



"Beginning at birth, every child in Hardin and Marshall County will be physically, mentally, socially and spiritually healthy."

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Website: <http://iowarivervalleyeca.com>

RFP Documents & Resources: <http://www.iowarivervalleyeca.com/request-funds.html>

FY'27 Request for Proposal (RFP)

General instructions for ALL NEW applicants, regardless of program type.

TIMELINE

Request for Proposal Release: March 18, 2026

Proposals Due: April 15, 2026

Contract Awards: May 19, 2026, at 4:30pm

Late Applications Will Not Be Accepted

ANTICIPATED CONTRACT TERM

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board

FY'27 Request for Proposal

The Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area (IRVECA) Board has agreed to distribute this Application for Early Childhood Iowa funds in FY'27. This will establish uniform guidelines and procedures for soliciting grant proposals from early childhood providers in the Hardin and Marshall County area, who provide services to children aged prenatal through five. Contingent upon receipt of Early Childhood Iowa Funding from the State of Iowa, the IRVECA Board is announcing the Request for Proposal for 2026-27 program funding.

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board is to empower and enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human service programs on behalf of the children, families, and other citizens residing in Marshall and Hardin Counties. The goal of the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area is to have its activities improve the quality of life for families with children aged prenatal through five.

Early Childhood Iowa Initiative

Early Childhood Iowa was established by Iowa state legislation during the 1998 session to create a partnership between communities and state government with an emphasis on improving the well-being of families with young children. Services funded by ECI areas shall be high-quality, accessible, and sustainable. The statewide initiative promotes five key priority result areas, which include:

- Healthy Children
- Secure and Nurturing Families
- Safe and Supportive Communities
- Secure and Nurturing Environments
- Ready to Succeed in School

Issuing Officer

The Issuing Officer is the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance until selection of the successful Bidders. There shall be no communication regarding this RFP with any IRVECA Board Member during the procurement process. Attempts to do so may negatively impact the grant award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is Carrie Kube, IRVECA Director, PO Box 365, Iowa Falls, IA 50126, Email: iarivervalleyeca@gmail.com

IRVECA Community Plan Indicators and Priorities

A Community Plan was developed by the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board in support of residents prenatal through five, and their families in Hardin and Marshall County, Iowa. It highlights goals, indicators and priorities of the IRVECA Board that affect the well-being of Marshall and Hardin County's youngest citizens. In addition, the plan identifies community assets, common needs, and gaps in services that help "steer" the Early Childhood Iowa Area. The plan shall be used as a guide for grant writing and funding decisions and can be found on our website. To view the Community Plan, please visit our website at: <https://www.iowarivervalleyeca.com/community-planning.html>

Board identified priorities are as follows:

- Equitable educational opportunities for children
- Parent education and family development for the prevention of child abuse
- Support for health, mental health, and wellness
- Quality care through childcare expansion and accessibility
- Connect families to available resources

Program Eligibility

To be considered eligible for funding, the applicant must:

- Limit services to Hardin and/or Marshall County residents.
- Be a not-for-profit entity or group 501(c)(3), or substantially meet the requirements to be certified as not-for-profit or have a not-for-profit administer the funding; local governments, churches, and schools.
- Possess a target audience of families with children from prenatal to age five who reside in Hardin and Marshall County, Iowa.
- Work with families who meet eligibility criteria. Eligibility is generally based on residency, child's age, and family needs, with priority often given to families experiencing risk factors such as low income, limited access to resources, or developmental concerns. Specific eligibility requirements may vary by service.
- Demonstrate efforts to secure additional funding sources equal to at least 5% of the requested amount. The IRVECA Board is not intended to be the sole source of funding. Outside sources include matching funds from other funding sources, community grants, donors, or parent payments for only those being served in the grant proposal.
- Demonstrate a commitment and ability to comply with all reporting requirements and relevant state and federal laws, including all rules and policies implemented by the IRVECA Board and the Early Childhood Iowa State Board.
- Successfully demonstrate a plan to provide services around the Early Childhood Iowa Tool O.
- Applicant agencies must submit a separate proposal for each program and may not submit a single application for multiple programs. A program that serves both counties may submit a single application.

Ineligible Applicants

- Entities without an EIN are not able to receive state funding.
- Applicants seeking funding for a one-time purchase or a single activity should not complete an RFP.
- Family Support Home Visitation programs.
- ECI funding may not be used for construction, building purchases, or major facility renovations.

