

Future Early Childhood Program and Childcare Center

Request for Expressions of Interest
(REOI)

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus

Buffalo, NY

Date Issued:

October 16th, 2023

Submissions Due:

November 16th, 2023

Submit via Email to:

wnywfdn@wnywfdn.org

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WNY Women's Foundation

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc. (BNMC) in partnership with the WNY Women's Foundation (WNYWF) – together referred to as the Project Partners - are issuing this Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) to gather information and assess interest from locally established child care providers in operating a future Early Childhood Program and Child Care Center in Buffalo, NY to meet the needs of neighborhood residents and employees on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

Project Location

The project would take place on or in close proximity to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus is a consortium of nine research, health care and educational institutions and more than 200 private companies co-located on 120 acres just north of the City of Buffalo's Central Business District.

More than 15,000 employees are located on the campus. These 15,000 employees make up a diverse workforce including physicians, clinicians, scientists, researchers, educators, entrepreneurs and social innovators. The three largest employers on the Medical Campus include Kaleida Health, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the University at Buffalo. In addition to its adjacency to the Central Business District, the Medical Campus is next to two main residential neighborhoods: Allentown to its west and the Fruit Belt to its east.

Project Partners

Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Inc.

BNMC is a not-for-profit organization that brings people together to create positive social and economic impact within our community. We manage the premiere health & innovation district and economic engine of Western New York, the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, and are building an innovation ecosystem that focuses on breaking down barriers to a higher quality of life for all in our region.

We focus our efforts on: advancing an inclusive and collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem that builds community wealth; creating a vibrant, accessible, inclusive and attractive place for our community through the planning and management of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus; coordinating the development of safe, sustainable, inclusive, and convenient travel options that make it easy to access the many resources and opportunities in our district and beyond; and cultivating a culture of wellbeing in our community by helping address social determinants of health.

More information can be found at www.bnmc.org

WNY Women's Foundation

The WNY Women's Foundation (WNYWF) is a nonprofit organization with a mission of creating opportunities for each woman to learn, earn, lead, and thrive. The WNYWF is led by diverse women who envision a culture of possibility where all women achieve their fullest potential, leading to a vibrant, inclusive Western New York community. Grounded in data, we drive solutions to advance gender equity and move Western New York forward. We believe that collaboratively tackling issues that women struggle with—like child care—is the best way to catalyze change in our community.

We do this work by focusing on 4 areas positioned for change: 1. **We amplify** women's voices to advance gender equity through data-driven solutions, 2. **We educate and engage** decision makers to advance policies and funding, accelerating the pace of change for issues impacting women, 3. **We empower** women of all backgrounds and identities to achieve economic mobility by eliminating barriers and providing targeted support in education and workforce development, and 4. **We advance** women's leadership and gender equity through employer education, individual mentorship, and elevating female entrepreneurs.

Project Background

Phase One

In 2015, BNMC and the WNYWF convened a group of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and sectors of the community to develop and bring the vision of an innovative, high quality Early Childhood Program on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus to fruition.

A facilitated, structured planning process guided the group in exploring how to collaboratively design an innovative, high quality early childhood development initiative that supports employee families, neighborhood residents, encourages healthy child development, increases business vitality, and boosts economic development in our community. By supporting our community's workforce with the resources needed to access and maintain family sustaining employment, the initiative aims to create a solid educational foundation to build the workforce of our future.

This six-month process led the group to identify the pillars on which the initiative would be built: collaboration; excellence; family focus; innovation; accessibility; and business vitality.

Contributors to the process and the plan included representatives from various sectors of the community including: funders, higher education, early childhood education experts, healthcare, government, community collaborators, out of school time program experts, social/human services, and transportation.

