



Illinois State Board of Education

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Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D. 
State Superintendent of Education

DATE: September 29, 2011

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):** Illinois Service Resource Center

General Information

Purpose of RFP: The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) seeks grant proposals from qualified entities for the continued operation of the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC) for children and adolescents, through the age of 21, who are deaf or hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

Eligible Applicants: Not-for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, school districts, special education cooperatives, and other entities experienced in providing technical assistance and professional development relative to the mental health and behavioral services for students with deaf and hard of hearing disabilities are eligible to apply.

Grant Period: The initial grant period will begin no sooner than November 1, 2011 and will extend from the execution date of the grant agreement until June 30, 2012. The successful applicant may reapply via continuing application for up to four additional years, with subsequent grant periods extending from July 1 of each year through June 30 of the following year. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Grant Award: One grant will be awarded in FY 2012 (year one of the project) in an amount not to exceed \$338,000. For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the *Stevens Amendment*), bidders are advised that 100 percent of funds for this project are derived from federal sources.

The grant award amounts in each of years 2 through 5 (i.e., FYs 2013 through 2016) will not exceed \$507,000 per year. Annual allocations will depend on program needs and scope of activities in each year as well as total appropriation for the program.

Application Deadline: Mail the **original and five copies** (six applications in all) to the *Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N-253, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, Attn: Todd Williams, Special Education Services*, to ensure receipt no later than October 17, 2011. No electronic submissions including facsimiles will be accepted. The original and five copies must be received by the due date in order for the proposal to be considered. Late or substantively incomplete proposals will not be eligible for consideration.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Todd Williams at 217/782-5589 or todwilli@isbe.net.

Background

In 1994, P.A. 87-1127 (105 ILCS 5/14-11.03) established, subject to appropriation, the operation of the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC) for children and adolescents through the age of 21 who are deaf or hard of hearing *and* exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Since that time, however, state funds have not been appropriated for the operation of the ISRC. Rather, ISBE, recognizing the importance of the services outlined in P.A. 87-1127, makes discretionary funds available via the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to operate the ISRC. Since the inception, The Center on Deafness has been awarded the funds to operate the ISRC. Further information regarding ISRC can be found at <http://www.isrc.us>.

The purpose of ISRC is to provide statewide coordination for a wide variety of services tailored specifically for children who are deaf and hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Any child or adolescent diagnosed with the combination of these disabilities who is referred to the ISRC must qualify for services on a no-reject basis.

The ISRC assists local school personnel, students, and families in developing service plans that address the specific needs of the referred students. Each service plan identifies the student's targeted behavior(s) and any activities or positive behavioral interventions to support the replacement of the targeted behaviors. The service plan may include other information, services, or activities such as data collection procedures and methods, a crisis plan, counseling services, consultation services, training for any individual involved with the student/family, a transition plan to return the student to another setting, visits to be conducted with the school and/or home, and the identification of a community support network. ISRC staff members then provide many of the services included in the plan.

During FY 2010 the ISRC provided services to 147 students who are deaf and hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. These services resulted in the development or updates to 556 service plans and a total of 693 on-site visits. Quarterly training was provided for twenty-seven (27) deaf and hard of hearing behavior support teams from across the state, and coaching support was provided for implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for seven (7) educational programs serving deaf and hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

In the FY 2011, ISRC developed and/or updated 728 services plans. Additionally, they provided 821 on-site technical assistance visits, including 268 home visits and fifty-four (54) home-school team meetings.

As of June 30, 2011, ISRC had also provided behavior support at all three tiers of the Response to Intervention (RtI) model as follows.