Criteria for Requests

1. Demonstrate that the applicant's project was developed to meet the IRVECA Board Priorities and Strategies and the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board's [Community Plan](#) and ultimately link to the [Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Plan](#).
2. Qualifies under guidelines for Early Childhood Iowa Funding Tool G. It is recommended that each applicant review Tool G prior to submitting their request.
3. Incomplete applications and attachments may negatively impact grant awards.

4. Recommendation for funding based on the following:
 - The program's ability to implement a plan to meet identified needs or gaps in service, which includes a clear program evaluation component, achieve program goals, and assess program outcome measures.
 - Services provided to Hardin and/or Marshall children, prenatal-5 years – including number served and cost of the service.
 - Proof of quality practices being implemented by the program or service through the use of evidence-based materials, programming, and qualified personnel.
 - Collaboration with other agencies or community services and/or IRVECA-funded programs.
 - Overall value and impact of the project.

Grant Procedure

- Interested programs must submit the online application form by the timeline listed above. Late applications will not be considered. All applications are due by **April 15, 2026, at NOON.** Submission of a grant proposal is not a guarantee for future funding.
- Applicant agencies must submit a separate proposal for each program and may not submit a single application for multiple programs. A program that serves both counties may submit a single application.
- Requests will be reviewed by the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board for review and determination of award. Applicants will be notified of the decision on or after May 20, 2026.
- Incomplete applications may be negatively impacted.

To Submit a Request

1. Complete the form: <https://forms.gle/NJYrDYm66Xbxt9ge6>.
 - a. Complete the Project Budget Form (Form B). Submit Form B to Carrie Kube at iarivervalleyeca@gmail.com by April 15, 2026. A list of non-allowable expenses by the Board is provided. Both can be found on our website
2. Submit the following attachments.
 - Proof of License or Accreditation (separate attachment)
 - Proof of Liability Insurance for your program and all subcontractors (separate attachment)
 - Three (3) Letters of Reference or Support, pertinent to the selected program. (separate attachment)

Budget Instructions

The Budget form is in Excel and includes some embedded basic addition formulas. The Budget form is not locked to allow programs to add narrative space as needed. Headings, required categories, and the general layout of the Excel sheet should not be altered. For technical assistance or help with the budget, please contact the issuing officer.

The program budget should be calculated based on the estimated expenses of the project for the proposed contract period. Provide a detailed narrative for each line item in the space identified on the Excel form. Show the math that justifies the total line item requested.

SALARIES + BENEFITS: Staff salary, benefits associated with the salary such as Social Security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, health insurance, paid leave, and other benefits.

CONTRACT SERVICES: These are services that are outsourced by the applicant in which a fee may be contracted.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: To be used for training, workshops, and conferences that are relevant to the scope of service and/or early childhood development. Training information, including dates, times, and locations, shall be provided with the voucher. The participant must be in a funded position by ECI Funds. Expenses are only reimbursed after the event has taken place.

TRAVEL: Hotel and mileage are reimbursed at the State of Iowa DAS current rate. Food is a non-allowable expense. <https://das.iowa.gov/state-accounting/travel-relocation/state-travel>

Certification of the lodging provider's Human Trafficking Prevention Training is required if using public funds. Procedure 210.205. Beginning January 1, 2022, prior to expending or committing public funds for a purpose described below, a public employer or a public employee shall confirm a lodging provider's current certification status on the website found at www.stopthiowa.org. Public employers and employees are prohibited from committing or spending public funds at non-certified facilities.

Out-of-state travel must be approved by the Fiscal Oversight Committee before the cost is incurred. The program must complete a [Request for Out Of State Travel Form](#), Reference: Policy 5.9.

SUPPLIES & OPERATING COSTS: All program-related supplies and other expenses. Program materials such as curriculum, printing, brochures, or other program material costs are also included. This can also include rent, phone service, utilities, office supplies, assessments, cell phone plans, and data plans.

ADMINISTRATIVE OR INDIRECT COSTS: Indirect costs may not exceed five percent (5%) of the total project budget or grant award, unless the applicant organization has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Organizations with a federally negotiated rate may request indirect costs of up to ten percent (10%), provided the rate is supported by appropriate documentation and does not conflict with applicable state laws or regulations. Agencies must present documentation of the federally negotiated rate. Agencies requesting Administrative/Indirect Costs must specify what expenses will be included.

TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS ONLY: School districts with a preschool transportation contract will seek reimbursement by calculating a district per diem rate; it shall be based on the previous year's reimbursement from the Iowa Department of Education. Equal to the average cost per pupil divided by the number of school days (180) days.

