



UPDATED January 9, 2015

**CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING
Request for Proposals**

Ready To Learn Research Partner

I. OVERVIEW

In anticipation of a U.S. Department of Education (“ED”) Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for a new round of Ready To Learn (“RTL”) grants, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”) seeks a research organization to serve as its research partner (“Partner”). The Partner will:

- A. Assist CPB, PBS, and their content and outreach partner(s) in developing and writing the RTL proposal, the research and evaluation section in particular. The proposal will lay out an intended but modifiable five-year research and evaluation plan; and
- B. Serve as CPB’s RTL research and evaluation partner should CPB receive a new RTL award.

The research and evaluation plan is expected to include the following:

- National research and evaluation studies of RTL content and outreach/engagement activities implemented in diverse sites throughout the United States¹;
- Integration of research with content and outreach development activities;
- Quick turnaround studies on the learning potential of newly developed content;
- Local research and evaluation studies in partner public media station communities;
- Technical assistance to partner public media stations related to their local evaluation efforts;
- Conversion of study interventions into resources for public media stations, their partners, and other educators; and
- Strong communication and dissemination of research findings.

The Partner is expected to work closely and flexibly with CPB, PBS, content producers, outreach partners, and partner public media stations during all phases of the project.

CPB was awarded an RTL grant for 2010 – 2015 totaling \$72 million and expects to be a strong contender for the forthcoming RTL grant.

¹ CPB expects research and evaluation studies to be conducted at sites beyond the cities and states in which the Partner has offices.

II. FILING DEADLINE

Proposals are due via e-mail no later than **2:00 P.M. EST January 20, 2015**.

III. BACKGROUND

The [Corporation for Public Broadcasting](#) (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the Federal Government's investment in public broadcasting. CPB helps support the operations of more than 1,400 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and it is the largest single source of funding for research, technology, and program development for public radio, television, and related online services. Public broadcasting has a special responsibility to remain a neutral, unbiased convener of a healthy civic dialogue that informs and engages the public and strengthens the community for the common good.

Prior RTL Grant Awards

CPB, in partnership with PBS, has received three five-year RTL awards (2000 – 2005, 2005 – 2010, 2010 – 2015) from the Federal Government. The stated purpose of the Ready-To-Learn Television Program – the program's formal name under section 2431 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended – is to:

- 1) Facilitate student academic achievement by supporting the development and distribution of educational video and programming for preschool and elementary children and their parents; and
- 2) Develop and disseminate educational outreach materials and programs that are designed to promote school readiness, are interactive, and use multiple innovative technologies and digital media platforms.

The 2005 – 2010 RTL award focused primarily on supporting the development and distribution of education content designed to enhance the literacy skills of children ages 2 - 8 from low-income families. New television series produced with this award included *SUPER WHY!*, *Martha Speaks*, and *The Electric Company*. The 2010 – 2015 award emphasized transmedia storytelling designed to enhance the mathematics skills of children ages 2 - 8 from low-income families. In addition to developing gaming suites across technology platforms for *Cat in the Hat*, *Curious George*, *Cyberchase*, *Dinosaur Train*, *Fetch! Fizzy's Lunch Lab*, *Sid the Science Kid*, and two new television series – *Peg + Cat* and *The Odd Squad* – allied transmedia content were also produced with this award. Both awards emphasized anytime is learning time, with education and community engagement led by local public media stations and their partners, and with related research studies² taking place in the home, at schools and preschools, and in out-of-school settings such as after-school programs, libraries, and summer camps.

An essential component of the 2005 – 2010 and 2010 – 2015 RTL awards has been the development of rigorous, scientifically based research and evaluation strategies to increase the body of knowledge about the impact of educational technology on improving the

² Needs assessments, context studies, formative evaluations, small efficacy studies, implementation evaluations, pilot studies, and impact and summative evaluations.

school readiness and academic success of children from low-income families. Links to the *Findings from Ready To Learn (2005 – 2010)* and the research reports can be found at: www.cpb.org/rtl. Reports from the 2010 – 2015 research and evaluation studies can be found at <http://pbskids.org/lab>.

In the past, CPB contracted with research partners after the award was made, and the researchers did not engage with the content they were studying until after it was developed. Going forward, CPB intends to contract with the research partner prior to the ED's release of the RTL request for proposals ("RTL RFP"). Early engagement will allow the Partner to play an essential role in the proposal development and work closely with content developers and outreach partners so that fundamental research concerns can be addressed as part of content development and outreach resource production.

