



Building Bright Futures Request for Proposal Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP) Project Manager

Release Date: December 15, 2023

Proposals Due: January 19, 2024

Contact for Proposals: Kate Bailey, Network Manager, Building Bright Futures,
kbailey@buildingbrightfutures.org

1. Introduction and Background

The [Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council](#), Inc. (BBF) seeks a qualified contractor with expertise in strategic systems change, and project management to update Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP), the 5-year strategic plan. Expertise in diversity, equity, inclusion, and community engagement is essential in order to guide systems change with a DEI lens.

Vermont has been awarded a [\\$23 million federal grant](#) (a Preschool Development Grant, or PDG) 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 the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. Building Bright Futures has been contracted by the State of Vermont to host several grant functions, including updating Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan and ensuring systems are equitable and that they serve vulnerable and underserved populations. BBF is procuring this contractor to manage the project development, stakeholder engagement, synthesis, and writing, editing, and finalization of the updated plan.

The contractor will work closely with BBF's Deputy Director, Network Manager, Research and Data Director, Early Childhood Systems Evaluator, and others on the BBF team. They will also work with State of Vermont staff who serve on the State Advisory Council and with statewide leaders and decision-makers with influence on all aspects of the early childhood system, including workforce professional development, grantmaking, child care quality and licensing, early childhood mental health delivery, and family and child health delivery. They will work in coordination and in a complementary way with consultants hired during this same contract period working 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.



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 VECAP

[Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan \(VECAP\)](#) is a bold, collaborative approach to building a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system that promotes healthy child development and family stability. The VECAP outlines a cohesive vision by the year 2026 and establishes shared accountability to achieve statewide priorities for children and families from the prenatal period through age 8. Originally established in 2013 along with the Vermont Early Childhood Framework, the updated VECAP is a structure around which to build coordinated action across public and private stakeholders throughout Vermont. It centers around making measurable changes in early childhood outcomes through identification of common goals, strategies to reach those goals, and the use of common language to align initiatives. It is built on Vermont's Guiding Principles, which articulate Vermont's commitment to fully include each and every child and their family in a continuum of meaningful experiences to ensure their health, mental health, safety, happiness, and success now and into the future.

BBF's Approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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.



2. Scope of Work

Onboarding (Jan.-March 2024)

- Orientation to BBF, the VECAP, key partners and political dynamics influencing the process, equity priorities, etc.
- Build a project plan and timeline.

Coordination/Planning (Ongoing)

- Articulate the process to update the VECAP with key decision points (scope, stakeholder engagement, levels of decision-making, outcomes for success, and process for managing the VECAP as a living document).
- Define final product (format, name, and accessibility).
- Conduct an environmental scan of relevant data, reports, or needs assessments to summarize what we already know and reduce duplication of data collection.
- Coordinate with other ongoing activities that are complementary, including VECAP monitoring efforts, needs assessment, PDG evaluation, etc.
- Coordinate with the VECAP Equity consultants who are advising on VECAP monitoring and the update process to ensure statewide and stakeholder priorities related to racial equity are implemented.
- Participate in advisory group meetings and present regular updates on the process.

Network Engagement (Ongoing)

- Partner with the Research and Data Director and Early Childhood Systems Evaluator to design a community engagement process for data collection, using methods that might include focus groups, key informant interviews, community forums, attending existing community meetings, or other innovative approaches. Work with BBF's equity consultants to ensure this strategy uses a DEI lens.
- Coordinate with BBF to carry out the community engagement process, including outreach, scheduling, convening, and all related logistics. This will include arranging for interpretation and translation, providing refreshments as appropriate, and tracking participation.
- Clearly communicate the value of gathering meaningful feedback from diverse perspectives in drafting the update.

Document Drafting and Review Process (Year 2 and 3)

- Listen for diverse perspectives and synthesize information into a comprehensive and accessible end result. Seek to reduce bias in the data analysis process.
- Analyze and compile results from the community engagement process into a publicly available summary in partnership with the Research and Data Director and Early Childhood Systems Evaluator, including a list of priority issues/indicators, and share findings back with the network.