Review Process

- Once received, the ECI Director will check applications for completeness, noting discrepancies or missing items. Applications lacking the required elements may be negatively impacted during the review process. Additional information from the applicant may be requested after the comprehensive review.

- The applications will be reviewed by a committee of the IRVECA Board. A scoring rubric will be used to evaluate proposals. The committee will provide recommendations to the IRVECA Board for consideration of approval.
- A copy of the rubric can be found at: <http://www.iowarivervalleyeca.com/request-funds.html>
- To avoid conflict of interest in the above funding determination process, any member of the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Board who has a direct or indirect interest in a particular funding proposal will not participate in the scoring and evaluation of that proposal or similar proposals.
- The ECI Director will not make any recommendations for funding but will provide information as requested by the Board.
- Priority may be given to proposals serving families in communities of higher risk within the service area. Indicators and reports are used by ECI to determine areas of need on our website.
- The IRVECA Board reserves the right to negotiate proposal details and may grant less than the amount requested. Applicants awarded less than the amount requested will have an opportunity to resubmit budgets and proposed outputs based on the awarded amount.
- The IRVECA Board also reserves the right to reject, in whole or in part, any or all applications, and to cancel this RFP if funding is reduced or eliminated.
- The IRVECA Board is subject to Iowa Open Meetings and Open Records laws. An RFP submitted and reviewed by the IRVECA and/or committees of the board is considered a public document and can be reproduced. Copies of all materials can and will be distributed to the public at their request. Any requests for copies of materials are to be made in writing to the ECI Director using a form provided by the Board.

Contract Awards

The IRVECA Board will determine grant awards at the May 19, 2026, Board Meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

Contracting Period

The contracting period will be for the period **July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027**, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the Termination section of the Contract.

Notification of Awards

All applicants will be notified in writing electronically regarding the funding decision. Notification will be made to the Contact Person on the application cover sheet within 30 days of the IRVECA Board's decision to make the award.

Requirements for Funded Programs

Applicants awarded funds may be required to, but not limited to:

- Submit the required performance measures required by the State Early Childhood Iowa Board.
- Submit performance reports to the IRVECA Board, which shall be distributed after a contract has been fully executed.
- Conduct an on-site visit with the ECI Director and/or IRVECA Board Member.
- Provide the board with a copy of the agency's most current financial audit summary (if applicable) and proof of current liability policy throughout the contract year.

- Provider of services or representative must attend at least one IRVECA Board meeting per year. Each meeting will have time allotted on the agenda for sharing agency information and public input.
- Priority consideration for funding will be given to those programs that are able to successfully demonstrate quality practices.
- Funded programs must publicly recognize the Iowa River Valley Early Childhood Area Boards as a funding source. The Board's logo will be provided for public awareness purposes.

Review of Award Decision

Applicants who are denied funding may appeal to the respective Early Childhood Area Board. The appeal must be made in writing and filed within 10 days of the date of the written notification to the applicant of the grant committee's decision. The request to review the award decision must be in writing and must clearly and fully identify all issues being contested by references to the line(s), section(s) and page(s) number of the RFP. The Board shall review the request to review the award decision based only on the record and issue a written decision within thirty (30) working days of receipt of the review request. The decision of the Board shall be final.

ECI Area's Use of Google Docs

Contracted programs will be required to use Google Docs throughout the contract period. It is advised that the contracted programs become familiar with this program before becoming contracted.

Statewide Budget Cuts

Statewide budget cuts may occur after grant awards have been made. In the event, the IRVECA Board will apply budget cuts as equitably as possible. Providers will be given notice of any pending budget cuts as soon as possible so that they can plan accordingly. Cuts would first be taken out of unallocated funds. Additional cuts would be taken out of the unspent fund balances of individual contracts. The application of any budget reductions would require Board approval, whereupon contract amendments would be issued to individual contractors.

Contract Payments

Successful applicants may not draw down more than 25% of their grant award per fiscal quarter without prior approval of the Early Childhood Area Board or the Fiscal Oversight Committee. If the applicant expects to spend large lump sums in any given quarter, this must be explained/justified in the grant application.

Non-Discrimination

Programs receiving IRVECA funding must comply with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age in any program funded through Early Childhood Iowa.

