



## SAMPLE Proposal for United Way of Olmsted County Early Success grant

### How to use this Sample Proposal:

We have created a mock proposal for a pretend program to provide *one example* of what strong responses to the Initial Proposal questions *may* look like. United Way staff have provided notes to demonstrate how the sample responses address the review criteria described in our [evaluation rubric](#).

We suggest you use this sample proposal to help you understand what types of information we hope to learn about your program and what level of detail may be appropriate as you respond to the proposal questions.

We take a holistic approach to reviewing grant applications. This means reviewers consider how the overall application meets the criteria described in the rubric. The sample application below touches on elements of all evaluation criteria, as described in our staff notes.

Organization Name: Rochester Childcare Foundation

Program Name: Get-Ready-Grow

#### 1. Briefly describe the goals and activities of your program. (1-2 sentences)

Our Get-Ready-Grow program provides low-cost childcare for families with children from the ages of six weeks through 5-years-old. Our mission is to provide working families with high-quality, culturally responsive childcare that offers age-appropriate learning through play.

#### 2. Describe how your program uses best practices to provide high-quality childcare or early childhood education. (1-2 paragraphs)

Get-Ready-Grow provides a safe and enriching environment for children. We are a licensed childcare center in good standing with the state of Minnesota and have achieved a 4-star Parent Aware rating. Because we provide childcare for infants and toddlers, we adhere to a 1:4 teacher to child ratio. We know that children learn best through play. Our teachers foster learning through free play and guided play (for older learners). We use the Creative Curriculum and GOLD assessment tool to track developmental progress. We also work closely with families to provide referrals and support resources to help children meet their developmental needs.

We follow the recommendations of the National Association for the Education of Young Children on Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education. Using these recommendations as a guide, our programming specifically focuses on creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment, building reciprocal relationships with families, and tending to the social-emotional learning of participants in developmentally appropriate ways. Given the cultural and ethnic diversity of our students, we strive to ensure that our programming is culturally relevant, and that childcare is sensitive to childcare practices at home. Many of

**Commented [JC1]:** Program demonstrates that they use a widely accepted curriculum and assessment tool. Curriculum and tool align with other providers in the county who use GOLD assessments.

1b. Program provides high quality childcare or early childhood education

3a. Program responds to local conditions

**Commented [JC2]:** Program demonstrates that they are engaged in continuous improvement in equitable childcare approaches.

3c. Program demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement.

**Commented [JC3]:** Program demonstrates that they are culturally-responsive and place emphasis on social-emotional learning; both evidence of high-quality childcare.

1b. Program provides high quality childcare or early childhood education

2c. Program design and implementation is informed by thinking about racial, disability, and socioeconomic justice (equity lens)

our youngest Get-Ready-Grow participants speak a language other than English in the home/as a first language. Our teachers reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our participants; 35% of our staff identify as BIPOC and several speak Spanish fluently. We always have at least one staff member working who speaks Spanish, the second most common language spoken by our families.

**Commented [JC4]:** Program demonstrates an understanding of equity issues in early childhood education, employs BIPOC staff, and offers bilingual care

3. Our goal with this investment is to serve children from low-income families (generally those living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level). Please tell us about your participant population. Who uses your services? (1-3 sentences)

2b. Program design is responsive to children's and families' needs

2c. Program design and implementation is informed by thinking about racial, disability, and socioeconomic justice (equity lens)

Our program primarily serves lower- and middle-income families through a sliding fee structure. Approximately 80% of the families we serve live at or below 185% if the federal poverty level, the remaining 20% live at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. Last year, 25% of children enrolled were Black and 40% were Hispanic/Latino.

**Commented [JC5]:** Program serves the intended population. Program collects disaggregated demographic data.

4. How many children did your program serve last year? If you anticipate that the number of children served will change significantly in the coming year, please explain. (# of participants)

2a. Program serves primarily individuals and/or families with an income at or below 185% federal poverty level.

Last year, we provided childcare for 46 children from 32 families. This year, we expect to serve more families because we have been able to hire another staff member for evening care.

5. Equity is a core value of United Way of Olmsted County. We define equity as the fair participation of everyone in a society in which all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity occurs when barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled. Tell us how equity is embedded in your program and/or your organization.

Equity is at the heart of what we do. Our childcare program is specifically designed for children and families from marginalized communities. Many of our participating families are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants, speak English as a second language, and face substantial financial barriers in Olmsted County. We collect participant and outcome data by race, ethnicity, and income-level to better identify disparities in developmental progress and program experiences. Our staff are trained in culturally relevant childcare and education, and many of our staff are people of color themselves who are also bilingual. Having teachers and caregivers who reflect our students' cultural backgrounds is extremely important in building trust and relationships with families. We also understand that developmental milestones may be incorrectly assessed for bilingual children when conducted in their secondary language; therefore, all developmental assessments that require interacting with the child directly are conducted in the child's home language whenever possible.

**Commented [JC6]:** Understands participant needs and responds accordingly.

This statement also indicates that the program uses data to evaluate program success. There will be questions about program evaluation on the full proposal, but this begins to describe how they define success and collect data.

2b. Program design is responsive to children's and families' needs

3b. If an existing program, demonstrates positive outcomes through data; if a new program, demonstrates strong potential for impact

In our daily program activities, we use a culturally responsive teaching approach through the Creative Curriculum Teaching Strategy. We acknowledge and celebrate a diverse array of cultural and religious holidays recognized by our families. We also want our classrooms to reflect the diversity of participants; our classrooms are decorated to reflect the cultures of our participants and our bookshelves are stocked with books with BIPOC children and families as main characters. We interview each family at the beginning of enrollment to better understand childcare practices and learning habits at home. We also gather feedback from families at least twice throughout the year during family interviews. This practice allows families to tell us what childcare practices are working and what areas that

**Commented [JC7]:** Program demonstrates that they collect feedback from families and use that to make improvements

2b. Program design is responsive to children's and families' needs

3c. Program demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement.

they feel need improvement. We use this feedback during our annual program evaluation to ensure that we are responding to any changing needs of our families.

In addition to creating a welcoming environment for children and their families, we strive to support our staff by providing equity training and other professional development. Our team of caregivers understands the inequities in education and childcare and the negative and long-lasting impacts these have on BIPOC communities. Rather than require our staff to undergo “DEI training”, we offer staff a variety of professional development opportunities related to equity in teaching and child development. We have found that these resources tend to be more relevant and valuable in helping our staff work with children from many different cultures and communities.

**Commented [JC8]:** Program provides equity training as well as professional development for staff.

2c. Program design and implementation is informed by thinking about racial, disability, and socioeconomic justice (equity lens)