

MENDOCINO COUNTY
CHILDREN & FAMILIES FIRST COMMISSION

**Request
for
Application
(RFA II)**

CFFC will award \$230,632 in this second round of funding to the following three regions: Inland North, \$86,000 (Willits, Branscomb, Laytonville, Leggett, and Piercy); Coastal North, \$118,816 (Fort Bragg, Westport, Comptche, Mendocino, Caspar, Albion, and Little River); and Coastal South, \$25,816 (Elk, Manchester, Point Arena and Gualala).

Important Dates:

March 7, 2001	Release of RFA and Application
March 27, 2001	Grantseekers' Conferences (Fort Bragg and Point Arena)
March 29, 2001	Grantseekers' Conferences (Willits)
April 13, 2001	Last day to Submit Letter of Intent
May 18, 2001	Application Submission Due Date
June 18-29, 2001	Site Visits with Applicant Finalists
July 9, 2001	Anticipated Announcement of Intent to Award Funds

404 South School Street, Ukiah, California 95482

Tel (707) 46CHILD (462-4453)

Fax (707) 462.5570 E-mail to cffc@mendochildren.org

Questions and responses are posted on the Commission website and updated regularly. You may access the Application on the Commission website:

www.mendochildren.org

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION
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RFA AND APPLICATION

FACT SHEET

SUMMARY	Mendocino County Children and Families First Commission is requesting applications from qualified entities to provide services to children, prenatal through age five, and their families. Proposition 10, passed by California voters in November, 1998, provides funding for this program.
APPLICATION TIMELINE	<p>On March 7, 2001 – Applications available via the Commission website and by calling the Commission.</p> <p>Friday, May 18, 2001 by 3 PM – Deadline for Applications to be received</p> <p>Submit original applications to: Mendocino County Children & Families First Commission 404 South School Street, Ukiah, California 95482</p>
FUNDING ELIGIBILITY	<p>Funded projects will meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services to Mendocino County’s prenatal to five population and/or their families • Service areas must be Coastal South, Coastal North and Inland North • Cannot supplant or replace any current or expiring funding source • Provide new or expanded services • Relate to results identified in the Commission’s <i>Strategic Plan</i> (June 2000) <p>Copies of the Commission’s <i>Strategic Plan</i> and <i>Community Asset Map</i> are available on the internet via the Commission’s website: www.mendochildren.org</p>
GRANTSEEKERS’ CONFERENCES	All interested applicants are strongly encouraged to attend the information sessions. Funding requirements will be reviewed and Commission staff will be available to answer questions. This is also a great opportunity to meet potential partners from your Region.
QUESTIONS	<p>Questions related to the content of this RFA, the Application, or the evaluation process, may be directed to <i>Anne Molgaard, Executive Director</i>, at (707) 462-4453 or submitted in writing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 404 S. School St., Ukiah, CA 95482 • Fax: (707) 462.5570 • E-mail to ffc@mendochildren.org <p>All written questions and responses will be posted on the Commission website and updated regularly. Staff will respond in a timely manner.</p>

BACKGROUND

California voters passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families First Act, in November, 1998. The Act provides for a 50 cent per pack tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products. The monies collected are used to fund parent education, health, and child care projects that promote early childhood development from prenatal through age five.

Each County Board of Supervisors established its respective County Commissions. Commissions are then responsible for adopting a strategic plan prior to the allocation of any funding. The Mendocino County Children and Families Commission adopted its *Strategic Plan* on June 28, 2000.

One of the first steps in developing the Children and Families *Strategic Plan* was to evaluate the needs of children prenatal through age five and their families, and to identify and map existing resources throughout the County. The Commission produced the *Community Asset Map*, June 2000, to document current services and local strengths.

2001 FUNDING ALLOCATION - REGIONAL INITIATIVES

This grant application is for the second Regional Initiative funding cycle for the calendar year 2001. Approximately \$230,632 in funding is available in three different regions of the County. The amount of money available in this funding cycle represents remaining funds not awarded in the Commission's first funding cycle. The award of any grant is subject to the discretion of the Commission. The Commission may award grants of lesser amounts than the total sum available to be allocated, or not at all.

