



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

**Housing Supports Research Project External Evaluator**

DATE OF ISSUE: November 9, 2023

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## BACKGROUND

Since 1991, Family League of Baltimore (Family League) has been the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore. Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions that align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Family League believes that racial equity plays a pivotal role in realizing its organizational vision and that it can be achieved when race no longer determines the life trajectory of people in Baltimore. As such, Family League applies a racial equity lens to its policies, practices, organizational culture, and grantmaking.

Family League’s work is guided by, and its success is defined by its ability to address, the State of Maryland’s 8 Child Well-being Results. We work to ensure that babies are born healthy; children are healthy; children enter school ready to learn; children are successful in school; youth will complete school; youth have opportunities for employment or career readiness; communities are safe for children, youth, and families; and families are economically stable.

As a careful steward of the funds awarded by the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and federal and private entities, Family League braids its resources together to maximize the impact of each dollar invested in support of these results areas. We leverage these resources to serve Baltimore’s children, youth, and families and hold three key roles in the community: programming and grantmaking, coalitions and collaborations, and policy and advocacy.

### Family League’s Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Family League is committed to strengthening Baltimore City-based businesses and incorporating a focus on equity and inclusion in its procurement process. It is the policy of Family League to provide all Baltimore City-based small, minority and/or woman-owned or -led businesses and other historically underrepresented and underutilized business enterprises the maximum practicable opportunity to compete and be awarded contracts to provide goods, services, and activities administered by the Organization.

## PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTMENT

Infant mortality is a measure of the overall health of a community, and in Baltimore, infant mortality highlights “deep inequities in health and resources faced by Baltimore families.”<sup>1</sup> Baltimore previously had one of the highest infant mortality rates (IMR) in the country. In 2009

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<sup>1</sup> B’more for Healthy Babies. (2019). *B’more for Healthy Babies 5-Year Strategy Update, 2019-2024*. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vLJivBuaQd78PHIa5b5G2r5xTLpUdiTr/view>.

alone, 128 babies died before their first birthdays, a rate that had been climbing for a decade.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Black babies were five times more likely to die than White babies. Overall, there were two leading causes of infant mortality— babies born preterm and at low birth weight, and babies dying in their sleep.<sup>3</sup> Many factors influence infant mortality, and in Baltimore, infant mortality is a social justice challenge. Across the city, communities of color and neighborhoods with higher rates of poverty have the highest infant mortality rates.

In 2009, Baltimore launched the B'more for Healthy Babies (BHB) initiative. The city-wide initiative takes a multi-level life course approach to reducing infant mortality and improving birth and early childhood outcomes. Between BHB's launch in 2009 and 2018, Baltimore's IMR decreased by 32% to 9.2 deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the Black IMR decreased by 28% during this time. While much progress was made, the work must continue. 2020 saw an increase in infant mortality rates.<sup>5</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic impacted families tremendously, including access to essential resources like housing and health care that could prevent poor infant and perinatal health outcomes.<sup>6</sup> The gap persists between Black and white infant health outcomes in Baltimore.<sup>7</sup>

In response to Baltimore's high infant mortality rate and clear disparities, the city continues to engage in a multi-year, city-wide planning process to analyze the factors influencing infant mortality. The planning resulted in the identification of 11 high-impact areas on which to focus; home visiting was one of them. Family League supports several home visiting models, including Healthy Families America (HFA). There are three programs that Family League currently funds to implement the HFA model: DRUM Healthy Families, Sinai Hospital, and The Family Tree. Together, these programs make up the city's HFA home visiting strategy. The H.O.P.E. (Healing Ourselves through Peer Empowerment) Project, is another home visiting program that Family League supports. H.O.P.E. is unique in that it serves mothers who have experienced a pregnancy or infant loss in an effort to improve preconception health and address risk factors for a subsequent loss. Across Baltimore, the home visiting strategy serves birthing people with a previous poor birth outcome, medical condition, or the presence of psychosocial risk factors. Participants are able to enroll prenatally or shortly after the child's birth and remain enrolled until their child is three years old.

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland Department of Health. 2010. *Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report 2009*.

<https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Reports%20and%20Data/Annual%20Reports/2009annual.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> B'more for Healthy Babies. (2019). *B'more for Healthy Babies 5-Year Strategy Update, 2019-2024*.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vLJivBuaQd78PHIa5b5G2r5xTLpUdiTr/view>.

<sup>4</sup> B'more for Healthy Babies. (2019). *B'more for Healthy Babies 5-Year Strategy Update, 2019-2024*.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vLJivBuaQd78PHIa5b5G2r5xTLpUdiTr/view>.

<sup>5</sup> Maryland Department of Health (MDH). (2021). *Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report 2020*.

