



Building Bright Futures Request for Proposal Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) Equity Consultant

Release Date: August 9, 2023

Proposals Due: September 13, 2023

Contact for Proposals: Beth Truzansky, Deputy Director, Building Bright Futures,
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1. Introduction and Background

The [Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council](#), Inc. (BBF) seeks a qualified contractor with expertise in strategic systems change with a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, and leadership coaching to partner in monitoring and updating the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP). This contractor will work closely with a small group of Vermont early childhood partners to advise on decision-making to ensure that Vermont is using an equity lens to monitor the VECAP, and that children and families are held at the center of decision-making. This will involve assessment, identification, and support to act on opportunities that promote DEI.

Vermont has been awarded a [\\$23 million federal grant](#) for three years (2023–2025) to strengthen the state’s early childhood system, support the early childhood workforce, and improve the quality and availability of services for children from birth through age 8 and their families. Grant funding supports improvements in family engagement and the delivery of services across settings and services, including: child care, Universal Prekindergarten Education, Head Start, health care, mental health care, and other services and programs that support the health and well-being of Vermont children and their families.

Building Bright Futures has been contracted by the State of Vermont to host several grant functions, including updating the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan and ensuring systems are equitable and serving vulnerable and underserved populations. BBF is procuring this contractor to guide systems change with a DEI lens. This involves working at all levels (individual, organizational, and institutional) to leverage change. The contractor will work closely with the BBF Executive Director, Deputy Director, Policy and Program Director, and Data and Research Director. They will also work with State of Vermont staff who serve on the State Advisory Council and in leadership and decision-making roles with influence on all aspects of the early childhood system such as workforce professional development, grant making, child care quality and licensing, early childhood mental health delivery, and family and child health delivery.



About BBF

Building Bright Futures is Vermont's early childhood public-private partnership charged under Vermont Title 33, Chapter 46 and the federal Head Start Act to serve as Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council, the mechanism used to advise the Governor and Legislature on the status of children in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. BBF's mission is to improve the well-being of children and families in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together across sectors and within regions to discuss critical challenges and problem-solve. State statute charges BBF with maintaining and monitoring the vision and strategic plan for Vermont's early childhood system called Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP). The vision is for Vermont's early childhood system to be an integrated continuum of comprehensive, high-quality services that is equitable, accessible, and will improve outcomes for each and every child in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families.

BBF's Approach to DEI

Building Bright Futures is committed to supporting the well-being and development of each and every young child and family in Vermont. As leaders in the early childhood community, BBF is committed to collectively addressing systemic injustice and striving to do better for Vermont's youngest and most vulnerable children and families. BBF is committed to listening, learning, elevating inequities, and taking action to dismantle racism in the organization and in Vermont's early childhood system. BBF's approach to DEI is guided by Vermont's vision for the early childhood system: Vermont aspires to realize the promise of each and every Vermont child by ensuring that the early childhood system is an integrated, continuous, comprehensive, high-quality system of services that is equitable, accessible, and will improve outcomes for children in the prenatal period to age 8 and their families. BBF's professional development opportunities have included: understanding bias; building culturally responsive and trauma responsive systems of care; navigating conflict; facilitative leadership; family engagement and leadership. BBF Leadership has participated in the Hunt Institute *National Early Childhood Solutions Consortium* and BUILD *Equity Leader Action Network*.



2. Scope of Work

Landscape Analysis/Document Review (Year 1)

- Conduct a system-wide landscape analysis to ensure an equity and child-centered vision and strategy by conducting an equity audit alongside the strategic plan crosswalk (Prioritizing the VECAP and SAC Policy Recommendations as well as process, outcomes, and deliverables network-wide).
- Conduct an internal BBF organization landscape analysis focused on improving culture, approach, HR practices, and professional development.

Leadership Coaching, Skill Building, and Capacity (Ongoing)

- Internal to BBF Team
 - Provide coaching (individual and small group) to build understanding and ability to influence strategic decisions.
 - Facilitate a series of at least three workshops or discussions to build staff skill and capacity to achieve DEI goals.
- BBF Network
 - Facilitate workshops with early childhood system leaders who are in leadership roles in the BBF Network (SAC members, VECAP committee co-chairs, Regional Council leaders) to build skill and capacity to achieve DEI goals.
 - Executive coaching to support leaders in making institution-level changes. This can take many forms to support leaders to identify and work through key decision-making opportunities to make systemic change such as hiring practices, evaluation measures, organization culture, and policy development.

Policy Development (Year 2-3)

- Family and Community Engagement
 - Consult with BBF's team to build diverse engagement across the BBF Network, including meaningful participation of marginalized populations and currently unrepresented or under-represented groups.
- VECAP Update
 - Advise and support the update of the VECAP (comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan) with broad stakeholder engagement, aligned vision, and routine monitoring and evaluation to document progress and success.
 - Partner with Vermont's Office of Racial Equity to ensure the VECAP update is aligned with existing recommendations and statewide priorities related to racial equity.



