**Request for Applications**

RFA – 2022-2023 CC-2

**The Unmet Needs Initiative: A Coordinated Campaign to Impact the Registry of Unmet Needs**

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

**ISSUE DATE: May 24th, 2021**

**DEADLINE DATE: July 12th, 2021**

**Receipt of applications online at** [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org) **is preferred, but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm EDT on July 12th, 2021. Please notify 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

2010 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-2010

**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**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org). Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

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**I. 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 Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Disabilities, Office of 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=1247)) 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**](http://501c3go.com/irs/need-copy-of-501c3-letter/)**.** 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.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

**II. ABOUT NCCDD**

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, 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 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Its activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people with intellectual or 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 DHHS.

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its draft Five-Year State 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 State 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 **all three goal areas as a Cross-Cutting initiative**.

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

**RFA #: 2022-2023 CC-2**

**The Unmet Needs Initiative: A Coordinated Campaign to Impact the Registry of Unmet Needs**

**III. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) is requesting applications for a four-year initiative with $600,000 in federal funding in installments of $150,000 per year with a 25% non-federal match requirement of $50,000 per year to work with the Council to develop and carry out a coordinated approach to positively impact the Registry of Unmet Needs and also to positively impact people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) who lack services who might not be on the Registry at all to ensure that they receive the services they need to live the life that they want to live.

***BACKGROUND:***

People with I/DD typically benefit from various home and community-based services or Medicaid Waiver services that allow them to access healthcare and live successfully in a community of their choice. The wait time for developmental disability Medicaid Waiver services is approximately three years in the United States. However, according to the NC Waiver Action Team, “North Carolina’s average wait is 9.5 years. Thousands have been waiting longer than 10 years.” North Carolina’s Registry of Unmet Needs (Registry) currently exceeds 15,000 people with I/DD. As of February 2021, there were approximately 13,138 I/DD Medicaid Waiver (also known as the Innovations Waiver) slots in use. This means that the number of people currently waiting in line exceeds the number of people currently receiving Innovations Waiver services in North Carolina. Also, many parents of young individuals with I/DD do not know about the availability of Innovations Waiver services or the need to add their child to the Registry as early as possible because of a lack of accurate information or a lack of knowledgeable professionals who are able to properly inform them about available services.

NCCDD conducted surveys and listening sessions virtually across the state to prepare for its next Five-Year Plan that starts on October1st, 2021. Throughout this process, NCCDD has received a consistent message from individuals with I/DD, families, providers, advocates, state leaders, and stakeholders: NCCDD should undertake a multi-year initiative to advocate for system improvements so that North Carolina can better meet the needs of those individuals on the Registry of Unmet Needs. A four-year initiative is necessary to develop and carry out a coordinated approach to positively impact the unmet needs of North Carolina individuals with I/DD who are on the Registry. NCCDD has worked with a contractor on a pilot initiative that started on October 1st, 2020 to investigate the Registry and the need for a potential multi-year initiative.

A multi-year initiative is also necessary at this time because there are several immediate systemic efforts occurring in the state that will impact the Registry. First, the state is engaged in systemic strategic planning for people with disabilities through the creation of an Olmstead Plan. *Olmstead* is the most important U.S. Supreme Court decision for people with disabilities. In 1999, the Supreme Court held that individuals have the right to receive services in the community rather than in institutions and indicated that states could comply with *Olmstead* through creating effective, working plans resulting in a reasonably paced movement off of waiting lists.

In addition to Olmstead planning, which started in the summer of 2020, a state judge recently held that North Carolina was out of compliance with *Olmstead* for people with I/DD. The judge is seeking a plan for how the state can meet the needs of individuals on the waiting list and in institutions.

The state is also preparing for Medicaid Transformation, a process that will significantly impact the coordination and provision of Medicaid services for people with I/DD. Relatedly, the state is contracting to develop a “unified waitlist system,” which will positively impact the data and information collected and available on the needs of individuals waiting for I/DD services.

Simultaneously, state legislators and policymakers have expressed an immediate interest in and offered proposals to reduce the waiting list. However, some of these leaders have raised concerns that advocates and self-advocates do not have a coordinated strategy related to the Registry and that this lack of coordination has hampered progress.

