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Initial Submissions Due: Jan. 23, 2015, 11:59 p.m. EST

Webinar: Jan. 27, 2015, 3:00 p.m. EST

Final Proposals Due: Feb. 13, 2015, 5:00 p.m. EST

January 12, 2015

*Letter of Invitation for Entry-Level Pilot Study  
Supporting Transitions to Employment for Parents (STEPS)*

**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is committed to creating the conditions that propel all children and families to achieve success in education, health and economic security, along with an overarching commitment to promoting racial equity and civic & community engagement. Children live within the context of families and communities. Our core focus is in support of assuring the optimal health, education and economic security for all children across the country.

The Foundation is specifically focused on helping families reach incomes that are at least 200 percent of the federal poverty level. We do that by supporting efforts to increase economic stability and workforce mobility for families living in poverty. Specific strategies that we support include access to income supports, financial education, asset building, entrepreneurship and workforce development. Our work helps families access resources that help them achieve economic security and build skills towards quality jobs.

Although we have a priority focus on children from birth to 8 years old, we know the critical importance of advancing the economic security of parents to achieve the greatest outcomes for children. For this reason, we focus on two-generation strategies – approaches that help children and families advance simultaneously. The research is clear: when parents are economically secure, children do better socially, emotionally, cognitively, and academically.

Unfortunately, the rebound from the Great Recession has not reached all families and communities. Too many families remain in poverty, unemployed and unable to make ends meet, especially single mothers of color with young children. They face a number of barriers in their struggle to find stable employment, with securing quality child care among the most challenging. If this barrier were eliminated, many mothers would be better positioned to enjoy greater success in employment, job retention and long-term economic security for their families.

Creating effective, lasting change also requires a strong level of authentic partnership across sectors, breaking down traditional silos and working together more formally to remove barriers and meet the needs of families.

## SECTION 2: PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

In an effort to remove the child care barrier and advance greater employment outcomes for mothers of color with children from birth to eight years old, and to build collaboration between sectors, **the Kellogg Foundation will invest in high-capacity, workforce development organizations to establish formal partnerships with early childhood education (ECE) and child care providers, including Pre-K programs and elementary schools, for the purpose of recruiting unemployed mothers from those settings into entry-level workforce training programs.** Through this pilot, we will test and learn how these formal collaborations affect mothers' employment and education outcomes and the economic security for their families.

There are a wide range of high-capacity, nonprofit workforce development organizations that provide or connect people to sector-based, demand-driven employment



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training and education. Workforce entities typically view child care as one of many support services

jobseekers need to succeed, but largely limit their engagement in this area to referral relationships with early care or child care providers rather than partnering closely or formally with them. As a result, the opportunities and constraints associated with child care and early learning policies and programs are not fully understood by workforce development organizations or integrated into their workforce strategies. Although there are a number of two-generation efforts that have incorporated child care, employment training and wraparound services into their programs, these have generally not been driven by workforce organizations.

We seek to change this dynamic by promoting more intentional partnerships between workforce development organizations and quality ECE and child care providers -- partnerships that are driven by workforce organizations that understand the importance of supporting parents and their children simultaneously. One key component of this pilot will be recruiting mothers who *already* have their children from birth through age 8 enrolled in quality child care or education programs into short-term workforce training programs. This eliminates the child care barrier for the purpose of the pilot, opening the way for unemployed mothers to have greater opportunities for successful employment and job retention outcomes. This approach supports our priorities of both building economic stability for families and providing children with the quality early education and care they need.

We have a particular interest in seeing workforce organizations actively initiate and manage partnerships with child care and education learning stakeholders. Our expectation is that these partnerships will not only address barriers to work for the mothers, but will also provide workforce organizations with:

- Access to an untapped pool of potential program participants.
- Better alignment and supports between child care, parenting and pre-employment services.
- A streamlined pathway to work by coordinating and staging the delivery of workforce and child care services provided to mothers and their children.

### SECTION 3: SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROFILE OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

The Kellogg Foundation will consider full proposals for this pilot study from invited applicants only. We are looking for workforce development organizations with proven organizational capacity and track records in achieving the economic security outcomes listed below.

#### Organizational Capacity and Profile:



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While an organization may not possess all of the characteristics, many of the following are essential:

- An established organization with at least seven years of operation and a substantial annual operating budget, with the financial and data systems and staff to take on a project of this scope.
- Demonstrated evidence and achievement of employment and job retention outcomes for low-income populations.
- Demonstrated capacity to initiate and lead successful partnerships and collaboration across sectors and with public, private and nonprofit partners.
- Demonstrated commitment to racial and gender equity in staff and board composition, stated values, policies, programs and accountability systems.
- Demonstrated capacity and commitment for using data for planning, evaluation and learning.
- A record of applying best practices and/or innovative workforce development strategies in areas such as, but not limited to:
  - Recruitment, screening and assessment of participants.
  - Case management and coaching services during both training and retention phases.
  - Adult basic education, including diploma, GED, ESL and/or bridge programs.
  - Life skills training.
  - Employment readiness services.
  - Short-term, sector-based, vocational/technical training that is delivered in under six months (either directly or in partnership with another training institution) and results in a stackable, industry-recognized credential.
  - Engaging employers in effective workforce partnerships.
  - Transitional employment strategies for less job-ready participants.
  - Career pathways and postsecondary education strategies that help entry-level workers advance to better jobs.
- Demonstrated evidence and achievement of outcomes in helping low-income populations access public benefits and tax credits.
- Demonstrated evidence and achievement of outcomes in helping low-income populations increase income and assets and reduce debt.

