



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

EXTERNAL ASSESSORS

DATE OF ISSUE: September 24, 2025

DEADLINE: October 21, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, Family League of Baltimore (Family League) has been the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, which oversees local interagency service delivery systems for children, families, and communities. Family League invests in strategies and initiatives to create lasting change for Baltimore's children and families that fall along a continuum in perinatal health, school readiness, youth development, food justice, and youth justice.

Family League's mission statement is: 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 seeks to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Family League focuses on four priority Results Areas: Cradle to Career Education, Healthy Families, Economically Secure Families, and Safe and Thriving Families. Family League supports these Results Area through three key roles: programming and grantmaking coalitions and collaborations, and policy and systems change.

As a careful steward of the funds awarded by the City, 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 result areas. Family League also delivers data analysis, technical assistance, and professional development to strengthen partners' organizational capacity.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the following definitions apply:

- **Domain** - A major grouping within the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) framework, composed of 3 to 6 related scales. Domains represent broad areas of youth experience and program quality. Both the School-Age and Youth PQA Form A include four domains: Safe Environment, Supportive Environment, Interaction, and Engagement.
- **Endorsed External Assessor** – A trained individual certified to conduct independent site observations using both the School-Age and Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools. To earn endorsement, assessors must complete the External Assessor Reliability Training (EART)—a multi-day certification process that culminates in a video scoring check. Participants must achieve at least 80% scoring accuracy against expert ratings. Assessors are trained to collect objective observational evidence and provide justification for every scored

indicator to ensure data integrity. They focus on capturing interactions during structured group-based program offerings and may support improvement efforts by informing quality planning.

- **External Assessment** - A formal observation conducted by a trained, independent assessor using the School-Age or Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools. External assessments generate reliable data to support program evaluation, accountability, and continuous quality improvement. Assessors observe one or more structured program offerings, focusing on staff-youth interactions, and submit scored data and evidence through the Weikart Center's Online Scores Reporter. When paired with internal self-assessment, external assessments contribute to a comprehensive understanding of program quality.
- **External Assessor Reliability Training (EART)** - A required, multi-day certification process designed to ensure consistent and accurate scoring of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools. The EART includes training in both the School-Age and Youth PQA instruments and culminates in a video scoring assessment. To achieve endorsement, participants must demonstrate at least 80% accuracy compared to expert scores. Assessors also learn best practices such as conducting advance notifications to sites, avoiding informal settings like drop-in activities, and emphasizing that visits are for program quality—not staff evaluation. Completion of PQA Basics Training is required prior to enrolling in the EART.
- **Family League of Baltimore** - The designated Local Management Board for Baltimore City and the network leader responsible for implementing and coordinating the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process across funded Out-of-School Time (OST) programs. As the Network Leader, Family League supports the entire quality improvement system by communicating key information, scheduling and coordinating external assessments, and providing access to training, coaching, and technical support. Most importantly, Family League reinforces to program staff that continuous improvement is a valued and essential part of youth development work. In this role, Family League ensures alignment between quality goals and program implementation while promoting a culture of accountability and excellence.
- **Frontline Staff** – Program staff members who work directly with children and youth and play a critical role in shaping the day-to-day experiences of participants. They are primarily responsible for implementing high-quality programming and enacting improvements identified through the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process. Frontline staff may serve as members of an assessment and improvement team and, in some cases, take on responsibilities for helping lead their site through the assess-plan-improve cycle. Their engagement is essential to both observing and sustaining quality improvements in the program environment.