Presented below is the allocation available by Region in this funding cycle.

Region	Communities Included	Amount
Inland North	Willits, Branscomb, Laytonville, Leggett, Piercy	\$86,000
Coastal North	Fort Bragg, Westport, Comptche, Mendocino, Caspar, Albion, Little River	\$118,816
Coastal South	Elk, Manchester, Point Arena, Gualala	\$25,816
Total		\$230,632

Vision:

All Mendocino County children will be born healthy; thrive in supportive, healthy, nurturing, and loving environments; enter school eager to learn; and become capable, contributing members of the community.

Mission:

The mission of the Mendocino County Children and Families First Commission is to promote, support and improve the health and development of children, prenatal to five years of age. This mission shall be accomplished by establishing a strategic community plan, distributing Proposition 10 funding, and assessing the efficacy of funded projects.

The Commission shall establish, institute, coordinate, and support appropriate standards, resources, and integrated and comprehensive services that emphasize families, community awareness, education, nurturing, child care, social service, wellness, and research.

Goals:

The goal statements reflect long-term results the Commission is working toward based on four priority focus areas:

Parent Education and Support Services

1. Increase the availability of parent and caregiver education that fosters nurturing, healthy, safe, and loving environments for children.
2. Increase parents' skills to better meet the physiological and psychological needs of their children.
3. Support approaches for parents to care for their own children in their own homes.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development

1. Improve the quality of child care by increasing the number of licensed child care providers, increasing the number of accredited child care programs, increasing the number of child care providers that conduct self-assessments, reducing the staff/child ratio, and reducing group size.
2. Increase the number of child care providers who assess and provide for the on-going social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of children.
3. Increase the number of licensed bilingual and bicultural child care providers for the Native American and Latino populations in Mendocino County.

Child Care and Early Childhood Development (cont)

4. Increase the accessibility and number of quality child care providers in all geographic areas of Mendocino County for infants/toddlers, preschool-age children, school-age children, children with special needs, children in foster care, special populations, and do so during traditional as well as non-traditional hours.
5. Support approaches that integrate and streamline local child care services.

Health and Wellness

1. Increase the number of families with health services providers, ensuring each child a medical home (a consistent place where a family can seek medical care).
2. Increase the number of programs that support the development of children in safe and healthy environments. These programs should include prevention of childhood diseases, and injuries and abuse caused by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, domestic violence and other high-risk behaviors.
3. Increase the number of programs that connect and provide families with comprehensive health services and improve family access to healthcare, including early prenatal care, dental care, and mental health services.
4. Improve access to services for children with developmental disabilities and serious emotional disturbance.
5. Increase the services available to promote the health and safety of children in child care settings.

Policy and Advocacy for Children and Family Issues

1. Increase countywide capacity to provide a wide range of services and support systems for parents and families with children, prenatal to age five, regardless of geographic, cultural, linguistic, social or financial barriers.
2. Advocate for policies and procedures that enhance the well-being of children and improve the self-sufficiency of families.
3. Advocate for the affordability of quality child care for parents at all income levels such that child care costs do not exceed 15% of the sustainable wage, and child care services are provided without charge to families without a sustainable income.
4. Advocate for sustainable wages for all entry level child care providers, comparable salaries based on educational level, increased benefits, improved working conditions, and compensation for continuing education.
5. Advocate for policies that provide flexible employment arrangements for parents.
6. Advocate for increased funding levels for child care programs.

LIMITATIONS ON FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The Commission's Regional Initiative funds provides funds to qualified entities with the following restrictions and limitations, as mandated by the California Children and Families Act of 1998:

- ♦ Funding must support programs that are designed to achieve one of the Commission's stated results and target services to the zero to five population and their families.
- ♦ Funding must not supplant or replace any existing or expiring revenue sources.
- ♦ Funding must be used for expanded or new services for the targeted population, or to develop organizational capacity to provide the services in the near future.
- ♦ Funded projects must have defined, targeted results and include a plan on how progress toward the desired results will be tracked and reported.