The stakeholder group identified four focus areas to explore during the facilitated planning process:

Program

- Inclusive, family friendly early childhood program
- Actively engages and supports families
- Evidence-based programming
- Interconnected with BNMC culture, innovation, energy, and assets to promote learning and healthy growth
- Accessible to families working on the BNMC and living in the neighborhood regardless of income
- Continuous quality improvement

Finance & Economic Development

- Inclusive funding strategies to ensure financial sustainability
- Cost of care includes program enhancements and family sustaining wage for employees
- Mixed funding model – community support, grants, subsidies
- Supports economic and workforce development

Facilities

- Accessible to employees who drive, bike, walk and use public transit
- Accessible to neighborhood residents
- Flexible, innovative, creative and inspirational environment
- Design informed by evidence based program components and model programs
- Utilize community assets (services and buildings) to expand programming

Preferred Components of this high-quality program:

- Extended Hours - 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM+
- Inclusion of Pre-K programs
- Care for moderately sick children typically unable to attend day care or school.
- Out-of-school time programming for children up to age 14
- Care for school age children during school breaks, summer, school holidays and snow days
- Innovative educational curriculum including STEM, Literacy, Arts, Technology
- Inspiring, innovative design
- Experiential, Fun, Social
- Enhanced program accountability and assessment/evaluation
- Trauma-Informed
- Inclusive and Diverse (socio-economic, cultural, developmental)
- Family support services
 - Linkage to community support services (WIC, HEAP, Counseling, etc.)
 - Facilitate connections to other quality programs to meet any unmet needs of families
- Breastfeeding Friendly designation
- On-site healthy food preparation
- Connection with higher education institutions
- Family Involvement
 - Opportunities for healthy family activities

- o Family Advisory Board
- Cost-Assistance for families (sliding scale fees)
- Family Sustaining Wage for all employees

Employee Survey Findings

We surveyed employees at the major institutions currently located on or planned for on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. We received more than 1000 responses. Data was collected from February - April 2015. 75% of respondents indicated that they would consider enrolling their child in a high quality child care center serving children ages birth to 14 near/at the Medical Campus.

We found that, due to child care issues:

- 49% of respondents missed 1-4 days of work per year
- 25% missed 5+ days of work per year
- 44% of respondents had 1-4 days that they were late or less productive
- 36% had 4+ days that they were late or less productive
- 73% of respondents indicated that they stay at home from work to provide care when their child is sick.

Phase Two

In 2021, with renewed energy, the BNMC and WNYWF became a participant in Local Initiatives and Support Corporation's (LISC) National Building Innovation for Equitable Childcare (BIEC) program.

Working together on data collection, it was concluded that:

- Buffalo's Fruit Belt is a childcare desert. The estimated demand for childcare exceeds supply by more than 500 slots.
- Most working on the BNMC rely on family and friend caregivers.
- Childcare is unaffordable to working parents, often driving women out of the workforce.
- Adequate resources are not available at the provider level.
- Factors driving employee dissatisfaction with current care are cost/affordability, hours of operation and sick childcare.
- Sick child = lost wages

Phase Three

In 2023, we have assembled the steering committee with campus stakeholders, social service providers, and foundation leaders; identified a scaled program (size, number of classrooms, etc.); we are working to identify an operation partner to deliver a quality program unique to BNMC employee needs; started a site search for suitable locations to test fit for the center; examined funding strategies to support upfront capital costs for the center, as well as ways to reduce operational costs; and hired a project manager.

From here our project outline is as follows:

- November 2023: Established program parameters
- February 2024: Identified target sites, establish budget, schematic design, confirm feasibility
- April 2024: Design, approvals, funding
- June 2024: Construction commencement
- September 2025: Occupancy

PURPOSE OF THIS REOI

This is a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) only. This REOI is issued solely for exploratory purposes and does not constitute a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The Project Partners are not responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in response to this REOI.

This REOI does not constitute a promise to issue an RFP or RFQ in the future. However, if the Project Partners do issue a future RFP or RFQ, the responses to this REOI will be used to generate a short-list of qualified and interested candidates. The Project Team will blind review REOI submissions and may invite selected candidates to follow-up interviews to gather more information. If the Project Partners choose to issue a future RFP or RFQ, it will be sent to the selected candidates only.