<https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Reports%20and%20Data/Annual%20Reports/2020Annual.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Heerman, W. J., Gross, R., Lampkin, J., Nmoh, A., Eatwell, S., Delamater, A. M., Sanders, L., Rothman, R. L., Yin, H. S., Perrin, E. M., & Flower, K. B. (2022). How COVID-19 impacted child and family health and healthcare: a mixed-methods study incorporating family voices. *Translational behavioral medicine*, 12(3), 466–479.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibab166>

<sup>7</sup> Maryland Department of Health (MDH). (2021). *Maryland Vital Statistics Annual Report 2020*.

<https://health.maryland.gov/vsa/Documents/Reports%20and%20Data/Annual%20Reports/2020Annual.pdf>

Home visiting, particularly the Healthy Families America (HFA) model, is a two-generation strategy that improves outcomes for children and their parents. HFA is an evidence-based, nationally recognized model designed to work with families who are at-risk for child abuse and neglect and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) due to parents' histories of trauma, intimate partner violence, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues.<sup>8</sup> Participants join HFA voluntarily and may leave at any time. Services are offered up to three years after participants' children are born.<sup>9</sup>

Over 200 studies have been conducted on the HFA model. This research indicates promising outcomes, including:

- Increase in positive parenting practices
- Reduction in child maltreatment
- Improvement in child health
- Improvement in family economic self-sufficiency
- Reduction in adolescent behavioral challenges, family violence, and crime
- Improvement in perinatal Health
- Improvement in child Development and school Readiness
- Increase in linkages and referrals<sup>10, 11</sup>

The Housing Supports program has been implemented by four different home visiting agencies in Baltimore City. On average, this program reaches 300 families a year across the four home visiting sites combined. Each program is unique in its implementation of the program and their delivery of the housing stipends to program participants.

Stable housing plays a significant role in the wellbeing of parents with young children. Housing instability significantly contributes to low birthweight and preterm birth,<sup>12</sup> the leading cause of infant death in Baltimore City. HFA programming is an evidence-based strategy that supports positive outcomes for families, Family League has identified that housing instability provides a consistent barrier for engaging in programming, positive birth and family outcomes, and increases stressors for the household.

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<sup>8</sup> Healthy Families America. (2019). *The Healthy Families America Strategy*.  
<https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/the-hfa-strategy-1>

<sup>9</sup> Healthy Families America. (2019). *The Healthy Families America Strategy*.  
<https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/the-hfa-strategy-1>

<sup>10</sup> Healthy Families America. (2019). *The Research into Healthy Families America*.  
<https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/research-articles>

<sup>11</sup> Healthy Families America. (2019). *Evidence of Effectiveness*.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55ccef2ae4b0fc9c2b64f3a1/t/5c6d7f0cfa0d605f7d7d964d/1550679821665/HFA+Evidence+of+Effectiveness.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Cutts, D. B., Coleman, S., Black, M. M., Chilton, M. M., Cook, J. T., de Cuba, S. E., ... & Frank, D. A. (2015). Homelessness during pregnancy: A unique, time-dependent risk factor of birth outcomes. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 19(6), 1276–1283. doi: [10.1007/s10995-014-1633-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-014-1633-6)

Innovative funding structures that remove barriers for participants are critical for program success. With the support of funding for the Baltimore Children and Youth Fund from the Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund administered by the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, Family League was able to layer barrier-removal monthly housing funds to complement existing program strategies. \$500 monthly housing stipends were supplied to home visiting participants to address and respond to systemic inequities impacting participants by meeting their immediate housing needs.

Our program evaluation data suggests positive outcomes from the housing program related to:

- Retention of participants in home visiting programs
- Family functioning and stress
- Health outcomes
- Housing stability
- Implementation for home visiting programs

With this 3-year investment, ending in June 2024, we want to assess the impact and efficacy of the investment before seeking future funding. Furthermore, we want to share our lessons learned with the national community of home visiting agencies about the impact that this program had on families and contribute to the discussion about increased focus on guaranteed income and its impact on families. An external evaluation of the program would provide the evidence base needed to improve and advocate for this program.

## DEFINITIONS

- **B’more for Healthy Babies (BHB):** B’more for Healthy Babies (BHB) started in 2009 in response to high infant mortality rates in Baltimore City and an alarming disparity seen among Black infants who were dying at significantly higher rates. BHB is a Baltimore City initiative led by the Baltimore City Health Department with support from Family League of Baltimore and HealthCare Access Maryland. BHB brings together communities, organizations, and resources so that every baby might have the best start possible. To learn more about B’more for Healthy Babies visit: <https://www.healthybabiesbaltimore.com/>
- **Healthy Families America (HFA) Home Visiting:** Healthy Families America (HFA) is the home visiting program designed by Prevent Child Abuse America.<sup>13</sup> The evidence-based home visiting model promotes child well-being and prevents the abuse and neglect of children by delivering services that empower families and communities.