Further information on the Commission's targeted results, indicators, and strategies can be found in the *Strategic Plan*. The Commission will carefully review and evaluate all funding requests to ensure that the requested funding will not supplant or replace any existing or expiring revenue sources. As a condition of receiving funds, grantees must participate in a compliance audit to verify compliance with grant conditions and must perform the required evaluations.

The *Strategic Plan* is the basis for funding decisions made by the Commission. It identifies the four long-term goal areas, as well as the key objectives that the Commission believes are critical to achieving these goals. Applicants should be familiar with the results, objectives, strategies and indicators presented in the Commission's *Strategic Plan*.

Applications are only eligible for consideration if they seek funding for projects that are directed at achieving Commission results and objectives. Commission results and objectives are non-negotiable.

While there are numerous individual strategies designed to achieve the Commission's results, the overarching concept is to develop an integrated, coordinated, easily accessible system of health, early care and education, and family support services for all families who want, need, or choose to use them. While the plan lists certain strategies, this list is not exclusive. The Commission encourages grantseekers to analyze their service area and create their own effective strategies.

PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE RESULTS

The Commission and Proposition 10 are committed to measuring performance and evaluating service. Both the State and the local Commission are currently implementing a program evaluation and a monitoring and reporting system. This system will track trends found throughout the State, within rural Northern California, in Mendocino County, and in each county Region. The information will be available to support resource allocation and other policy decisions.

All funded projects will be required to submit periodic performance data via the Commission's result collection and reporting system. The Commission's system is based on the results and indicators presented in the Commission's *Strategic Plan*. Pages 37–49 of the *Strategic Plan* provide the Commission's goals, targeted results, strategies, and indicators that have been selected to monitor accomplishment. The *Strategic Plan* should be the starting point for all applicants in selecting results and indicators for proposed projects. The Commission will provide evaluation guidance and assistance to grantees.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Applicants are required to complete the application form as well as the detailed narrative requirements. Additionally, consistent with Proposition 10 requirements, all Program Grant recipients will be required to collect and report result data on the results achieved with the funding. The results must link directly to the intent of the funded program and be supported by quantifiable, objective measures. Further information will also be provided at the Grantseekers' Conferences.

A Word about Community Involvement and Collaboration:

The Commission considers both Community Involvement and Collaboration essential to promote an integrated and effective service system.

The Commission will look for evidence of true Community Involvement, that is, a project that reaches out to its stakeholders and service consumers for their active participation, input, feedback, and evaluation. Some projects are even able to achieve inclusive governance of the project by sharing power and decision making with those directly affected and served by the project.

A Word about Community Involvement and Collaboration:

(cont.)

In order to achieve the result of integrated services that are easily accessible to all local families, the Commission encourages collaboration– organizational coordination to develop a responsive local service delivery system. Collaborative planning, coordinated services, and joint funding of projects allow for greater flexibility in designing innovative delivery systems. These systems enhance the probability of sustaining projects, achieving mutual goals, and using funds economically.

How Funds Can Be Spent:

To allow for maximum flexibility, grantees may use funds to cover operating expenses such as staff salaries, outreach, communication, as well as related capital expenses for facilities and equipment. The Commission will make one-year grants. However, based upon the first year performance, the Commission anticipates funding most projects for a second and third year.

Legal Requirements – Nonprofit organizations must generally have a valid tax exemption status under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and be classified as a public charity and not as a "private foundation" under Section 509(a). Business entities must have a valid business license. Government and public agencies are also eligible for funding. We will consider grants to organizations not meeting these requirements on an individual basis. If an application is from an unincorporated collaboration or a community project, some fiscally responsible entity is required. Tax exemption verification and a Letter of Agreement signed by a fiscal agent that is eligible for funding are required. These forms are not required in order to submit an application. The Commission may assist a community group in locating a qualified fiscal agent.