Insurance

If a contract is awarded, the Contractor, and any subcontractors performing the services required under a Contract, shall maintain in effect, with insurance companies authorized to do business in the State of Iowa, at its own expense, insurance covering its work. The insurance shall be of the type and in the amounts reasonably required by the Early Childhood Area. The Contractor's insurance shall, among other things, insure against any loss or damage resulting from or related to the Contractor's performance of this Contract. All such insurance policies shall remain in full force and effect for the entire life of this Contract and shall not be canceled or changed except after thirty days written notice to the Early Childhood Iowa Area. Unless otherwise requested by the State, the Contractor shall, at its sole cost, obtain the insurance coverage(s) set forth below:

Type of Insurance	Limit	Amount
General Liability		\$1 million
Workers' Compensation	As required by Iowa law	

All insurance policies required by the Contract shall provide coverage for all claims arising from activities occurring during the term of the policy, regardless of the date the claim is filed or expiration of the policy.

The contractor and any of its subcontractors performing work on this project shall submit certificates of insurance described above with their application. The receipt of such certificates does not constitute approval of the coverage contained on the certificates, and the Contractor remains responsible for determining that its insurance coverage meets each requirement of this Contract. Acceptance of the insurance certificates by the Early Childhood Area shall not act to relieve the Contractor of any obligation under this Contract. All contractors and subcontractors shall keep a current, non-expired insurance policy on file with the ECI Director. The program will be contacted for proof if the policy on file has expired.

The Contractor shall obtain a waiver of any subrogation rights that any of its insurance carriers might have against the State. The waiver of subrogation rights shall be indicated on the certificates of insurance coverage supplied to the Early Childhood Iowa area.

Use of Funds

Programs should review the IRVECA Board Policy on [allowable and non-allowable expenses](#) before submitting an application. The IRVECA Board has the right to amend allowable expenses during contract negotiation.

Duplication of Funds

At its sole purpose, the Early Childhood Iowa Area Board is to provide funding where there is a gap in early childhood services. Grant funds cannot be used to supplant other federal, state, or local funds supporting existing programs or activities (i.e. Medicaid, child care assistance, SWVPP or subsidy to eligible recipients).

Program Performance Measures and Monitoring

The IRVECA Board contracts with programs that have a clear understanding of the required Early Childhood Iowa Performance Measures. It is the applicant's responsibility to know and understand the Performance Measures and Reporting Instructions for the service being applied for. All performance measures will be used to evaluate the progress toward achieving goals, program effectiveness, and the ability to produce positive outcomes for children. The program's anticipated performance shall be documented properly in the application, utilizing measures in Tool O. If contracted, a program may also be required to submit local measures determined by the IRVECA Board. All measures fall into one of four categories:

Input

Resources used to support program activities and produce outputs. Inputs measure the resources invested in a program, such as funding, staff time, facilities, equipment, or other physical resources.

Quality / Efficiency

Measures the productivity or cost-effectiveness associated with program activities. These measures assess the cost per service, unit cost, or level of productivity related to the outputs produced.

Output

The direct products or services delivered by a program. Outputs measure the amount of work completed, such as the number of people served, services provided, or activities conducted.

Outcomes / Results

The meaningful changes or benefits experienced by children, families, or communities as a result of program services. Outcomes reflect the broader goals or desired conditions programs aim to achieve (e.g., children enter school healthy and ready to learn). Programs should consider: "What measurable change do we expect to see by the end of the contract period?"

Additional Operational Definitions

Programs and Services: These are specific and targeted approaches, aligned with general strategies, designed to influence indicators and outcomes. By nature, programs and services may impact more than one result and utilize multiple strategies.

Indicators: A set of measurable behaviors, events or conditions that indicate some level of change relevant to the desired outcome. Indicators provide an approximation of whether progress towards the outcome is being made. Often, multiple indicators are needed to determine if progress toward the outcomes is occurring. In short, it is how we know we are going in the right direction.

Strategy: An approach or methodology that is designed to lead to the achievement of an outcome or outcomes. A strategy is a plan to achieve a result and is a response to the question "what works" or needs to be done for achievement. In other words, what needs to be done to get the desired outcomes.

Direct Contact Hours: This is time spent working directly with the child/family by the funded ECI professional in a face-to-face setting. Direct instruction and services are provided to help a child/family meet goals and objectives.

Non-Contact Hours: This is time in which the ECI-funded professional is not working directly with the child/family in a face-to-face setting. This can include preparation, completing documentation outside the visit, reporting and/or traveling.

Contract Manager: The Contract Manager is the individual responsible for overseeing contract compliance and administration and is authorized to sign the contract on behalf of the organization.

Program Manager: The Program Manager is responsible for the day-to-day implementation, management, and reporting of the program to ensure services and outcomes are achieved.

Billing Manager: The Billing Manager is responsible for preparing and submitting invoices and maintaining financial documentation in accordance with contract requirements.