



Illinois State Board of Education

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

TO: Eligible Applicants

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

Christopher A. Koch

Date: February 19, 2013

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, not-for-profit entities, public universities, public university laboratory schools approved by the State Board of Education, and area vocational centers with extensive experience in completing similar web-based projects in Illinois as described in this RFP are eligible to apply.

Grant Award: ISBE will award one grant and the annual grant award will be \$500,000. In the event that these funds do not become available to the Illinois State Board of Education, no proposals submitted under this RFP will be funded. Subcontracting is allowed under this agreement.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2013, and will extend until June 30, 2014 (i.e., FY2014). Continuation funding is anticipated and will be made available to the selected grantee for up to four additional fiscal years (i.e., 2014-15 through 2017-18) contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and 5 copies to Cindy Zumwalt, Early Childhood Division Administrator, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, E-225, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on April 8, 2013.

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 Donna Emmons, by phone at (217) 524-4835, or by email, demmons@isbe.net.

Background

Section 1C-2 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/1C-2) establishes the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) to be administered on a competitive basis. The ECBG is a birth to age 5 grant program that includes Prevention Initiative (PI; ages 0-3) and Preschool for All (PFA; ages 3-5). The ECBG's purpose is to provide early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive evidence-based child development and family support services to help families prepare their young children for later school success. ECBG funds are distributed to eligible applicants, including school districts, social service agencies and other entities on a competitive basis. The PI and PFA programs are intended for children who have been determined to be at risk for school failure as indicated by their families' high levels of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, limited-English proficiency, or other need-related indicators (e.g., school districts' rate of dropouts, retention, truancy, teenage pregnancies and homeless students; high rates of infant mortality, birth trauma, low birth weight or prematurity; and high rates of child abuse or neglect).

The [Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map](http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/about.html) (IECAM) was developed during FY2006 to bring together data from multiple early care and education data systems and the U.S. Census, in order to make the allocation of early care and education resources more equitable across the state. IECAM provides a tool for transparent resource allocation and planning, enables data to drive decision-making, and serves as a one-stop source of early care and education information. IECAM currently operates within the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative or ECAP, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (<http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/about.html>).

IECAM has been able to provide, through its website, a picture of early care and education services at a given point in time by querying a data source that brings together information on publicly funded programs (PI, PFA and Head Start) and private child care, among other services. This has been important for ISBE, given its goal of ensuring an equitable distribution of grant funds around the state. To ensure that services are available in close proximity to the families and children who, because of a variety of risk factors, require the PI and PFA services, ISBE needs to know where Head Start classrooms are located and the funded enrollment in each classroom, as well as where high-quality child care centers and family child care homes are located. This information is available from IECAM.

Besides providing data specifically related to the number of children receiving early care and education, further insights on the conditions of young children and their families are gleaned from relating early care and education site locations to other contexts, such as income and ethnic variables. IECAM provides demographic theme maps that show percentages of specific populations (i.e., ages 0 through 4, racial and ethnic categories [Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian]); population density; and unemployment rates. Maps are presented by counties and U.S. Census block groups. The locations of PI and PFA sites, Head Start sites, and child care centers can be plotted on top of these maps.

IECAM assists ISBE, as well as other state agencies, school districts, child welfare agencies, community organizations, early childhood advocates, researchers, and the general public by identifying geographic areas with high concentrations of children living in poverty and those with high needs to enable organizations and agencies to ensure that children at risk of academic failure receive the early childhood services necessary for them to enter school ready to learn. As an example, information from IECAM effectively assists ISBE with targeting PFA funding to the most at-risk children in an effort to close the achievement gap prior to kindergarten entry.

