

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are a for-profit entity or membership organization. Can we apply for funding?

No. The Stranahan Foundation only funds IRS-designated 501c3 charitable organizations.

My organization operates an early childhood education center or program. Are we eligible?

It depends. If the proposed project is focused on providing professional development to early childhood program directors, coaches, and teachers within your organization, this would be a better fit for our provider cycle (anticipated to open in the summer of 2024).

If your organization's services include training other early childhood providers in your proven high-quality early childhood education model or regional workforce partnership with other providers – the proposed project may be a fit for this opportunity.

Are religiously affiliated programs or organizations eligible for funding?

The Stranahan Foundation will consider supporting religiously affiliated early childhood organizations under the following conditions:

1. It does not proselytize or require staff or students to engage in religious activities.
2. It does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), or disability.

Does the foundation support professional development for family/home-based childcare providers?

The Foundation supports programs and projects targeted at family childcare, Early Head Start/Early Head Start, center-based childcare, pre-K, and kindergarten and does not have a particular setting preference.

I work for a public school district, college, or university and can't get my EIN number to work in the portal. Am I ineligible?

Please get in touch with grants@stranahanfoundation.org to help you start the LOI process.

Are home-visiting staff considered eligible early childhood professionals?

While we understand the importance of home-visiting programs for young children and their families, the Foundation's funding targets existing and aspiring early childhood education leaders, coaches, classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and teacher aides.

My organization is in the process of opening an early childhood center and is looking to build out our professional development offerings for new staff. Would this project be eligible?

No. If your proposed project's target audience includes your organization's current or prospective staff of your organization, it would not be eligible for funding under this RFP. However, it may fit our provider cycle, which generally opens in the summer.

How does the Stranahan Foundation define "low-income"?

The Foundation defines "low-income" as families whose income does not exceed 200% of the 2023 federal poverty level determined by the Department of Health & Human Services click [here](#) for the official income guidelines). Grantees may provide evidence that their project serves or plans to serve low-income children on a

community/neighborhood poverty basis or based on enrollment among children from families who would be eligible for (a) free- or reduced-price lunch (or equivalent family income), (b) state and federal childcare subsidies, or (c) Early Head Start or Head Start.

Does my “innovation” project proposal need to involve technology?

No. While technological tools or platforms to support the early childhood workforce and the quality of early childhood teaching and learning are welcome in the innovation category, the Foundation’s intended definition of “innovation” is broader and may include a variety of curricula, coaching strategies, programs, tools, models, etc. that otherwise meet the Foundation’s goals.

How rigorous does my evaluation plan need to be? Do I need to hire an external evaluator?

All proposals must have a plan for tracking key outputs, outcomes, and learning throughout a project.

Within the innovation category, applicants must demonstrate a logic model and plan for gaining clarity and insights about what works, for whom, and under what conditions. However, this may be a formative or implementation evaluation, recognizing that not all innovative approaches are ready for an impact evaluation.

The strongest proposals would include at least some form of the following three types of evaluation:

- *Process/Implementation Evaluation:* To help determine whether the program activities have been implemented as intended, the project team should conduct evaluation activities to codify the content of the intervention or project components strengthen their understanding of who, what, when, and where; identify barriers that impede the program’s implementation activities; and determine whether the program is accessible to the target population.
- *Formative Evaluation:* To help understand the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to drive continuous improvement activities, project teams should plan to formally collect and analyze participant feedback during the development or implementation of a program or project. Generally, acceptable activities include participant satisfaction surveys, engagement metrics, in-activity quizzes, or pre-and-post tests.
- *Outcomes/Impact Evaluation:* To preliminarily understand what works, for whom, and under what conditions – we ask project teams to conduct outcome evaluation activities. Outcome evaluations measure the program’s effect on the target population by assessing the changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, or practices of program participants. Generally, acceptable activities include the application of a recognized classroom, teacher, or, ideally, a child assessment tool. Staff or participant retention post-intervention may also make sense in some cases. Applicants may also request funding for a rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental impact evaluation.

Ultimately, the specific evaluation tools and methods proposed should be appropriate to the project context and stage of project development, with consideration given to any prior evaluative evidence that informs the approach. An external evaluator is not a requirement but may be part of the proposal.

Am I required to indicate the type of project or strategy for which I seek funding?

Yes. The system requires you to indicate whether you are applying under the innovation or proven PD strategy on the *Funding Request* tab in the portal. Your response to this question determines what questions will be asked of you throughout the remainder of the application process.

Two questions in the LOI form ask for similar information related to the project components. Can you clarify what I should be entering and where?

The initial question that requests a description of your goals and primary components/activities/interventions is intended to collect information about your overall model or approach. More specifically, the interventions your team will use to support adoption or changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, and practices. For reference only, this could include in-person training, online modules, communities of practices, leadership support, coaching, data collection/assessment, etc.

The latter question, which requests how you would use Stranahan Foundation funding to support your project goals, is intended to be a simple overview of your specific project or grant implementation. For reference only, this could include hiring a new staff position, material development, tool or resource creation, piloting # teachers or cohorts, conducting evaluation activities (be sure to include the types of evaluation), iteration, etc.

Do you have a list of application questions available outside of the portal?

We do not offer a list of the specific questions asked outside the portal. However, there is a link to the general overview of the types of information being requested in the *Application Process* section of the RFP.

The portal also allows you to print a copy of the questions with the descriptive text. WARNING: To get the complete and appropriate list of questions, select the strategy you are applying under (innovation or proven professional development) from a drop-down on the *Funding Request* tab first. This ensures that the system displays the appropriate questions for the type of project.

I am using a fiscal sponsor or am part of a university system. Whose information should I reference in the application?

Generally, we see a combination of both entities as part of the *Organization Background* section.

Here is some general guidance we have historically provided to applicants:

- Most use the brief overview of your program, services, and experience to cover the scope of your entity/institute/department/program.
- For board-related numbers, please use the fiscal sponsor or the university's board of directors.
- If you have a program-specific advisory board, you are welcome to speak to their makeup in the question referencing to what extent the organization's leadership (board & CEO) reflects the children, families, and professionals the program intends to serve of impact.
- The financial information should reflect the fiscal sponsor or a more extensive university system. If you would like to help us better understand your individual program's budget, please share it in the *Additional Information* section.

What is most important is to be clear as to whose information you are referencing in your response.

Can organizations apply for more than one grant?

Generally, we only allow one LOI per organization.

The only exception could be for colleges and universities. More than one department or institute can apply; however, we wouldn't anticipate moving more than one proposal per institution past the LOI stage.

Can we include funding for existing staff positions?

Yes. Historically, we have supported staff salaries and benefits for staff who participate in project implementation.

Do we need to attach a project budget at the LOI stage?

No, a project budget is not required at the LOI stage. However, if you have already secured a portion of the funding for the project – we'd encourage you to share that in the *Additional Information* section.

Is there a template or specific format we should use for the logic model?

No. Please upload the logic model in the format you use internally.

Are there word or character limits in the portal?

We provide recommended word limits for questions where applicants generally give too much information. However, there are no system-imposed limitations.

I need help submitting my application; who do I contact?

For applicants needing help accessing or submitting their LOI, please email grants@stranahanfoundation.org.

I haven't heard back from the Foundation; the deadline is tomorrow. What should I do?

The Foundation will not accept late submissions or applications outside the designated systems. Therefore, you should review the timeline carefully and plan to submit your application materials well before each deadline.