway project or book to extend the age-appropriate learning that occurred in that session.

Each “Community” can be customized by the needs and feedback from the caretakers who attend. Materials may be customized to offer culturally relevant information about early child development and school readiness. Content and information can be modified for non-English speaking families. Programs ensure staff training and processes are implemented to support culturally responsive program delivery to all children and caregivers who attend.

In addition to play-based sessions, programs may offer workshops and trainings for families and caretakers. Topics may include child development, health, and social emotional well-being.

Play and Learn Community Programming may follow the [Kaleidoscope Model](#) or other nationally recognized models.

Program Type 2: Early Literacy and Learning Programming

This area is broad and encompasses evidence-informed early literacy programming supporting improved language ability, listening, and communication skills in young children. All programming will include one or more of expectations as defined by the MDE Early Childhood Standards of Quality, including⁴:

- Creative arts: including visual arts (drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, fiber, and multimedia), instrumental and vocal music, creative movement, and dramatic play (puppetry, storytelling, mime, and role playing). Support for children’s creative

⁴ Partial definitions from the Michigan Department of Education’s Early Childhood Standards of Quality were included in this section. For complete description of the domains included, and additional identified domains, see the full documents available at: https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_50451-193806--,00.html

development is essential to foster their appreciation of the arts and their competence, self-reliance, and success.

- **Language and early literacy development:** Children begin to communicate at birth. During the preschool years they are emerging as language users and developing competence as listeners, speakers, readers, writers, and viewers. Each of these language arts is strengthened by integrated literacy experiences in print-rich active learning environments in homes, neighborhoods, outdoor play spaces, and in all formal and informal early learning settings.
- **Early technology literacy:** Digital technology plays an increasing role in the lives of young children in preschool programs and beyond. The array of such tools continues to expand as does understanding of both their potentials and cautions. Research supports young children's age-appropriate use of technology to support and to extend learning and development under the guidance of adults who understand how to use it appropriately.
- **Early learning in the areas of mathematics, science, and social studies:** Young children's early understandings of mathematics are broad in scope and extend well beyond numbers and counting. Problem solving is the central focus of the mathematics curriculum from the early years onward. Early learning in science builds on young children's natural sense of wonder and curiosity. It provides them with better understanding of the world around them and how it works. The balance of age-appropriate content and the use of inquiry to learn more about the people in their families and neighborhoods, the earth they live on, the people who live on the earth and learning more about their histories, will give young children the skills they will need as citizens of a democracy.
- **Social emotional development:** To develop socially and emotionally, children need to develop the capacity to experience, express, and gain self-control over their emotions and social interactions. Children learn and thrive when they feel emotionally secure with and socially connected to adults who provide nurturing relationships and positive early learning experiences and with other children. When children feel emotionally secure and physically safe, they feel more confident to explore their environment and to learn.

III. Equity and Inclusion Statement

Ready by Five investments will support an early childhood system that helps all children and families thrive.

In the approach to identifying needs in Kent County, agencies will consider group-based factors and deploy targeted approaches that address the varying needs and circumstances of each group eligible

for Ready by Five funded services. Ready by Five has a comprehensive interest in improving equity for marginalized demographics, especially communities of color and families in households with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

IV. Criteria Breakdown

All proposals will be reviewed by the Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board. This body will recommend what proposals are funded and for how much. The Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board will use the following evaluation criteria to select recipient organizations based on their responses to the RFP.

Programming Criteria	Total Points
Clearly articulated plan that demonstrates relevant, high-quality services and integrates evidence-informed practice as well as Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage specifications. The narrative has described how the model aligns to MDE’s Early Childhood Standards of Quality .	15
Articulates a clear need for the proposed service as well as consideration of how this proposed service will align and cooperate with current available services.	15
Proposal includes a plan to deliver services with a special consideration for underserved populations and geographies not currently served.	20
Demonstrates established partnership(s) with community partners to reach and engage families as well as fully serve families.	15
Equity and inclusion are fostered within the organization at the leadership and staff levels.	20
Proposed costs are comparable to all providers for specific Program Type and interventions.	15
Total Possible Points	100

**Proposals must meet a minimum of 70 total points to be considered for funding.*

In addition to program components, organizations must meet all requirements listed below to be considered for funding.

Additional Required Criteria**
Proposing Agency’s financial audit shows the organization to be in good financial standing.
Proposing Agency has adequate funding to cover program costs and plans to pursue additional sources of funding in addition to Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funds.
Proposing Agency has clearly explained how current funding will not be supplanted by Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Funds.
The expenses include descriptions and calculations (where applicable) and provide sound reasoning for why each budget item is necessary.
The submitted proposal is complete.