Outcome measures

Activity	Deliverables	Timeframe
1. Landscape Analysis/ Document Review	a. System-wide landscape analysis and strategic plan crosswalk	Year 1
	b. BBF organization landscape analysis	
2. Leadership Coaching, Skill Building, and Capacity	a. Coaching and training for BBF staff. Participants report increased skill to achieve DEI goals via a pre- and post-assessment.	Year 1-3
	b. Coaching for BBF Network leaders. Participants report increased awareness and skills to facilitate shifts in the EC system that will dismantle policies and practices that are unjust or result in inequitable outcomes.	Year 2-3
3. BBF Policy and Organization	a. Advise in the development of the BBF State Advisory Council Network policy recommendations.	Ongoing
	b. Advise BBF and the Early Childhood Systems Evaluator to monitor the EC system, document advisement and impact.	Ongoing
	c. Advise on a strategy to build diverse engagement across the BBF Network.	Ongoing
4. VECAP Update	a. Build strategy to update the VECAP with a DEI lens.	Year 1
	b. Support the update of the VECAP.	Year 2-3



BBF's Role to Support the Contractor

The contractor will partner closely with the BBF Directors team (including the Executive and Deputy Directors, Policy and Program Director, and Data and Research Director) throughout the award period. Building Bright Futures will provide support to the contractor in the following areas:

- A. Providing documentation and publications for systematic document review
- B. Developing contact lists for key informant interviews and community conversations/focus groups
- C. Supporting communication to stakeholders about participating in interviews and community conversations as well as convening/hosting the virtual sessions via Zoom
- D. Supporting the contractor with facilitation and analysis as appropriate and necessary

3. Reporting and Record Keeping

The contractor will be required to meet monthly with the BBF Directors Team and quarterly with the PDG Leadership Team. A timeline of deliverables based on the above scope of work will be collaboratively developed with the contractor. All time will be positively reported through a monthly timesheet. The contractor shall submit monthly invoices to the Company's Business Manager by the 15th of the subsequent month and the Company agrees to pay such invoices within 15 days.

4. Applicant Eligibility and Requirements

Desired Qualifications

- Experience working with organizational leaders to shift policy and culture towards best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Expertise in individual coaching to build leaders' skill and capacity to identify and navigate system inequities, impact of racial and social bias, decision-making, and navigating conflict
- Expertise in managing complex projects, maintaining positive working relationships with teams, and meeting timelines and deliverables
- Familiarity with public and private organizational structures, power dynamics, and elements to facilitate systemic change
- Experience collaborating with diverse stakeholders to create respectful, effective systems for soliciting qualitative data, supporting strategic decision-making, and personal development in DEI
- Work with others cooperatively, communicate clearly, and contribute to a work environment that focuses on shared goals and collective impact
- Clear and accessible writing skills, strong analytical and critical thinking skills
- Preferred experience and understanding of Vermont and Vermont's early childhood system



Location: Must have the ability to attend meetings with the project team and statewide partners, primarily virtually with some in-person meetings.

5. Deadlines and Content of Proposals

The contract can begin as early as October 30, 2023 and end December 31, 2025, contingent upon the availability of funds. Budget range is \$200,000 - \$235,000 for the contract period.

Please submit questions about the proposal to btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org by 11:59 PM EST, September 13, 2023. The email must be clearly identified with the subject line "Questions - VECAP Equity RFP."

Please submit proposals to: btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org. The email must be clearly identified with the subject line of the email "VECAP Equity RFP". The name of the contractor and contact person must be listed in your proposal and in the body of the email. Attach to the email your entire proposal in Adobe PDF format.

All proposals must include the following six (6) components (not to exceed 3 pages):

1. A statement identifying a) individuals who were involved in the preparation of the proposal, b) a single point of contact, c) type of organization (Municipality, Non-profit, Corporation, Sole Proprietor, LLC), and d) the organization's address as it appears on a W-9 that has been signed within the previous 6 months.
2. Proposed approach to the work
3. A detailed scope of work describing how the deliverables will be met
4. A detailed description of the organization's experience with providing services outlined in this RFP including coaching and facilitating trainings on topics related to diversity, inclusion, and racial equity. Detail relevant staff qualifications and experience. This can include resumes, reports, and descriptions of expertise. Please also describe experience facilitating on-line trainings from a diversity of perspectives while being attentive to numerous competing and/or overlapping priorities.
5. Proposals must clearly address each of the selection criteria identified on page 8 of this document.
6. Attachments (not included in page count)
 - a. Proposed budget: an estimated budget for the Scope of Services. The estimated budget must include cost breakdown by major task and budget categories (such as personnel, materials and supplies, travel, etc.)
 - b. Résumé(s)/CV(s) of consultant(s)
 - c. References: A minimum of two references (including current phone numbers and email addresses) from individuals who previously hired the applicant to conduct DEI training, coaching, or strategic advisement.



