

2026 Family Support for Early Childhood Learning and Development Program

INFORMATION SESSION

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Purpose of the RFP
- Eligibility & Requirements
- What should a strong Letter of Intent make clear?
- Funding
- Submission Process
- Application reminders
- Questions & Discussions



Introduction

MISSION

The mission of The Rapides Foundation is to improve the health status of Central Louisiana.

VISION

Our vision is to positively impact Central Louisiana by deploying resources to improve key factors of health status.

Purpose of the RFP

Improve school readiness by strengthening families' capacity to support young children's development and learning.

- Extend early childhood work beyond early childhood centers and Pre-K classrooms into the community and family homes.
- Support parents and caregivers with evidence-based knowledge, skills, resources, and connections.
- Support expecting families and families with children birth through age 3.
- Focus on coordinated, ongoing family engagement and not one-time events.

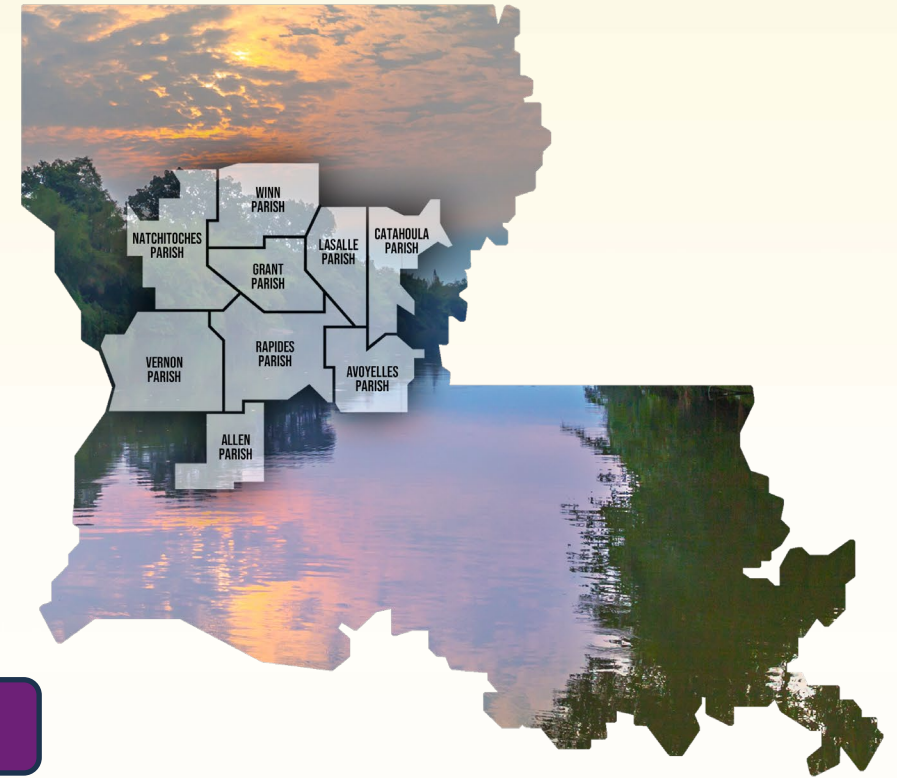
Eligibility & application limits

- Primary application / fiscal agent must be Section 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization or governmental entity.
- Applicant cannot be a private foundation under Section 509(a).
- Organization must be within the Foundation service area or seek support for a project restricted to the nine-parish service area.
- Only ONE application per organization.
- An organization may serve as a partner on multiple applications.
- Partnerships are encouraged where they strengthen reach, coordination, or specialized support.



The Rapides Foundation Service Area

- Allen
- Avoyelles
- Catahoula
- Grant
- LaSalle
- Natchitoches
- Rapides
- Vernon
- Winn



ALL programs must be implemented within the Foundation's service area.



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What should a strong Letter of Intent make clear?

NEED

- What family/community need are you addressing?

APPROACH

- What evidence-based strategy will you use?

CONNECTION

- How will families receive 3+ meaningful contacts?

PARTNERSHIPS

- Who needs to be involved?

OUTCOMES

- What will change, and how will you collect and measure it?



NEED

- What family/community need are you addressing?

Who is the program designed to serve?

Expecting Families

Support can begin before a child is born.

Families with Children Birth – 3

Build parents' and caregivers' capacity during a critical period of development.

★ Parents & Caregivers

Treat families as the first teacher to children's learning, health, and development.

★ Community

Families not connected to early childhood programs.

Applicants should clearly define the families they intend to reach and why those families need the proposed support.



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What can the work address?

- Parenting & responsive interactions – support learning through everyday relationships and interactions.
- Healthy childhood development – build awareness of milestones and practices that support healthy development.
- Family resource navigation – help families identify, access, and follow through with needed services.
- Family goals & economic stability – support parent/family goal setting and progress toward economic stability.
- Maternal mental health – provide education and appropriate referrals.

Proposal must address at least TWO of the five focus areas.



APPROACH

- What evidence-based strategy will you use?



