

Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage Healthy Development 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 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-Clmact</i>	<i>Submitted to KCHD</i>	<i>Submitted through e-Clmact</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 Healthy Development Programming

Healthy Development Programming provides services to expectant parents and children through age five currently residing in Kent County, Michigan. Programming will follow evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that demonstrate success in supporting positive health behaviors and drive better health outcomes for children ages birth through five years as well as expectant parents. In addition to a focus on health and developmental outcomes.

The goals of this RFP are:

- **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.
- **Reduce outcome disparities** by supporting models that serve traditionally underserved community members based on their racial background, zip code of residence or, cultural factors.

Health through the early years is an important contributor to later educational success and their life-long health. Nationally and in Kent County the data supports the need for services beginning in a child's early years and before Kindergarten entry. Data also shows equitable interventions and programming is necessary to support all children as we see significant disparities in health, well-being, and developmental concerns among groups. A few examples include:

National data shows a connection between poverty and a child's development, as parents are more than 50 percent more likely to report a concern related to their child's development, than parents with children and a household income at least twice the poverty level. This number is higher for Black and Latino children. Compared to children in households with parents who have more than a high school education, children in families where parents have less than a high school degree are more than three times as likely to be at risk for having two or more developmental concerns. Children with parents with a high school degree are twice as likely to have a developmental concern.²

According to the Kent County Health Department's Community Health Needs Assessment, mental health and wellbeing has been identified as a significant need in Kent County for a consecutive number of years. Within Kent County, one in four adults have some form of diagnosed depression.³ The needs in this area have only been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, a survey conducted by Child Minds Institute during the COVID-19 pandemic

² Source: The Youngest Americans: A statistical Portrait of Infants and Toddlers in the United States. By: David Murphey, Mae Cooper and Nicole Forry. November 2013.

³ 2020 Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment: <https://accesskent.com/Health/CHNA/pdf/FINAL-2020-CHNA-REPORT.pdf>

found that 72% of parents stated that they have witnessed a decline in their child’s emotional well-being since the onset of the pandemic. Nearly half of parents surveyed reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased their need to seek mental health care for their child.⁴

Birthweight is a significant predictor for infant health. 2019 data shows 9.1% of all births were a low birthweight (infants born weighing less than 2,500 grams), and additional 1.5% were a very low birthweight (infants born weighing less than 1,500 grams). Just under 11% of babies born in Kent County were born prematurely, prior to 37 weeks gestation. As this data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, disparities become apparent as Black babies are more than twice as likely to be born at a low birthweight, and three times more likely to be born at a very low birthweight than White babies.⁵

Blood lead testing is required for children under six years old enrolled in the federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) program and/or Michigan Medicaid programs by age of three. Other children of this age group are tested based on medical care providers’ advice and the family’s wishes. 2019 data shows 18% of children under age six were tested and 2.4% of those tested had an Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL). As of February 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a substantial decrease in EBLL testing, In 2020, 11% (5,609 out of 52,460) of children under six were tested and 159, or 2.8%, had EBLL.⁶

II Attributes of Requested Services

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

Note: Nationally recognized home visiting models applying under this RFP will not be considered. See Ready by Five’s Parent Education and Support RFP for more information on funding specifically available for home visiting programming during this round of funding.

In their approach to identifying needs, Proposing 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. Services will be asset-based programming that builds on the individual’s strengths and supports families with their individualized needs. This includes conducting programming in a way that is culturally responsive.

⁴ Child Mind Institute. (2020, December 22). 2020 Children’s Mental Health Report: [Telehealth in an Increasingly Virtual World](#).

⁵ 2020 Kent County Health Needs Assessment (page 63). Accessed 7/5/2021. Available at: <https://accesskent.com/Health/CHNA/pdf/FINAL-2020-CHNA-REPORT.pdf>

⁶ 2020-21 Opportunities Assessment, Kent County Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage (page 15). Accessed 7/5/2021. Available at: https://www.firststepskent.org/uploads/financial-reports/Millage-Portal/Kent-County-Ready-by-Five-Early-Childhood-Millage-Opportunities-Assessment-2021_JD.pdf

All models must employ professionals with expertise who are registered nurses, nurse practitioners, educators, social workers, community health workers 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](#) and when possible, serve additional areas, communities or groups where current available services may be limited.