***Proposals must meet all listed requirements to be considered for funding.*

SECTION THREE: RFP PROCESS

I. Directions for Submission- Letter of Intent and Proposals

A. The deadline to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) is August 6, 2021, at 5 p.m.

Information provided in the LOI will be considered preliminary and used by First Steps Kent for planning purposes. Information will not be used for proposal scoring purposes.

B. The deadline for proposals is August 27, 2021, at 1 p.m.

This deadline is firm, no exceptions. First Steps Kent is not responsible for delays caused by any occurrence. Under no circumstances shall submissions received after the time be considered.

B. LOIs and Proposals will only be accepted in electronic format and must be submitted through the e-CImpact system.

- All forms and required information must be submitted by the stated deadline.
- If a proposal is missing elements, First Steps Kent may disqualify the proposal from further consideration.

- The e-CImpact system is accessible by any computer with an internet connection and current version of web browser (example: Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari).
- Your agency EIN number is required to set up a profile.
- To access the Ready by Five e-CImpact website, please go to: <https://agency.e-cimpact.com/login.aspx?org=FirstStepsKent>
- Please bookmark the address to easily access e-CImpact at your convenience.
- All additional materials will be posted on the First Steps Kent website at: <https://www.firststepskent.org/millage>
- In the situation your agency has technical issues, please contact First Steps Kent at readybyfivekent@firststepskent.org. Please allow two business days for First Steps Kent to respond.

II. RFP Timeline

- A. First Steps Kent reserves the right to change the RFP schedule. First Steps Kent also reserves the right to cancel, reissue, or make corrections or amendments to the RFP due to errors or changes identified by First Steps Kent and to otherwise modify the terms of the RFP at any time.
- B. The timeline for the RFP is:

7/14/2021	RFP Issued – Posted on First Steps Kent website
7/14/2021	Preconference #1 (Virtual)
7/15/2021	Preconference #2 (Virtual)
8/6/2021	Letter of Intent Deadline – 5 p.m.
8/9/2021	Question and Answer Period Closes – 5 p.m.
8/16/2021	Final questions and revision to RFP (if necessary) posted to FSK website
8/27/2021	RFP Proposal Submittal Deadline – 1 p.m.

III. Question and Answer Period

- A. All questions, clarification and interpretations of the RFP must be submitted in writing. Requests must be made in writing during the period of July 14, 2021, through August 9, 2021, by 5 p.m. No questions will be accepted after this period.
- All questions must be submitted in writing via the following on-line form [\[CLICK HERE\]](#)
 - Questions will not be accepted by any other means including, but not limited to, verbal communication, text messages, email communication, and/or by phone.
- B. All answers to questions will be published on the First Steps Kent website accessible at: <https://www.firststepskent.org/millage>
- C. It is the respondent's sole responsibility to monitor all inquiries (including those submitted by other agencies and published by First Steps Kent) to properly prepare proposal for submission.
- D. Two types of questions generally arise. One may be answered by First Steps Kent to offer clarification of a specific section of the RFP. Other questions may be more complex and may require a written amendment to the RFP. First Steps Kent staff will make that decision.
- E. All final answers and notification of amendments to the RFP will be posted on the First Steps Kent website (www.firststepskent.org) by August 16, 2021, at 5 p.m.

IV. Resident Proposal Review Board

- A. The Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board is the body who reviews and determines a recommendation for whether a proposal should be funded and how much funding will be allocated. These recommendations are reviewed and approved by the First Steps Kent Board of Directors and final approval is decided by the Kent County Board of Commissioners.
- B. The Resident Proposal Review Board will use the Programming Criteria Rubric in the RFP's Section Two to guide discussion as they evaluate and score the proposals based on the organization's responses to the RFP questions. Proposals must meet a minimum of 70 total points to be considered for funding.
- C. Questions and communication will only be sent to the Primary Contact listed in your agency profile's contact information (please double check the email and phone contact information for this individual is correct prior to submitting). First Steps Kent will reach out by email to Proposing Agencies with questions from the Resident Proposal Review Board. Answers and clarifications will be considered in the proposal review process. **Agencies submitting a proposal should anticipate they will receive emails requiring an urgent response as the Resident Proposal Review Board meets during the dates of September 21 through September 24, 2021.**