



CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Request for Proposals

Researcher for Ready-to-Learn

Due: **February 21, 2020, 12:00 P.M. EST**

I. OVERVIEW

In anticipation of a U.S. Department of Education (“ED”) Request for Proposals (“ED 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 lead (“Researcher”) for the project. An essential component of past 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 media on improving the school readiness and academic success of children from low-income families. We anticipate it will be a critical component of the ED RFP, which the Researcher would assist with, in the following ways:

- A. Work closely with CPB, its partner the Public Broadcasting Service (“PBS”) and project stakeholders in developing the anticipated but modifiable five-year research and evaluation portion of the proposal. The research must address the fundamental and summative research needs of the project, and;
- B. Act as the summative research and evaluation lead for the project should CPB and PBS receive an RTL award. This work would be detailed in an agreement negotiated with the Researcher after the grant award.

Applicants must provide to CPB a statement of their qualifications and experience with the following:

- Large-scale national research and evaluation studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards of newly developed RTL PBS KIDS content, learning resources and activities for children, families and educators implemented in sites throughout the United States; including studies that focus on learning outcomes;
- Quick turnaround research on the usability and appeal of RTL-funded resources, including with children who have a range of disabilities;
- Formative studies on the learning potential of newly developed content that informs content iteration;

- Collaborating and sharing data with other research partners in studies that harness the use of learning analytics and A/B testing;
- Research and evaluation studies on the local implementation and efficacy of learning resources and partnership models in public media station communities;
- Technical assistance to public media stations' local RTL evaluation efforts; and
- Strong communication and dissemination of research findings.

To reiterate, this list describes the services CPB expects will be required for the project which may be different than that set forth in the ED RFP.

II. BACKGROUND

Since 2005, CPB and PBS have jointly directed three RTL grants from ED. 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.

PBS KIDS, the number one educational media brand for kids, offers children ages two to eight the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television, digital media and community-based programs. PBS KIDS and local stations across the country support the entire ecosystem in which children learn, including their teachers, parents and community. Provided by stations, the free PBS KIDS 24/7 channel and live stream is available to more than 95% of U.S. television households. Kidscreen- and Webby Award-winning pbskids.org provides children, family and educators with engaging interactive content, including digital games and streaming video. PBS KIDS offers mobile apps to support young children's learning, including the PBS KIDS Video app, which is available on a variety of mobile devices and on platforms such as Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Android TV, and Chromecast. PBS KIDS also offers parent and teacher resources to support children's learning anytime and anywhere.

- The 2005 – 2010 RTL award focused on supporting the literacy skills of children ages two to eight 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 to enhance the mathematics and literacy skills of children ages two to eight from low-income families. In addition to suites of digital games for *The Cat in the Hat Knows A Lot About That*, *Curious George*, *Cyberchase*, *Martha Speaks*, *The Electric Company*, *Dinosaur Train*, *Fetch! With Ruff Ruffman*, *Fizzy's Lunch Lab*, *Sid the Science Kid*, two new television series – *Peg + Cat* and *The Odd Squad* – were produced.

- The 2015-2020 award addressed early science and literacy learning, with an emphasis on the practice of science, and informational text literacy, for children ages two to eight from low-income families. The award also advanced the use of Universal Design for Learning principles in the development of children’s educational media, as well as personalized and adaptive learning and the use of learning analytics and embedded assessments in digital content in its digital content. Two existing television series and their digital content, The Cat in the Hat Knows A Lot About That and Ready Jet Go!, were aligned with the award’s content and digital priorities, and three new properties were produced: The Ruff Ruff Ruffman Show, a web and streaming short-form series with related digital games which focused on physical science, engineering and technology and launched in August 2016; Molly of Denali, which focused on informational text and launched in July 2019; and Elinor Wonders Why, which focused on preschool science and will launch in September 2020.

Each award included education and engagement activities led by local public media stations and their partners. The related research studies took place in children’s homes, schools, preschools and out-of-school settings such as after-school programs, libraries and summer camps.

