



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATE

### GENERAL

In June 2018, Rotary and Save the Children US embarked on a national partnership to increase literacy rates in rural communities through research-based early learning initiatives. The partnership unites Save the Children's expertise in child literacy programs, data collection and outcomes measurement with Rotary's expertise in advocacy, connecting community leaders, developing and implementing projects and driving public awareness and fundraising efforts – all with the aim of measurably increasing education outcomes for young children living in poverty.

### THE NEED: UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY LEARNING GAP

Research shows that, for at-risk children, the academic achievement gap starts early and can be measured in babies as young as 9-months old; 90% of a child's brain is developed by age 5, so a strong start is critical to later academic success.

Low-income children often live in households with no books or early learning resources. Early language and literacy development is a key school-readiness factor. By age 3, the average child in low-income households knows fewer than half as many words as children in high-income households.

Young children who do not have access to high-quality preschool or early education are:

- 25% more likely to drop out of school
- 40% more likely to become teen parents
- 60% more likely to never attend college
- 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Save the Children is committed to working with Rotary Clubs in rural communities to support innovative approaches to early childhood literacy. This application serves as an opportunity for Rotary Clubs to receive \$5000-\$10,000 for community-wide initiatives that support Kindergarten readiness and early childhood literacy. Up to ten projects will be funded. Proposals are due **September 30, 2021**.

#### Eligibility criteria:

- Applicants should be a Rotary Club within the US and have the capacity to implement their proposed project
- Applicants should serve high-poverty, rural communities
- Applicants should contribute a funding match of at least 10% of the total award amount
- Proposed projects should clearly demonstrate how they will utilize community partnerships in the planning and implementation of their proposed project to align efforts for maximum impact and avoid duplication of services
- Proposed projects should support one or more of the following:
  - Kindergarten readiness
  - Early childhood literacy

#### Proposed projects should apply the following key Community Engagement strategies:

- *Increasing access* to books, high-quality learning resources, and programs that support early childhood education
- *Increasing awareness* about the importance of early childhood education, and of early childhood education programming available to families in their community

- *Building capacity* of caregivers, educators, and community partners to support learning and healthy development
- *Building partnerships* to take action, increase the messenger pool, leverage resources, and strengthen supports for children and families

**Clubs are encouraged to:**

- Engage community partners from various sectors in project design and implementation. Sectors represented may include, but are not limited to: local government, business, K-12 education, early childhood, social service, health care, faith community, parenting networks/support groups, philanthropy, first responders, media, and/or informal learning institutions, including libraries and recreation centers.
- Integrate project activities into existing community priorities, activities, or initiatives to support sustained impact.
- Utilize partnerships that support equitable, broad-reaching impact of community-based initiatives.

Save the Children will provide selected communities with funding, tools and ongoing support to plan and implement proposed projects. See Appendix I for examples of community projects that support early learning.

**SCOPE OF WORK**

**Project Lead:** Person who can serve as the main contact and lead for the project. This person should be able to answer any questions about the project and take the lead on implementation.

**Planning Team:** The project planning team must include representation from the sponsoring Rotary Club. In addition, it is critical that the planning team be comprised of community members from various sectors, including parents/family members. Sectors represented may include, but are not limited to: local government, business, early childhood, K-12 education, social services, health care, faith community, parenting networks/support groups, philanthropy, first responders, media, and/or informal learning institutions, including libraries, and community recreation centers.

**Fiscal Agent:** Grant payment will be dispersed via an automatic deposit to the agency/entity in the community designated to serve as the fiscal agent. Once the fiscal agent has received the deposit, they are responsible for dispersing payments to various vendors. *Note: For this initiative, Rotary Club applicants will serve as their own fiscal agent.*

**Expectations of award recipients:**

- Convene a cross-sector planning team including sponsoring Rotary Club representation, community members, and parents/family members to identify needs and opportunities within the community to increase awareness and support of early learning.
- Design and implement a Community Engagement Project to utilize grant funds as a catalyst for cross-sector community engagement to advance local knowledge, resources and supports that promote early childhood education.
- Participate in a Community of Learning that includes training/technical assistance to support project implementation and ongoing check-ins to monitor progress towards project objectives.
- Participate in data collection and reporting for the project. A detailed impact report is due at the end of the project period and additional finance reporting will be required for awards of \$10,000.
- Provide a funding match of at least 10% of the total award amount.

### **Support provided by Save the Children:**

- Funding for project materials, supplies, stipend for project lead, and transportation costs associated with project development and implementation
- Training and technical assistance

### **APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

- Prospective partners may submit their completed proposals via email to **communityimpact@savechildren.org** (subject line “**Rotary Community Engagement RFP**”); see Appendix II for the approved proposal template
- Applications are due **September 30, 2021**
- Please note, the Save the Children Community Engagement Project Proposal Review Team may request edits to maximize impact and results for children
- Partners will be informed of the award decision and next steps within two weeks after the application deadline

### **HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Please contact [communityimpact@savechildren.org](mailto:communityimpact@savechildren.org) or [cfj2@mac.com](mailto:cfj2@mac.com)