Evidence-based approach

- Identify the evidence-based model, intervention, or practice that supports the proposed approach.
- Explain why the approach is appropriate for the population and community being served. How have these strategies worked in similar communities to yours?
- Describe the project, timeline, activities, partners, and other factors.
- Connect the strategy to your desired outcomes.

“We have done this for years” is experience – not evidence by itself.



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CONNECTION

- How will families receive 3+ meaningful contacts?



Examples of Meaningful Contacts

ENGAGE

Needs assessment
and goal planning

LEARN/PRACTICE

Sessions involving
parent education,
coaching, modeling,
or parent-child
interactions

FOLLOW UP

Reinforce learning
and checking
progress

What are NOT meaningful connections:

- Health or resource fairs
- Pamphlets or flyers
- Swag distribution

What frequency does the evidence-based show is necessary for the desired outcomes?



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PARTNERSHIPS

- Who needs to be involved?



Partnerships

- Identify partners who can help identify families, provide specialized services and/or expertise, and strengthen referrals.
- Use warm referrals and follow up when families need services rather than unnecessarily duplicating them.

Remember: An organization may be a partner on multiple applications, even though it may submit only one application as the primary applicant.



OUTCOMES

- What will change, and how will you collect and measure it?



Funding

Up to \$100,000
per year

Up to 3 years
maximum grant
period

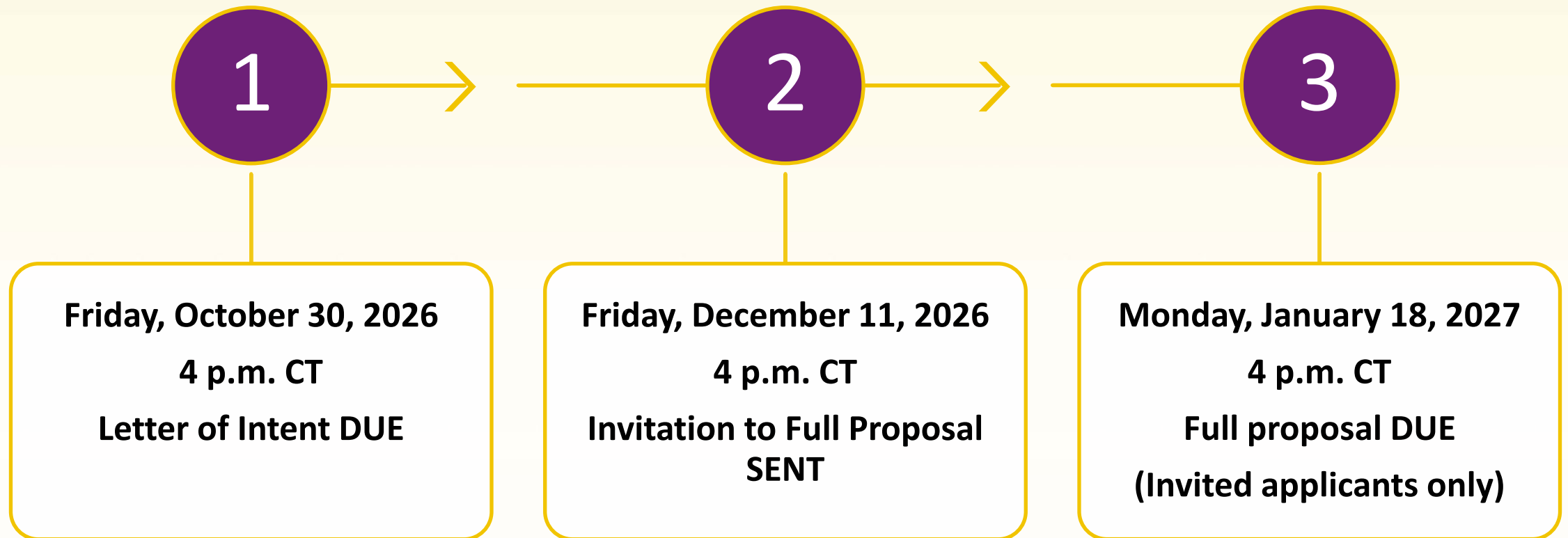
Up to \$300,000
maximum total
request

- The Foundation will consider both large and small grants.
- Matching funds and/or in-kind support are encouraged but not required.
- Build the scope and budget around the program you can implement effectively and not simply the maximum award.
- Explain how the project will be sustained both financially and organizationally after the funding concludes.
- The Foundation reserves the right to not award any grants or award partial grants.



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Online Submission Process



Grants

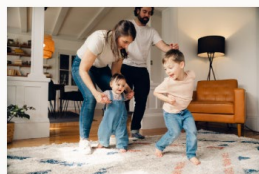
ALL OF OUR WORK AT THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION REVOLVES AROUND OUR MISSION TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH STATUS OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA.

Projects must directly benefit residents or organizations within the Foundation's nine-parish service area: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn. Grant proposals are accepted through a Request for Proposals process which aligns with our priority areas.

