



## CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

### REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS:

**Ready To Learn Learning Neighborhood Planning Projects**

**Deadline for response: Thursday, June 30, 2022, 4:00 PM Eastern**

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#### I.RFA AT A GLANCE

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (“CPB”), as part of the 2020-25 Ready To Learn initiative (“RTL”), intends to contract with up to thirty public television stations to participate in a capacity-building planning period (“Phase I”) from which a third and final cohort of 18 stations will be selected for funding as Learning Neighborhoods (“Phase II”), an innovative model of community engagement designed to extend the reach and impact of RTL content in low-income communities. A Learning Neighborhood consists of a group of partners, including a local PBS station, that are acutely focused on the early learning needs of children and their families in the local station’s service area (“**Learning Neighborhood**”). Learning Neighborhoods will intentionally coordinate parent, family and educator experiences and provide a comprehensive set of touchpoints for a community to support a child’s learning, encouraging sustained use and extending the impact of the RTL content. On a macro level, the goal of the Learning Neighborhood will be to foster a community-wide culture that promotes Ready To Learn’s “Learn Together” theme and empowers children and adults to learn anytime, anywhere – at home, in the neighborhood, and within local systems and spaces.

During Phase I, stations will use project funds to participate in a series of trainings related to the RTL 2020-25 learning priorities: functional literacy, critical and computational thinking, executive function and career readiness, with a focus on intergenerational learning and accessibility. Stations will also develop a stronger understanding of the RTL target audience: children ages two to eight from low-income communities, along with their families, caregivers, and educators. Further, stations will complete training in inclusive and equitable facilitation to support RTL’s commitment of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Finally, stations will be introduced to the RTL Community Assets & Needs Assessment (“CANA”) tool, which they will utilize in their station’s service area to identify potential sites, partners, and strategies for developing a Learning Neighborhood. At the conclusion of Phase I, stations will submit a Learning Neighborhood proposal; the 18 proposals will be selected for funding over a two-year period.

Phase I will begin no earlier than October 1, 2022 and conclude no later than May 31, 2023. Phase II will begin no earlier than October 1, 2023 and conclude no later than September 30, 2025. Both phases are contingent on the continuation of annual federal grant awards to CPB for the RTL program.

In order to be eligible to apply for funding, stations must currently be a CPB community service grant recipient in good standing and have engaged in the following activities within the last five years:

- implemented recent RTL content and models;
- engaged with families in low-income communities;
- participated in early learning initiatives; and
- a demonstrated commitment by the station's leadership and community partners to the above activities.

The Learning Neighborhoods are funded through a Ready To Learn Programming grant by the U.S. Department of Education, for a grant project entitled, "Learn Together: Connecting Children's Media and Learning Environments to Build Key Skills for Success" (PR Award No. S295A200004/ CFDA No. 84.295A). The total amount of funds available for up to 30 stations in Phase I, contingent on a continuation of annual federal grant awards to CPB for the RTL program, is \$300,000 (FY23). The total amount of funds available for up to 18 stations in Phase II, contingent on a continuation of annual federal grant awards to CPB for the RTL program, is \$1,350,000 (FY24) and \$1,350,000 (FY25).

## II.FILING DEADLINE

Applications are due via the CPB Grants Management System no later than **Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 4:00 PM ET**. See Section IX for submission instructions.

## III.CPB BACKGROUND

CPB is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967. The mission of CPB is to facilitate the development of, and ensure universal access to, non-commercial high-quality programming and telecommunications services. It does this in conjunction with non-commercial educational telecommunications licensees across America. CPB is the largest single source of funding for public television and radio programming, distributing funds via grants, investing in more than 400 local radio and 175 television stations. CPB grants fund activities that include: station operations, equipment, development and production of radio and television programming and overall public media support.

## IV.PROJECT OBJECTIVES

During Phase I, stations will achieve the following objectives:

1. Deeper understanding of children ages 2 to 8 from low-income families, their families, caregivers, and educators, considering the impact of COVID-19 and recent educational and economic instability.
2. Heightened awareness of RTL learning priorities, including functional literacy, career readiness skill-building, computational thinking, executive function, and

the role families play in a child's learning, especially through intergenerational engagement.

