

Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Outreach and Navigation Programming Request for Proposal

RELEASE DATE: July 14, 2021

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 mils 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 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.
- B. 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](#).
- C. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. 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-CImpact</i>	<i>Submitted to KCHD</i>	<i>Submitted through e-CImpact</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			★	

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 Outreach and Navigation Services

Ready by Five's Outreach and Navigation Services function as the "front door" for families accessing early childhood services; ensuring all families living in Kent County either expecting a child or the caretaker of one or more children through age five are connected with the right service at the right time.

The goal of this RFP is to: Increase cross-sector collaboration between providers to ensure families are being connected with needed services in the form of a warm handoff through other referrals.

II. Attributes and Outcomes of Requested Services

Outreach and Navigation Services are key to growing partnership(s) among community partners to a) strengthen connections between early childhood services, b) reach, inform and further engage families in services, and c) ensure families are successfully connected with services.

Programs must define three components in their model including: Outreach, Screening, and Navigation. Each component is defined below.

Outreach

Within the provider network, partners funded as Outreach and Navigation providers are working towards increasing multiple entry points for families with young children to access services within the early childhood provider network. Outreach services aim to:

- Increase the usage of the system by engaging future parents and families with young children not currently using any services or who are unaware of services.
- Support families who are engaged in services connect with additional needed services (i.e., Play and Learn Communities).
- Have a clear plan to increase outreach to Kent County's most vulnerable families not currently engaged in services.
 - This includes but is not limited to families whose primary language is not English, families with limited internet or technology access, and families in the rural areas of Kent County.
- Work with all Outreach and Navigation services to identify outreach gaps.

Screening

All programs must have developed a screening protocol for determining the need of all individuals served by the program. All funded programs will designate a specific screening tool to ensure families are screened for all needs related to their Social Determinates of Health and

other needs as determined by the agency. Programs may opt to include multiple screening tools to further identify and guide families to resources.

For families who indicate an interest in home visiting options in Kent County, First Steps Kent strongly encourages programs to utilize the [Kent County Parent Support](#) site. This is especially important if the provider also houses a home visiting program within their agency to ensure families are fully aware of all home visiting program options available.

Navigation

As needs are identified, navigation will offer connection and address barriers to access and utilization of services, information, and resources.

Additionally, navigation services will:

- Provide trusted, accessible, person-centered care with culturally responsive, trained, and supported staff who use best practices in the field.
- Identify the needs of families through formal screening as well as conversation with individuals served.
- Ensure families are not only successfully connected but connected with the appropriate level of services.
- Ensure families receive information on all options of services available and offer the level of service specific to the need of each family.
- Develop procedures to ensure families requiring interpretation services are effectively served.
- Have clear procedures for tracking referral success.

Proposals could include an innovative, new program or an expansion of current Outreach and Navigation services. Agencies responding to this RFP will consider how their proposed program works in tandem or complements the [programs currently funded by the Ready by Five Millage](#).

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:

- Increased referral completion and follow-through.
- Increase in the number of children and expecting parents engaged in navigation supports.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing supports.
- Programs may propose additional indicators and results that support in this area.

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
Proposes a clear plan that articulates high-quality services that integrate evidence-informed practices as well as meet Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage specifications to a) screen and assess an individual's needs, and b) successfully track if families are successfully connected to services.	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 a) strengthen connections between early childhood services, b) reach and engage families, and c) ensure families are successfully connected with services.	15
Equity and inclusion are fostered within the organization at both the leadership and staff levels.	20
The overall submitted proposal describes services and costs in a clear, complete, concise narrative and budget details are clear. Proposed costs are comparable to all Outreach and Navigation providers for specific intervention.	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.**