OUR THREE AREAS OF FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES IN EACH AREA ARE:

- **Healthy People:** To improve access to healthcare and to promote healthy behaviors.
- **Education:** To increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status.
- **Healthy Communities:** To improve economic opportunity and family income; and enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations.

Funding Opportunities



Family Support for Early Learning and Development Program Grant

The Family Support for Early Learning and Development Program Grant is open.

[READ MORE](#)



District Grant for Effective Schools

The grant proposal submission period is open.



Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Mini Grant

The grant proposal submission period is open.

FAMILY SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT

The Family Support for Early Learning and Development Program Grant is open and consists of a two-stage submission process. The deadline for Letter of Intent submissions is 4 p.m. CT on Friday, October 30, 2026.

Purpose

Through this Request for Proposal, The Rapides Foundation seeks to improve school readiness by supporting efforts to equip parents or caregivers with evidence-based knowledge, skills, resources, and connections to strengthen their child's development and learning. This funding opportunity is designed to take the Foundation's early childhood work beyond the early childhood centers and Pre-K classrooms into the community and family homes.

The program will support coordinated evidence-based efforts in the Foundation's nine parish service area that includes, but is not limited to, addressing two or more of the following for expecting families or families with children birth through 3:

- Parenting and responsive interactions to support learning
- Awareness of best practices to support healthy childhood development
- Family resource navigation
- Parent/family goal setting and planning for economic stability
- Maternal mental health education and referrals

Successful proposals will provide at least three points of connection with the families annually.

One-time events will not be considered.

Grant Awards

Applicants may request up to \$100,000 per year for up to a three-year period with a maximum request of \$300,000. The Foundation will consider large and small grants.

The Foundation will consider only one application per organization; however, it is permissible for an organization to be listed as a partner in multiple applications. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to secure matching funds and/or in-kind support.

All programs must be implemented in the Foundation's nine parish service area: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes.

Applicants should thoroughly review the Request for Proposals and other key documents included in the Key Materials section (in right column) to see full details, including what grant funds may be used for, application process and proposal requirements.

Eligibility Requirements

Primary applicants (grant fiscal agent) must meet all of the following requirements:

- Classified as a Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code or a governmental entity.
- Cannot be a private foundation under Section 509(a).
- Must be an organization within The Rapides Foundation Service Area or seeking funding support for projects restricted to the Foundation's nine parishes.

Proposal Submission Process

Family Support for Early Learning & Development Program Grant consists of a two-stage submission process. The first stage is submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) using The Rapides Foundation's online application process. Use the button in the side menu to "Start a Letter of Intent". Letter of Intent submission is required by the Foundation's Board of Trustees, so to

Informational Webinar

Interested applicants are encouraged to attend the informational session that will be held, Thursday, October 8, 2026 from 9:00a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CT via Zoom. Click on the button below to register.

[REGISTER FOR WEBINAR](#)

Submit a Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent submission Deadline: Friday, October 30, 2026, no later than 4 p.m. CT. All Letters of Intent must be submitted using the online submission process.

[Start a Letter of Intent](#)

[Return to Letter of Intent](#)

*Please note: Only invited applicants are eligible to submit a full proposal. Organizations will receive an email with a link to complete the full proposal of application. All required documents must be fully submitted by the deadline; therefore, you must begin uploading the completed documents prior to that time. It is suggested you allow a minimum of three (3) hours for the upload process.

Key Materials

Please review thoroughly before applying.

[Family Support for Early Learning & Development Program Grant Request for Proposals](#)

[Project Budget Worksheet](#)

[Budget Narrative](#)

[Signature Page](#)

Contact

Prospective applicants are encouraged to schedule a call or meeting with

After clicking on Start a Letter of Intent, you will log into the portal. If you do not have an account, you will need to create one.

Once you are in the portal, select your organization, and click on Start new application.

Family Support for Early Learning and Development

Accepting applications until Oct 30, 2026 04:00 PM

You have 1 application that has not been submitted. Click edit, view all my applications, or start a new application.

Jennifer Cowley on behalf of Rapides Parish School Board
Application ID: 2781587

[Edit](#)

[View all my applications](#)

[Start new application](#)



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Reminders before submitting the LOI:

- We clearly identify the families and community needs.
- Our project addresses at least 2 RFP focus areas.
- We identify the evidence supporting our intervention or practice.
- We provide at least 3 meaningful family connections.
- We explain how the work occurs in the community and/or family home.
- We identify relevant partners and how they will contribute.
- We describe measurable outcomes and how they will be assessed.
- Our budget is appropriate to the scope and duration of the project and is it sustainable when funding concludes.
- We meet eligibility and one application per organization requirements.



Questions & Discussion

- Use the RFP (Sec. VII) and Key Materials as the main source for submission requirements.

<https://www.rapidesfoundation.org/Grants>

- Schedule 1:1 meeting with Program Officer if needed at least two weeks prior of the Letter of Intent deadline, no later than October 16.

Letters of Intent DEADLINE

October 30, 2026

4 p.m. CT

***Please allow yourself up to 3 hours to upload the required documents.**



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Contact Information



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