



EPISCOPAL HEALTH  
FOUNDATION

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 2019**

**ASSESSMENT OF TEXAS POLICYMAKERS**

# BACKGROUND

---

## **About the Episcopal Health Foundation**

The [Episcopal Health Foundation \(EHF\)](#) believes all Texans deserve to live a healthy life - especially the poor and those with the least resources. Our public health orientation leads us to focus on upstream work that goes beyond providing healthcare services in a doctor's office and seeks to address the underlying social, economic, behavioral, and environmental causes of poor health. We are most interested in work that takes a systems approach to improve community health, which leads us to focus on creating and supporting intentional connections between and among institutions aimed at not just improving healthcare delivery but transforming the health of an entire community. With more than \$1.2 billion in estimated assets, EHF operates as a supporting organization of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and works to help improve the health and well-being of the 11 million people living throughout a 57-county region of Texas.

## **Building Brain Development – EHF's work**

One of EHF's goals is to ensure that children, particularly those in low-income and vulnerable families, have the best chance at a healthy life. While there are many programs addressing the important topics of school readiness, parenting techniques, child protection from maltreatment, early childhood education in formal settings, and early literacy, EHF is, instead, focused on supporting brain building prenatally through age three. We know that the pre-natal period and first three years of a child's life offer a unique opportunity to optimize brain development, communication, and social skills and strengthen a child's ability to mitigate the long-term effects of stressful life events and circumstances. This is an ideal time to build a strong foundation for lifelong physical and mental health.

Historically, most public investment in early childhood brain development (ECBD) programs has come from the federal government. But, the return on investment during this critical time in a child's life when the foundation for emotional, cognitive and social development is being formed should be an incentive for local and state level investments.

Currently, there are multiple investments and activities happening around ECBD in Texas, and the momentum is continuing to build. For example, the nationally focused Pritzker Children's Initiative has invested in three Texas ECBD organizations to develop a policy planning process that will improve the connections to, and quality of programs addressing the postpartum period through age three. Also, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Early Learning Council recently conducted a statewide needs assessment of family consumers of and providers of services for kids ages 0-5 in order to inform the development of a forthcoming statewide strategic plan; funding for a national early childhood institute has been seeded at the University of Texas at Austin, and several statewide conferences and events focused on early childhood issues are being planned throughout the next 18 months leading into the 2021 Texas legislative session.

# PROJECT PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

---

Policymakers at the state and local levels have multiple policy, programmatic and fiscal mechanisms to support positive brain development and promote a healthy society.<sup>i</sup> As such, EHF would like to learn about state and local policymakers' knowledge and attitudes around early childhood brain development in order to identify opportunities for messaging/education/advocacy to inform policy and program development.

EHF is seeking a consultant to conduct an assessment of state and local policymakers in order to solicit what they *know* and how they *think* about early childhood brain development. The selected consultant will develop, conduct and analyze an assessment of local policymakers' thoughts and knowledge of brain development processes, influences, problems, and positive and negative outcomes.

Policymakers that will be included in the assessment:

- 181 state legislators (150 Texas House members and 31 senate members)
- 285 county representatives for the 57-county EHF service area (Judge + 4 commissioners for each county).
- Mayors and city council members for largest cities in the EDOT (130):
  - Houston (17), Austin (11), Pasadena (8), Killeen (8), Waco (6), Beaumont (7), Round Rock (7), Pearland (9), College Station (7), Tyler (7), League City (8), Sugarland (7), Longview (7), Bryan (7), Baytown (7), Missouri City (7)

Interested applicants should propose an assessment methodology, which may include a survey, key informant interviews, focus groups, or a combination of these approaches. The questions included on the assessment tool(s) will be developed with input from EHF.

# TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

---

The deliverables for this work include:

- a final report that details the assessment findings and includes messaging recommendations around investment potential in early childhood brain development based on assessed legislator knowledge and attitudes
- coordination of a briefing release event to share the assessment findings report with stakeholders, policymakers and the broader public that will be held in Austin with a webcast

It is expected that the work will take 4-6 months and should be targeted for completion with a final report to be released in January 2020.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

---

If you/your organization is interested in applying, please submit the following to [jmineo@episcopalhealth.org](mailto:jmineo@episcopalhealth.org) by close of business, Friday, August 16, 2019.

- 1) A cover letter describing your areas of expertise and prior experience relevant to the work described in this request for proposal.
- 2) A 3-4-page proposal that includes a detailed timeline, budget (not to exceed \$85,000), and a work scope describing how you plan to execute the deliverables outlined in "PROJECT PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW" section above.
- 3) Information about all individuals and organizations you plan to use to support your work, including their resumes, their areas of expertise and prior experience in the area encompassed by the scope of work.
- 4) At least two references from similar projects completed within the last five years. Each reference should describe the project, dates of work, outcomes achieved, and a client reference that includes name, title, email and phone contact.

Please direct all questions to Jennifer Mineo at [jmineo@episcopalhealth.org](mailto:jmineo@episcopalhealth.org) or 832-658-2671.

---

<sup>i</sup> Alliance for Strong Families & The Palix Foundation (2016). Using a Brain Science-Infused Lens for Policy Development. Achieving healthier outcomes for children and families. <http://www.alliance1.org/change-in-mind>