



**Thrive in 5 Evaluator RFP
Questions and Responses
12/8/09**

Community School Readiness Wiring (CSRW)

- Based on the RFP, the evaluation of the CSRW component should answer the question about whether outputs and short-term outcomes are being achieved. Is it anticipated that the evaluator would depend on data being collected by the community grantees to address this question or primary data collection that the Evaluator would initiate?
 - The evaluator will be expected to work with CSRW grantees to assess what relevant data are currently being collected, design an evaluation plan that builds on and standardizes those data collection activities already in place, and implement new data collection activities if needed. New data collection activities should be within the capacity of grantees and partners to implement, yet may require some support from the evaluator depending on the specific evaluation activity. A key aspect of the CSRW evaluation plan will be its ability to build grantee and community capacity to conduct data collection, allowing CSRW to be sustainable and replicable in additional communities.

- If the evaluation depends on data being collected by the CSRW grantees, can you provide a synopsis of the type of data currently collected or anticipated to be collected?
 - CSRW grantees have not yet been selected (a formal announcement will be made in the coming weeks), so a synopsis of current data collected is not available. The CSRW RFP process did include questions relating to applicants' current data collection activities and overall evaluation capacity. However, Thrive in 5 anticipates working closely with grantees and the evaluator once selected to determine how current data collection activities support CSRW evaluation and what additional data are needed. In general, CSRW applicants shared information about data collection related to their current services, including capacity, frequency and child/family outcomes, as well as a range of models for data collection which vary in their technical sophistication.

- Can Thrive in 5 provide any more detail about the child outcomes envisioned from the CSRW initiative by the Kellogg Foundation (referenced on page 9) and/or Thrive in 5? The child outcome described in the CSRW logic model is that children receive nurturing care, but are there additional child outcomes, particularly developmental outcomes, expected/envisioned?
 - The Kellogg Foundation grant requires that Thrive in 5 work with grantees, including CSRW, Smart from the Start and others, to develop capacity to



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measure child outcomes by July 2010, but does not expect Thrive in 5 to demonstrate progress in child outcomes by this point. Thrive in 5 is currently working with the Data and Research Team, Boston Public Schools and others to determine the best strategy(ies) for measuring child outcomes, ultimately in a holistic way (including all domains of child development) along the developmental timeline. Please refer to pages 76 – 78 of Boston's School Readiness Roadmap (http://www.thrivein5boston.org/pdf/TN5_Full_Report.pdf) for further information about Thrive in 5's vision of child outcomes measurement.

- Will the expectation for CSRW be that the evaluation plan be in place prior to the start of project implementation? Or will the project implementation begin prior to the finalization of the evaluation plan?
 - The evaluator will work with CSRW grantees to develop the evaluation plan as grantees are developing their project plans in the first months of the grant. Depending on timing and the progress made in each community, implementation may begin before finalization of an evaluation plan.
- Given the timing of the funding to CSRW grantees and start-up period (three grantees funded in January 2010 with 6 month start-up and two more in September 2010 with 6 month start-up), does Thrive in 5 envision it will be feasible to collect new data in the context of the CSRW evaluation and/or will the role of the evaluator be primarily to analyze data required from grantees as part of their CSRW funding?
 - Thrive in 5 envisions that new data collection, particularly around collaboration and coordination between partners in a community, will be possible during the project period, as well as analysis of new and existing data.
- To what extent will the CSRW grantees be required to cooperate with the evaluator? For example, will they be required to share the data they collect as part of their grant? Participate in and/or assist with coordinating other data collection efforts?
 - CSRW grantees will be required to work closely with the evaluator as the evaluator develops and implements an evaluation plan that is feasible and builds on existing activities. Grantees will be required to share data and report regularly to Thrive in 5 and the evaluator on CSRW activities that are aligned with the evaluation plan developed. In addition, Thrive in 5 is exploring opportunities to better coordinate and streamline data collection across the 5 CSRW sites, including the data collection systems referenced in the RFP.
- The RFP provides the budget size for MYCHILD and Project LAUNCH, but not CSRW. What is the overall budget for the CSRW effort?
 - The current funding for CSRW is \$450,000 over the next 18 months, of which 10% is set aside for evaluation activities by CSRW grantees. Thrive in 5 is pursuing additional funding to support CSRW in the five initial communities and to expand CSRW to other neighborhoods.

- Is there an evaluation in place for either Smart from the Start and/or the Allston-Brighton Early Childhood System of Care that the evaluator can build on?
 - Smart from the Start and the Early Childhood System of Care are both conducting evaluations of their work. Information about these evaluations will be shared with the evaluator once selected.