After meeting the funding eligibility requirements and submitting a completed application, each application will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria:

1. **Project Strategies, Indicators, and Results** (25%) Applicants should clearly state what the results of the proposed project are and how they relate to the results and indicators adopted by the Commission in the Strategic Plan. The Commission will evaluate how well the project's design and strategies support accomplishing the result for the target audience based on the project design, proven research models, and/or the prior experience of the agency which correlate the planned service to the targeted result. This section will be evaluated by reviewing the Narrative and the Services to Results Table.
2. **Identified Community Need** (15%) Applications will be evaluated based on how well the community needs are identified and defined, as well as the applicant's analysis on the need for the proposed service. Applicants should review the Strategic Plan and Community Asset Map. An applicant's further findings or assessments should build on these two Commission documents.
3. **Community Involvement and Collaboration** (25%) This section refers to two related concepts: community involvement and collaboration. Community Involvement means the people receiving services are actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Collaboration is the meaningful coordination among two or more organizations toward common strategies and results. The Commission considers both Community Involvement and Collaboration essential to promote an integrated and effective service system.
4. **Ability to Provide Quality Services** (10%) Applicants will be evaluated based on their perceived ability to provide high quality, timely services. Experience and qualifications in providing similar services will be considered. Newer applicants should demonstrate how they can compensate for having less direct experience.
5. **Evaluation and Information Systems** (10%) A major component of any funded project will be the tracking the results achieved. Because both the State and this Commission will assist grantees in evaluation, an applicant is not required to have technical experts in evaluation currently on staff.
6. **Budget and Leverage of Other Financial and Community Resources** (15%) Consistent with its commitment to community collaboration, the Commission seeks to leverage opportunities to partner with other organizations to fund projects and services. Applicants should use Commission funds to enhance their ability to tap into new revenue resources not previously available to the organization. This section will be evaluated in the Narrative and Budget Tables.

STEPS TO PREPARING AND SUBMITTING

Step 1: Obtaining the Application and Related Information

The application and related information may be found on the Commission's website or by calling the Commission. Throughout the application process, the "Frequently Asked Questions" notices will be updated regularly. Applicants should periodically check the Commission's website for updated information. Applicants should be aware that applications may be subject to public disclosure, from time to time, pursuant to applicable law and Commission policy.

Step 2: The Letter of Intent (Optional)

Applicants may submit a Letter of Intent to the Commission. The Letter is limited to two pages, 1.5 spacing. Letters must be received by April 13, 2001. See website for details.

Step 3: Obtaining Additional Information

It is strongly recommended that all applicants attend a Grantseekers' Conference prior to submitting their application to the Commission. The conferences will address applicants' questions and assist applicants in preparing a quality application. Additionally, opportunities will be provided for applicants to meet other potential applicants and investigate opportunities for collaboratives.

Additional information about the Commission can be found on the Commission website or by contacting the Commission Executive Director, Anne Molgaard (707-462-4453). Calls will be returned promptly.

Step 4: Developing the Application

The Application consists of your narrative and five forms: Application Cover Sheet; Application Checklist, Services to Results Table; Budget Overview; and Budget Detail. An application is not complete if it is missing any of these pieces. Please label your information clearly according to the numbers and titles below. Applicants are encouraged to be concise in their submittals.

Step 4: Developing the Application (cont.)

