



CHILDREN FIRST
A MERAGE FOUNDATION



Orange County
Community
Foundation

*Connecting low-income children with skilled retirees
to expand educational opportunities*

Invest in Children Grants Proposal Guidelines 2009



Mission and Goals

CHILDREN FIRST was established by Paul and Lilly Merga in 2005 to extend early childhood development opportunities to children from low-income families in Orange County. Like national and local child development experts, they strongly believe that good development experiences help expand the abilities of children to succeed in life. In addition, CHILDREN FIRST believes that retirees have the accumulated wisdom, experience, skills, and desire to lend a real helping hand to early childhood development providers. CHILDREN FIRST is focused on mobilizing skilled retirees to assist local providers to offer educational opportunities for children ages 0-5.

Invest in Children Fund

CHILDREN FIRST encourages retirees and community leaders to donate to the Invest in Children Fund administered by the Orange County Community Foundation. The fund generates money from the community to support innovative and critically needed early childhood development programs serving low-income children in Orange County. The “return on investment” to each retiree is expanded educational and quality-of-life opportunity for needy children. The results of the investment lead to a healthier and stronger community.

Eligibility Requirements

Organizations and/or programs eligible to apply must:

- Be located in Orange County.
- Serve low-income children ages 0-5 and/or families with children. At least 50% of participants must be considered low-income.
- Have 501 (c) (3) Status.

Funding Opportunities

The Fund provides grants of up to \$25,000 per year, for a maximum of three years, to support innovative early childhood development programs *servicing children ages 0-5 from low-income families in Orange County*. Receipt of an initial grant for one year does not guarantee receipt of further grants. All grants depend on the availability of funds. Second and third year grants depend upon a review of program performance and the consistency of the application for continued funding with grant criteria.

Grants can be used for strategic planning, enrichment of present programs and initiation of new programs in the following three areas of interest:

1. Educational Development: Innovative programs that increase the language, reasoning, problem-solving, motor, and communication skills of low-income children in early childhood development centers (ECDC) or programs.
2. Health Development: Health screenings, preventive care, and nutrition counseling that occur in partnership with ECDC or programs.

3. Parent Involvement: Parent guidance and involvement programs. These programs should expand opportunities for parents of children ages 0-5 and in collaboration with ECDC or non-profit organizations that provides services to low-income children.

In order to leverage grants and current initiatives, CHILDREN FIRST will grant preferences to ECDC that need and agree to utilize skilled retirees (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.) recruited by CHILDREN FIRST.

Requests for the following will be denied

The Invest in Children Fund will not offer financial assistance and is not limited to the following items:

- Individual scholarships, fellowships and grants
- Political campaigns or lobbying
- Travel Expenses
- Deficit reduction
- Programs that do not support the goals or mission of CHILDREN FIRST.

Format of Proposal

The proposal must be formatted based on the following criteria:

- Eight (8) page limit. Include page numbers.
- 12 point font.
- Double spaced.
- One inch margins all around.
- 8 1/2 x 11 inch paper.

Application Submittal

Applications must be delivered to CHILDREN FIRST no later than Friday October 26, 2007 by 5:00 p.m. Postmark and or proof of transmittal alone will not be considered timely. All applications will receive a receipt.

Please send three (3) hard copies of your proposal to
Todd Hanson, VP of Donor Relations and Community Partnerships
Orange County Community Foundation
30 Corporate Park, Suite 410
Irvine, CA 92606

Also, please send one (1) hard copy of your proposal to
Alejandro Tovares, Program Officer
CHILDREN FIRST
4350 Von Karman Ave., 4th Floor
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Questions

Send questions regarding the grant guidelines to infochildrenfirst@meragefoundations.com.

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Orange County Community Foundation

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Application 2009



I. Applicant Information

Organization Name: _____
Executive Director Name: _____ E-mail: _____
Grant Contact Name: _____ E-mail: _____
Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
Website: _____
Organization's Total Annual Budget: _____
Number of full time employees: _____ Number of part-time employees: _____

II. Proposal Information:

Project Title: _____
Project Description: _____

Total Amount Requested: _____ Total Proposal Budget: _____
Duration of Project: _____
Grant Type (check one): Strategic Planning Enrichment of program New program
Invest in Children Fund Area of Interest (check one): Education Development Health
Development Parent Education

III. Application Checklist:

Please provide 4 copies (also see Application Submittal section) of each of the following:
 Application Coversheet
 Proposal Narrative
 Line-Item Budget
 Line-Item Budget Narrative
 Board of Directors List (include board position and professional position)
 IRS determination letter of 501(c)(3) status

I have read and agree with the application, proposal, and all supporting documents.

Signature of Executive Director or Authorized Officer
CHILDREN FIRST
Orange County Community Foundation

Date
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NARRATIVE

I. Program Summary

Briefly describe the program in 1-2 sentences.

II. Organization: History and Capacity

Provide a brief description of the history of your organization include mission statement, services provided, geographic location and population served if different than proposal. State staff qualifications and explain why your organization can complete the proposed program.

III. Program Description and Need

Describe the problem, goals, and strategies your proposed program will address and utilize. The proposal should provide information on how you plan to solve the issue you identified and how it relates to improving the lives of young children in Orange County. This section should discuss how your program or project is a fit with the Foundation's areas of interest and if it is in the areas of preference. Please refer to the Foundation's mission and Funding Opportunities Section. Provide a list and timeline for completion of activities that will reach the goals of the proposal.

Discuss the community need for the program using data gathered by your organization, public and/or private sectors. Describe the population, geographic focus, socio-economic status, amount of non-English speakers and age group that will be served. Use data that support the needs of the community. You may use data collected by your organization or data gathered by other organizations (see the list below). If you are proposing to do a needs assessment (under the umbrella of strategic planning), and will collect data, discuss how you will collect information and how you will utilize it.

IV. Evaluation

Indicate how the program outcomes will be measured and what tools you will use in assessing the effectiveness. How will you monitor and measure success throughout the grant period and future impact on the community?

V. Sustainability

Discuss how the organization will sustain the program when funding ends. What types of challenges do you foresee and what are some strategies to overcome them?

BUDGET

The budget should be a detailed description of how the grant money will be spent. Organizations can be awarded up to \$25,000. List expenses for salaries/wages, benefits, subcontractors, supplies, administrative costs, etc. Also indicate how these funds will be leveraged and in-kind contributions. *For each line item, provide a brief narrative supporting the need.* For example, if there is a line item for a subcontractor, provide an explanation of their contribution to the program, expertise, education, and hourly rate.