An essential component of these awards has been the development of rigorous, scientifically based research and evaluation strategies to increase the body of knowledge about the impact of educational media on improving the 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: <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/pbs-kids-lab-research/> a <http://pbskids.org/lab>

The 2015-2020 studies can be found at: <https://pbslearningmedia.org/collection/research/>.

Additional background information about the Ready To Learn program is provided at ED’s website (<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/rtltv/index.html>).

III. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The selected applicant will be required to sign a confidentiality and nondisclosure agreement with CPB and PBS. Should CPB and PBS receive the RTL award, CPB and the selected applicant will enter a contract detailing the required activities, timeline, deliverables and budget.

Applicants must separate their technical and cost proposals and include the following:

A. Qualifications and Experience

Statement of qualifications and experience to perform the activities described in Section I – Overview, including but not limited to:

- a. Narrative of no more than eight pages summarizing the applicants’ qualifications for this project;
- b. Up to three examples of relevant previous research experience completed

- during the past five years, at least one of which is a study submitted to or accepted by the What Works Clearinghouse, along with URLs or PDF copies of related final project reports; and
- c. Bios for key staff to be assigned to the project and a detailed description of their experience relevant to this project.

B. Cost Information

A statement of costs required to design, implement and report on the sample study described below. The cost statement should be formatted as a budget with budget narrative. Costs may include:

- a. Personnel, include the number of hours, rate, fringe and total cost per person. Identify key staff by name, all other staff by title;
- b. Travel;
- c. Subcontractors, if applicable;
- d. Materials and Equipment (e.g., print materials, devices for children);
- e. Participant support;
- f. Other (if applicable, please specify);
- g. Indirect costs¹; and
- h. Total.

The sample study is an example for the purposes of assessing costs for this RFP and is not necessarily indicative of the research requirements in the ED RFP. Nonetheless, the estimated hourly rates must be the same as applicant's rates if CPB contracts with it to provide the research services for the project.

SAMPLE STUDY: A 10-week-long randomized controlled trial of a new RTL property with a sample of 500 pre-school children from low-income families (250 treatment group, 250 control group) that must meet What Works Clearinghouse standards. The study will take place in five geographically diverse locations throughout the United States. Study content includes video, digital games, and offline content. The research team would provision devices (e.g., tablets).

Assumptions: Assessment instruments for core content exist, and the research team has already conducted a pilot study, such that all researcher developed instruments (e.g., assessments, surveys, logs) also exist. The study involves some parent/caregiver mediation. All materials must be in English. The researcher must provide a draft report to CPB and PBS for comment before delivering a final report.

IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and the assigned weight. CPB may request applicants with the top scores to meet with CPB and PBS senior management at CPB's offices in Washington, D.C. or participate in a conference call. If

¹ Indirect costs are subject to CPB's Guidelines for Indirect Costs available at: <https://www.cpb.org/grants/managing-your-grant>.

so, CPB will notify applicants.

A. Qualifications and Experience (75%)

The quality of the applicant's qualifications as described in the narrative, the quality of research conducted in examples of previous research experience, and relevant experience and qualifications of assigned staff. Preference will be given to applicants who agree to work exclusively with CPB and PBS.

B. Cost Information (25%)

Reasonableness of the proposed costs for the sample study, including applicant's hourly rates.

V. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND QUESTIONS

Submissions are due no later than February 21, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. EST. CPB will not consider applications submitted after this time.

All questions must be submitted in writing to Barbara Lovitts, CPB's Director of Research and Evaluation, at blovitts@cpb.org by February 12, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. EST. CPB will post the questions, without attribution, and CPB's response on CPB's website, no later than February 14, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. EST.

Applicants must submit their proposals through CPB'S grants management system. To gain access, please send an email request to Barbara Lovitts, blovitts@cpb.org, no later than February 18, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. EST. Access will be provided to applicants within two business days. Even if you already have access to the system, you must contact Ms. Lovitts to request access to this RFP.