Program Specifications

Overview: ISBE seeks applications from eligible entities that will maintain and further refine an Illinois early childhood asset mapping website (IECAM) for early childhood personnel, state agency personnel and the general public. Specifically, the website should provide online access to demographic data on young children and data on early care and education services in Illinois. Applicants must explain how they will combine up-to-date demographic information with early childhood program information from PI and PFA, Head Start, and child care. The website should use a sophisticated electronic coding/mapping function to locate early childhood programs correlated with demographic data across multiple sectors of the state. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will have access to the existing pages and resources of the current site in order to make the transition to the applicant's system and to support the site with its own infrastructure.

The current IECAM website is located at <http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/>.

As indicated under the *Background* section, further insights on the conditions of young children and their families can be revealed by linking early care and education site locations to other information, such as income and ethnic variables. The successful applicant will be required to continue to provide demographic theme maps that show populations broken down by age range, race and ethnicity; population density; and unemployment rates presented, at a minimum, by counties and U.S. Census block groups. The locations of PI and PFA sites, Head Start sites and child care centers can be plotted on top of these maps.

IECAM must identify geographic areas with high concentrations of children living in poverty and provide other relevant information to effectively assist ISBE with targeting its ECBG funding to areas most in need of services.

IECAM must use the most current and appropriate GIS mapping software so as to make it possible for policy makers to know the location of existing services as they make decisions about funding additional services. Website users should be able to click on a location on a map to learn the extent to which a county, school district, legislative district, or other area is currently served by early childhood programs, and to find demographic data that illustrate how population factors relate to the current distribution of funds. Using these data, policy makers can determine where new or expanded programs are most needed.

The goals for the IECAM project are to:

- Provide an effective tool for resource allocation and planning for early care and education (ECE);
- Enable data to drive decision-making about ECE resource allocation;
- Develop a one-stop source of information on publicly funded and private ECE services;
- Support a culture of transparency that contributes to accountability and that supports the process of distribution of state funds for ECE;
- Identify and eliminate gaps in existing ECE databases in the state;
- Analyze early childhood and demographic data using the tools provided on IECAM;
- Provide Illinois stakeholders with information on effectively and accurately using data about ECE, including the data on IECAM (if student-specific data are used, then use of that data are subject to the provisions of the Illinois School Student Records Act [105 ILCS 10] and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [20 USC 1232g]); and

- Support the administration of Illinois’ ECE grant programs for children from birth to five years old.

Website Specifications and Technology: The successful applicant will establish a secure website to house the IECAM project. The data gathered by the applicant will be owned by ISBE, but housed on the website obtained and maintained by the applicant. The server is required to be backed up daily. All rights to access and control of this data will be assigned to the Illinois State Board of Education. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain appropriate electronic equipment to gather the data needed for the IECAM project. IECAM requires both Sequel Server and the Esri Arc GIS server to support the website. The website also uses a custom GIS mapping software that was developed by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois. The applicant must be able to maintain and develop the website using this or similar software. The applicant will provide tools or methods to ensure that data are kept secure and error-free.

Objectives: It is anticipated that the successful applicant will employ or contract with professional staff to implement activities and initiatives to accomplish the objectives listed in the chart below.

The abbreviations and acronyms used in chart are defined below:

CCAs	Chicago Community Areas
CPS	Chicago Public Schools
EC	Early Childhood
ECE	Early Care and Education
GIS	Geographic Information System
GUI	Graphical User Interface
HS	Head Start
HSSCO	Head Start State Collaboration Office
IDHS	Illinois Department of Human Services
IECAM	Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map
INCCRRA	Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
PFA	Preschool For All (3-5 year old state educational program)
PI	Prevention Initiative (Birth to 3 year old state educational program)

Technical Issues, Website Design, and Presentation of the Data

Objective	Timeframe
1. Develop and maintain an IECAM website (see example of current website http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/).	Ongoing
2. Update website continually as new data become available.	Ongoing
3. Add new Standard Reports to the GIS section of the website based on ISBE and other stakeholder requests.	Ongoing and As Needed
4. Revise, refine and develop new website Help Pages and Quick Help Handouts.	Ongoing and As Needed
5. Create webinar(s) designed to instruct users	Year One