Objectives of the REOI

The Project Partners are seeking information from established child care operators and experts that will be used to assess the feasibility of and to plan for a future Early Childhood Program and Childcare Center that will be primarily targeted toward employees and neighborhood residents located on/around the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus in Buffalo, NY. By issuing this REOI, the Project Partners are seeking to achieve the following objectives:

- To gather feedback on the proposed project from industry experts
- To identify and gauge the interest and capabilities of potential project partners/operators
- To gather feedback on a sustainable financial model for the Center
- To better understand operating methodology, including pricing and programming methodology
- To better understand facility and space recommendations/requirements
- To gather other market information for planning purposes

REOI RESPONSE INFORMATION

The Project Partners are requesting that organizations with expertise and experience related to the proposed project provide the following information (**please answer all questions**). In order to be considered for follow-up interviews and to be sent a potential future RFP or RFQ, candidates must submit full responses to this REOI.

1. Respondent organization or team summary

- a. Organization Name
- b. Organization type (for profit, non-profit, etc.)
- c. Organization website (if applicable)
- d. Organization Locations (main and satellites if applicable)
- e. Primary contact information (name, title, phone, email)
- f. Summary of organization and services offered
- g. Size of organization (revenue and employees)
- h. Years in business

2. Please check the items that best apply to your organization.

	Currently Offer (Direct)	Currently Offer (Through a Partner)	Interested in Offering (Direct)	Interested in Offering (Through a Partner)
Daycare (0-5 Y/O)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Out-of-School Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drop-in Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please check the following items for which you have demonstrated capacity and past success:

- Program for at least 100+ children
- Collaboratively developing a high quality, innovative facility
- Providing care for (moderately sick) children as part of child care
- Developing a sustainable financial model for sliding-scale fee
- Accept subsidized payments from regional child care subsidy programs
- Offering expanded family support services as part of a child care center
- Utilizing a family advisory board
- Incorporating trauma-informed programming
- Utilizing a two-generation approach

- NAEYC Certification
- Breastfeeding friendly designation
- Integration with higher education institutions
- On-site food preparation
- Enhanced assessment and evaluation of program quality

4. Do you have familiarity with and/or capacity to work within New York State Office for Children and Family Services Child Care Regulations?

a. (Yes/No) Please Explain.

5. Describe your past successful collaborations, approaches, and recommendations for:

- a. Service Provision
- b. Facility Design
- c. Staff Training

6. Based on the program information provided in **Project Background**, please provide:

- a. An overview of how you would approach collaborative program development for this project. Please include any information on how you have approached program development in previous projects similar to this one.
- b. Examples of a sustainable financial model for the program, including information on operating costs, recommended funding sources needed to sustain the program, and recommendations on tuition and fee structures that provide a wide array of income levels with access to the services.

7. Kindly provide any distinctive or essential details about your organization and/or programs that you believe are noteworthy.

REOI SCHEDULE AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

REOI Questions

Questions regarding this REOI will only be accepted via email. If you have questions, please submit them to wnywfdn@wnywfdn.org by **October 26th, 2023 by 5:00 PM**. The Project Team will compile all questions and create a Q&A document. This Q&A document will be shared via email with all organizations who received the REOI directly from the Project Team, and with organizations who submitted questions by the deadline.

REOI Submission

The REOI submission deadline is **November 16th, 2023 by 5:00 PM EST**. All submissions should be in PDF format and less than 10 MB in size. Submissions will only be accepted via email at wnywfdn@wnywfdn.org.

REOI Follow-Up

The Project Team will conduct a blind review of the responses and will reach out to select candidates based on the information provided in the response for follow-up interviews. Follow-up interviews may take place later this summer.

Your time and effort in responding to this REOI are greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution.