HOW APPLICATIONS ARE REVIEWED

The Foundation is committed to transparent and thoughtful grantmaking. To support this commitment, we share the primary areas we consider during each phase of the review process.

Our review process includes Foundation staff, consultants, and family members who are passionate about investing in the workforce to increase access to high-quality early childhood education.

STAGE 1: LETTER OF INQUIRY (LOI) SCREENING

During the preliminary screening phase, we are primarily looking to understand:

Your model or approach

Competitive applicants will typically demonstrate:

- How their approach fits within the selected priority and meets its specific requirements
- A compelling, feasible approach that aligns with best practices in adult learning and research
- How they (and their partners) have the expertise, relationships, and capacity to carry out the work
- How data, feedback, prior experience, or organizational learning informed their model

Project

We look for organizations that can clearly explain:

- How their project aligns with the Foundation's strategies
- How their project benefits educators outside of their organization

Educator and Family Voice

We are interested in how organizations:

- Gather feedback from early childhood leaders, educators, and families
- Use that feedback to develop and refine their model or approach

Alignment with the Foundation's Overall Priorities

This includes:

- Demonstrating that at least 60% of children served are from low-income families
- Having clear methods for collecting or calculating this information

STAGE 2: PROPOSAL/APPLICATION REVIEW

In addition to the areas above, organizations invited to submit a proposal will also be evaluated on:

Project Quality, Alignment, & Feasibility

We are looking for projects that:

- Have clear goals, realistic activities, and a focused scope
- Include practical implementation plans, timelines, and staffing structures
- Demonstrate thoughtful and feasible use of funding

Organizational Readiness and Capacity

Competitive proposals will typically demonstrate:

- Leadership and staffing capable of supporting implementation
- Internal systems and structures that support ongoing improvement
- Alignment between the project, staffing, timeline, and budget

Measuring Success & Continuous Improvement

We are interested in how organizations:

- Articulate what they hope to learn about 'what works'
- Define and measure success
- Use data, feedback, observations, or standardized tools to understand progress

Alignment with Priority Populations and Communities

Additional consideration may be given to organizations that:

- Serve communities with limited access to high-quality early childhood education
- Support educators who have historically faced barriers to advancement and professional growth
- Demonstrate leadership and staffing reflective of communities most impacted by disparate child outcomes
- Have the networks and connections to share learnings with the broader field

STAGE 3: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION SUBMISSION & VIRTUAL CONVERSATIONS

Organizations invited to the final stage will participate in additional organizational review and follow-up conversations.

At this final stage, we will assess:

- Organizational and financial stability
- Board and leadership capacity
- Project feasibility and implementation readiness
- Availability of staffing, expertise, and other resources
- Ability to identify and address implementation challenges
- Long-term sustainability and future plans
- Clarity and realism of intended outcomes and success measures