



EPISCOPAL HEALTH  
FOUNDATION

# Request for Proposal

Submission Deadline: Monday, October 12, 2020

**Early Childhood Brain Development  
Portfolio Review**

# 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 the 57-county region of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

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

The third goal in the Episcopal Health Foundation's (EHF) 2018-2022 strategic plan is to "build the foundation for a healthy life." This goal, along with the related outcome, strategies, and targets, articulates EHF's funding priorities to support parents, immediate caregivers, and children during the critical developmental stage, prenatally through age three.

This goal is based on the scientific literature that says that a child's first three years offers an optimal chance to build a healthy brain and lay a strong foundation for lifelong mental and physical health.<sup>1</sup> Under our current strategic plan, EHF's research and funding investments have focused on learning about and supporting community-based clinics and community-based organizations that embrace the importance of early childhood brain development and prioritizes primary prevention work with vulnerable families. See EHF's strategic plan [here](#).

Over the last 10-20 years, the early childhood brain development sector has been developing internationally, across the US, and in Texas. Prominent institutions such as the World Health Organization, the US Federal Reserve Board and Harvard University, as well as philanthropies including the J.B and M.K Pritzker Family Foundation and the Bezos Foundation have contributed new research and actionable findings to the field. Through its research and grantmaking, EHF is interested in building on these efforts and leading continued advancements in Texas.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2020). *Connecting the Brain to the Rest of the Body: Early Childhood Development and Lifelong Health Are Deeply Intertwined Working Paper No. 15*. Retrieved from [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).

# PROJECT PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

---

At EHF, our work is realized through the combined efforts of three divisions: grantmaking, research and evaluation, and community and congregational engagement. Each division has an individual as well as synergistic role in the work of the foundation. The funding we award through grants supports innovative solutions; our research and evaluation surfaces issues and drives action through our polling, partnerships, and analyses; and our engagement work with individuals, coalitions, and congregations strengthens and gives voice to the communities we serve.

The purpose of this project is to identify opportunities for EHF to contribute through grant funding, research and/or community and congregational engagement to 1) integrate the concepts of brain development into policies and practice across health and health care-related sectors, and 2) advance the field of early childhood brain development work (ECBD) for Texas.

## Proposal

---

EHF is seeking a consultant to conduct a scan of all of the ECBD grants and research investments made under the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, and outline opportunities grounded in equity and cultural competence for increasing the capacity of organizations, policies, and programs informing the development of Texans in the prenatal to three period. Specifically, recommendations should consider the significance of race/ethnicity and the primary drivers of disparities and promote health equity.<sup>2</sup> In this reference, "health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Williams, D.T. and Purdie-Vaughns, V. (2016). Needed interventions to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in health. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 41(4).

<sup>3</sup> Braveman, P. A new definition of health equity to guide future efforts and measure progress. *Health Affairs*, June 22, 2017, accessed on September 21, 2020 at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20170622.060710/full/>

Activities related to this work should include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Assess and evaluate EHF's Strategy 8 and 9 grant funding and research projects under the 2018-2022 strategic plan to identify areas of progress and gaps, or opportunities for refinement to the approach, strategy targets or associated indicators, including new areas of investment
- 2) Examine current EHF community and congregational work, under Strategies 6 and 7, to identify opportunities for contributions to the advancement of EHF's ECBD priorities
- 3) Examine EHF's current strategic plan for natural opportunities to integrate ECBD work, i.e. Strategy 1 work and opportunities around healthy systems and payment reform, rural ECBD issues, etc.
- 4) Assess federal and state ECBD policies and policy opportunities around ECBD in Texas
- 5) Research local, state and national philanthropies for similar or parallel ECBD efforts to identify funding or research partnership opportunities
- 6) Outline equitable, culturally relevant opportunities for EHF to strengthen and/or build capacity around ECBD through our investments (grant-making, research, and engagement)

## TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

---

The deliverables for this work include:

- A final report that details the findings from the scan of EHF's ECBD portfolio of investments, with opportunities outlined
- A presentation of the findings and recommendations for maximizing investment opportunities and leading continued ECBD advancements in Texas

This work should be targeted for completion by mid-March 2021.

# 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, Monday, October 12, 2020.

- 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 \$75,000), and a work scope describing how you plan to execute the deliverables outlined in "Project Purpose and Overview" and "Proposal" sections 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) One to two early childhood reports or presentation slide decks completed in the last five years that are examples of your work in early childhood field.
- 5) One to two samples from recent projects ( $\pm 5$  years) that demonstrate your knowledge about and inclusion of health equity principles in your work.
- 6) 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).