**Request for Applications**

RFA #: 2024.3.1a

**NC Advocacy Leaders Network**

**FUNDING AGENCY: North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)*,*** NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Secretary

**ISSUE DATE: May 17th, 2023**

**DEADLINE DATE: June 30th, 2023**

# **Receipt of applications online at** [www.ddsuite.org](http://www.ddsuite.org) **is preferred, but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm ET on June 30th, 2023. Please advise at least two weeks in advance of the due date if you need application materials in an alternate format or otherwise require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Direct all inquiries concerning this Request for Applications (RFA) to:

**Mailing Address:**

NCCDD-RFA

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3109 Poplarwood Court, Suite 105

Raleigh, NC 27604

**Via Email:**

RFAinfo@nccdd.org

**Delivery Information:**

Applicants for this RFA are strongly encouraged to submit the application electronically in the DD Suite online database found at [www.ddsuite.org](http://www.ddsuite.org). Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Council’s Five-Year State Plan. The NCCDD’s major funding source is the United States Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The NCCDD makes funds available primarily through competitive bids or Requests for Applications (RFAs). A general description of the current RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available through DD Suite ([www.ddsuite.org](https://www.ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=2068)) or may be requested in alternate formats or by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply if your organization or agency intends to apply.

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organization, agency, or non-profit demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, the non-profit private entity that is awarded this contract must submit proof of 501(c)(3) status with a [**current IRS determination letter**](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/eo-operational-requirements-obtaining-copies-of-exemption-determination-letter-from-irs)**.** The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Private non-profit and for-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations).

1. **BACKGROUND**

NCCDD

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, and is one of 56 entities of its type in the United States and the territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC DHHS. Its activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council’s quarterly meetings are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to assure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, contribution, self-determination, integration and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its Five-Year Plan (2022-2026). These goals represent the most pressing needs as identified by stakeholders in North Carolina. These goals are approved by the Council as the framework for its work within the context of the Five-Year Plan.

GOAL 1: By 2026, increase financial security through asset development for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 2: By 2026, increase community living for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 3: By 2026, increase advocacy for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

This RFA will address **Goal 3**.

For further information on the work of the NCCDD, please see the NCCDD Five-Year State Plan at our website <https://www.nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html>

**III. RFA BACKGROUND, DELIVERABLES, AND CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) seeks to make an important investment in establishing and maintaining an organized network of developmental disabilities advocacy leaders made up of North Carolinians that are graduates from state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs\*. **This initiative will identify, track, further train, and keep informed the graduates from NC I/DD advocacy training programs, so that as members of the NC Advocacy Leaders Network - they can be informed and organized to educate others about I/DD issues important to them and/or all North Carolinians.** *\*Programs include Partners in Policymaking©, Advancing Strong Leadership, Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Related Disabilities, Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility, Ability Leadership Project of NC, and NC IDD Peer Mentor Training. Other non-disability specific innovative leadership training programs (e.g., The Council on Quality and Leadership professional leadership) will be considered.*

***BACKGROUND:***

Before the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act), input by individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families was often excluded from policy decisions that affect their lives. The signing, amendment, and reauthorization of the DD Act (1975/1990/2000) assured that the voices of those most impacted were included in the platforms of policy development. However, increasing the pool of informed representatives of I/DD with lived experience continues to be a priority and is a mandate of the DD Act.

The DD Act (2000) mandates that Council’s willestablish or strengthen a program for the direct funding of a state-level self-advocacy organization led by individuals with I/DD; support opportunities for individuals with I/DD who are considered leaders; to provide leadership training to individuals with I/DD who may become leaders; and support and expand participation of individuals with I/DD in cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions [DD Act Section 124 (c)(4)(A)(i-iii) (4)]. U.S. Councils on Developmental Disabilities meet this mandate a multitude of ways.

The NC Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) has a long history of advocacy organizing and leadership development of individuals with I/DD, family members and guardians, professionals, and other stakeholders. For example, NCCDD leadership engagement opportunities have included the ADA Network initiative (2008 – 2021), Advocacy Ambassador initiative (2015 – 2016), and the Stakeholder Engagement Group initiative (2013 – 2016). Leadership training programs included NC Partners in Policymaking (Partners 2002 - 2016) and NC Advancing Strong Leadership in Developmental Disabilities (Advancing Strong Leaders [2009 - 2016]).

In 2016, the NCCDD initiated extensive state and national research that resulted in a competitive release of funds for the development of an inclusive advocacy leadership development training. **In summary, the research indicated lack of advocacy training as a significant barrier to the growth of self-advocacy** (for detailed research findings refer to RFA# 2018-19.3.1c).

