ALL OUR KIN (AOK) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EVALUATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
RELEASE DATE: January 4, 2021

I. TIMELINE FOR SELECTION PROCESS

ACTIVITY DATE

RFP Released January 4, 2021

Application Due February 8, 2021

Follow-up Conversations February 9 - 17, 2021

Contractor Selected and Applicants Informed February 22 - 26, 2021

Contract Start Date March 8, 2021

Contract End Date Fall 2022

All questions and requests for additional information regarding this RFP must be received in writing by All Our Kin via email before 5 p.m. PST on January 22, 2021. All Our Kin reserves the sole right to determine the timing and content of the responses to all questions and requests for additional information. All Our Kin may respond to individual inquiries and then post replies to all questions.

Please submit questions and requests for additional information via email to:

Ana Elisa Franco-Labarga, MPP
Research, Evaluation & Data Specialist
anaelisa@allourkin.org
II. BACKGROUND

All Our Kin is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed. As you know, across the country, family child care providers play a critical role as educators of children ages 0-3, children of color, and children in overburdened, under-resourced families. Family child care programs reach children at a crucial moment in their lives, when the brain is literally being built, and are uniquely well suited to meet the needs of today’s working families: they are based in families’ own communities, making them easily accessible; they tend to be less expensive than center-based programs; they offer warm, individualized care to small, mixed age groups of children in family-like settings; they oftentimes offer evening and weekend hours, giving families greater flexibility; and they oftentimes align with families’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

However, despite the important work that family child care providers do for children and families, they are systematically overlooked and undervalued in policy, program, and practice. As a result, family child care providers lack access to the resources, training, and support necessary for building high-quality, sustainable family child care programs.

In response, All Our Kin supports family child care providers at every stage of their careers, growing their capacity as both early childhood educators and small business owners. Through All Our Kin’s high-touch, strength-based, holistic suite of programs and services, family child care professionals succeed as entrepreneurs, increasing economic security and opportunities for themselves and their own families; parents can go to work, knowing their children are in safe, loving hands; and above all, children gain the high-quality early learning experiences that lay the groundwork for success in school and in life.

AOK began in New Haven, Connecticut in 1999 with a group of six mothers and six children. Over the past twenty years, we have demonstrated the value of our unique, strength-based approach to engaging family child care educators, and have proven our ability to raise the quality, availability, and sustainability of family child care. As a result, our work has gained increasing recognition around the country from groups including Ashoka, the federal Office of Child Care, New America, and the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

Today, AOK serves nearly 900 family child care providers who have the capacity to educate and care for more than 5,000 children in five cities across Connecticut and in New York City. Most recently, we developed an ambitious integrated growth plan for the period 2019-2021, through which we will scale our work through replication of our direct service model as well as technical assistance services in partner communities across the country.
All Our Kin’s Technical Assistance Outcomes and Approaches

Based on our research, we identified four Outcomes where we can achieve broad, lasting impact affecting the greatest number of children and their families. The strategies we use to reach these Outcomes are connected and mutually reinforcing, providing a clear, focused path for All Our Kin’s work with its partners to help children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

Our target Outcomes are:

1. Communities: Community leaders have increased understanding and capacity to create change in FCC policy and practice
2. Coaches and Trainers: Coaches and Trainers have increased knowledge of FCC best practices and work with providers to implement them
3. Providers: FCC providers have increased income, increased program sustainability, and implement improved child development practices
4. Children: Children experience improved outcomes

Ultimately, our goal is to improve child outcomes through improving the Quality, Equitable Access and Sustainability of FCC programs.

