**WilliamPenn**Foundation

Request for Proposals

# Increasing Access to Out-of-School Learning Opportunities

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# Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve the lives of young children in Philadelphia. The Foundation's Children and Families program was created to expand access to programs and resources that support the healthy development and academic success of young children, ages 0 to 8, in Philadelphia. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goal, and all of its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website. This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

**Through 2035, enable 550 additional children to participate in out-of-school learning opportunities each year, particularly in underserved areas of the city.**

Out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunities provide a range of benefits to young children including gains in academic achievement and social-emotional skills, and exposure to new experiences and opportunities.[1] However, families shared with us that there are barriers to accessing OST programming in Philadelphia, particularly in certain neighborhoods. As a result, our goal is to provide direct support to existing, high-quality out-of-school time programs to increase the number of children who have access to, and participate in, these critical learning opportunities. Proposals should focus on the expansion of direct services, provided by existing out-of-school time (OST) providers, to increase the number of children, ages 3 to 8, who have access to afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities.

All applicants should describe a compelling explanation for how their proposed work will advance the objective above. This RFP seeks project proposals that will advance this objective and make tangible improvements in the quality of life for residents of Philadelphia. The specific criteria that will be used to assess all proposals can be found on pages 6 and 7 of this document.

### Why is the Foundation using a Request for Proposals to advance this objective?

The Foundation has chosen to advance this objective using a Request for Proposals for several reasons. First, we believe that stakeholders across the region have a great deal of expertise and experience that can be supported to make progress on an objective that we heard was important to communities in our region. We want to hear about the impactful projects that are underway or could get underway and need funding. Second, we want to be as transparent as possible about the opportunity for non-profit organizations in the region to secure funding for work to advance this objective. Third, we heard from applicants and grantees in the past that our grant application process was overly burdensome, had unpredictable timelines, and did not provide sufficient information about the funding availability or the criteria used in selecting grantees. Fourth, we heard that applicants wanted an opportunity to show Foundation staff their work, not just tell them about it. The RFP process, including site visits as described below, is part of our effort to address all of this important feedback and to align with the Foundation's grantmaking values (as detailed on our website).

> **This RFP seeks projects that will increase the number of children, ages 3 to 8, in Philadelphia who participate in high-quality out-of-school time programs.**

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[1] McCombs, Whitaker, & Yoo, (2017). *The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs*.

# Background

There are decades of research that demonstrate the value of out-of-school time (OST) for children's learning and development in school and in life.

Youth who participate in high-quality OST opportunities demonstrate improved academic performance in reading and math, grades, school attendance, and engagement in learning. These gains are even greater for youth who are most at risk.[2] However, many children do not have access to these critical learning opportunities. In Philadelphia, there is limited supply of high-quality out-of-school programming. Additionally, OST program costs can be prohibitive, and when basic needs like housing, transportation, and healthcare are at risk, OST participation is low.

Expanding the number of high-quality OST learning opportunities available to Philadelphia children and removing barriers to access (e.g., cost to participate, location of existing programs) will enable more children to participate in programs that expose them to new opportunities, ideas, and experiences.

**A survey of Pennsylvania parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, 4 more would participate if a program were available.[3]**



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[2] Afterschool Alliance, (2017). *What does the research say about afterschool?*

[3] Afterschool Alliance, (2022). *This is Afterschool in Pennsylvania*

# Opportunity Overview

WPF would like to support efforts that increase the number of children, aged 3 to 8, who have access to out-of-school time learning opportunities. Funding will be limited to projects that will positively impact young children, aged 3-8, living in specific neighborhoods in the City of Philadelphia.

An out-of-school time (OST) learning opportunity is defined by WPF as a supervised program that young people regularly attend when school is not in session. Examples of OST programming include academic programs (e.g., tutoring), multi-purpose (e.g., homework help, enrichment), and specialty programs (e.g., art, music, sports, STEM). Programming that takes place during the school day is not eligible for this RFP.

This RFP seeks to support the expansion of year-round (school year and summer) OST opportunities for children ages 3 to 8 (pre-K to grade 3). To be eligible for funding, organizations must provide continuous programming during the school year and summer. Programs that operate solely during the school year or summer are not eligible for funding under this RFP. We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that making significant progress on the objective is difficult and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise to reach proposed goals.

All proposals that meet the review criteria described on pages 6 and 7 are encouraged to apply.

WPF has $5.5 million available to advance this objective at this time. There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding that organizations may request. The grant amount requested should be commensurate with the contribution that the project will make to the overall objective.

At least $1 million of the total amount awarded under this RFP will be reserved for grants to organizations that have budgets under $1 million per year and/or are led by individuals who are members of groups with a history of discrimination or exclusion.

## Eligibility

Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Organizations are eligible to apply for funding for up to three distinct program sites. Proposed projects must occur in select zip codes (see page 7) in Philadelphia and serve Philadelphia children aged 3 to 8.

# Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria below. ***Applicants should address these criteria in their narrative responses to the application questions.***

| Alignment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Absent** | **Emergent** | **Developing** | **Strong** |
| Project activities and goals are unrelated to the defined objective. | Project activities and goals may advance the defined objective, but connection is vague. | Project will make a clear but indirect contribution to advancing the defined objective. | Project will make a clear and direct contribution to advancing the defined objective. |
| | | *Developing or Strong Required* → | |

| Program Design | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Absent** | **Emergent** | **Developing** | **Strong** |
| The approach to the work is vague or unclear. | Outlines an approach to the work that describes one of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track the outcomes and impact on the relevant objective. | Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes two of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective. | Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, and a plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective. |
| | | | *Strong Required* |

| Partnerships and Collaboration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Absent** | **Emergent** | **Developing** | **Strong** |
| No identified partners or plans for collaboration. | Partners are identified but there are no clear commitments. | Some existing partnerships, a clear plan to build new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact. | Sufficient existing partnerships or commitments from partner organizations and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact. |
| | | *Developing or Strong Required* → | |

| Organizational Experience | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Absent** | **Emergent** | **Developing** | **Strong** |
| No implementation experience and no track record of success. | Limited implementation experience (less than two years) with advancing the specified objective and a minimal track record of success. | Some implementation experience (2-5 years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions. | Extensive implementation experience (5+ years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania. |
| | | *Developing or Strong Required* → | |

| Community Engagement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Absent** | **Emergent** | **Developing** | **Strong** |
| No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort and no plan for future engagement. | Minimal evidence of the applicants' familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation. | Evidence of the applicants' familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort and there is a plan for ongoing stakeholder engagement during implementation. | Key components of the project were informed by the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation. |
| | | *Developing or Strong Required* → | |

## Additional expectations:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Program Operation** | Program must provide school year and summer programming. During the school year, program must operate for a minimum of 15 hours per week; five days per week. During the summer, program must operate for a minimum of eight hours per day, five days per week, for six weeks. |
| **Priority Zip Codes** | All program sites proposed for funding must operate in one of the following zip codes: 19120, 19124, 19132, 19134, 19138, 19139, 19141, 19144. |
| **Cost to Families** | All aspects of programming (e.g., activities, registration fees, equipment, meals, field trips, etc.) are provided at no-cost to families. |
| **Organizational Capacity** | Strong plan for implementation, including existing or new staff members who have the necessary qualifications, recruitment plan, and other resources needed to effectively deliver the program. Organization adequately compensates staff. |
| **Recruitment of Youth** | Strong track record of youth recruitment and retention. Proposal describes a strong plan for how additional youth will be recruited. |
| **Program Design and Development** | Experience implementing high-quality age-appropriate, research-based activities that help children ages 3 to 8 develop academic, social, emotional, and/or physical skills. |
| **High-Quality Programming** | Program activities are active, engaging, fun, content-rich, socially interactive, and relevant to children's everyday lives. Students are able to choose among some activities. |
| **Staffing** | Programs hire qualified staff who have experience working with young people and can deliver high-quality program content. Staff are provided with ongoing training and professional development opportunities. |
| **Positive Relationships with Youth** | Deep knowledge of, and relationships with intended participants and welcoming approach to children, families, and communities. |
| **Family and Community Engagement** | Strong experience actively engaging family members in program and community initiatives and understanding of greater community context in which children and families live. |
| **Accessibility** | Program takes place in accessible locations, during convenient times, has a plan to accommodate English language learners. |
| **Start Date** | Organizations must begin providing services to additional number of children by July 1, 2025. |
| **Budget** | The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities and the stated results. |

# Learning and Evaluation

Grantees will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how they have made progress toward the objective above and what they have learned during the year.

In addition, organizations funded as a result of this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.

> **(!) Webinar**
>
> Interested organizations are invited to participate in an informational webinar on **Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 1:00PM EST.**
>
> Register for the webinar at https://lu.ma/williampennfoundation

# Budget

Project budgets should cover up to three years of funding and may include up to four months for planning, including hiring of staff and student recruitment. Organizations are required to build on their existing programs, using WPF funding to expand the number of children ages 3 to 8 their programs can serve.

Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget.

WPF funding can be used to support the expansion of OST seats available to children ages 3 to 8 as well as all associated programming costs including staffing, community engagement, materials, professional development, enrichment activities, field trips, and meals/snacks.

WPF funding cannot be used for capital projects including the buying and/or renovating of buildings or program space.

# Application Process

**Before you apply**, please review your responses to the six questions below. If you can confidently answer "yes" to all of the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond "no" to any of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your program, and you should not apply.

## Does your program:

|  | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|
| Serve children between the ages of 3-8? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Take place in one of the zip codes listed on page 7? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Provide a child with OST learning opportunities all year? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Come at no cost to families? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have a track record of providing high-quality programming to children? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have a plan to enroll more children with WPF grant funds? | ☐ | ☐ |

Please also review all of the criteria on pages 6 and 7 and make sure that your program aligns with those.

If you answered "yes" to all of the questions above and meet the stated criteria, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee. Submit your application by 5:00PM EST on **October 25, 2024**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To review the application questions and to download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please click here.**

In the narrative section of the application in the grant portal, applicants should provide clear definition of the learning goals the program is trying to advance (e.g., science, social-emotional, art) and the rationale for how the program advances children's learning and development.

# Timeline

**September 18, 2024**

Proposal submission period opens.

**September 24, 2024**

Informational Webinar
*(see page 8)*

**October 25, 2024**

**Proposals due by 5:00PM EST**

**November 6-8, 2024**

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

**November 11 – November 27, 2024**

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

**January 31, 2025**

WPF Board review selected proposals.

**February 2025**

Project implementation can begin.

Applicants are **also required to provide the following information about their program operation**. Applicants should complete the [program information attachment](#) for each site proposed for funding and upload it as an attachment in the grant portal.

- Site(s) information including name, location (e.g., school, rec center, etc.), neighborhood, address, and zip code.
- Days and hours of operation (school year and summer, if different).
- Total number of students served currently (school year and summer, if different).
- Total number of *additional* students organization is proposing to serve with WPF funds.
- Grades served and number of students served per grade.

Organizations are eligible to apply for funding for up to three sites. Organizations do not need to submit separate applications for each site. However, a separate program information attachment should be completed for each site proposed for funding.

**Selected organizations** will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants' work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

*This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact Amanda Charles at* [*acharles@williampennfoundation.org*](mailto:acharles@williampennfoundation.org)