

**Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage - Request for Proposals
2025 Funding Questions and Answer.
As of: 5/2/2024 (Not Final)**

Please Note: Answers added most recently can be found towards the end of this document. Preconference attendees (those who signed in) are available at the end of this document.

Question Number	RFP and Related Section	Question Asked	Answer
1.	Preconference question	Can you speak a little more about data collection requirements? Do all programs/service categories require fairly extensive demographic data to be collected about all families who receive services?	<p>Agencies providing direct programming are required to submit data files to the Kent County Health Department via a secure link on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Information for each individual served includes demographics, service information, and referral tracking (if applicable to your program).</p> <p>This data submission follows a very specific .csv file format with required fields and codes as defined in the Ready by Five Data Standard document.</p> <p>Agencies will be required to sign a data agreement with First Steps Kent and Kent County Health Department as part of the contracting process.</p> <p>See Part One, III, B., 4-5. for more information.</p>
2.	Preconference question	One more question... What about the number served in each category? I think I remember 12k children were served. Just wondering the number in each category?	<p>The stated 12,000 unique children served in 2023 was identified through the third-party evaluation process that is currently underway. Unique numbers of children for 2023 are being finalized by the evaluation team and will be shared with the community in early summer, 2024.</p>
3.	Preconference question	Are there letters of support/good standing requested for this round? If so, should that be at the organization level or the program proposal level?	<p>Letters will be submitted at the Agency level. No more than three letters of support will be submitted for each agency. All letters must be bound in one pdf file and included with the proposal submission.</p> <p>Letters should come from partner organizations that can speak to the Proposing Agency's experience in providing quality services within the program and community focus areas included in the proposal(s).</p>

4.	Preconference question	Would there also be the expectation that both categories of O&N coordinate with each other?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>In RFP 1, Section Two it states, "Within the first 60 days of the contract start date, all partners working in this program type will convene to develop a coordinated outreach strategy and a method of ongoing communication to ensure alignment within the shared outreach strategy continues for the term of the contract period. Service Partners will also coordinate outreach efforts with the agency developing the Early Education Technology Link programming (see RFP 2)."</p> <p>In RFP 2, Section Two it states, "Programming will align with the Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation network which functions as the "front door" for families accessing early childhood services by ensuring all families living in Kent County are connected with the right service at the right time".</p>
5.	Preconference question	If handout educational institutions materials are created by a Ready by 5 funded staff person, who owns copyright? Or is this use of time not allowed?	<p>In the RFP Section One, Part I, A. it states, "Unless specified in the RFP, costs allocated to Ready by Five funding should not include major purchases of equipment or the development of intellectual property. Items developed or acquired with Ready by Five funds remain vested with First Steps Kent and Kent County."</p> <p>Unless specified in the RFP, First Steps Kent will not fund expenses that fall into these types of categories. These types of expenses should be covered with other sources of funding.</p>
6.	Preconference question	Our program is within the healthcare space-Children on Medicaid usually do not have a co-pay for well-child visits and it is illegal to take payments at the point of service for medical care if an insurance contract, such as Medicaid, is in place. We have received a waiver in the past-do programs ask for that again if cost-sharing is prohibited?	<p>The application includes a question for agencies applying under the relevant program types to respond to the Cost Sharing requirement.</p> <p>If your organization is not able to or unsure about aspects of the Cost Share policy, please provide more specific in the application's Service Narrative form within the section titled, "Cost Sharing Requirement". (Note: If you do not see this question appear in your application, it is not relevant to your program type.)</p>