- A. Application Cover Sheet** – The person in the organization who has authority to submit the application for the proposed project must sign the cover sheet transmitting the application. If an application proposes to serve more than one Region, the applicant should demonstrate how its proposed service fits into each community’s needs and system. Further information about multiple-Region applications can be obtained from Commission staff.
- B. Application Checklist**—Proposals must first pass the “Application Checklist” review in order to be eligible for further evaluation. This is a pass/fail evaluation. Commission staff will review the application carefully to ensure that the applicant has responded “yes” to each of the questions. If a required item is not included, a documented reason must be given for this response. Proposals that do not pass the Checklist review will be considered unresponsive and will not be eligible for further consideration.
- C. Services to Results Table** – An applicant may cover some of the same material in the narrative as will be found in the Services to Results Table. (The Commission really did hear grantseekers’ concern about applications that are too repetitive!) However, the Table helps all of us in two ways: (1) applicants must take the time to clarify their thought processes and plans in order to be succinct; and (2) this is another method to ensure that the reader understands your project. Note: The Focus and Result sections of this table must correspond to identified foci and results from the Commission’s Strategic Plan. The Strategy and Indicators sections, however, may or may not be specifically found in the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Fill in the worksheet according to the instructions at the top of the page.
 - ◆ FOCUS AREA – Select the Commission goal area appropriate to your project. If there is truly more than one goal, check more than one box. However, bonus points are not given for superfluous box checking.
 - ◆ RESULT – Identify the overall result, the broad and long-term improvement, that you are working to achieve in the lives of the children and families.
 - ◆ STRATEGY – State the activity or activities you will implement.
 - ◆ SHORT-TERM INDICATOR – Describe the performance measure, supported by data, that will indicate how well project service delivery is working. Include anticipated dates.
 - ◆ LONG-TERM INDICATOR – A benchmark, or measure, for which data is available, which measure how well the project has accomplished the result desired. Include anticipated dates.

Step 4: Developing the Application (cont.)

D. Budget Overview and Detail – Fill in these worksheets according to the instructions at the top of these pages. Prepare a Year 1 Budget only.

If a single applicant is applying and has no subcontractors or partners that will receive money under this grant, the applicant should fill out one Budget Overview Table and one Budget Detail Table.

If more than one organization will receive funds under this application, however, the lead applicant should make additional copies of the Budget Overview Table and Budget Detail Table. Submit an additional table for each partner.

For example, if a lead applicant is working with two other partners that would receive funds under this grant, the application should include four (4) Budget Overview Tables and four (4) Budget Detail Tables: one set for the entire project, one set for the lead applicant, and one set for each of two subcontractors or partners.

E. Narrative – Applicants are encouraged to be concise in their response.

Applications are not graded by the pound, but rather by their clarity. Responses to the narrative questions below must not exceed a total of ten letter-sized one-sided sheets, 12-point font, 1.5 spaces between lines, with one-inch margins.

1. Clarity of Project Strategies, Indicators, and Results

- **Project Description** - Provide a description of the proposed project and the specific services to be provided. The description should identify what services are planned, how the services will address the community need, how services will be deployed in the community, and how the services lead to results.
- **Timeline** - The Commission understands that most projects cannot begin providing complete services the day funding begins. Present a realistic timeline for start-up of the project. Identify anticipated issues and challenges in deploying the service once an award is received. For example, key activities related to staffing, leasing facilities, developing data tracking.

2. Identified Community Need – Review the Commission *Strategic Plan* and *Community Asset Map*. Explain why you agree or disagree with the community need identified in the Commission documents. Explain why the project focuses on certain needs rather than others. Highlight the data that indicates a critical local need, and describe how the project will address this need. Since Prop 10 funding is designed to serve all children, please note the demographics of the people to receive services in this section and why you focus on them (e.g., ethnicity, gender, geographic background, income levels, special needs, etc.).

Step 4: Developing the Application (cont.)

E. Narrative

3. Community Involvement and Collaboration

- **Community Involvement** - Applicants are encouraged to design their projects with an emphasis on community and parental participation to enhance project impact, better meet the goal of easily-accessible services, and provide a needed reality check. Explain how individuals being served will participate in the project planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Collaboration** - List all partners and address how your service will be integrated with other community service providers through referrals, integrated service networks, collaborations, co-location of staff, memoranda of understanding, etc. Specifically, describe the communication, decision making and conflict resolution methods the partners have agreed upon. Explain the history, if any, of the various partnerships, and identify how the agencies' referral systems currently operate and how they will operate.