By January 1, 2018, Disability Rights of North Carolina began implementing the Ability Leadership Development Project of North Carolina (ALP-NC) in collaboration with the Center for Creative Leadership. The ALP-NC initiative is training a new and diverse group of I/DD advocates that increase their knowledge, confidence and skills to advocate locally and at state and federal levels to promote systems change related to I/DD issues. The 5th cohort of the base curriculum training will graduate in the summer of 2023 and the third train the trainer class ends early fall of the same year. Learn more at [www.alpnc.org](http://www.alpnc.org) and <https://www.nccdd.org/initiatives/currentinitiatives>.

The NCCDD aims to invest in maintaining and engaging the momentum of these new graduate leaders as well as re-igniting the passion of the graduate leaders that came before them. In addition, this initiative will capture and acknowledge the impact of the members of the NC Advocacy Leaders Network. Across decades of leadership trainings, the depth and breadth of the hundreds of NC graduates’ impact is difficult to be certain of. Typically, graduates of these NCCDD funded training programs did not maintain an ongoing relationship with the NCCDD. This disconnect made it difficult to ascertain the impact and return on NCCDD investments.

The intent of this RFAaims to establish and maintain an organized network of diverse developmental disabilities advocacy leaders made up of North Carolinians that are graduates from state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs. Network members will take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others and systems that effect those lives.

***DELIVERABLES:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) seeks to make an important investment in establishing and maintaining an organized network of developmental disabilities advocacy leaders made up of North Carolinians that are graduates from state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs\*. **This initiative will identify, track, further train, and keep informed the graduates from NC I/DD advocacy training programs, so that as members of the NC Advocacy Leaders Network - they can be informed and organized to educate others about I/DD issues important to them and/or all North Carolinians.** *\*Programs include Partners in Policymaking©, Advancing Strong Leadership, Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Related Disabilities, Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility, Ability Leadership Project of NC, and NC IDD Peer Mentor Training. Other non-disability specific innovative leadership training programs (e.g., The Council on Quality and Leadership professional leadership) will be considered.*

This initiative will be awarded to a contractor that will:

1) Design an initiative that will establish, maintain, and engage an NC Advocacy

Leaders Network made up of North Carolinian graduates of state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs\*. *\*Programs include Partners in Policymaking©, Advancing Strong Leadership, Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Related Disabilities, Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility, Ability Leadership Project of NC, and NC IDD Peer Mentor Training. Other non-disability specific innovative leadership training programs (e.g., The Council on Quality and Leadership professional leadership) will be considered.*

2) In collaboration with the NCCDD, establish and maintain the customer relationship management (CRM) data collection system (TBD) to record and track network member contact and related information, continued education experiences, and advocacy activity. The NCCDD will own and thus cover the costs of the CRM data collection system used.

3) Work closely with the NCCDD to keep informed of the Council’s Five-Year State Plan goals and public policy priorities for continued education and engagement opportunities for network members.

4) Establish the NC Advocacy Leaders Network as a shared benefit and shared investment for NC orgs, entities, etc. that need well-trained/informed, and savvy advocates including individuals with IDD/self-advocates, parents, family members, and other stakeholders to advance advocacy priorities.

***CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

The Program Coordinator will manage initiative activities for up to three years.

1. **Engage with a NCCDD owned** **data collection technology system.** Essential to this initiative is a data collection **technology system for managing and tracking network member information, activity, and impact. The technology is also referred to as** customer relationship management (CRM) systems and is often used in sales **for managing and tracking relationships and interactions with customers and potential customers.** The successful applicant will enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NCCDD that outlines shared usership parameters for the duration of the initiative. The NCCDD expects to cover costs and maintain ownership of this data collection system, including the collected data after the 3-year initiative ends.

2. **Locate and invite NC advocacy/leadership training graduates.** The successful applicant will describe a plan to engage outreach, marketing and information collection to reach and recruit North Carolinian graduates of state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs. This activity is on-going across all three-years of the initiative.

3. **Regularly interact, gather and engage the NC Advocacy Leaders Network.**

 ON-GOING: Maintain regular contact with network members to: a) continuously build members confidence in reliability of the network; b) keep members informed of disability-related news; c) continuously build upon member skills and knowledge; d) actively work to strengthen member relationships with network coordinators and the NCCDD; and e) connect members with other advocacy organizations and opportunities.

 YEAR 1: Coordinate and implement a minimum of 6 virtual gatherings of the network as “getting to know you” experiences and to set the foundation for future events involving continuing education, advocacy, engagement, or information sharing.

 YEAR 2: Coordinate and implement at least 12 virtual gatherings and 2 in-person gatherings of the network involving continuing education, advocacy, engagement, and/or information sharing.