7.	Preconference question	Are there any staffing areas that aren't allowed? For example, last RFP we couldn't use funds to pay for the executive director's staffing time.	This information has been outlined in the RFP in Section One, Part I., A. If there are additional questions, please submit questions via the Question & Answer process that can be found in Section Three, Part II.
8.	Preconference question	You mentioned that this round of funding is 9.8 million. Do you know what the total amount for the last round of funding was? Similar question: Did you share the investments per round for each category... before and this round.	In 2023, the Kent County transition their fiscal year schedule from a calendar year (Jan-Dec) to an Oct 1-Sep 30 fiscal calendar. Additionally, there were carry over funds from previous years that were unspent due to many service partners having challenges with fully implementing service delivery during the pandemic. The amount of available funds was higher for the last round of funding (2023). The recommended allocation for new contracts in 2024 was \$8.9M. This was in addition to \$2.1M of allocations to continue contracts that were executed before the change in the fiscal year calendar. The total allocation was \$11M. The Resident Proposal Review board determines the amount that will be allocated to each category.
9.	Preconference question	Are Child Safety applications being accepted?	Child Safety Programming is not being funded for this round of funding.
10.	Preconference question	If asked to present [to the Ready by Five Resident Proposal Review Board], will that also be the week of June 20-26?	Yes. Once proposals are submitted, First Steps Kent will be reaching out to schedule dates and times with agencies who will be asked to present. More information on why an agency may be asked to present are included in the RFP Section One, Part I. A. Scenarios may include: proposals are from agencies who have not been funded previously, have an increase in their request or scope (number served), have proposed budget costs that are consistently higher than the established average, or have not demonstrated complete performance in past contract periods may be asked to present to the Resident Proposal Review Board.
11.	Preconference question	Is this funding part of the new or former voter approved millage? Specifically, if the millage didn't pass this fall, would this funding still be available.	This funding is for the last year of the ballot measure that was passed in 2018.

12.	Preconference Question	<p>Is Niche Family Supports required to participate in Cost Sharing?</p> <p>(The Service Provider manual currently shows them as a program type that is excluded).</p>	<p>First Steps Kent has reviewed documents from past years and found that Cost Sharing has been required in all previous versions of the RFP and Service Provider Manuals for this program type. We have determined that this was a misprint in the 2024 Service Provider Manual.</p> <p>Appendix F (see page 71) should state:</p> <p><i>The following Ready by Five categories of services require income verification for determining cost sharing responsibility by families:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent Education and Support - Home Visiting</i> • <i>Parent Education and Support – Child Safety Initiatives</i> • <i>All Healthy Development Services (except Fetal Infant Mortality Review Network)</i> • <i>Early Learning – Early Literacy and Learning</i>
13.	General RFP Question	<p>Do laptop computers count as equipment or supplies?</p>	<p>The Service Provider Manual requires accounting for and inventory of all non-expendable property costing \$1,000 or more per unit. Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage funds may not be used to purchase equipment or property. Computers and technology costing \$1,000 and over per unit are considered equipment and not an allowable cost for programs applying for funding under the current RFPs.</p> <p>Computers and technology costing \$999.99 and under per unit are allowable with the following contingencies. If awarded, the agency will be required to provide a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your agency’s internal controls are in place to track the technology as it is assigned to staff and/or program participants, and • how your agency plans to safeguard sensitive information that may be housed on the technology.
14.	General RFP Question	<p>How will the cost share amount be calculated?</p>	<p>The cost for each individual served is determined by taking the annual amount awarded and then divided by the number of encounters to be served included in the contract.</p> <p>The number of encounters will be determined during the contracting process.</p>

15.	General RFP Question	<p>If my program collects funds through donations or cost sharing, is my allocation reduced?</p>	<p>No, this would not reduce the allocation, it would be used as an additional source of program revenue. Any agency that collects funds through cost sharing or donations may use these funds towards the cost of providing additional Ready by Five contracted services.</p> <p>All funds collected through cost sharing will be used as the “first dollar” towards services and will increase the amount of funding available.</p> <p>An example: If a family of four has an annual income higher than 200% Federal Poverty Level and is interested in services, the provider would collect payment for services based on the Ready by Five Cost Sharing Policy. This cost share payment would be applied as a source of revenue towards the cost of the service and reported to Ready by Five as collected income. This collected payment would be leveraged and used in addition to the millage funds awarded by the program who collects the funds.</p>
16.	General RFP Question	<p>Regarding; To add a program to this application, select a program from the drop down (if available), or if there is no drop-down displayed, select 'Create a new Program.'</p> <p>If a drop down is available, where would we see it on the screen. I do not see it.</p>	<p>The drop-down menu will appear on one of the following screens. We have clarified the instructions on the main screen regarding this.</p>
17.	<p>3c. Healthy Development Services - Niche Family Supports.</p> <p>RE: The Number Served and Community of Focus form in the online application</p>	<p>We were recently awarded funding on 4/1/2024 we will not have metrics data beyond the first month. What should we list in the data sections since we will only have metrics data for 1 month at the time of this RFP submission deadline?</p>	<p>For programs that are unable to provide information from the previous years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter “0” in all fields within the “Actual Last Year” column. • Enter projections for upcoming contract year in the “Proposed – Upcoming Year” column. <p>You may note the reason for why information was not provided in the “Actual Last Year” column with the “Proposed Service Narrative and Detail” form under the following question, “Describe your plan of outreach. Include details on the specific outreach strategies to each of the community of focus areas identified in the Number Served and Community Focus form will happen. If applicable, include a description of any additional demographic groups your program will reach in addition to what is defined in the Community Focus form.”</p>