**Proposed Objectives:**

1. Educate individuals with I/DD, family members, professionals, policymakers, and legislators so that they have accurate information about the Registry to assist in developing a more coordinated and cohesive strategy to address the needs of individuals on the Registry.
2. Educate professionals, policymakers, and legislators about the critical needs facing individuals with I/DD who are on the Registry, as well as the critical needs of individuals not on the Registry in need of services. These needs will continue to intensify as parents of individuals with I/DD, who are often their primary caregivers, age and pass away.
3. Develop and implement collaborative communication and policy education strategies to positively impact the Registry of Unmet Needs.
4. Empower self-advocates and family members of individuals with I/DD to meaningfully improve systems in North Carolina that can better meet the unmet needs of individuals on the Registry.

***DELIVERABLES:***

**Description of Activities**

* 1. **I. Main Components of Initiative:**
	2. The vision for this initiative is that the successful applicant will work in partnership with the Council and the I/DD community to develop and implement policy education and communication strategies to meet the needs of individuals on the Registry. In order to do this well, the applicant will engage self-advocates and families, grassroots groups of people with disabilities, stakeholder groups, and policymakers in listening sessions and developing coordinated strategies. It will include gathering stories, investigating potential strategies and policies that can meet the needs of those on the registry, and collecting and sharing data and other critical information related to the needs of those on the Registry.

The successful applicant should ensure the leadership, voice, and influence of self-advocates and family members are part of every aspect of this initiative. Accordingly, the successful applicant is strongly encouraged to employ or subcontract with one or more of the following (if it does not currently have this): a self-advocate, peer mentor, self-advocacy organization, organization with self-advocates, grassroots group of people with disabilities, Center for Independent Living, or similar person or organization to ensure that individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities are included in all aspects of this work.

The successful applicant should have or be able to quickly develop strong collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, advocates, Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs), providers, state agency leaders, legislative leaders, and other policymakers.

* 1. The Council, its staff, and its communications contractor anticipate working in partnership with the successful applicant throughout this grant.
	2. Descriptions of each component of the grant are described in more detail below.
	3. a. **Strategy Development, Story Gathering and Research:** This work will include:
* The creation of an Advisory Committee with regular meetings to advise the contractor, NCCDD, and North Carolina leaders and policymakers;
* Investigation and development of strategies to meet the unmet needs of individuals on the Registry; research on qualitative and quantitative data and information on the unmet needs of individuals on the Registry; and research on the potential costs of different strategic approaches;
* Work with the Council, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and/or other partners, as needed, to provide consultation to any contractor or agency that is doing an economic impact study or multi-year funding plan related to funding Innovations Waivers and/or other supports for individuals on the Registry;
* Research and strategy development related to how certain issues may impact or create advocacy opportunities related to the Registry, including but not limited to Medicaid Transformation, Tailored Plans, Olmstead planning and implementation; new and recent federal funding, Direct Support Professional pay and workforce issues, successful strategies and policies in other states, and other events that occur during the course of this initiative.
* Research and analysis of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues related to the Registry, including when and how individuals and families learn about and apply for the Registry and the development of strategies to ensure greater equity.
* Outreach and gathering of stories and narratives of individuals on the Registry and their needs;
* Development of a Collective Impact agenda based on the input of diverse stakeholders and advocacy groups with particular input from individuals with I/DD and family members; and
* Development of a coordinated strategic approach to meet the unmet needs of individuals on the Registry and those eligible for the Registry.
	1. **b. Community Engagement:** This work will include hosting virtual and in-person engagement sessions with key stakeholders, self-advocates, families, grassroots groups of people with disabilities, policymakers, providers, LME/MCOs, and related groups. These sessions will provide opportunities to listen, educate, and survey as well as gather stories and develop coordinated strategies. It is likely that early community engagement sessions will include more listening, surveying, and story collecting while later community engagement sessions during this initiative will provide more education, story sharing, and advocacy based on what is learned and developed.
	2. **c. Policy Education, Analysis and Advocacy:** This component of the initiative will include the development of a policy education and advocacy strategy to meet the needs of individuals on the Registry; programing and activities to engage self-advocates and advocates, particularly I/DD leadership training alumni (such as Partners in Policymaking and the Ability Leadership Project North Carolina known as ALP-NC); and working with the Council to execute this strategy. This work will also include the development of policy education documents, flyers, presentations, and other materials that can be shared with policymakers and the community to educate about the Registry of Unmet Needs and potential strategies. This work may include addressing related issues that may impact the Registry, including direct support professional pay, Medicaid Transformation, Appendix K, other available waivers, increasing supports through the Medicaid state plan, state funds, and other ways, and increasing services available through the Waiver. The successful applicant will keep NCCDD and the I/DD community informed of policies, hearings, and issues that may impact the Registry. This work will be done in coordination with and with support from NCCDD public policy staff, systems change staff, and the NCCDD Public Policy Ad Hoc Committee. **Policy education and engagement must not include lobbying and must comply with all laws and regulations governing the Council.**
	3. **d.** **Communications:** The Communications component of this initiative will include working with NCCDD to develop and implement a communications plan and campaign to educate the community, stakeholders, families and individuals with I/DD, and policy leaders on the Registry. **The successful applicant should dedicate** **at least 20% of the annual budget of this initiative to implementing communications or do so through a subcontract.** This work will include working with NCCDD to market and brand the campaign. It will include hosting webinars and speaking at conferences. It will include collecting and sharing stories of individuals on the Registry and those who are receiving Innovations Waiver services; email and newsletter communications; videos; social media; press communications; and other media. The successful applicant must make all products accessible to people with disabilities such as using readable fonts with good contrast and captioning any videos created. The successful applicant must provide any requested communication accommodations for in-person meetings, virtual meetings, and webinars such as American Sign Language interpretation and captioning. The communications component of this initiative will also include the development of a website in coordination with the Council and its communications contractor on the content, design, implementation, and updates of the website. The website should include information, data, stories, media, education materials, latest news, and policy education and advocacy materials. The Council has a communications contractor for its work. The successful applicant will work in coordination with the Council and its communications contractor on the communications aspects of this initiative.

**Achievements and Outcomes Expected**

* Significantly more individuals with I/DD on the Registry of Unmet Needs will have their needs met.
* Self-advocates and advocates will receive training and engage in policy education and advocacy on the unmet needs of individuals with I/DD on the Registry.
* Key policymakers and legislative leaders will be educated on the Registry and policy strategies to meet more of the needs of individuals on the Registry.
* DHHS will have more information on how Medicaid waivers and various service structures can meet the needs of individuals with I/DD.

**Expected System Change as Result**

* More individuals with I/DD will be able to live full and meaningful lives in the community.
* The I/DD Waiting List (the Registry of Unmet Needs) will be reduced as more individuals with I/DD receive the services they need.

***ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

**Performance Requirements**

Provide NCCDD the mandatory reports (i.e., quarterly/annual programmatic reports in the NCCDD’s DD Suite database, monthly fiscal reports for reimbursements, Initiative Information Sheet updates, and other relevant reports deemed necessary).

Also, the applicant selected for theinitiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate outreach to and inclusion of the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community. The 2017-2021 State Plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities must 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. Outreach to, 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 current 2017-2021 and future Five-Year Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the 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 way 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.
* Demonstration of a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of systems change.
* Entities based in North Carolina that are already familiar with how the I/DD system of services works in this state.

The funding for this RFA will be up to **$150,000.00** per year for up to four years (plus an optional fifth year), with Year One beginning **October 1st, 2021** and ending **September 30th, 2022** with a 25% non-federal match of $50,000.00 per year. Within these parameters, an applicant shall propose a four-year work plan clearly identifying the outputs and outcomes for each year.  **The Year 1 budget is the only budget to be entered into the DD Suite application.**  Continuation of funding after each funded year depends on contractor’s performance, Council approval, and continued funding from the United States Office of 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.

Definition of 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.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/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, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **June 8th, 2021** 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 9th, 2021** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time on **July 12th, 2021**. 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 24th, 2021**: 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 8th, 2021**: Deadline for written RFA questions.
		+ **June 9th, 2021**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidders’ Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidders’ Workshop at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **July 12th, 2021**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time.
		+ **August 13th, 2021**: Award announced.
		+ **October 1st, 2021**: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.