#### Profile of Early Childhood Education Providers

Workforce development organizations participating in the pilot will be expected to form partnerships with high quality child care and/or early care and education (ECE) providers.

These organizations should demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Serve specific cohorts of children from birth to 8 years old, through:
  - Public or private child care centers;
  - Early Head Start and Head Start sites;
  - Family child care homes;
  - Pre-K programs; and/or



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- Public or private elementary schools serving Pre-K-third grade.
- ECE programs serving children from birth to age 5 that participate in public or private funding supports for low-income families, such as (but are not limited to) CCDBG, Head Start, Title I, TANF, MIECHV, SNAP E&T, etc.
- ECE providers participating in state quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) or other methods of quality improvement.
- Elementary schools that serve a high percentage of free- and reduced-price lunch students.
- Elementary schools that are racially and/or linguistically diverse, and employ staff who reflect the students being served.
- Schools with at least 40 percent of their students meeting state assessment standards.

### Types of Workforce Development and ECE Partnership Models

Workforce development organizations and their target ECE partners may employ a variety of different partnership models for the pilot. In all cases, the workforce partner will be expected to recruit mothers from ECE and child care settings. Partnership models may include:

1. Workforce partner (WP) collaborates with ECE providers that are external to its organization and/or with Pre-K or K-5 elementary schools.
2. WP collaborates with externally-managed ECE partners that are co-located on-site with the workforce development center.
3. WP operates separate workforce development programs/services and ECE programs under one organization – which may or may not be located on-site with the workforce center. They may be staffed and managed independently of one another, but will need to work in alignment.
4. WP collaborates across its internal workforce and ECE departments/programs, in addition to partnering with external ECE partners and/or Pre-K or K-5 elementary schools.

## **SECTION 4: PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES, AND OUTCOMES**

### Summary

The Kellogg Foundation will invite a select number of workforce development organizations to apply to participate in this pilot study, and a total of six organizations will be selected and awarded \$850,000 in total over 2 ½ years or 30 months. This includes a six-month planning phase plus two years of implementation.

### Planning Phase – Six Months

Once the six pilot sites are chosen, each workforce development organization will lead their local partners in a six-month planning process to solidify the formal partnership, form an



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advisory committee, refine the proposed strategies, formalize partner agreements and develop an implementation plan.

### Implementation – Two Years

Implementation will take place over the following two years. Each pilot project will recruit and enroll into their workforce training programs a sufficient number of unemployed mothers who are drawn from partnering child care and education organizations, with the expectation that at least 100 of these women complete training during the two-year implementation period. No minimum number of completers is required for the first year.

Key activities to be completed during the overall pilot period include the following:

1. Vision, Partnership Alignment and Memorandum of Understanding – Workforce Partners must take the lead in creating formal partnerships with the 0-8 early childhood and education communities and create memorandums of understanding that outline:
  - **Alignment and articulation of a common vision and set of values.** Partners buy-in and agree to engage and advance two-generation outcomes that benefit parents and children simultaneously.
  - **Definition and agreement on what a quality partnership means.** Partners should co-create a vision for a quality partnership that outlines roles, expectations, goals, mutual learning, data sharing and tracking agreements, meeting schedules and other relevant elements.
  - **Workforce and ECE partners must agree to a set of shared equity values (racial, gender, other).** Partners articulate a clear set of values for promoting equitable selection and support of participants. Partners will be accountable for including diverse voices in the planning and implementation processes and developing culturally competent and relevant curriculum and services for participants.
2. Advisory Panel – Workforce and early childhood education partners must have an advisory panel of cross-sector partners that can help inform and guide the work of the pilot.
  - An advisory panel will be required for each pilot that includes stakeholders from different sectors within a community or state to advise the partnership. This panel may be newly created specifically for the pilot or built on an existing partnership.
3. Short-Term, Demand-Driven Training - WP must target high-growth industry sectors and collaborate with employers and other partners to develop and advance demand-driven job training programs that award short-term credentials that are stackable and have well-defined career pathways to higher skilled, higher paying jobs. In cases where the targeted entry-level credentials, jobs and associated advancement opportunities are marginal, the WP should consider how career *crosswalks* to other sub-sectors or industries can be used to help participants access better jobs and career pathways.