 YEAR 3: Coordinate and implement at least 12 virtual gatherings and 2 in-person gatherings of the network involving continuing education and/or information sharing.

 In addition, partner with the NCCDD to engage in one advocacy campaign related to a NCCDD public policy priority activity.

 The successful applicant will describe proficiency using audio/video conference platform(s).

4. **Engage robust and meaningful monitoring and evaluation activities**.

The successful applicant will monitor and evaluate performance activities and outcomes as set out in their scope of work. Reporting performance activities and outcomes shall include guidance by performance measures provided by the Administration on Community Living(ACL) Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD). Specifically, **monitoring and evaluation** description shall include most of the Individual and Family Advocacy (IFA) and several of the Systems Change (SC) Annual Performance Measures\*\*\* (refer to OIDD DD Council Performance Measures – June 2016). ***\*\*\*Performance Measures:*** *Individual and Family Advocacy (IFA) 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3, 3.1, 3.2 and Systems Change (SC) 1, 1.3.2, and 1.3.4*

* **For Example**: IFA 1.1 (and all other Measures listed) can be reviewed @ [https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY-20-Performance-measures-short-version.pdf](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY-20-Performance-measures-short-version.pdf%20and%20IFA%201.1)  and IFA 1.1 is:
	+ *The number of people with developmental disabilities who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems.*

5. **Develop a sustainability proposal for NC Advocacy Leaders Network**. The successful applicant will describe a plan to determine requirements to maintain long-term maintenance and momentum of the Advocacy Leaders Network. The plan should include shared management with the NCCDD, and potentially other organizations and entities.

***ADDITIONAL FEATURES:***

A. The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities expects to collaborate

 closely with the contractor of this initiative.

* Foremost, the NCCDD must ensure that network etiquette and advocacy activities align with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act ([DD Act] P.L. 106 – 402) mandates. Including, but not limited to:
* Individuals with I/DD are fully included in all aspects of the initiative, and
* Prioritize accommodations and meeting support needs such that self-advocate network members are “out front” in advocacy activities for decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others and systems that affect those lives.
* When possible and appropriate, self-advocate network members should receive a stipend for participation in advocacy activities.
* The Council expects the network activities to include education and advocacy related to the Council’s Five-Year State Plan goals, and public policy priorities (Learn more here: <https://www.nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html> and <https://nccdd.org/public-policy/2023-public-policy-priorities.html>)

B. Applicants are expected to include a description of a contact information collection

plan. With the successful applicant, the NCCDD will share existing contact information records from Council funded leadership development training programs including recent and legacy programs. *We anticipate that a reasonable amount of contact information records for legacy program graduations will be outdated.*

***ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

Also, the applicant selected for the **NC Advocacy** **Leaders** **Network** initiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate *inclusion of diverse communities including but not limited to the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community*. The state plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities identify disparity among a subpopulation of the state’s I/DD community and address that disparity. The NCCDD identified a barrier to services and supports for the Hispanic/Latino community caused by language access issues in response to the Administration on Community Living’s (ACL) mandate. Inclusion and collaboration with the Hispanic/Latino community to increase engagement and involvement is the Council’s proposed intent.

In addition, the Council has identified **Collective Impact** as the model to be used during the 2017-2021 Five-Year Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the **Leadership Development Training for People with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), Parents, Professionals and Other Stakeholders** initiative will be expected to operationalize activities to facilitate the five essential elements to a Collective Impact project, including:

1. Common Agenda:

All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.

1. Shared Measurement:

All participating organizations **agree on the ways success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.

1. Continuous Communication:

All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

1. Backbone Support:

An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Examples of when communities are ready or near-ready for Collective Impact:

* There is a “champion” for this cause who has the ability to engage and encourage multiple sectors in the community and is willing to use that ability to help the community solve this problem;
* There is some local funding available to begin this effort or in-kind resources (protected time for selected staff members) to begin working to obtain funding;
* There is a history of other kinds of successful collaboration in the community among at least some of the relevant stakeholders;
* The general public is aware of this problem and cares about it, or can be readily made aware and will care if they are aware.

***Priority will be given to organizations that offer:***

* Clear evidence of the agency’s capacity to carry out the proposed initiative.
* Evidence of a history of providing related services that are demonstrated to be person-centered.
* Documentation of collaborative relationships in the I/DD field. This should include letters of commitment from partnering organizations and other collaborating agencies.
* That their work and the response in the RFA demonstrates a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of system change.