IV. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should discuss the following issues for RTL proposal development and project implementation while also attending to the features of an RTL research and evaluation plan as laid out in Section I – Overview.

1) Proposal Development

- a. Vision for a five-year research and evaluation plan;
- b. Advice to CPB on the scope and nature of research and evaluation studies that should be conducted during the presumed five-year grant period, including geographical diversity and other pertinent considerations;
- c. How Partner will work with CPB, PBS, and other key partners on developing the RTL proposal; and
- d. The value Partner will bring to CPB-PBS RTL proposal and project.

2) Project Implementation

- a. How Partner will work with CPB and PBS on designing and implementing research and evaluation studies over the presumed five-year grant period;
- b. How Partner will work with the content producers during content development to ensure mutually agreed upon studies, where mutual includes CPB and PBS;
- c. How Partner will work with outreach developers during resource development to ensure mutually agreed upon studies, where mutual includes CPB and PBS;
- d. Whether the relationship in 2.b and 2.c above compromises the perception of Partner as an independent evaluator, and, if so, whether other organization(s) should be hired to conduct summative evaluation(s), and, if so, who should hire the summative evaluator(s), CPB or Partner as a subcontractor, and why; and
- e. Whether other research firms should be hired to conduct some of the research and evaluation studies. If so, which studies, and why? And who should hire it/them, CPB or Partner as a subcontractor, and why?

V. TECHNICAL AND COST PROPOSAL

CPB is seeking proposals from research organizations with extensive experience in the areas of children’s media and technology, and public media. Applicants must be willing to sign a confidentiality and nondisclosure agreement with CPB about the RTL proposal. Should CPB receive a new RTL award, CPB will amend the selected applicant’s contract. The amended contract will include a formal workscope with a timeline for tasks and deliverables, and an allied budget and budget justification based on the research and evaluation work proposed in the RTL proposal.

Applicants must separate their Technical and Cost Proposals.

1) **Technical Proposals** (Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format) must include the following information in the order specified:

a. **Executive Summary**

A written narrative (one page maximum) that clearly outlines your organization’s:

- Qualifications to provide the services required for this Project, and
- Approach to developing and implementing a research and evaluation plan for the CPB-PBS RTL project.

b. **Project Narrative**

A written description (15 pages maximum excluding resumes, examples of similar projects, and labor rates) of the Project that clearly addresses the:

- Issues outlined in Section IV – Proposal Requirements;
- Summary of applicant’s qualifications, including not more than three examples of similar projects completed during the past three years, along with URLs or PDF copies of related final project reports; and
- Résumés of key staff to be assigned to the Project and a detailed description of their experience relevant to the Project.

2) **Labor Rates** (Microsoft Excel format) Should ED release an RTL RFP, CPB expects the selected applicant to participate in the RTL proposal development phase of the project at its own expense as part of normal business development efforts. While applicants cannot budget for the implementation phase of the project in the absence of the RTL RFP and a formal work plan, applicants must provide a list of senior personnel by name and other personnel by job title (e.g., research assistants, research associates) they anticipate will be required for the project and their rates, for the presumed five-year project term. In addition, applicants should identify their indirect rate if one will be applied, subject to CPB’s Indirect Cost Guidelines, available at: <http://www.cpb.org/grants/indirectcosts/> Organizations with a federal NICRA should include the same for their indirect rate.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

CPB will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria and with the assigned weight:

1) The project narrative is comprehensive and appropriate for this project including the following:

- a. the proposal provides a creative, realistic, and sound vision for the research and evaluation component of the project, and quality advice to CPB and PBS about key aspects of the RTL project, the research and evaluation component in particular; (20%)
 - b. the plan for implementing the vision is reasonable, clear, well aligned with the vision, and includes geographic diversity of study sites; (20%)
 - c. the applicant demonstrates the ability to work closely and flexibly with CPB, PBS, and other project partners; (15%) and
 - d. the proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of Ready To Learn, early childhood education and technology, and the public media system; (15%)
- 2) Qualifications - The organization and project team are qualified for this project:
- a. the staff assigned to this project have prior experience and expertise planning, developing, and conducting research and evaluation studies related to early childhood education and technology/media, community engagement/outreach, and working collaboratively with clients and associated partners; (20%) and
 - b. examples are high quality and demonstrate that the staff has the necessary skills to implement the vision and conduct studies like those required by this project. (10%)
- 3) Labor Rates – since applicants cannot budget for the implementation phase in the absence of an RTL RFP and a formal work plan, labor rates will not be scored, but locked in for contractual purposes and used when preparing a proposal in response to the anticipated RTL RFP. (0%)

CPB may request applicants with the top scores to meet with and present their proposals to senior management at CPB’s offices in Washington, D.C. If so, CPB will notify applicants to schedule these meetings.