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<sup>13</sup> Healthy Families America (N.D.). *Our approach*. Healthy Families America. <https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/our-approach/>

- **ACEs:** Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 year).<sup>14</sup> Also included are aspects of the child’s environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding. Other traumatic experiences can also impact health and wellbeing, such as not having enough food to eat, experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, or experiencing discrimination. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood as well as other potential challenges in school and work. ACEs are common, however, ACEs can be prevented.
- **Barrier Removal:** The provision of resources that assist participants in navigating the conditions, policies, and/or personal and social hurdles that many must surmount in day-to-day life that might prevent or impede full participation and success in the initiative. These removals might include providing access to transportation, housing assistance dollars, assistance in securing legitimizing documentation (birth certificate, identification), access to expungement services and associated fees, etc.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Family League is seeking an external evaluator to complete an implementation and outcome evaluation of the Housing Supports program to understand how well the program is working, its impact on participants, and recommendations for future programming. Family League will provide the selected evaluator with evaluation data from 2021-present. This will include program implementation data from July 1, 2021 to present and 350+ anonymous participant feedback survey responses completed by participants at a 3-month follow-up. We would like the evaluator or team of evaluators to conduct 4-12 interviews with Home Visiting Program staff to collect additional qualitative data on the process and outcomes of the program.

The anticipated deliverables for the evaluation project include:

- Development of research questions and a logic model in consultation with Family League
- Development of an interview protocol and script
- Interview transcripts, thematic code book, and prevalence data on themes identified
- Documentation on existing data review and analysis
- A draft of the report on which Family League will provide feedback and assist with meaning-making if needed.
- A final public report that contains an executive summary, methodology, findings of the study, limitations, data visualizations, conclusions, and recommendations.
- A presentation to internal Family League staff on the findings of the evaluation
- A presentation to HFA partners on the findings of the evaluation.

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<sup>14</sup> Centers for Disease Control (2023). *Fast facts: Preventing adverse childhood experiences | violence prevention | injury Center | CDC*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

The External Evaluator shall comply with any contractual or statutorily required privacy standards for maintenance of data as applicable including those required by the Family Educational Records Privacy Act (34 CFR §99), The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) 45 CFR Part 160 and Part 164, Subparts A and E, and the Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.08.

## GRANT TERMS & APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

**This application is for information-gathering purposes; should an applicant be selected, a separate contracting process will follow, which will represent the following terms:**

**Contract Award Amount:** Not to exceed \$75,000.00

**Contract Performance Period:** Contingent upon available funding, the anticipated period is January 1, 2024– June 30, 2024. Contract performance period, scope of work, and budget will be finalized during the contract execution period. A timeline will be developed with the consultant and Family League to determine when drafts of deliverables should be submitted and reviewed. Final deliverables must be completed by June 30, 2024. Project scope is negotiable to fit within this timeframe. All revisions to the scope must be negotiated with and approved by Family League.

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit proposals through FUNDINGtrack, Family League’s online grants management system accessible through <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Submission must be completed by the date and time specified in this RFQ and in the FUNDINGtrack application. The deadlines will be strictly enforced. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application process is completed by the deadline. Hard copies, emailed copies, and late submissions will not be accepted. Furthermore, Family League reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend or modify any provision of this RFQ or to withdraw this RFQ at any time prior to contract award. Family League shall not be bound by or liable under this RFQ and/or any response thereto until a final written contract has been executed by Family League and the grantee incorporating the terms and conditions of the award.

**Applications Due: December 7, 2023 by 4:00pm, EST**

### Registration

All applicants must be registered in FUNDINGtrack. This is done by selecting the “Register” link on the portal’s home page, found here: <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Applicants will receive login credentials via email within three business days of submission of the registration form. Applicants are highly encouraged to register early.

### Organization Information and Documentation

The Organizational Profile enables all registered users of FUNDINGtrack to provide the key business and contact information needed from partners. All registered users should fully complete the requested information and upload the due diligence documentation required in this RFQ.