To achieve these Outcomes, All Our Kin will focus its efforts on four technical assistance approaches, defined below

1. Business Development
2. Educational Coaching
3. Policy Advising
4. Network Development and Advising

III. BACKGROUND ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance Approach and Strategies

Through technical assistance, All Our Kin builds the capacity of agencies and organizations across the country to effectively Improve quality, equitable access, and sustainability of family child care. Our approach is one of partnership and collaboration: we value the relationships that technical assistance partners have with the family child care educators in their communities, and leverage the deep knowledge that partners have about the challenges and opportunities in their local early childhood landscape. All Our Kin offers several strands of technical assistance.
Educational Coaching

Effective coaching, including professional learning, is essential to creating and maintaining high-quality early care and learning. In this high-touch, hands-on engagement, skilled and experienced All Our Kin mentor coaches and educational leaders work closely with cohorts of staff and supervisors at agencies such as family child care networks, CCR&Rs, or Early Head Start-Child Care hubs, providing one-on-one and peer group training and support on strategies to deliver strength-based coaching and relationship building with family child care educators. Participating staff and agencies gain access to All Our Kin’s proprietary coaching materials, including a coaching and learning framework and many additional resources.

Business Development Support

Family child care educators are both educators and businesspeople; knowledge of good business practices is essential to their ability to provide continuous care. All Our Kin’s business series is a highly comprehensive, 30-hour course that covers a wide range of topics designed to build family child care educators’ knowledge and practice as small business owners, including but not limited to: crafting contracts and policies for use with parents, using marketing strategies to increase enrollment and earnings, and crafting a program budget and tracking expenses. All Our Kin has also developed and delivers a virtual business series that uses adult learning theory to engage participants as they learn many of the same topics. Our Business institute includes several full days of training, ongoing coaching and support to participants during their first time teaching the series, and access to curriculum materials and our training guide.

Policy Advising

All Our Kin provides individualized consultation and support to state and local leaders who want to implement family child care supportive policies and practices in their communities. We offer a set of recommendations as well as guidance to policymakers on how to create the conditions for family child care to thrive. Our value-add is very concrete guidance on the intersection between policy and practice. We are using both a cohort model and individual consultation.

Network Development and General Advising

All Our Kin provides tailored support to agencies and communities in building upon, developing, and/or launching staffed family child care networks or other supports to strengthen the viability, quality and sustainability of family child care.
Technical Assistance Pilots and Expansion

To date, All Our Kin has supported several partner agencies and communities through its technical assistance, including:

- **Mentor Coaching Pilot.** In April 2017, AOK launched a Mentor Coaching Pilot with five Family Child Care Networks in New York City to grow and strengthen their coaching and consultation practices with FCC providers. The pilot, originally designed to operate from May 2017 through December 2017, was extended through June 2019.

- **Family Child Care Support Pilot.** The Family Child Care Support pilot was launched in one community in Connecticut to support enhancing the quality of home-based family child care programs through a variety of professional learning and coaching opportunities. AOK provided support along three strands: (1) coaching professional learning sessions, (2) business development supports, and (3) strategic planning and evaluation.

- **Increasing the Quality, Availability, and Sustainability of FCC in New Jersey.** AOK completed several strands of work in New Jersey, supported by five foundations. In 2018, AOK and the Bridgespan Group produced the New Jersey Family Child Care Landscape Report, which included findings and recommendations on how to best support and expand the supply of high-quality family child care in New Jersey.

- **Family Child Care Technical Assistance Pilot.** In July 2017, AOK launched the three-year FCC Technical Assistance Pilot in one community in Connecticut to build the capacity of FCC agencies and providers. Over the course of the pilot, AOK supported mentor coaching, the development of an FCC Network, business development, and direct training and support for FCC providers.

- **Business Development Technical Assistance Project.** In April 2019, AOK began a project to build local capacity of agencies in Nebraska to support FCC providers. To date, AOK has implemented a two-part Business Series Train-the-Trainer Institute (6 days total), a Family Child Care Toolkit Workshop, a Business Coaching Workshop, and is currently providing individual TA for business coaching.

- **Network Development and Policy Technical Assistance Project.** In 2019, AOK was contracted to support policy advising, network development and strategic planning in Rhode Island. Activities to date have included a site visit by a team of out-of-state stakeholders to AOK, assistance in organizing a FCC summit on-site about staffed family child care networks, and monthly consulting calls to support strategic planning and policy efforts.