3. Increased proficiency in the inclusive and equitable facilitation of early learning resources, with a greater knowledge of best practices in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in community engagement.
4. Meaningfully engage members of the proposed Learning Neighborhood community (e.g. educators, non-profit leaders, families) using the CANA toolkit to design a strong proposal for a two-year Learning Neighborhood project.

## **V. YEAR 1 DELIVERABLES**

In Phase I of the project, stations will be required to complete the following activities.

1. Learning Neighborhood Planning Project Kick-off Meeting – stations must send representatives to a virtual orientation of the Learning Neighborhood planning project stations.
2. Trainings - stations must send representatives to the training sessions addressing Inclusive & Equitable Facilitation, the CANA toolkit, and other meetings (virtual and/or in-person) conducted by CPB, PBS, the RTL research consortium, and other RTL stakeholders. Most, if not all, trainings will be offered on a virtual platform. If public health recommendations allow, CPB and PBS will co-host a two-day in-person/hybrid training to supplement virtual offerings.
3. Learning Neighborhood Project Proposal – stations must work with station colleagues and local partners to design a Learning Neighborhood plan that identifies goals and develops a process for achieving innovations and outcomes in alignment with the RTL 2020-25 project, especially toward improving functional literacy, career readiness, computational thinking and executive function among the Target Audience.
4. Bi-Monthly Narrative Reports – stations must provide CPB with interim narrative reports describing project activities, impact numbers and any challenges to their plan every two months.
5. Financial Reports – stations must provide CPB with a detailed financial report every three months, reflecting the actual project expenses incurred and the estimated costs to complete the project.

## **VI. STATION BENEFITS**

Stations participating in the project will benefit by:

1. receiving access to new CPB-PBS RTL 2020-25 content;
2. gaining an enhanced awareness of educational media and its potential impact on their communities;

3. improving their capacity to use technology for early learning and to provide training to support young children;
4. obtaining access to cutting edge educational tools and resources;
5. establishing thought partnerships with colleagues at other public media stations to innovate practices in community engagement; and,
6. expanding their ability to scale and sustain high quality and equitable early learning experiences to their communities.

## VII.APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must separate their technical and cost applications.

A. Technical applications must include the following, in the order specified:

1. Station Capacity and Commitment

Applicants must describe their station's commitment to education and community engagement, especially among low-income families with children ages two to eight. This may be done by highlighting specific initiatives and projects, including the station's outcomes from 2017 to 2022. Applicants should describe how they adapted their station's education and engagement work to serve children and their families, especially those from low-income communities, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applicants must also demonstrate their station's capacity to conduct RTL work in their communities with dedicated education and engagement staff as well as support from station leadership. This may be done by listing station staff who have previously conducted RTL or other early education work, providing biographies of any personnel who will play a significant role in the project, and describing how station leadership (executives, board members, etc.) will support the proposed Learning Neighborhood.

Applicants should describe their station's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) and anti-bias/anti-racism (ABAR) policies and practices. Proposals should address the question: How has the applicant demonstrated real and authentic dedication to DEIA and ABAR, which are critical pillars of Ready To Learn.

2. Collaborative Engagement

Applicants should describe their stations' capacity and willingness to work collaboratively with a network of community partners to support functional literacy, career readiness, computational thinking, and executive function for the Target Audience. Applicants should include recent partnerships that have

adopted a collective impact (or similar) approach, with multiple stakeholders contributing to the end goal. In addition, responses must also address the questions: How were partnerships formed, strengthened, and maintained over the course of the project? What innovative practices or interesting lessons did the station learn from the experience(s)?

Further, Applicants should recount their experience with local affiliates of RTL's national partners (the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Parents as Teachers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation), and describe potential opportunities for collaboration under the Learning Neighborhood Model. Applicants should also highlight any work undertaken to design, adopt, or support accessibility modes, such as the Universal Design for Learning, non-English language usage, and culturally responsive design.

- B. Applicants' cost applications for the Phase I of the project (October 1, 2022 – May 31, 2023) must be submitted using the Budget Template, which includes a detailed line-itemed Budget and Budget Narrative (MS Excel format). Cost information should not be included in Applicant's technical applications.

Budget categories may include:

- Staffing (pay, fringe, and time allocations)
- Travel (local\* only, please do not include expenses related to attending the two-day in-person training or other training, which will be coordinated and paid for separately by CPB. )
- Supplies
- Contractual (e.g. consultants, partner stipends)

CPB requests that applicants not include indirect costs in their Phase I budgets even if allowed by their governing institutions.