VI. OTHER TERMS

A. General Provisions

Information submitted in response to this RFP shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date. Proposals must provide a straightforward, concise description of how applicant (Applicant) will meet the project requirements. Neither multiple nor alternate applications will be accepted. Applicant must clearly identify any portion of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets. In addition, it must identify all subcontractors and advisors and include a description of their roles.

If Applicant is selected for funding, it is deemed to have accepted the terms in this RFP. Any exceptions to these terms must be clearly identified in its proposal. CPB, at its sole discretion, may reject any proposal that includes exceptions.

If CPB shares any materials, data, other information and analyses (collectively, "Information") with Applicant, as a condition of receiving such Information, Applicant is deemed to agree to protect, preserve and maintain all such

Information on a strictly confidential basis, and to promptly return to CPB upon its request all tangible copies in Applicant's possession.

CPB is not responsible for the loss or damage to material that Applicant provides to CPB in conjunction with this RFP. Upon submission, said information shall become CPB's property (not including any intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and CPB is not required to return the same to Applicant. Applicant is responsible for any violation of copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other rights related to such material.

This solicitation does not constitute an agreement by CPB to extend funding to any party. CPB may, in its sole discretion, elect not to pursue this project. By submitting a proposal, Applicant grants to CPB the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute the materials submitted for purposes of evaluation, review, and research. In addition, it guarantees that it has full and complete rights to the information and materials included in its proposal. 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.

CPB is not responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in preparing and submitting its proposal in response to this RFP, or in performing any other activities relative to this solicitation. If a proposal is selected for funding, Applicant must sign a binding agreement that meets with CPB's approval ("Agreement"). Until the Agreement is executed by both parties, no express or implied commitment has been made to provide funding. Applicant is not authorized to commence work until the Agreement is fully executed. If Applicant commences work the Agreement is signed by both parties, it does so at its own risk.

B. Other Requirements

Applicant acknowledges and agrees that it will comply with all federal requirements. Further, Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, any work it undertakes is not defamatory and will not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Applicant must also agree to indemnify CPB against any loss resulting from breach of any of the representations and warranties in the Agreement. The Agreement will contain additional requirements, including but not limited to the following:

1. Applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate financial support to complete the work and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property set forth in the Agreement;
2. Applicant must maintain, for three years after CPB's approval of its final financial report, all financial records to the project, which shall be accessible to CPB, and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives of each for examination and audit purposes. Applicant will additionally ensure that any

subcontractors or consultants engaged for the project also maintain such records for the same period and under the same terms;

3. Applicant must maintain, for three years after CPB's approval of its final financial report, all subcontracts and other agreements, licenses, clearances and other documents related to the work undertaken. Applicant must make copies of the same available to CPB and its representatives upon request;
4. Applicant must provide CPB with a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General audit report issued in connection with the project;
5. Applicant must comply with all applicable equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies;
6. Applicant must provide CPB with documentation that evidences the actual costs of the project (including timesheets or other relatively contemporaneous record-keeping documents), and project supporting detail demonstrating that all costs were reasonable, necessary and incurred for the project;
7. All research and 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 research and materials to be provided are not considered works made for hire under the copyright laws, then Applicant will be required to assign all right, title and interest in and to such research and materials to CPB. Applicant further agrees that neither it, nor any of its subcontractors, will have any copyrights or other intellectual property rights whatsoever in any research and/or materials created, developed, compiled or produced by them or by any subcontractor, or by any third party participating in the preparation of research or materials for this project; and
8. The Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.

C. Federal Funding

CPB's primary source of funding is appropriations made by the U.S. Congress. Therefore, if CPB's appropriation is reduced and that reduction materially affects CPB's ability to meet its obligations under the Agreement, then CPB and Applicant, at CPB's discretion, may agree to enter good faith negotiations to modify the Agreement. Further, Applicant is strictly prohibited from using any funds provided by CPB:

- for any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the United States Congress or any state legislature; and
- to conduct any reception or provide any other entertainment for any officer or employee of the federal government or any state or local government.