- 4. Ability to Provide Quality Services/Experience and Qualifications** - Describe the applicant's staff experience and qualifications in providing the proposed service. Include partners' and contractors' expertise. What is your organization's or similar organization's history in achieving these results? Explain how your organization is or can become well-equipped to provide this service through receipt of the grant. If an applicant has little or no organizational experience, what personal experience or other expertise will it rely upon?
- 5. Evaluation and Information Systems** - What short-term and long-term data should be used to demonstrate the result? How will the data be collected and monitored? What are the anticipated costs or hurdles in implementing the data collection and reporting protocols? What role will project participants and staff play in the evaluation? (As stated previously, the State and Local Commissions will provide further clarification and assistance with Project Evaluation).
- 6. Budget and Leveraging of other Financial and Community Resources** - Use this space to explain anything not covered in the Budget Overview or Budget Detail Worksheets. Do not repeat the same information. The lead applicant should state what portion of the budget they are retaining and what is being passed through. Discuss potential funding sources you might consider to sustain the program after Commission funding ends.

Step 4: Developing the Application (cont.)

..... TO BE INCLUDED SEPARATELY FROM THE 10-PAGE NARRATIVE

- F. Board of Directors or related Governing Board** – Include a description of what body directs and approves actions of your organization locally. The names and affiliations of the policy makers; for example, the Board of Directors list should be attached.
- G. Organizational Charts** – Please provide an organizational chart for each entity that will receive funding and for any other significant project partner. You may also include a draft organizational chart of the collaborative, if possible.
- H. Additional Information** – No additional information is allowed.

Step 5: Reviewing the Application Before Submittal

Carefully review the Application Checklist to ensure you have included all required materials.

- ♦ Use only the official Application Cover Sheet—any other special cover sheet will be removed.
- ♦ Use a clip—do not bind the application in any other way (e.g., binder, staple, etc.).
- ♦ Submit only the original, no copies.
- ♦ Fax and e-mail applications are not acceptable.
- ♦ Responses to the narrative questions must not exceed a total of ten letter-sized one-sided sheets, 12-point font, 1.5 spaces between lines, with one-inch margins.

♦ **Step 6: Submitting the Application**

All applications must be received by:

Friday, May 18, 2001
by 3:00 p.m.
at the Commission Office
404 South School Street, Ukiah, California 95482

Applications that are delinquent in any way will absolutely not be considered for funding.

Step 7: Notice of Intent to Award Funds

The Commission reserves the right to require changes of any kind as a condition of funding. To this end, the Commission may approve projects conditionally, pending applicant agreement to amend the project design submitted. For example, several applications may be grouped together to facilitate collaboration, there may be recommendations for an improved project performance plan, and/or staff may work with applicants to further refine strategies.

Further Documentation: Grant approval may be made pending review of the following: Copy of Business License or evidence of non-profit status; audited financial statements or tax submissions; appropriate Workers' Compensation and liability insurance; and/or other documents.

The Commission will make every effort to advance funds necessary to begin the project (so that a grantee does not have to front the funds, if it is unable to do so).

Support for Unsuccessful Applicants

After competitive funding has been awarded to those applicants selected, Commission staff will be available to discuss non-funded applications. In response to an applicant's request, staff may offer any, or all of the following types of assistance. As staffing is limited, feedback will be provided as soon as possible.

- (1) a one-on-one summary of the reviewers' comments;
- (2) referrals to other, similar programs in the area which may provide useful assistance or possible collaboration;
- (3) suggestions for worthwhile strategies that could be pursued;
- (4) guidance on grant writing and fundraising opportunities; and
- (5) referrals to other individuals or resources which may be useful in organizational, program or proposal development.

Because of our own commitment to continuous improvement in order to best serve children, we look forward to your feedback on this application and process. After the awards are made, the Commission will contact those involved in different stages of the process for their impressions and suggestions. As you go through the process, please note any suggestions or recommendation you may have. The more specific your feedback the better. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

MENDOCINO COUNTY

CHILDREN & FAMILIES FIRST COMMISSION

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