- Move through an iterative process of writing, presenting findings, facilitating discussion, and editing to build a draft document.
- Document input, even if ultimately it is not included in the final plan, to be used for future planning.
- Plan out who needs to be involved in reviewing different sections and what decisions need to be made.
- Document lessons learned in the process, including successes, challenges, and recommendations for the future.

Outcome Measures

Activity	Deliverables	Timeframe
1. Coordination and Planning	Participate in meetings to ensure coordination with other BBF PDG projects	Ongoing
	Conduct environmental scan of documents and current VECAP implementation	2024
	Create work plan with key decisions and timeline	January–April 2024
2. Network Engagement	Design and implement community engagement process for data collection	2024
	Report on findings from community engagement process to advisory group	Ongoing
	Coordinate with equity consultant and BBF for meaningful input of diverse perspectives	2024
3. Documentation of Progress	Produce a summary of results from network engagement data collection	Late 2024



	Present working draft at VECAP Summit and incorporate feedback into final draft	May 2025
	Finalize draft to be shared with the advisory group and SAC in September for endorsement at the October SAC	May—October 2025
	Document endorsed by SAC	October 2025
	Documentation of lessons learned implementing this project	July—December 2025

BBF’s Role to Support the Contractor

The contractor will partner closely with BBF’s Deputy Director and Network Manager as well as BBF’s Equity Consultant 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 Network partners 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 advisory group 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



- Expertise in managing complex projects, maintaining positive working relationships with teams, and meeting timelines and deliverables
- Clear and accessible writing skills, strong analytical and critical thinking skills
- Understanding of plain language, accessibility, and the desire to make complex systems work accessible to multiple audiences
- Experience producing documents developed with extensive community engagement and collective decision-making through an iterative process
- 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 and supporting strategic decision-making
- Ability to work with others cooperatively, communicate clearly, and contribute to a work environment that focuses on shared goals and collective impact
- 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 February 1, 2024, and end December 31, 2025, contingent upon the availability of funds. Budget range is \$75,000 for the contract period.

Please submit questions about the proposal to kbailey@buildingbrightfutures.org. The email must be clearly identified with the subject line “Questions - VECAP Equity RFP.”

Please submit proposals to kbailey@buildingbrightfutures.org by 11:59 PM EST, Friday, January 19, 2024. The email must be clearly identified with the subject line of the email “VECAP Project Manager 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 community engagement, strategic planning, and



- writing. Detail relevant staff qualifications and experience. This can include resumes, reports, and descriptions of expertise.
5. Proposals must clearly address each of the selection criteria identified in 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, January 19, 2024

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 about the proposal to kbailey@buildingbrightfutures.org

Timeline

December 15, 2023	Release RFP
January 19, 2024	Proposals due by 11:59 PM EST
February 1, 2024	Contract award
February–May 2024	Network engagement
June–December 2024	Synthesize input and begin drafting VECAP update
February–May 2025	Working Draft
May 2025	VECAP Summit
June–September 2025	Final drafting
October 2025	SAC endorsement

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, 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 writing skills, plain language, and making complex systems work accessible to multiple audiences 		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder demonstrates expertise in managing complex projects, maintaining positive working relationships with teams, and meeting timelines and deliverables • Bidder demonstrates experience producing documents developed with extensive community engagement and collective decision-making through an iterative process • 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 • Bidder includes intent to work with others cooperatively, communicate clearly, and contribute to a work environment that focuses on shared goals and collective impact 		
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 familiarity with public and private organizational structures, power dynamics, and elements to facilitate systemic change • Preferred: experience and understanding of Vermont and Vermont's early childhood system 		
C. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice	5	
<p>Promotion of DEI values in the proposal, such as the following:</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"> Bidder's 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