SAMHSA Grants (Project LAUNCH and MYCHILD)

- Where do the activities of MYCHILD and Project Launch fit into the Thrive in 5 logic model? How should the Thrive in 5 evaluation team work with those evaluators and how should the Thrive in 5 evaluator think about those activities in the evaluation plan?
 - MYCHILD and Project LAUNCH are both federally-funded grants and therefore have many predetermined evaluation requirements. Both projects fall under the Ready Systems component of Thrive in 5 and are reflected under the current priority strategies in the Thrive in 5 Logic Model. Logic models for individual implementation projects are in place/under development and will ultimately produce outputs and outcomes that align with the overall Thrive in 5 Logic Model. The evaluator should identify ways to link both currently and in the future data and results from these projects to provide an overall picture of Thrive in 5 results. We envision that all implementation project evaluators will participate in the DART, facilitating regular communication between evaluators and coordination of their activities to the fullest extent possible.

- What is the status of the current evaluations being conducted by Abt Associates and Northeastern University [evaluators MYCHILD and Project LAUNCH, respectively]? Are there any early findings or reports to share?
 - MYCHILD and Project LAUNCH are both in the very early implementation stages and data collection and evaluation activities have not yet begun.

RFP and Evaluation Contract

- Are samples available for budget format(s) that will best facilitate your proposal review process?
 - No sample budget format is available, but please include information about how you would break out the total contract amount into various line items (for example, staff, overhead, travel, copying/printing, etc.). Please note the budget should include a time allocation for each staff person on the evaluation team.

- In addition to the 10-page page limit, are there other specifications for the proposal format? (e.g., single- or double-spacing, 1" margins, specific font-size, etc.)
 - No, although please take into consideration the eyesight and health of our review committee and use standard margins and no smaller than 11-point font.

- In order to provide the United Way with sufficient information about qualifications as referenced on page 10 of the RFP, is it allowable to include additional appendices to those specified in the RFP? For example, is it allowable to include tables describing staffing or corporate experience as additional appendices?
 - Yes, additional appendices are allowed, although please keep any additional information to a reasonable length.
- Will the evaluation contract issued be cost reimbursement or fixed price?
 - This is a fixed price contract. A payment schedule will be developed with the evaluator once selected.
- Which entity will be the primary technical contact for the evaluator? The RFP mentions that the United Way will be the fiscal agent, but does not reference who will be managing the research.
 - Thrive in 5, specifically the Data and Research Team Co-Managers and Executive Director, will be the primary contacts for research and evaluation activities.
- Are there expectations, or arrangements already made, for an IRB review of the evaluation?
 - No, arrangements have not already been made, although we anticipate working on this with the evaluator.
- Is it possible that Thrive in Five would promote/require collaboration between applicants prior to or after submission of proposals?
 - Prior to submitting proposals, Thrive in 5 will not require collaboration, although has promoted it by sharing a list of applicants. Collaboration in and of itself will not explicitly impact or influence Thrive in 5's decision making or your proposal's score; although, it is important that the proposal demonstrate that all needed skills and experience are available to support the work outlined.

Thrive in 5 and Evaluation Management/Oversight

- From Thrive in 5's point of view, what is the relative importance of the 3 evaluation components outlined in the RFP? In each of the three areas, what are the most important things you want to learn? How do you plan to use this information?
 - Evaluation of Community School Readiness Wiring and development of a strong evaluation plan for Thrive in 5 overall are the highest priority components outlined in the RFP as they will ultimately inform Thrive in 5's work over the coming years. CSRW evaluation results will be used to support continuous quality improvement, seek additional funding and replicate the model across the city. Evaluation of Thrive in 5 overall will be used to prove the value of Boston's work with young children and the Thrive in 5 model. Coordination of evaluation across implementation projects is an important component of the overall Thrive in 5 evaluation plan and should be included.
- The DART will clearly play an important role in this effort. Does Thrive in 5 envision other groups playing a role – such as the CSRW Advisory Group?
 - Yes, the CSRW Advisory Group and grantees, as well as other groups related to Thrive in 5, will play an important role in this effort. We envision that the Thrive

in 5 Team, particularly the Data and Research Team Co-Managers, will serve as liaisons to these groups when appropriate so as not to overwhelm the evaluator.

- Can the Thrive in 5 team clarify their expectations of the day-to-day involvement of the evaluation team in the Thrive in 5 areas of work and operations?
 - It is difficult at this point to fully anticipate the day-to-day involvement of the evaluator, however see the response to the question above for more information.
- What is the role of the evaluation team vis a vis the data collection system to be built? Will the evaluators build it, advise on the building of it and/or populate it?
 - Thrive in 5 is exploring off-the-shelf data collection systems currently available and is in the process of determining what system(s) best meets our needs and the needs of our partners. We do not envision that the evaluator will populate the data collection system. We anticipate working with the evaluator to review options for data collection systems as evaluation plans are developed.
- What is the status of the phase I evaluation for Thrive in 5? Are the results of this evaluation available? Who are the evaluators and are they applying for this contract?
 - Evaluation of Boston's Birth to Five School Readiness Initiative (phase 1, the planning process that led to the development of Thrive in 5), conducted by Goodman Research Group, is complete. The final report from that evaluation, which focused on the planning process itself, do not seem to be relevant to this RFP, but is available upon request. Names of all evaluators who have chosen to have their name shared with other potential applicants have already been shared.