- **Item** - Also known as an “item row,” this refers to a specific indicator of best practice within a scale. Each item is scored based on observed staff behaviors or program conditions. Items are rated using a 3-point rubric: low (1), medium (3), and high (5). Scales typically consist of 2 to 6 items, and each score must be supported by objective, written evidence from the observation.
- **OST Site Manager** – The designated staff member responsible for leading an OST program (or programs) through the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process. This individual typically serves as the Site Leader and may hold the title of manager, supervisor, or director—but could also be any staff member who has the capacity to coordinate the YPQI process effectively. The OST Site Manager must have sufficient time and authority to oversee assessments, attend all required training, and manage the development and execution of the site’s Program Improvement Plan. Core responsibilities include coordinating internal assessments, facilitating planning sessions, and ensuring that identified improvement goals are implemented and tracked.
- **PQA Basics Training** - A foundational training that introduces participants to the structure, content, and scoring methodology of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools. It prepares participants to observe youth programs and understand how to identify and rate quality indicators. Completion of PQA Basics Training is a mandatory prerequisite for participation in the External Assessor Reliability Training (EART).
- **PQA Domains** – The four major groupings in both the School-Age and Youth PQA frameworks that define key elements of quality youth development experiences:
 - **Safe Environment:** Youth experience physical and emotional safety in clean, adequately resourced, and sanitary spaces.
 - **Supportive Environment:** Adults provide active learning, skill-building, and opportunities for relationship development in a youth-centered space.
 - **Interaction:** Youth build a positive peer culture, collaborate, lead, support one another, and engage in small-group experiences.
 - **Engagement:** Youth have voice and choice through planning, decision-making, reflection, and meaningful participation in activities.
- **Scale** - A page-level section of the PQA that addresses a focused aspect of quality within a domain. Each scale includes a series of measurable items. For example, the Supportive Environment domain includes scales such as Skill-Building and Active Engagement. There are 19 scales in the School-Age PQA and 18 scales in the Youth PQA.
- **School-Age Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** - An assessment tool based on the validated Youth PQA instrument, designed specifically to evaluate the quality of programming for

children in Kindergarten through Grade 6. The School-Age PQA helps identify both program strengths and staff training needs by measuring staff practices and the experiences of children at the point of service—where staff and children interact. It has been used in schools, camps, and other settings that promote learning, fun, and safe adult-child interaction. The School-Age PQA consists of 4 domains, 19 scales, and 70 items, with Form A focused on observable practices.

- **Scores Reporter** - An online data entry and reporting platform provided by the David P. Weikart Center for Program Quality. External Assessors use Scores Reporter to enter completed Program Quality Assessment (PQA) scores and generate formal program quality reports. The system compiles site-level data that supports both accountability and continuous improvement efforts, serving as a critical tool in the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process.
- **Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** - A validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of programming for youth in Grades 4 through 12 and to identify staff training needs. The Youth PQA has been used in a variety of settings such as schools, camps, and community programs. It focuses on observable practices at the point of service—moments when staff and youth directly interact. The tool consists of 4 domains, 18 scales, and multiple measurable items per scale. It guides program improvement by assessing staff practices and youth experiences that promote learning, engagement, and positive development.
- **Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)** - A comprehensive continuous improvement model developed by the David P. Weikart Center. The YPQI process includes assessment, planning, and improvement phases to help youth programs identify strengths, set improvement goals, and take action to elevate program quality. The model integrates both internal self-assessment and external assessments to build a complete data profile of program practices, with a focus on improving staff-youth interactions.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

Family League of Baltimore is committed to advancing the quality of Out-of-School Time (OST) programming across Baltimore City. Through its implementation of the **Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)**, a continuous improvement model developed by the **David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program** Quality, Family League works to transform OST programs into safe, supportive, and engaging environments that foster positive youth development.

As part of the YPQI process, comprehensive OST programs engage in both **internal self-assessments** and **external assessments** to generate meaningful data that supports continuous improvement. External assessments are conducted by trained, reliable assessors who observe

program offerings and score the **School-Age PQA** (Program Quality Assessment) or **Youth PQA** based on objective evidence gathered during the observation. These assessments complement internal evaluations and contribute to each site's **Program Improvement Plan (PIP)**.

Family League serves as the network leader, coordinating the external assessment process by:

- Training and endorsing external assessors,
- Scheduling and assigning assessments,
- Distributing assessment materials,
- Supporting communication with sites, and
- Monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment practices.

NOTE: Assessors must be fully endorsed (reliable) before conducting any compensated external assessments.

Training And Certification

All selected external assessors must complete the following steps before conducting paid external assessments:

- | 1. PQA | Basics | Training |
|---|---------------|-----------------|
| A prerequisite training that introduces assessors to the structure, scoring methodology, and expectations for observation and documentation. | | |
| 2. External Assessor Reliability Training (EART) | | |
| As part of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process, external assessors must hold a current reliability certification from the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality in both the School-Age and Youth versions of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool. | | |

Assessors who are only certified in one version at the time of application (e.g., School-Age only or Youth only) may still apply but must commit to completing the additional training prior to conducting assessments. The cost of this training will be deducted from the first payment(s) received for external assessment services.