## Help using the Online Application

For questions or problems, contact Family League's Help Desk at [support@familyleague.org](mailto:support@familyleague.org), Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

## PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE & QUESTIONS

Questions can be emailed to [fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org](mailto:fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org). **Questions will be accepted until close of business (4:00 pm) on November 15, 2023.** All questions and responses will be publicly posted on the Family League website <http://familyleague.org/funded-partnerships/funding-opportunities/professional-service-opportunities/> by **November 20, 2023.**

A Pre-proposal Conference will be held on **November 20, 2023**, 4:00pm-5:00pm via Zoom:

Funded Partnerships is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: FY24 Housing Program Evaluation Pre-Proposal Conference

Time: November 20, 2023 4:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/85497959908?pwd=wiGGLSQpi81LrPva4rui2LBRbl0824.1>

Meeting ID: 854 9795 9908

Passcode: 893712

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One tap mobile

+13017158592,,85497959908# US (Washington DC)

+14703812552,,85497959908# US (Atlanta)

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Dial by your location

- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 470 381 2552 US (Atlanta)
- +1 646 518 9805 US (New York)
- +1 786 635 1003 US (Miami)
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)

- +1 470 250 9358 US (Atlanta)
- 833 548 0276 US Toll-free
- 833 548 0282 US Toll-free
- 877 853 5247 US Toll-free
- 888 788 0099 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 854 9795 9908

Find your local number: <https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/85497959908>

## RFQ Components

Applicants should provide the following in addition to what is listed in “Applicant Questions and Submissions”

- Researcher(s) resume and bio
- Proposed budget for this project
- Proposed timeline and outline of research process
- A letter of reference
- 1-2 samples of final reports for other projects that include mixed methods analysis and data visualization

### Communication Regarding RFQ

To maintain fairness in the process, inquiries concerning this RFQ, including questions related to technical issues, are to be directed through email to [fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org](mailto:fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org). Communication by telephone or in person will not be accepted.

**Inquiries or requests for clarification submitted prior to 4:00 pm on November 15, 2023, 4:00pm (EST) will be addressed in writing and available on Family League’s website at [www.familyleague.org](http://www.familyleague.org) no later than November 20, 2023. All proposal responses must be received by the deadline.**

## REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

### Review Panel

Applications will be reviewed and rated by a panel comprised of individuals with experience, knowledge, and expertise in the field. This panel may include service professionals; community members; parents, youth, and/or family members of Baltimore City. Review panelists will serve at the invitation of Family League.

### Selection Criteria

Criteria, including compliance with RFQ priorities/requirements, will be used in determining which applicants will be awarded grants and become community partners. This includes:

- Proposal is designed to support community voice
- Proposal is aligned with and designed to meet B'more for Healthy Babies and Family League of Baltimore's missions and priorities
- Proposal meets needs identified by Baltimore City stakeholders and shows knowledge and experience conducting research ethically with communities.

## Announcement

Funding decisions are expected to be announced by the week of December 19, 2023.

## Key Dates and Deadlines

DATE	TASK
November 9, 2023	RFQ Released
November 15, 2023	Question & Answer Deadline
November 20, 2023	Questions and Answers Posted on Website
November 20, 2023	Pre-Proposal Conference
December 7, 2023	Applications Due
December 8-13, 2023	Technical Review & Cure Period
December 14, 2023 – January 5, 2024	Application Review
January 18, 2024	Award Announcements
January 1, 2024	Contract Term Start Date
June 30, 2024	Contract Term End Date

## Applicant Questions/submissions

1. Describe your evaluation and research values and principles.
2. There are complex systemic challenges and historic context that impact Baltimore's families today. Specifically, there is a history of racist and exploitive research practices in Baltimore. How would account for this historical and contemporary context in your approach to this project?
3. What is your connection and familiarity with Baltimore? Describe your experience working with Baltimore communities.
4. Describe any experience you have evaluating or otherwise working with Housing and/or Perinatal Health programs.
5. Provide an initial description of how you plan to approach this project including research methods, potential research questions, timeline for work completion, budget and other potential components to the project. *Please note these pieces would be finalized in collaboration with Family League staff if awarded.*
6. Provide an overview of the staffing structure proposed for consideration under this RFQ, including all staff titles, role to the project, and the hourly rate charged by position. Resumes or bios of research team should be attached.
7. What questions, concerns, challenges, or potential conflicts of interest to do anticipate

encountering with this project?

8. Please provide the Project Description of a previous project the organization has worked on including:
  - **Project Background:** Include background information regarding the client and/or project as applicable.
  - **Project Scope:** What were the project activities your organization completed? What expertise did your organization bring to the project and what expertise came from other sources? Provide sufficient information to give insight into the size/complexity and scope of the project.
  - **Involvement of Client and/or Stakeholders:** Discuss how the client and any stakeholders were involved in the project, opportunities for input, client staff contributions, and so forth.
  - **Project Outcomes:** What, if any, service deliverables or outcomes can be attributed to your services? How did you add value for the client?
  - **Collaborative Problem solving:** Describe a challenge faced during the project and how you worked with the client to solve the problem together.
  - **Attachments:** Provide 1 or 2 examples of previous final reports you/your team produced, with data visualization. An internal team one and a public facing one would be preferable.
9. Other Attachments
  - Researcher(s) resume and bio
  - Proposed budget for this Housing Stipends research project
  - Proposed timeline and outline of research process
  - A letter of reference