- At the *Universal Level*, ISRC provided technical assistance with implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports in ten (10) programs that serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Classroom management mentoring was provided for nine (9) educators.
- At the *Secondary Level*, ISRC provided quarterly training to twenty-five (25) deaf and hard of hearing behavior support teams. Approximately seventy-five (75) educators attended each training session, and ninety-two (92) parents received training. Data collection coaching was provided during sixty-four (64) on-site visits. Support for *Check-In Check-Out* as a secondary level intervention was provided during thirty-two (32) on-site visits. *Check-In Check-Out* is a specific positive behavioral intervention typically used as a part of the PBIS network. Further information on PBIS can be accessed at <http://pbisillinois.org/>.
- At the *Intensive Level*, ISRC had an active caseload of 159 students. This number represents approximately 4% of the 4,035 students in Illinois who are deaf or hard of hearing. Research indicates that 3-5% of this student population will need *Intensive Level* services.

Program Specifications

The ISRC offers outreach services intended to provide behavior support for all students in Illinois who are deaf or hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Services include a resource library, newsletter,

website, monthly e-mail, parent facilitators, conference participation, online training, and ongoing communications with project constituents. To this end, the following services and activities will be required of the grantee selected under this RFP.

Project Deliverables:

1. Develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials;
2. Establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system;
3. Develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments;
4. Perform case coordination, referral, and consultation services;
5. Provide technical assistance and professional development training* for programs and providers;
6. Conduct participant evaluations of all training activities, aggregate and analyze the data, and report the findings to ISBE;
7. Monitor, evaluate, and assess statewide resources, identify service gaps, and develop and deliver services; and
8. Maintain standard accounting practices for the allocation and expenditure of federal grant funds.

* *The successful applicant must secure approval as a continuing professional development provider in order for participants to claim credit for the training activities completed. (See Section 25.855 and 25.860 of rules governing Certification at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/25ark.pdf>.) Further information about how to become an approved professional development provider can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/accountability/html/providers.htm>.*

Personnel Qualifications: The grantee must employ or contract with personnel who are uniquely qualified to perform the work outlined in this RFP. For the purpose of this grant, ISBE does not require specific educational or experience qualifications with the exceptions of all professional staff must be proficient in manual communication and have demonstrated experience in providing and directing behavioral and mental health assistance activities. Additionally, the grantee must have knowledge of and the ability to work with psychiatric hospitals and therapeutic schools that specialize in providing services specific to deaf or hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that include a staffing structure that will advance the mission of the ISRC and accomplish the day-to-day work of the center. To that end, proposed positions must be described, and personnel must be named and supported with documented qualifications. Each proposal must provide the following personnel information as appendices to the proposal.

- Organizational chart reflecting the proposed staffing structure;
- Current job description for each proposed position; and
- Current résumé or curriculum vitae for each proposed staff member.

For planning purposes only, the following information is provided to applicants regarding the current staffing structure, on a full time equivalency (FTE) basis, of the ISRC. Further information can be accessed at http://www.isrc.us/contact_us.

- Project director, 1.0 FTE
- Deaf and hard of hearing behavioral specialists, 3.0 FTE
- Librarian/information specialist 1.0 FTE
- Project assistant, 1.0 FTE

Reporting Requirements: The successful applicant will be responsible for submitting two types of project reports to ISBE on a quarterly basis.

1. **Progress Reporting:** Information must be reported relative to the types of activities, services, and trainings provided to students, schools, communities, and families and the impact of those services on the participants'

students. Evaluation data collected from participants in the professional development trainings must also be included in the quarterly progress reports provided to ISBE.

2. **Expenditure Reporting:** Fiscal information must be reported relative to project expenditures and in accordance with the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures](#) handbook.

Cumulative quarterly reports will be due to ISBE according to the schedule provided below. Reports will not be required for the first quarter of the initial grant period (FY 2012) because the project start date is after the first quarter ends.

Quarter	Cumulative Reporting Periods			Report Due Date
1	Project Begin Date	through	September 30	October 20
2	Project Begin Date	through	December 31	January 20
3	Project Begin Date	through	March 31	April 20
4	Project Begin Date	through	June 30	July 20

Project Evaluation: Data collection, regarding the services administered by the grantee and an analysis thereof, is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and to make subsequent decisions regarding the ongoing improvement of services. Applicants are advised that the project evaluation must be designed to address, at a minimum, the following areas and associated costs must not exceed four (4) percent of the total budget. Applicants must provide an evaluation plan that includes a complete description of how the project’s effectiveness will be evaluated. The evaluation plan must include a description of how proposed procedures and instruments will be used to determine the extent to which the project objectives (i.e., deliverables) will be met. Attachment 2 is provided for this portion of the proposal.