This dual-certification requirement ensures that all assessors can be matched flexibly to sites across the network and maintain consistency in quality standards. A multi-day certification workshop covering both School-Age and Youth PQA tools. Assessors will:

- Practice observational and scoring skills,
- Receive protocols and scoring rubrics, and
- Complete a video-based scoring reliability check with a required minimum of 80% accuracy.

3. Assessment Materials Provided:

- School-Age or Youth PQA instrument
- External assessor protocol
- Observation tools (e.g., paper, pen, or laptop)
- Online tool *Scores Reporter* login (sent via email)

Training

Costs

Family League will cover the full cost of training and materials upfront. However, these costs will be recouped through deductions from the assessor's initial paid external assessments following certification. Assessors must pass the reliability check before conducting any paid assessments.

Roles And Responsibilities:

External Assessors will be responsible for the following activities across four key phases:

1. Preparation and Planning

- Participate in a 2-hour planning/kickoff meeting;
- Conduct two unpaid practice assessments during the training phase to reinforce learning and contribute toward training cost reimbursement. During this period, assessors will also meet with Family League's Quality AmeriCorps VISTA for mentoring and quality coaching to support successful onboarding into the assessment role;
- Coordinate with Family League and assigned OST Site Managers to schedule assessments that align with programming times; and
- Review provided materials (assessment tools, protocols, and scheduling information) prior to site visits.

2. Conducting Site Observations

- Complete up to **10 external assessments** between **February and May 2026**, depending on site availability and scheduling;
- Contact Site Managers to confirm visit details and verify that the program offered meets observation criteria (e.g., at least 45 minutes, 4+ youth present, not a one-time or drop-in activity);
- Arrive at least **15 minutes early** to check in and prepare;
- Introduce yourself to the site supervisor and program staff while maintaining professionalism and discretion;
- Observe **one full program offering** from beginning to end;
- Take detailed, **objective notes** focused on staff and youth behaviors, quotes, interactions, materials, and environmental cues; and
- Ask any **required follow-up questions** immediately after the offering concludes.

3. Scoring and Documentation

- Complete a **unique and complete PQA** for each observation (no on-site scoring allowed);
- Score each PQA **within 48 hours business hours** of the visit, ensuring all items include evidence in the rubric's scoring boxes;
- Submit final scores via the **Scores Reporter** platform; and
- Return completed PQA forms and observation notes to Family League via the designated submission process.

NOTE: Assessments must be submitted within 48 business hours and include complete documentation. If a submission is late or incomplete, the assessor will receive a reminder or follow-up from the Quality AmeriCorps VISTA and may be asked to resubmit before the assessment is eligible for payment.

4. Collaboration and Reflection

- Join a 2-hour debrief/closeout meeting at the end of the contract period to reflect lessons learned and provide feedback on the assessment process and
- Engage with the Quality AmeriCorps VISTA or Family League staff as needed for quality assurance, coaching, and process improvement throughout the assessment season.

Benefits:

- **Professional Development:** Receive certification in nationally recognized program quality tools.
- **Meaningful Impact:** Directly contribute to the improvement of youth programs in Baltimore.
- **Compensation:**
 - External Assessors will be paid **\$300** per completed and approved external assessment (after certification).
 - Compensation includes time for scheduling, observing, scoring, submitting documentation, and **travel to and from the site**.
 - Note: The cost of training will be **recouped through deductions** from completed and approved assessments.
- **Professional Learning Community:** Join a network of assessors and OST professionals committed to quality and equity.

The Application Should:

- Demonstrate the applicant's experience with youth programs and/or Out of School Time (OST) settings;
- As applicable, describe familiarity with or experience using observational tools such as the PQA and/or other observations, assessments and program evaluation instruments;
- Confirm willingness and availability to attend all required training sessions and complete assessments within designated timelines;
- Describe skills and competencies;
- Indicate a commitment to objective, evidence-based scoring practices, and timely data submission; and
- Include a current resume and a cover letter addressing the applicant's qualifications and interests.

Please note, applicants with expired EART certification may be considered if they commit to recertification. Applications will be scored using a standardized rubric aligned with established criteria listed in this RFQ.

GRANT TERMS & APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The contract period for this grant is **December 1 – June 30, 2026**. To apply, interested individuals or organizations must:

- Be in Good Standing with the State of Maryland (**applicable only for non-profits and corporations**) and provide a PDF copy of the certificate dated **within the past 30 days**. Certificate can be obtained from [here](#);
- Be in Good Standing with Family League (if a current or past partner);
- Provide a copy of the organizations Form 990 dated within the past 12 months (**applicable only for non-profits and corporations**); and
- Respond fully to all questions and submit all required supplementary documentation by the posted deadline.