## **VIII. SELECTION CRITERIA**

In Phase I, CPB will evaluate applications based on the criteria below with the associated weight.

- A. Quality and experience of project personnel in early learning, as well as the commitment of station leadership to the project (40%)
- B. Demonstrated capacity of station to participate in collaborative efforts that supports early learning – especially functional literacy, career readiness, computational thinking, and executive function - through engagement of the Target Audience, their families, and their educators (35%)

C. Reasonableness of proposed budget costs (25%)

In Phase II, CPB will evaluate Learning Neighborhood proposals based on the criteria below with the associated weight.

- A. Quality and experience of project personnel in early learning, as well as the commitment of station leadership to the project (35%)
- B. Quality of collaborative effort between station and community partners to support functional literacy, career readiness, computational thinking, and executive function through engagement of the Target Audience, their families, and their educators (45%)
- C. Reasonableness of proposed budget costs (25%)

**IX.SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applicants must request access to the application in CPB’s grants management system, even if they have previously submitted a proposal to CPB. Applicants must identify one individual to request access and serve as the point of contact for the application.

To request access, please send an email to Devon Tutak, Director, RTL Community Engagement, dtutak@cpb.org, no later than Friday, June 24, 2022 at 1:00 PM ET. CPB will provide access within two business days.

Applications are due no later than Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 4:00 PM ET.

All questions must be submitted in writing to Devon Tutak, at the email address above. CPB will post all questions, without attribution, and its response on CPB’s website. The deadline for submitting questions is Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET.

**X.TIMELINE**

Action Items	Dates
RFA announced	Monday, May 16, 2022
Information session for interested applicants	Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 1:00pm ET
Deadline to request access to grants system	Friday, June 24, 2022 at 1:00pm ET

Applications due to CPB	Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 4:00pm ET
Selections announced	September 2022

**XI. WEBINAR FOR INTERESTED APPLICANTS**

CPB and PBS will host an information session for interested applicants during the PBS Annual Meeting. The session, “CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Learning Neighborhood Planning Grants,” will be presented virtually on Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 1:00pm ET. More information on the PBS Annual Meeting can be found at <https://web.cvent.com/event/27a2e4a6-cb45-4c44-91fc-813f90db7cfc/summary>.

Participants may submit questions in writing during the webinar. The session will be recorded and a link to the recording will be posted in the FAQ shortly after its conclusion.

**XII.ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

A. Reports on RTL Research and Best Practices

Applicants may find the following resources useful for identifying best practices in RTL and serving the Target Audience as they prepare their applications:

- RTL: <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/rtl2015/>
- EDC: <http://cct.edc.org/rtl/>

B. RTL Overview

In 2020, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and PBS were awarded a Ready To Learn grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The five-year grant (contingent upon annual continuation of the grant award by the federal government) will connect children’s media and learning environments to build key skills for success.

The initiative will result in the development of new content that helps young children build vital skills to support their success in school and life, including functional literacy, critical thinking and collaboration — and shows them career options in age-appropriate ways. This will be done by producing multiple forms of content, some that show real-life examples of success by having adult role models share how they turned their childhood interest into their life’s work. It will also help parents, caregivers and communities support children’s learning and growth, with a goal of putting children on a path to success in learning, work and life.

CPB and PBS will work with experts in early learning and leading children’s media producers to create new PBS KIDS multiplatform content, including:

- (i) "Work it Out Wombats!" produced by GBH, which teaches preschoolers critical thinking and collaboration skills by following the adventures of three marsupial siblings as they explore their "Treeborhood."
- (ii) "Liza Loops," created and produced by Dave Peth, children ages 5-6 will encounter sociable city kid Liza, an aspiring inventor, and her fuzzy blue sidekick Stu as they invent solutions to help others in their neighborhood.
- (iii) a third series to be developed with a literacy curriculum, in addition to digital games and podcasts, as well as resources to support family learning at home, in virtual spaces and in the community.