Deadline: 11:59 PM EST, September 13, 2023

All proposals must be submitted as detailed in the manner described herein. Exceptions or extensions to established deadlines will not be granted. Please submit questions via email to Beth Truzansky at btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org.

Timeline

August 9, 2023 Release RFP
September 13, 2023 Proposals due by 11:59 PM EST
October 30, 2023 Contract award

The above dates are subject to change at the option of BBF.

6. Proposal Terms and Milestones for Payment

BBF reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this Request for Proposal. If a proposal is selected, it will be the most advantageous in terms of quality of service, the Consultant's qualifications, and capabilities to provide the specified service, and other factors that BBF may consider. BBF reserves the right, at its discretion, to waive informalities or irregularities in proposals or proposal procedures, and to accept or further negotiate cost, terms, or conditions of any proposal determined by BBF to be in the best interests of BBF even if not the lowest bid. The price quotations stated in the Vendor's proposal will not be subject to any price increase from the date on which the proposal is opened by BBF to the mutually agreed-to date of bid. Proposals must be signed by an official authorized to bind the provider to its provisions for at least a period of 90 days. Failure of the successful Vendor to accept the obligation of the bid may result in the cancellation of any award. A service contract will be executed between BBF and the awarded Vendor. The selected Vendor may not subcontract any of the work specified in this RFP without prior written consent of BBF.

Independent Contractor Status: Vendor is being retained by the Company only for the purposes and to the extent set forth in this Agreement. Vendor's relationship with the Company shall be and will remain as an independent contractor. Vendor shall not be considered under the provisions of this Agreement as having employee status and is not eligible to participate in any benefits provided by the Company to its employees. Vendor shall be responsible for all taxes on the consulting payments received by Vendor from the Company. Vendor shall not have any authority to and shall not bind the Company without the Company's prior written consent and authorization.

Insurance: Vendor shall take out and maintain during service to BBF under a contract such public liability and property damage insurance as shall protect Vendor, its subcontractors, and BBF from claims for damages for personal injury, including accidental death, as well as for claims for property damage, which might arise from operations under its contract with BBF,



whether such operations be by Vendor or its subcontractor, or by anyone directly or indirectly employed by either of them. All insurance policies shall be issued by responsible companies who are acceptable to BBF. The Vendor shall not cause any insurance to be canceled nor permit any insurance to lapse during the life of the contract with BBF. Vendor shall indemnify and hold BBF harmless from any damages, cost, claims, or expenses which may arise as a result of any failure on the part of the Vendor to provide accurate and/or complete data and information to BBF as outlined and required by the terms and conditions of its contract with BBF.

7. Evaluation and Selection

Systems Analysis proposals will be evaluated based on the Evaluation Criteria listed below. Proposals will be ranked in order of the highest numerical score first. BBF may select as many top ranked vendors as it deems necessary for inclusion within the negotiating list.

CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score
1. INFORMATION FROM THE BIDDER		
A. Quality of the Bidder's Experience	40	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder demonstrates knowledge of, and expertise in strategic systems change with a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, and leadership coaching to partner in monitoring and updating the Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) • Bidder demonstrates experience with project management, data analysis, and evaluation • Bidder demonstrates understanding of reporting expectations required under a grant agreement with BBF • Bidder demonstrates experience collaborating with diverse stakeholders and collecting and analyzing data 		
B. Bidder's Capacity to Perform	35	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder demonstrates capacity to execute this scope of work within the timeframe allotted • Bidder demonstrates relevant qualifications and experiences outlined in the RFP • Bidder demonstrates experience collaborating with agency and community leaders and partners through key informant interviews and focus groups to inform gaps in service provision, capacity, and governance 		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with qualitative data collection, analysis, reliable data management, assurance of anonymity through de-identifying data, and respecting informant confidentiality • Bidder demonstrates prior experience with a range of research methodologies, data collection, and statistical analysis procedures; policy and network analysis and program evaluation; project management and reporting • Bidder demonstrates clear and accessible writing skills, strong analytical and critical thinking skills 		
C. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice	5	
<p>Promotion of DEI values in the proposal including items such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of goals to promote diversity and equity, projects that include under-represented groups, such as Minority or Women Owned Sub-Contractor Businesses, are encouraged. • If the involvement of under-represented groups is anticipated, please list the names of the entity/entities anticipated to be utilized, including the primary contact person, email address, and any other relevant information for each of them. • Please be advised that although optional, a listing of intent to work with an under-represented group will make your proposal eligible for up to 5 additional points in scoring. 		
2. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL/PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS		
A. Responsiveness to Specifications	10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidders' description of how they will respond to the scope of work contained in section 2 of the bid • Completeness and reasonableness of the bidder's budget which will include all project costs 		
B. Capacity to participate in collaborative meetings	10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to maintain connection and participate in required meetings 		
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	100	
CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total	Score