Programming would work in tandem (not duplicate) with the parent or child's medical health home. Ready by Five Millage funds may not be used to supplant current sources of funding and will not pay for services currently covered by Commercial Insurers, Medicaid, TRICARE or other healthcare service payor.

Providers may apply for Healthy Development Programming funds to support programs that focus on one of the following three (3) 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) Healthy Expectant and New Parents

From the time of conception through postpartum, support and information can positively impact the health and well-being of a mother and her baby.

This area is broad as First Steps Kent is seeking programs that support improved health outcomes for expecting and new parents.

This includes programs increasing parental support during the period of time a mother becomes pregnant though, at minimum, the postpartum period (first six weeks following pregnancy).

This programming would complement (not duplicate) the mother's health home.

Programming will follow evidence-based or evidence-informed practices that demonstrates success in supporting positive health behaviors and that drives better health outcomes.

Proposals funded under this area will be asset-based programming that builds on the individual's strengths and supports women with their individualized needs.

This includes conducting programming in a way that is culturally responsive.

Programs applying under this RFP will impact one or more of the following indicators:

- Decrease in mothers smoking during pregnancy.
- Decrease in mothers using non-prescribed substances during pregnancy.

- Ensure expectant mothers and primary caregivers are screened for well-being.
- Ensure mothers receive adequate prenatal care. (Defined by the Kotelchuck Index)
- Increase in healthy births. (Defined as Babies Born at Healthy Weight at 2500 Grams)
- Increase in mothers breastfeeding.
- Increase in the number of families receiving referrals to additional ongoing supports (i.e. home visits, early intervention).
- Programs may propose additional indicators and results that support in this area.

Program Type 2) Developmental and Social Emotional Screenings and Connection

Children through the age of five years and their caregivers will have access to comprehensive, coordinated care that maximizes the child’s physical and emotional health and ensures children have regular developmental screenings to identify developmental delays, disabilities, and emotional challenges.

All funded programs will implement the [Ages and Stages](#) (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE) developmental screening tools. Programs may opt to include additional screening or assessment tools to further identify needs and guide families.

This program type includes evidence-informed models that ensure access to clinical interventions that specifically support a healthy parent-infant attachment, as well as address positive social/emotional development of children.

In addition to ensuring children are screened, these programs may include programming to support parental well-being through an evidence-informed facilitated group model to support parents and caregivers with the acquisition of new coping skills and resources to strengthen their overall wellbeing.

Agencies applying under this program type will impact one or more of the following indicators:

- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for developmental concerns.
- Increase in the number of children screened by programs for social emotional concerns.
- Increase in the number of children successfully connected to supports when a developmental or social emotional concerns is identified.
- Programs may propose additional indicators and results that support in this area.

Program Type 3) Healthy and Safe Home Environment

Programming that ensures families have access to support that specifically addresses environmental home health in Kent County. Services could include but are not limited to environmental home health screenings (to reduce home-based environmental health hazards regarding lead, asthma, accidental injury, etc.), child blood lead level screening, and case

management for addressing lead issues and home environment hazards, including referrals to lead remediation resources.

Note: funds may not be used to cover costs related to home repairs or lead remediation services.

These services may not have a broad navigation focus but will promote and link parent and caretakers to [Ready by Five Outreach and Navigation Services](#) for families to be connected to additional resources.

Programs applying under this program type will impact one or more of the following indicators:

- Increase in the number of children receiving blood screening to test for elevated levels of lead.
- Increase in the number of children's homes screened for environmental hazards and lead by a trained professional.
- Increase the number of families successfully referred to resources and services when one or more environmental concerns in the home have been identified.
- 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
Clearly articulated plan that demonstrates relevant, high-quality services and integrates evidence-informed practice as well as Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage specifications.	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.**