Between Spring 2021 and Fall 2022, we anticipate expanding our reach through:

- 3-4 business cohorts (institutes or other format)
- 1-2 educational mentor coach cohorts
- 1-3 policy cohorts (building on current one, which is being evaluated by smaller evaluation firm)
- 2-4 network development partner communities
Evaluation Portfolio

All Our Kin uses a thoughtful measurement and evaluation approach designed to assess our approach, our programming, and, ultimately, our impact. We do this through use of a system of evaluation tools and processes looking at fidelity to our model and impact. As we are rapidly expanding, we also incorporate tools to support our own learning as we strive to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency.

We have had the opportunity to work with external evaluators in our early technical assistance projects to ensure evaluation and support building our internal evaluation capacity for future projects through use of comprehensive evaluation plans and appropriate tools.

Published research and evaluation findings from our direct service work can be found on our website: http://allourkin.org/Evaluation

Evaluations of our technical assistance projects have not been published but can be discussed as needed for this proposal.

IV. PROJECT OVERVIEW

A. Rationale for the Evaluation

As our Technical Assistance work expands, we are looking to make our evaluation systems more effective and efficient through partnering with a single, national firm to conduct our evaluations. This single partnership will allow us to more efficiently build off previous projects, align evaluation approaches, and summarize learnings over time. Through an RFP process, we will identify a firm that can evaluate all 3 approaches while working closely with our internal evaluation team.

B. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the Technical Assistance Evaluation is to determine, using a methodologically rigorous design, if and how participation in Technical Assistance leads to changes similar to what we see at our direct service sites.

The primary goals of the evaluation are to:

1. Demonstrate the impact of All Our Kin’s Technical Assistance on family child care provider outcomes
2. Determine whether the impact of Technical Assistance mirrors those we see at our direct service sites
3. Identify variation in the impact of Technical Assistance across sites and approaches
4. Understand the outcomes of individuals and agencies that participate in Technical Assistance
5. Provide recommendations for improving All Our Kin’s Technical Assistance model
C. Evaluation Questions

We will work collaboratively with the selected partner to refine the questions and design and maximize our opportunity to address our key questions:

- Does technical assistance replicate provider, agency, and system-level outcomes that AOK has achieved in other communities?
- Does policy advising replicate system-level outcomes that AOK has achieved in CT in other communities?
- Which policies are most critical to supporting better provider/family connections, and greater provider sustainability?
- What is a leaner, more effective Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) model that All Our Kin can offer? How can All Our Kin bring down the cost of TTA over time (e.g., alternative delivery methods / staffing models)?

- All TA Projects
  - What agency characteristics affect the success of TA projects? What data on agency characteristics should be collected? How should this data be collected?
  - What is the long-term impact of TA projects for staff (e.g., coaches) and family child care providers?
  - What level of adaptation of our model is effective for both partners and AOK?
  - What is the difference in successful implementation between site projects and institutes with multiple organizations attending

- Education Coaching
  - What “dosage” of mentor coaching is needed to improve coaching knowledge and practices? This includes both the intensity and the overall length of mentor coaching.
  - What is the best way to track mentor coaching activities?
  - To what extent do different coach characteristics (e.g., education, years in the field) affect success?

- Business Development
  - What is the best way to organize the Business TTT Institute?
  - What is the most effective way to deliver business coaching assistance?

- Network Development
  - What is the best sequence of assistance to develop a strong FCC network? To what extent will the sequence vary based on the local context (i.e., one approach may not apply to all projects)?

- Policy Advising
  - What are the best ways to support the development of effective coalitions and policy efforts?
  - What are key milestones of the success of policy advising (e.g., formation of coalition, number of members)?
  - What impacts sustainability of policy efforts following engagement with AOK?
Applicants are encouraged to combine, rephrase and/or propose complementary evaluation questions that fit within the scope, timeframe and available funding for this project.

D. Evaluation Design

The evaluation design should be broad and consider all Technical Assistance approaches.

E. Collaboration with All Our Kin & External Partners

The selected contractor will work closely and in partnership with All Our Kin staff throughout the course of this evaluation. All Our Kin expects to work as a thought partner with the selected contractor and actively engage in all aspects of the design and implementation of this evaluation. All Our Kin has completed several evaluations of past Technical Assistance projects. The selected contractor will build on existing knowledge and instruments.