18.	3c. Healthy Development Services - Niche Family Supports. Pg 33 indicates yes. Pg 71 says "except" for income verification.	<p>Could you please clarify if cost sharing is required for Niche Family Programs.</p> <p>If this is required but we are not required to verify income how does a program determine the cost share amount for the family?</p>	<p>Please see question 12.</p> <p>Verification of family income and cost share responsibility must be completed annually. Documentation must be retained on file by the Service Provider.</p> <p>Families who meet one or more of the following qualifications are exempt from Cost Sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families that have income of 200% or less of the poverty income guidelines established by the Health and Human Services Administration are not required to cost share for their services. • Expectant parents and families with children through the age of five years and under who show documentation or attest they are recipients of Medicaid benefits. • Families that are experiencing homelessness as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). • Families who are experiencing financial hardship due to unemployment and can present documentation of their unemployment status. • Children or expectant parents who are engaged with child welfare services, including Child Protective Services and Foster Care. <p>Families who meet one or more of the qualifications listed above will complete "Form B: Attestation of Current Exemption Status". See the Ready by Five Service Provider Manual for complete details (Section 3.4 and Appendix F).</p>
19.	4. Parent Education and Support Services - Home Visiting Programming	<p>What types of letters of support would be strong submissions? Examples - from a community partner, client, staff/volunteer, etc.</p>	<p>Please see question 3.</p>

Preconference Attendees:

Name of Attendee	Agency
Emily Kobza	Family Futures; Ready for School
Ben Brower	DABSJ
Madison Perian	Grand Rapids Children's Museum
Katelin Webster	Refugee Education Center
James Hissong	Kent ISD
Barbara Berens	Vibrant Futures
Maureen Kirkwood	Health Net of West Michigan
Kimber Wager	MomsBloom, Postpartum Support Program
Candace Cowling	Family Futures
Teresa Gastaldi-Balhorn	Kent ISD Bright Beginnings
Hanna Visser	Family Promise of West Michigan
Wendy Wheeler	Kent Co MDHHS Prevention
Gabi Nye	Family Futures
Leslie Griswold	Kent County Health Department, Lead and FIMR
Scott Bloem	The Other Way Ministries (Little Lights)
Kristi Kam	Health Net of West Michigan
Jennie Mulder	Corewell Health West - Prenatal Education
Chana Edmond-Verley	Vibrant Futures
Yolanda Johnson	Think Babies Michigan
Melissa VanDyke	Easterseals MORC
Tara Gwamna	YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids
Tracy Amid	Ready for School
Jenn Harrod	Health Net of West Michigan
Anissa Eddie	Liminality Consulting
Christina Pavlak	Health Net of West Michigan
Corey Holcomb	Family Futures
Tatum Hawkins	Refugee Education Center
Sarah Miller	Comprehensive Therapy Center
Karmen Johnson	Marvelous Lifestyles Outreach
Julie Blaszak	Grand Rapids Community College Grants Office
Corey Holcomb	Family Futures
Lisa Dopke	GRCC
Cathy Weirick	Cherry Health

Rachel Johnson	Family Futures
Ashlie Jones	Grand Rapids African American Health Institute
Angela DeLost	Ready for School- Reach Out and Read Michigan
Tequia Adams	Corewell Health Baby Scholars
Laura Mammen	D.A. Blodgett-St. John's
Mary C Hartfield	The Village Learning Center