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 the 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 contract.

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 Funded 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 the Help Desk at FUNDINGtrack@FamilyLeague.zendesk.com, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE/QUESTIONS

A pre-proposal conference will be held virtually on September 30, 2025. The meeting can be accessed via Zoom:

Topic: FY26 OST External Assessor RFQ Pre-proposal Conference

Time: Sep 30, 2025 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/81730000627>

Meeting ID: 817 3000 0627

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,81730000627# US (Washington DC)

+19292056099,,81730000627# US (New York)

Join instructions

<https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/meetings/81730000627/invitations?signature=hgLfU6-9jLYY2e8OEmD2M-F9jN9vBXaAZBA5x7SVQog>

Applicants can submit their questions to fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org through September 30, 2025. A Question & Answer document will be posted on the Family League website (www.familyleague.org) on October 3, 2025.

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; and parents, youth and/or family members of Baltimore City. Review panelists will serve at the invitation of Family League.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate and select applicants for the role of External Assessor:

- **Relevant Experience** - Demonstrated experience working with youth-serving organizations, OST programs, schools, or related educational/youth development settings. Preference will be given to applicants with experience supporting K–12 populations.
- **Familiarity with Observation-Based Tools** - Experience using assessment, evaluation, or observational tools (e.g., the PQA or similar frameworks). The ability to document behaviors objectively and identify staff-youth interaction patterns is a plus.
- **Commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement** - Clear understanding of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) process and alignment with its goals, including interest in program growth, reflective practice, and evidence-based feedback.
- **Ability to Complete Training Requirements** - Demonstrated ability to attend all required trainings (PQA Basics and EART), complete two unpaid practice assessments, and achieve reliability status (minimum 80% scoring alignment). Applicants with expired certification must indicate willingness to recertify.
- **Professionalism and Reliability** - Ability to meet deadlines, follow protocols, communicate professionally with site staff, and provide accurate and complete documentation. Commitment to data integrity and follow-through.
- **Scheduling Availability and Flexibility** - Capacity to complete approximately up to 10 assessments between December 2025 and May 2026, primarily during after school program hours. Willingness to coordinate directly with sites and Family League for timely scheduling.

Announcement

Funding decisions are expected to be announced by: **December 12, 2025**

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Training and Technical Assistance

All Funded Partners must participate in training as indicated above. Information related to training opportunities, both required and optional, will be shared with Funded Partners on a

regular basis. Additionally, Family League is committed to providing technical assistance and welcomes Funded Partner feedback.

Contract

The submission of an application does not, in any way, guarantee a contract. Family League is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of an application in response to this RFQ. Family League reserves the right to withdraw from a contract prior to execution.

Contract Terms

All Funded Partners must comply with all terms and conditions detailed in their Professional Services Agreement (PSA).

The selected Funded Partner(s) will be required to submit financial forms required for payment prior to PSA issuance (i.e., Electronic Funds Transfer, copy of voided check/letter from bank verifying account ownership, and a W-9).

Additional Funder Conditions

Any additional terms and conditions imposed by funders following the release of this RFQ shall become a part of the contract between the Funded Partner and Family League.

Key Dates and Deadlines

DATE	TASK
September 24, 2025	RFQ Released
September 30, 2025	Question & Answer Deadline
September 30, 2025	Pre-proposal Conference
October 3, 2025	Q&A Posted on Website
October 21, 2025	Applications Due
October 22 – 30, 2025	Technical Review & Cure Period
October 31 - December 5, 2025	Application Reviews & Approvals
December 8, 2025	Determination Notices
Immediately after contract execution – November 2025	PQA Basics Training
November 2025	Kickoff Meeting Planning
November - December 2025	EART Training
January 2026 – March 2026	External Assessments and data entry into Scores Reporter
March 2026	Contextual Meeting
June 2026	Debrief/Closeout Meeting

CONTACT INFORMATION:

For more information, please contact our Grants & Contracts Team at fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org

Join us in our mission to enhance the quality of Out-of-School Time programs in Baltimore. By becoming a vital part of our assessment team, you will help drive program excellence and positively impact the lives of our city's youth. Apply today!