Objective	Timeframe
on how to effectively use IECAM and the data related to early care and education and demographics.	
6. Revise data and maps to accommodate changes in geographic areas.	Annually
7. Create a User Group of stakeholders, PFA, and PI programs to provide anecdotal reports on the use and value of use of IECAM.	Ongoing
8. Use GUI icons to make the website as user-friendly as possible.	Ongoing
9. Assure data and GIS mapping is as accurate as possible.	Ongoing
10. Create a technical manual for internal use regarding ArcGIS, geocoding, data management and the network used. Review and update annually.	Ongoing
11. Provide technical support to ISBE and other stakeholders.	Ongoing

Data Acquisition

Objective	Time Frame
12. Secure data sharing agreements with ISBE, CPS, Head Start and IDHS (INCCRRA).	Annually
13. Determine with ISBE what ECE data are pertinent to collect from ISBE, Head Start and IDHS in order to meet current agency objectives. Add both tabular and GIS data to IECAM.	Ongoing
14. Determine with ISBE if any additional data for next ISBE grant cycle needs to be added to IECAM.	Annually
15. Determine with ISBE which data are public and which are private.	Ongoing
16. Work with CPS to obtain data, including CCA and/or neighborhood data, in order to meet current agency objectives. Add both tabular and GIS data to IECAM.	Ongoing
17. Work with HSSCO and Head Start State Association Office in collection of current Head Start data.	Ongoing
18. Assure data collected are correct and accurate.	Ongoing
19. In consultation with ISBE, IDHS and HS, continue all current demographic variables on IECAM site plus add new demographic	Ongoing

Objective	Time Frame
theme maps as requested, such as population by education level, median net worth, maternal language.	
20. Tally IECAM user requests (website, email, phone) to analyze stakeholder need for site information. Report results to ISBE.	Ongoing
21. Develop search queries as requested by ISBE EC Division and report results to ISBE.	Ongoing

Reporting

Objective	Timeframe
22. Provide quarterly reports to ISBE delineating completed activities and tasks from the approved work plan.	Quarterly
23. Provide an annual report summarizing yearly completed activities and tasks from the approved work plan.	Annually

Outreach and Public Awareness

Objective	Timeframe
24. Create and disseminate an IECAM e-newsletter.	Monthly
25. Negotiate web links from major Illinois ECE websites to the IECAM website.	Ongoing
26. Provide brief articles about IECAM to ECE newsletters and professional journals.	Ongoing
27. Develop a brochure describing IECAM and how it can be used by those in the ECE field. Distribute brochure at appropriate education conferences, EC conferences and meetings. Update as needed.	Ongoing
28. Continue to develop and update as necessary, the <i>County Capsules</i> and <i>Snapshots of Illinois</i> found on the current IECAM website.	Ongoing
29. Continue to develop and disseminate <i>Data Reports</i> as found on the current IECAM website.	Ongoing
30. Continue to develop and disseminate <i>Technical Reports</i> as found on the current IECAM website.	Ongoing
31. Make conference presentations regarding	Ongoing

Objective	Timeframe
IECAM around the state and at meetings of stakeholders.	
32. Work with ISBE to inform PFA and PI grant applicants about the availability of IECAM for its use in the development of their PFA and PI grant proposals.	Ongoing
33. Arrange trainings on the use of IECAM around the state as needed and/or as requested.	Ongoing

Staff Structure: Applicants must include sufficient levels of staffing to accomplish the proposed activities. Staff and/or positions must be commensurately qualified for the respective job responsibilities and duties. Proposals must list information for each position indicating specific qualifications, including education, experience, and competencies, and delineating respective job responsibilities and/or duties.

Fiscal Information

Funding up to \$500,000 is anticipated for the initial grant period and for each subsequent renewal period contingent upon sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant contract year.

Indirect costs are limited to no more than 8%.