All Our Kin also works with many external partners that applicants need to consider, including leaders in the provider community, funders, advocates, and legislators. The selected contractor will need to interact with partners to ensure deliverables are useful for the various stakeholders as well as for All Our Kin’s internal decision making processes.

F. Timeframe for Impact Evaluation

The current Technical Assistance Strategic Plan will be in place through 2023 and planning for the subsequent strategic plan is expected to begin in early 2022. As such, it will be important to have findings and learning from this study available for All Our Kin staff, state commissioners and stakeholders to utilize in the planning process. The current timeline for the Evaluation that applicants should use to guide thinking around evaluation planning is as follows:

- March 2021: Execute contract with selected contractor
- March - May 2021: Business Institute Evaluation
- Spring 2021: Planning period
- Spring 2021 - Fall 2022: Data collection and reporting. Our current plan includes the following and may evolve as we learn from projects: 3-4 business cohorts (institutes or other format), 1-2 ed coach cohorts, 1-3 policy cohorts (building on current one, which is being evaluated by smaller evaluation firm), 2-4 network development partner communities
- Fall 2022: Additional reporting and contract ends
- Fall 2022: Review findings and program evolution to determine whether and how we would like to renew or extend the partnership.
These dates are subject to change. Applicants should carefully consider how their data collection and dissemination plans correspond with All Our Kin’s information needs when preparing their proposal narratives, scopes of work, and budgets.

V. SCOPE OF WORK

In order to successfully design and conduct the Technical Assistance Evaluation, All Our Kin expects the contractor to complete, at a minimum, the tasks outlined below. These tasks, as well as any additional tasks proposed by the applicant should be included in the proposal narrative and the proposed scope of work. Applicants are encouraged to revise, expand and otherwise edit the tasks in their project proposal as long as they remain consistent with the overall project purpose, goals, and available funding.

A. Major Tasks and Deliverables

Task A: Review and revision of logic model: The contractor will work with All Our Kin staff to refine its logic model, mapping out how outcomes overlap and determining what outputs would fit each approach.

- **Deliverable**: Visually appealing logic model inclusive of all Technical Assistance approaches

Task B: Evaluation plan for TA overall: The contractor will build on the evaluation plans for each approach to develop a plan for evaluating All Our Kin’s technical assistance work.

- **Deliverable**: An evaluation plan that accounts for all approaches and includes evaluation questions, evaluation activities and instruments, project outputs and outcomes to assess, specification of evaluation reports and other deliverables, and time frames for completion of key deliverables. The evaluation plan should align the AOK logic model and utilize AOK instruments where applicable (e.g., Business Series pre-post assessments)

Task C: Evaluation plans for each TA approach: The contractor will develop evaluation plans for each approach.

- **Deliverable**: Four evaluation plans, 1 for each approach, that include evaluation questions, data collection, analysis, recommendations and reporting. The plans should include selection, finalization and consistent use of assessments and instruments, data collection standards and procedures, and alignment of project data with AOK indicators.
- * The Fall 2020 Business Institute / Spring 2021 Business Series will be the first of these projects, requiring early consideration of the business development approach.
Task D: Complete an evaluation for each TA project: The contractor will implement the evaluation plan for each TA project.

- **Deliverable:** A report and executive summary for each TA project that includes an overview of the project, description of the evaluation methods, summary of key findings, and recommendations for program improvements and future evaluations.
- * The Fall 2020 Business Institute / Spring 2021 Business Series will be the first of these projects

Task E: Evaluation reports for each TA project: The contractor will share the reports and executive summaries of findings.

- **Deliverable:** A report and executive summary for each TA project that includes an overview of the project, description of the evaluation methods, summary of key findings, and recommendations for program improvements and future evaluations.
- * The Fall 2020 Business Institute / Spring 2021 Business Series will be the first of these projects

Task E: Memos and check-ins: The contractor will provide regular updates on progress made.

- **Deliverables:** Monthly memos, such as brief, bulleted lists, detailing evaluation activities, learnings, and any adjustments made to the evaluation plan. Regular check-ins between the evaluator and project staff to coordinate data collection activities and monitor progress.