The funding for this RFA is offered up to $90,000 level funding each year for up to three years with required minimum of 25% ($30,000) non-federal matching funds with Year 1 intended to begin no sooner than October 1, 2023 or after and ending September 30, 2024. Within these parameters, an applicant shall propose a three-year work plan clearly identifying the outputs and outcomes for each year. **The Year 1 budget is the only budget to be entered in the DD Suite application.** Continuation of funding during the initial period will be dependent upon contractor performance and continued funding from the United States Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Upon approval for continuation funding, the scope of work for upcoming year will be jointly reviewed and revised by the NCCDD staff and contractor 90 days prior to the start of the upcoming year.

**What is a Developmental Disability?**

Per the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), “The term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

* is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
* is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
* is likely to continue indefinitely;
* results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;

(i) Self-care;

(ii) Receptive and expressive language;

(iii) Learning;

(iv) Mobility;

(v) Self-direction;

(vi) Capacity for independent living;

(vii) Economic self-sufficiency; and

reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.”

**IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for-profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organizations, agencies, or businesses demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must submit proof of current 501(c)3 status with a current IRS determination letter dated in the current year. The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Non-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see [www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations](http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations)).

**Use of Funds**

Contract funds may be used to support personnel services, operating expenses, and contracted services. Funds must be budgeted in the categories listed in the line item budget. Applicants must develop a budget narrative, to accompany the line item budget. The line item budget and the budget narrative must show a clear relationship between the proposed budget and the proposed activities stated in the Initiative Plan**.** **Funds may not support efforts to engage in any political activities or lobbying.**

**Performance Monitoring/Quality Assurance**

To meet the requirements of the initiative, the contractor must collaborate with NCCDD staff to:

* participate in trainings and meetings;
* participate in initiative evaluation;
* participate in the NCCDD federally mandated Periodic Performance Review and;
* participate in other activities identified or conducted by NCCDD.

Performance and quality assurance of this contract will be conducted as follows:

* NCCDD will conduct monitoring activities during each contract period and will utilize the contractor’s objectives as its assurance criteria for meeting outcomes.
* The contractor must submit a quarterly progress report through DD Suite, and a monthly expenditure report to NCCDD.
* The contractor must submit an Annual Performance Measure Summary form.
* The contractor must submit an End of Year Progress Report.
* The contractor must be available to present at the quarterly NCCDD meetings.

**V. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND APPLICATION REVIEW**

The following is a general description of the process by which applicants will be selected for funding for this initiative.

* 1. RFA announcements are sent to prospective agencies and organizations, via email, and/or posted on the NCCDD website, the DHHS website, DD Suite, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **June 1st, 2023** via email at RFAinfo@nccdd.org. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCCDD website (www.nccdd.org) and DD Suite within 5 business days after the **Bidders’ Workshop on** **June 7th, 20203** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on **June 30th, 2023**. Electronic submission is required, except as otherwise noted. Complete application and attach/upload all necessary documents in DD Suite before submitting. The complete RFA package and instructions are available through the DD Suite electronic submission program (ddsuite.org/).
	4. Applications will be evaluated by an RFA Review Committee. The recommendations of this committee will be reviewed by the NCCDD, which reserves the right to accept or reject the Review Committee’s recommendations.
	5. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a Request for Applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
	6. Application Process Dates Summary:
		+ **May 16th, 2023**: Request for applications distributed to eligible applicants and posted on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities website ([www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)).
		+ **June 1st, 2023**: Deadline for written RFA questions.
		+ **June 7th, 2023**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidder’s Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidder’s Workshop at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **June 30th, 2023**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
		+ **August 18th, 2023**: Award announced.
		+ **October 1st, 2023:** Contract begins.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARD**

See DD Suite to download these attachments - all of these documents must be completed if your agency is awarded the contract for this RFA prior to the execution of the contract:

* Project Profile page
* NCCDD Assurances
* Notice of Certain Reporting and Audit Requirements
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Letter (Contractor’s COI)
* Conflict of Interest Verification – Annual
* Indirect Cost Rate Letter – if applicable
* 501(c)(3) Status Determination Letter/Form (private non-profit agencies) (Note: Public organizations shall submit a document verifying their legal name and tax identification number.)
* IRS Tax Letter
* Annual IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (private non-profit agencies)
* State Certifications
* Federal Certifications
* DUNS Letter
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Contracts
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Expenditure Reports
* Certification of No Overdue Taxes (applies to non-governmental entities)
* Proof of Insurance, if applicable

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit the attachments along with their application. If attachments are not submitted and the applicant is selected to receive the funding for this initiative, the attachments must be completed and submitted with the contract. The NCCDD will not execute a contract until it is in receipt of all attachments. Failure to provide these timely may result in disqualification for funding.