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- Given the barriers that often cause unemployed mothers to drop out of educational programs, this initiative is designed to couple short-term job training with intensive, customized support services and career coaching.
4. Funded Activities - The pilot will provide funding for specific activities and interventions. Pilot program costs that will/may be covered include, but are not exclusive to:
- A full-time or near full-time staff person at the WP that serves as the liaison to the 0-8 ECE partners and advisory group and is responsible for:
    - Conducting outreach.
    - Building relationships with and among partners and other stakeholders.
    - Developing and monitoring the formal partnerships outlined in the MOUs.
    - Managing the advisory group.
  - Technical assistance to facilitate the planning process and/or conduct research and analyses needed to refine and/or test proposed strategies.
  - Some of the costs associated with workforce training and services.
  - Gaps in child care subsidies for those not completely covered by federal or state programs and other associated costs.
5. Data Collection, Evaluation and Learning – This will be an essential part of the pilot study.
- This pilot will help the Kellogg Foundation and the field learn which workforce training models are most successful in supporting employment and job retention for unemployed mothers of young children from birth through age 8.
  - The Foundation will hire an evaluation partner who will be responsible for conducting a national cross-site evaluation. The pilot sites are required to participate in the national evaluation and provide the national evaluator with qualitative and quantitative data to assess progress and measure outcomes.
  - Each site will work with the national evaluator to establish common metrics for tracking progress toward outcomes, as well as provide ongoing formative feedback. To this extent, sites are not precluded from collecting additional data that they think will be useful to their ongoing monitoring, course correction and local needs. The sites will also need to develop data sharing agreements with their local partners.
  - Although partners will be tracking data related to employment and economic security for parents, the national evaluation team will work with sites to collect information about the processes used to establish cross-sector partnerships with ECE communities, as well as unanticipated benefits from the cross-sector partnerships.
  - Pilot partners should also be prepared to report ancillary benefits that result beyond the training and employment outcomes. Although not a focus of the intervention, we are interested in tracking child outcomes, given our interest in two-generation approaches that benefit parents and children simultaneously. We are also interested in family engagement and parenting outcomes. In the case of the latter, we are especially interested in understanding the extent to which parenting training might incorporate



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elements of life skills and other training that are applicable to a workplace or academic setting.

- We want to understand state policy barriers, challenges and opportunities regarding eligibility for unemployed mothers and their ability to access child care subsidies.
- The pilot phase evaluation will not include a comparison group. However, the pilot sites should develop sufficient baseline data and maintain client tracking protocols that will support future comparative and longitudinal assessments.
- Due to the innovative nature of this pilot, we are interested in highlighting key learnings from the pilot and sharing findings with key audiences in workforce development, economic development, and business and industry sectors. Your proposal should include a description of your organization's communications capacity (and that of your partners, if applicable) and/or experience in communication planning, including specific staff assignments.

6. Outcomes: By the end of the pilot, sites will be responsible for the following outcomes:

- A partnership between workforce development and ECE, pre-K and/or K-3 providers is established and sustained through formal MOUs that specify a common vision, goals, roles, timelines, activities and outcomes.
- At least 100 unemployed single mothers who have been drawn from multiple ECE, Pre-K or K-3 settings, complete workforce training programs and have been provided with customized support services throughout the process.
- A percentage of these mothers (TBD during the planning phase) are placed in transitional jobs and/or unsubsidized part- or full-time permanent employment within six months of completing the job training.
- Those mothers who are still employed one year after the initial job placement improve their financial stability and show increases in income, assets, credit scores and/or debt management capacity.
- Ancillary data showing child outcomes, family engagement and parenting outcomes, and any other outcomes and benefits from the study.

## SECTION 5: APPLICATION PROCEDURES & TIMELINE

The application process is a two-step process:

1. **Initial submissions must be received by Jan. 23, 2015, at 11:59 p.m. EST.** Invited applicants can visit the W.K. Kellogg Foundation website ([www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org)) and click on “Apply for a Grant” to submit their initial application.





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- To view potential questions and information we will require for this submission, [click here](#).
  - To view tips for completing the submission, [click here](#).
  - When submitting your application online, where it asks about prior contact with Kellogg Foundation staff, please indicate that you are applying for the STEPS entry level pilot project being led by Paula Sammons on the Family Economic Security team.
2. **Full proposals must be received by Feb. 13, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. EST.** Once invited applicants submit their initial submission (on or before January 23, 2015), additional information will be provided to the prospective sites regarding full proposal submission.

#### Webinar:

A webinar will be held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. EST for all organizations that have been invited to apply. This webinar is taking place after the initial submissions are received and before the full proposals are due to provide further information and answer any questions about the STEPS Entry Level Pilot. Additional information will be sent out shortly regarding the webinar.

#### Site Visits to Finalists:

Members of the Kellogg Foundation's Family Economic Security team may conduct site visits to the candidate sites in March 2015. The six pilot grantees will be selected by spring 2015.

#### Additional Questions:

If you have any question about the application process, the eligibility and selection criteria, or any other aspect of the pilot study, please contact Paula R. Sammons, program officer on the Kellogg Foundation's Family Economic Security team who will serve as the lead on this project. Invited applicants can reach Paula by email at [prs@wkkf.org](mailto:prs@wkkf.org) or phone (269-969-2085) and should also include her name on their application as a point of contact.