Task F: Annual report summarizing learnings from TA: The contractor will review project evaluations and share a report and executive summary.

- **Deliverable:** A report and executive summary that provides key learnings, questions, and progress on the evaluation plan for overall TA (Task B)

Task G: Final report summarizing learnings from TA: The contractor will provide a final report and executive summary.

- **Deliverable:** A report, executive summary, and any other deliverables identified in Task B following the implementation of the plan developed in Task B. The report will include an overview of program activities, description of the evaluation methods, summary of key findings, and recommendations for program improvements and future evaluations.

* Payment is contingent upon the completion of deliverables to the satisfaction of All Our Kin staff. Incomplete or unsatisfactory deliverables may be prorated and subject to nonpayment.
** Final reports and executive summaries should be in a narrative format that All Our Kin can readily format and publish using our branding and organizational style guidelines.

B. Additional Activities

Applicants may propose other activities or deliverables in support of the goals of this evaluation. All Our Kin may require the contractor to perform additional activities related to the work described above. These activities may be incorporated in a revised evaluation plan, budget, and scope of work as appropriate. The contractor will furnish the necessary personnel, materials, services, and otherwise do all things necessary to perform this evaluation, unless otherwise stated in this document.

VI. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must possess the capacity to support work across the United States. Evaluators must have knowledge of family child care and experience conducting program evaluations, including those related to policy change. In order for applications to be considered acceptable and eligible for award, they must be prepared in accordance with the instructions given in this solicitation.

VII. SUMMARY OF DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal applicant(s) will have experience conducting multi-site program evaluations, applying an anti-racist lens, and conducting evaluations with diverse populations, including linguistically diverse.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the literature related to family child care quality, equitable access, and sustainability
- Knowledge of early childhood education programs, especially family child care programs
- Familiarity with technical assistance frameworks
- Knowledge of measures commonly used to evaluate coaches and professional trainings
- Knowledge of issues and challenges of mixed methods designs

Experience

- Experience designing and conducting evaluations at multiple sites
- Experience evaluating technical assistance programs
- Experience evaluating policy advocacy interventions
- Experience adapting existing validated measures for diverse samples
- Experience collecting data, including conducting observations, in a variety of settings
- Experience with advanced statistical analyses
- Experience working collaboratively with community members, funders, and other stakeholders
Other Qualifications

- Understanding of the cultural, linguistic, regional, community, and demographic landscape of family child care
- Past experience and demonstrated ability in hiring data collection staff who are bilingual in English and one other language from the target population (primarily Spanish)
- Effective communication and problems solving skills
- Strong meeting facilitation capabilities and ability to plan with various agencies concurrently
- Capacity to work throughout the United States

VIII. TERMS OF PROJECT

Contract Period

The contract will span Spring 2021 through Fall 2022. In Fall 2022, AOK will review findings and program evolution to determine whether and how we would like to renew or extend the partnership.

IX. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

All Our Kin will award the Technical Assistance Evaluation contract to an applicant based on the following multi-stage review process outlined below. The contract resulting from this solicitation will be awarded to the most responsive bidder whose offer, conforming to the solicitation, is determined to provide the “best value” to All Our Kin, which considers a combination of both costs and technical merit of the proposal.

Level 1 Internal Review:

All Our Kin will evaluate all applications for completeness and minimum requirements. Basic requirements include: timely receipt of application, submission of all required attachments. Applications with omissions of any required documentation may be subject to disqualification.

All Our Kin reserves the right to conduct financial and due diligence reviews, including contacting former clients. Depending on the type of service and extent to which a Contractor must have good/healthy cash flow, financial stability may need to be reviewed. If such a determination is made, financial review may be a factor in the selection process, and applicant(s) may be required to submit financial statements or other additional information upon request. All Our Kin’s Finance Department may review a copy of audited financials or statements prepared by an independent auditor to ensure the financial capacity of applicants. As a non-profit, All Our Kin has a responsibility to the community to ensure that the organizations that receive the funds are financially stable to provide the contracted services. Further written materials regarding the financial stability of the agency may be requested during or prior to the review.
Level 2 Conversations:

The highest scoring applicants from the Level 1 review will be invited for an interview with All Our Kin staff. Only key personnel on the proposed RFP must attend the interview. Interviews will be held remotely. An interview is not a guarantee of funding approval. Further written materials regarding qualifications may be requested prior to the interview. The highest scoring applicant from the interview process will be awarded the contract.

X. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Proposal: Submit all documents as a single PDF file via email to anaelisa@allourkin.org.

A. Proposal Narrative (Maximum 10 pages single-spaced, size 12 font, 1” margins) The proposal narrative should describe how the applicant would approach this evaluation, including evaluation design, questions, sample, measures, analytic approach, and anticipated limitations. The proposal narrative should also identify any expected methodological challenges and describe how they will be addressed or minimized.

B. Proposed Scope of Work (maximum 5 pages): Applicants should create a SOW organized by task for the entire project period.

C. SOW Narrative (maximum 8 pages): The SOW narrative should: (1) describe the proposed process to complete each task outlined in the SOW, (2) identify and describe key deliverables, (3) provide a timeline, and (4) identify key members of the evaluation team along with their roles and responsibilities. The SOW narrative should also identify any expected logistical challenges and describe how they will be addressed or minimized. If necessary, the SOW narrative should also highlight any tasks that have been added or omitted and provide a brief explanation justifying the change.

D. Sample Evaluation Product (maximum 30 pages): Please include the executive summary, abstract section or data presentation/visualizations from 2-3 prior evaluation reports or publications completed within the past three years, not to exceed ten pages for each report.

E. Resume(s) or Curriculum Vitae(s): Please submit one resume or CV of no more than five pages for each of the key members of the team outlining relevant work history, educational attainment, publications, prior research projects, etc.. It is not necessary to submit resumes or CVs for all team members, only the key members of the team (e.g. those responsible for the overall management of the project or major study components).

F. Proposed Budget: Applicants should create a budget organized by task. Budget should be for the entire project, up to $300,000 for the entire contract period. Applicants are encouraged to include a variety of funding levels to ensure All Our Kin has a full understanding of budgetary considerations and options.
G. Budget Narrative: The application must include a budget narrative to accompany the budget. The budget narrative (no more than 10 pages) should supplement the information provided in the budget spreadsheet by justifying the cost of the proposed study and describing what will be included in each deliverable. The budget narrative should provide a financial and qualitative description that supports the proposed expenditures.

H. Most Current Independent Audited Financial Statements

Failure to submit all required attachments will constitute an incomplete proposal and may be grounds for disqualification. Applicants are responsible for any errors or omissions in their proposals and applications. In order to respond to this RFP, please complete and submit your application and all required documents to All Our Kin no later than February 1, 2021 at 5pm PST. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, prior to submission, that their proposal reflects the requirements of this solicitation.

XI. TERMS OF THE RFP

All Our Kin reserves the right to reject all proposals and re-solicit for proposals. Failure to comply with proposal specifications shall be grounds for disqualification of proposals. Each proposer shall be required to honor the price and specifications quoted for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days following submission of the proposal. All Our Kin also reserves the right to cancel this RFP, in its sole discretion, at any time before execution of a contract.

All Our Kin shall not be liable for any costs incurred in connection with a proposer’s preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. Any cover letters, résumés and curriculum vita, including attached materials, submitted in response to this RFP shall become All Our Kin’s property and subject to disclosure to relevant stakeholders, including community members.

Each proposal shall be retained for official files. The budget, scope of work and other contractual information may be included in board materials. Each proposer may clearly label parts of a proposal as “CONFIDENTIAL.” The failure to so label any information that is released by All Our Kin shall constitute a complete waiver of all claims for damages caused by any release of the information.

The proposer agrees that, by submitting an application proposal, the proposer authorizes All Our Kin to verify any or all information and/or references submitted in the proposal.

XII. CONTRACTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Unless otherwise submitted during the application process, the successful proposer will be required to submit additional required documentation including, but not limited to, the following documents before the Contract can be fully executed:

- Memorandums of Understanding (for any subcontractors, collaborators, and/or partners)