Funding received under this grant must not duplicate or supplant local or other state funds for similar activities. Documentation of the use of all funds and accurate record-keeping is required.

Subcontracting is allowed under this agreement.

Project Reporting and Evaluation Requirements: Quarterly expenditure reports will be required. Further information about the use of grant funds and the completion of expenditure reports may be found in the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures handbook](#). ISBE will require quarterly progress reporting. The report must include but not be limited to, all events administered with grant funds, a description of completed activities, website maintenance, and traffic.

Travel expenses for personnel to carry out grant activities will be an allowable expense. However, travel must be conducted as cost-effectively as possible and expenses must be paid in accordance with local policies. 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.

Proposal Format

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

- ___ 1. **Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ 2. **Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2):** Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the project.
- ___ 3. **Proposal Narrative (Attachment 3):** Applicants are encouraged to refer to the *Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals* section before completing the *Program Narrative*. See specific narrative requirements below.
- ___ 4. **Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 4A):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the official authorized to submit the proposal. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures and be in accordance with the [State and Federal Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures](#).
- ___ 5. **Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 4B):** 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 6).
- ___ 6. **Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 5 and 6):** Each applicant, *including each entity that is participating in a joint application*, is required to submit the certification forms attached ("Program-Specific Terms of the Grant" and "Certification and Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant"). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

Proposal Narrative Requirements

Use Attachment 3 to respond to each of the narrative requirements below.

1. Provide an introduction for the project proposed. This should be a narrative description or an overview of the entire project. Describe the capacity of the applicant to carry out the grant objectives as identified in the *Program Specifications* of the RFP.
2. Identify how project personnel and, if applicable, consultants will be identified, utilized and evaluated.
3. Detail each person to potentially be employed and/or contracted by providing the information below.
 - a. Project title and name (if known);
 - b. Project responsibilities;
 - c. Qualification or expertise applicable to project purpose;
 - d. Rate of pay; and
 - e. Percentage of time (full-time equivalency [FTE] on the project).
4. Describe in detail for each of the activities to be conducted to meet the objectives outlined in the *Program Specifications* section, the information listed below.
 - a. Implementation steps/work plan,
 - b. Staff responsible,

- c. Timeline for scope of work,
 - d. Project deliverables.
5. Clearly describe the website system to be provided.
 6. Describe the capacity of the applicant to house, develop and maintain the web-based project.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated in a competitive review process conducted by an expert panel of reviewers. Proposals will be scored using the criteria outlined below and ranked by score. The total number of possible points is 100. Final determination of funding will be made by the State Superintendent based upon the recommendations resulting from the review process.

1. **Grantee Capability (30 points):** The applicant demonstrates the sufficient capacity to fully deliver a project of the magnitude and scope inherent in the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map website. The applicant includes a thorough description of its proposed staffing, indicating that the number of staff to be employed and their responsibilities and qualifications have a high likelihood of contributing positively to the applicant's capacity to successfully perform the work outlined in this RFP.

The proposal adequately demonstrates the applicant's ability to effectively manage and account for allocations and expenditures of the awarded funds.

The proposal presents sufficient evidence of the applicant's expertise and experience in website construction and maintenance to suggest that the project will be implemented in a high-quality manner in accordance with the program specifications outlined in this RFP.

2. **Quality of the Project Implementation/Work Plan (50 points):** The proposed plan demonstrates thorough planning, communication and innovation sufficient to meet each of the objectives identified in the program specifications. The activities proposed are appropriate for the work to be accomplished.
3. **Timeline, Cost-Effectiveness and Budget (20 points):** The project timeline is appropriate for the scope of the work and project deliverables. The proposal represents a cost-effective use of State resources, as evidenced by the amount requested to support the activities proposed. The budget is reasonable in relation to the services to be provided.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer comments by contacting the Early Childhood Division, earlychi@isbe.net. All requests must be submitted in writing (e.g. email).