4) **PRE-PROPOSAL QUESTIONS**

All questions must be submitted in writing to Barbara Lovitts at the e-mail address below. CPB will post the questions and responses on a rolling basis on CPB’s Website, without reference to the inquiring organization.

5) **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Technical proposals and labor rates must be submitted in either Microsoft Word or PDF format. No other forms of submission will be accepted. Each proposal received will be acknowledged upon receipt.

Proposals must be submitted via e-mail, with “RFP – RTL Research Partner” in the subject line of the e-mail, to: Barbara Lovitts, Director of Research and Evaluation, blovitts@cpb.org.

CPB is not responsible for loss or damage to the materials submitted, or for any unauthorized use or misuse of the submitted materials by any third party.

By submitting a proposal, each applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all of the materials submitted for purposes of evaluation, review, and research. In addition, each applicant guarantees that the applicant has full and complete rights to all of the information and materials included in the proposal. Each applicant also guarantees that all such materials are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party.

6) **CONDITIONS OF AGREEMENT**

If a proposal is selected, the selected applicant (“Selected Applicant”) will be required to sign a binding agreement. Until both parties have signed an agreement, no express or implied commitment has been made to obligate any funds to the Selected Applicant. The Selected Applicant is not authorized to commence work until the agreement is fully executed. If the Selected Applicant opts to commence work, they do so at their own risk. No oral or written statement, other than the signed, written agreement, will govern or modify the relationship.

As a condition of agreement, the Selected Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, any work they undertake on behalf of CPB is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. The Selected Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the guarantees contained in the agreement.

The agreement is subject to the release of a RTL RFP by ED and a new RTL award by ED to CPB. If either ED fails to release a RTL RFP or ED fails to make a new RTL award to CPB, CPB shall have the right to immediately terminate the agreement. If the agreement is terminated, CPB shall only be responsible for paying the Selected Applicant for work performed prior to termination.

Those receiving funds from CPB must be able to comply with a number of requirements that will be included in the operative agreement. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintenance of all financial records to the project, which records shall be accessible to CPB, ED and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives for examination and audit purposes; (the Selected Applicant will additionally ensure that any subcontractors or consultants under the agreement shall also maintain such records for the period specified and under the same terms);
2. Maintenance of a final financial report, of a complete file of all subcontracts and other agreements, licenses, clearances, and other documents related to the work undertaken, copies of which shall be made available to CPB upon request;
3. Submission to CPB of a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General final audit report in connection with the project;

4. Compliance with equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;
5. All materials created, developed, compiled or produced pursuant to or as a result of this project (including but not limited to all reports) will be considered ordered and commissioned by CPB as works made for hire under the copyright laws, and made in the course of services rendered. If, for any reason, the proposed materials to be provided are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, then the Selected Applicant will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such materials to CPB. The Selected Applicant must further agree that neither they, nor any of their subcontractors, will have any copyrights whatsoever in any materials created, developed, compiled or produced by them or by any subcontractor, or by any third party participating in the preparation of materials for this project;
6. Representation and warranty that no funds provided by CPB shall be (i) used for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any state legislature (26 § U.S.C. 501(c)(3)); or (ii) used to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the Federal Government or any state or local government (47 § U.S.C. 396(k)(2)(A));
7. Requirement to indemnify and hold CPB harmless from and against claims, damages, liabilities, costs and expenses (including legal fees) arising out of or related to (i) any alleged or actual breach of any representation or warranty in the operative agreement; (ii) any other default by such applicant of any term or provision of the operative agreement; or (iii) applicant's performance under the project;
8. Requirement that during the term of the agreement and for a period of three (3) years after termination, the Selected Applicant shall keep in trust and confidence all confidential information, proprietary information and sensitive information ("Confidential Information"), and shall not use any such Confidential Information other than as expressly authorized by the agreement or disclose such Confidential Information to third parties without CPB's written consent; and
9. Compliance with federally required terms and conditions given the nature of the agreement with respect to the ED.