At a minimum, the following data elements must be included in the proposed evaluation plan.

- Improvements in student behavioral progress in both school and home environments;
- Suspension and expulsion data;
- Least restrictive environment placement; and
- Family stressors.

Fiscal Information

One grant will be awarded in FY 2012 in an amount not to exceed \$338,000. The initial and subsequent grant awards will be dependent upon the needs addressed and scope of activities in each year of the grant and the total appropriation for the program. Allowable expenditures include the following.

- Salaries and benefits for professional staff, including trainers, and support staff;
- Consulting fees for state and national experts to provide direct professional development and technical assistance to participating entities in relation to deaf and hard of hearing children with exhibited behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges;
- Space rental for meetings and conferences;
- Office space rental and associated utilities;
- Space rental for a resource library for over 1200 items for education and training materials to include manuals, software, videos, webinars, and other materials necessary to aid in project implementation;
- Program and office supplies directly related to the purposes of the project;
- Printing of business cards, stationary, envelopes, resource directory, brochures, and flyers;

- General administration, fiscal services, data processing services, and/or indirect costs associated with the overall administration of the ISRC may be proposed. These costs, however, **must be cumulatively limited to not more than three (3) percent of the total funding request.** (Note: Indirect costs cannot be claimed if either fiscal services or data processing services are requested.)
- Evaluation activities. Related costs must not exceed four (4) percent of the total budget;
- Subcontracting is allowed. Funds may be used to enter into subcontracting agreements for the provision of project activities that are beyond the scope of the grantee. Subcontracted services may include evaluation services. Information regarding subcontracting arrangements must be provided in accordance with item #7 on Attachment 8 of this RFP; and
- Travel expenses for project personnel to support students at therapeutic schools and hospital programs, day school programs, community trainings or services, home and family support, or workshop trainings.

Travel expenses must be paid in accordance with local policies and be most cost effective. Travel expenses, including transportation costs and, where overnight stay is required, lodging and per diem, are subject to the state rates according to the Governor's Travel Control Board as outlined in the Reimbursement Schedule of the [Travel Guide for State of Illinois Employees](#) and any annual changes therein.

Proposal Narrative Requirements

Applicants must propose a plan which demonstrates a sound approach to carrying out the project by responding to each of the following prompts. All activities must purport to build the capacity of Illinois school districts to serve the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges. Of great importance is the extent to which the proposed plan has a strong likelihood of fulfilling project objectives (i.e., deliverables) as outlined in the *Program Specifications* sections of this RFP.

The proposal narrative must be double-spaced with a 12-point font and one inch margins and may not exceed ten (10) pages in length. Information exceeding the ten page limit will not be included in the proposal review process.

1. Expertise and Experience:

- A. Describe the applicant's expertise and experience in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges; and
- B. Describe any previous experience in providing services, performing case coordination, referral, and consultative services to these students.

2. Training and Technical Assistance:

- A. Describe the applicant's expertise and experience in providing training and technical assistance to school personnel, parents, hospital personnel, and community members in developing services plans for students; and
- B. Describe how the applicant will develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments that might be used as part of the services offered under this grant.

3. Partnerships and Collaboration:

- A. Describe how the applicant will develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials;
- B. Describe the applicant's knowledge of and the ability to work with psychiatric hospitals, therapeutic schools, and public programs that may specialize in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges;
- C. Describe how the applicant will ensure comprehensive services by monitoring, evaluating, and assessing statewide resources, identifying service gaps, and then developing and delivering pertinent services;

4. **Capacity:**

- A. Describe the applicant's proposed work plan for providing each of the project deliverables as listed in the *Program Specifications* section of this RFP.
- B. Discuss the capacity of the applicant to administer the project and the ability to account for the allocation and expenditure of federal grant funds. Specifically address how the proposed staffing structure and identified personnel will contribute to the applicant's capacity to perform the work outlined in this RFP.
- C. Additionally, describe how the applicant will establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system, explain any user trainings of the system that will be provided, and indicate if any of the applicant's facilities will be used to conduct user trainings. Provide information relative to the location and explain how accessibility to participants statewide will be ensured.
- D. Describe how the applicant will evaluate the project as outlined under the *Project Evaluation* section.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling the completed proposal.