Local PBS stations will work with community partners, including schools, public libraries, museums, businesses, local chambers of commerce and other stakeholders, as part of a national network of Learning Neighborhoods devoted to supporting the early learning needs of children in low-income communities. Critical national partners include the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Parents As Teachers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. There are currently 22 Learning Neighborhoods funded by the RTL grant: Alabama Public Television, Alaska Public Media, Arkansas PBS, Austin PBS, Ball State PBS, Detroit Public Television, East Tennessee PBS, Georgia Public Broadcasting, KERA, KET, KSPS, Maryland Public Television, Nine PBS, PBS 39, PBS SoCal, PBS Wisconsin, Rhode Island PBS, Vegas PBS, WFSU, WNET, WQED, and WXXI.

The Education Development Center will lead a research effort to assess the success of the five-year initiative, with emphasis on the new content's ability to build key skills and inspire children to explore the "world of work." Project research will also provide new insights into the ways in which newer media, intergenerational learning, and accessibility options can support children's learning. Data analytics will advance the understanding of how games can influence learning gains, and formative studies will drive informed content creation.

## **XII. CPB Terms**

This RFA 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. Proposals submitted in response to this RFA by an applicant ("Applicant") shall be valid for at least 90 days following the closing date of applications.

1. Multiple Applications. Neither multiple nor alternative applications will be accepted.
2. Confidential Information. Applicant should clearly identify any portion of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets.

3. Subcontractors. Applicant must identify all subcontractors and advisors and include a description of their roles.
4. Exceptions. Applicants selected for funding are deemed to have accepted the terms in this RFA. Any exceptions must be clearly identified in their proposals. CPB, at its sole discretion, may reject proposals that include exceptions.
5. CPB Information. In reviewing Applicant's proposal, if CPB shares materials, data and other information and analysis (collectively "Information") with Applicant, Applicant shall be 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 of the same in Applicant's possession.
6. Proposals. By submitting a proposal, 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, Applicant guarantees that it has full and complete rights to the materials and that they are not defamatory nor do they infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights or other proprietary rights of any third party. Applicant is responsible for any violation of a copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret or other rights related to the materials.
7. Misc. CPB is not responsible for any loss or damage to material that Applicant provides to CPB in conjunction with this RFA. Upon submission, Applicant's proposal shall become CPB's property, excluding any intellectual property rights there, and CPB is not required to return the same.

### **XIII. Conditions of Agreement**

If an application 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, nor will CPB compensate it for the same. Applicants that opt to commence work in advance of the parties executing the Agreement, do so at their own risk. No oral or written statement other than the signed, written Agreement will govern or modify the relationship.

Applicant must guarantee that, among other things, that any work it undertakes related to this RFA 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 include but are not limited to:

1. Applicant's Financial Position. Applicant must demonstrate that it has adequate financial support, financial controls and other resources required to complete the work and to deliver reports and/or other intellectual property set forth in the Agreement;
2. Record Keeping. Except for the work that Applicant completes pursuant to a fixed price fee structure, Applicant must provide CPB with documentation that evidence the actual costs of the project (including timesheets or other relatively contemporaneous record-keeping documents) and supporting documentation that demonstrates that all costs were reasonable, necessary and incurred for the project.

Applicant must maintain, for three years following the end of the Agreement, all subcontracts, agreements, licenses, clearances and other documents related to the project, copies of which it shall make available to CPB and to the U.S. Comptroller General or other representatives of each, upon request, for examination and audit purposes. Applicants must also ensure that any subcontractors or consultants engaged for the project maintain such records for this period.

3. U.S. Comptroller Audits. Applicant must provide CPB with a copy of any U.S. Comptroller General audit report issued in connection with the project.
4. Other Regulations. Applicant must comply with the provisions of the Education Department of General Administrative Regulations, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies and all other applicable laws and government regulations;
5. Rights. Applicants must grant to CPB an irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, nonexclusive license, to use the project, including the individual components described in the Agreement in any manner and for any purpose, including all reports.

Applicant further agrees that it will secure any copyrights other intellectual property rights in any research and/or materials created, developed, compiled or produced by them or by any subcontractor or by any their party participating in the preparation of the same.

6. Lobbying. Grantee shall not use the project funds (i) 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) 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)). Further, the station represents and warrants that it shall use the project funds consistent with all applicable laws, including without limitation, all applicable Federal and state nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity laws, rules, and regulations.

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7. **Governing Law.** The Agreement will be governed by construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia without regard to its conflict of law provisions.
8. **Funding.** CPB's funding in the Agreement is conditioned on and subject to CPB's continued award and receipt of RTL funds from the U.S. Department of Education to support the project.