- ___ 1. **Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Include the name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of applicant; name and telephone number of the responsible agent or contact person, as appropriate. The cover page must be signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ 2. **Evaluation Design (Attachment 2):** Describe the evaluation procedures and instruments to be used to determine the extent to which project objectives will have been met. Limit to one (1) page.
- ___ 3. **Proposal Narrative (Attachment 3):** Provide a response to each prompt listed in the *Proposal Narrative Requirements* section of this RFP. The Proposal Narrative must be double-spaced, using 12-point font size, and have one inch margins. The Proposal Narrative may not exceed ten (10) pages in length. Pages exceeding the maximum length will not be included in the proposal review.
- ___ 4. **Budget Summary (Attachment 4):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ 5. **Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 5):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable (see item #7 of the document titled *Certification and Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant*, Attachment 5).
- ___ 6. **Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 6 - 11):** Each applicant is required to submit the following certifications and assurances. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
 - Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, Attachment 6
 - Program-Specific Terms of the Grant, Attachment 7
 - Certification and Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant, Attachment 8
 - Certification Regarding Debarment, Attachment 9
 - Certification Regarding Lobbying, Attachments 10 – 10C
 - General Education Provisions Act, Attachment 11

- ___ 7. **Appendices:** Each applicant is required to submit the following personnel information as an appendix to the proposal.
- Organizational chart reflecting the proposed staffing structure
 - Current job description for each proposed position
 - Current résumé or curriculum vitae for each proposed staff member

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated in comparison with other proposals received by the Illinois State Board of Education, scored according to the criteria below, and ranked by score. The total number of points possible is 100. Final determination for selection will be made by the State Superintendent of Education and will be based upon recommendations resulting from the proposal review process.

1. Expertise and Experience: (50 points)

The proposal demonstrates expertise and experience in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

The proposal includes an explanation of experience in providing services, performing case coordination, processing referrals, and providing consultative services to these students.

2. Training and Technical Assistance: (20 points)

The proposal demonstrates expertise and experience in providing training and technical assistance to school personnel, parents, hospital personnel, and community members; in developing services plans for students; and includes how the applicant will develop, obtain, and ensure the consistency of screening instruments that might be used as part of the services offered under this grant.

3. Partnerships and Collaboration: (15 points)

The proposal demonstrates how the applicant will develop and maintain a directory of public and private resources, including crisis intervention services and materials.

The proposal includes an explanation about the knowledge of and the ability to work with psychiatric hospitals, therapeutic schools, and public programs that may specialize in providing services specific to deaf and hard of hearing students who exhibit behavioral, emotional, or mental health challenges.

The proposal indicates how the applicant will ensure comprehensive services by monitoring, evaluating, and assessing statewide resources, identifying service gaps, and the developing and delivering pertinent services.

4. Capacity: (15 points)

The proposal demonstrates the capacity of the applicant to administer the project, specifically indicating the number of staff to be employed, their responsibilities, and qualifications and how personnel will contribute to the applicant's capacity to perform the work outlined in this RFP.

The proposal demonstrates the ability to manage and account for allocations and expenditures of federal grant funds.

The proposal includes how the applicant will establish and maintain a statewide student identification and tracking system, explains any user trainings of the system that will be provided, and indicates if any of the applicant's facilities will be used to conduct user trainings. The proposal also addresses information relative to the facility locations and how accessibility to participants statewide will be ensured.

The proposal documents how the applicant will evaluate the project as outlined under the *Project Evaluation* section.