PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORM

Agency Information

Agency Name: Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)

Mailing Address: 350 Henry Clay Blvd., Lexington, KY 40502

Street Address: 350 Henry Clay Blvd., Lexington, KY 40502

Phone: (859) 276 - 0335

Is your Agency registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization? ☑ Yes ☐ No

*Note: Agencies **must** be registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization to be eligible for ESR Program funding.*

Does your agency have a Silver Seal of Transparency or higher profile on GuideStar.org? ☑ Yes ☐ No

Note: Agencies must have a Silver Seal of Transparency or higher profile with GuideStar.org to be eligible for ESR funding.

Website Address: https://www.vips.org

Agency Representative *(typically the Executive Director - Name, Title, Phone, Email)*:

Diane Nelson, Executive Director, (502)498-2940, dnelson@vips.org

Person Completing Application *(Name, Title, Phone, Email):*

Mary Smyth, Assistant Director VIPS Central KY, (859)685-6712, msmyth@vips.org

Program Information

Name of program for which funds are being requested: **Early Childhood Intervention & Little Learners pro**

Total Funding Amount Requested: $ **68,700**

RFP #4-2020 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORM

- **Save this PDF formatted Proposal Submittal Form to your hard drive before beginning to enter responses in it to ensure your responses are saved to the form.**
- **LIMIT RESPONSES IN TEXT BOXES TO 250 WORDS**
- **REMINDER: All proposals must be written in a clear and concise manner, as there will be no follow-up or clarifications to proposer's submittal form once the evaluation process begins.**

5.1 Program Proposal & Design

5.1.1 Needs Statement—Purpose of the Program Proposal / Problem Statement **15 Points**

Using local data, provide a description of the problem in Fayette County. Identify the specific population your program is targeting (i.e. age, geographical region, economic status, etc.) and explain why. Discuss whether this population is under-served or at-risk. Describe your understanding of the local system of services addressing this problem, obstacles and/or opportunities your clients face, and how your agency fits within this system of services.

The cognitive, language/communication, fine/gross motor, and social-emotional maturation of a child are in the critical stages of development between the ages of birth and five years old. During this time of growth, understanding concepts, following directions, communication, physical abilities, developing pre-literacy (emergent literacy) and self-help skills are learned; and, foundations are laid that may affect the trajectory of their lives. "Healthy development in the early years (particularly birth to three) provides the building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, strong communities, and successful parenting of the next generation" (Center on the Developing Child, 2019). For a child who is visually impaired or blind, these early years are especially crucial in determining their development, education, and future life as an adult.

Children with visual impairments need early intervention consisting of specialized instruction, modeling, and hands-on opportunities to maximize learning and facilitate development. Children with low to no vision must be taught the meaning of the input they receive from touch, smell, sound, taste, and movement.

Children with blindness and visual impairments are at-risk of falling behind developmentally, socially and academically without early intervention services and programming. VIPS is the only agency in Fayette County that provides early intervention and educational services to children, birth to 5, who are blind or visually impaired. Through the Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs children who are blind or visually impaired are able to reach those all-important developmental milestones, and are better prepared academically and socially to enter preschool/kindergarten.

5.1.2 Service Delivery Model **15 Points**

What steps will you take or what activities will you provide to assist clients in achieving these goals? Describe each "unit of service" you will provide for clients and how often and how long this service will be provided (e.g. a one-time three-hour training; a weekly one-hour support group for 12 weeks; one 30-minute health exam twice a year; 1-3 hour advocacy services as needed; etc.) How will these services address the problem as identified in the Needs Statement above? Be specific.

To assist each child in reaching his/her specific developmental outcomes in the Early Childhood Intervention Program, VIPS' Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI), Developmental Interventionists (DI), and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) use their expertise in vision loss and early childhood development to: work 1:1 with the child in his/her home and community; educate caregivers of their child's vision loss and it's impact on development, education and literacy skills; model techniques to the caregivers for their use in everyday activities (i.e. bath time, meal time, play time, etc) to help their child cultivate and master developmental skills in between visits; demonstrate adaptations that may be made in the natural environment to increase success; provide caregivers with information, resources, and guidance to help them make informed decisions about preschool/kindergarten; and, empower caregivers by supporting them if they need to advocate on behalf of their child. Teachers typically provide one (1) hour visits on a weekly basis until the child's third birthday.

The VIPS teacher in the Little Learners Enrichment Program uses vision-specific academic activities in a developmentally appropriate classroom setting for two and three-year olds. Based on where a child is developmentally the teacher modifies the classroom activities to allow for the emergence of, or the strengthening of, each skill and concept. The teacher also places a strong emphasis on literacy for the children, whether they will be print readers or Braille readers. This program is offered 2-3 times per week for a minimum of two (2) hours each session.

5.1.3 Client Eligibility and Requirements **5 Points**

What eligibility requirements must clients meet to qualify for services? What are the expectations of clients while receiving services? (e.g. client must pay $30 fee for each class; client must remain sober; client is responsible for chores; nothing other than participation in services; etc.)

In the Early Childhood Intervention Program, all children are eligible if they meet one of the following criteria: have an established risk condition (i.e. Retinopathy of Prematurity, Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, Cortical Blindness, etc.) ; are legally blind (i.e. 20/200 with correction); are one standard deviation below normal in 2 developmental domains; are 2 standard deviations below normal in 1 developmental domain; or, if vision loss is suspected and not ruled out by a pediatric ophthalmologist or other professional. This program is offered to children from birth up to the age of three-years-old.

The Little Learners Enrichment Program enrolls children who are two to three-years-old who have either met the eligibility criteria for the Early Childhood Intervention Program, or who have typical vision. The staff to child ratio within the classroom is maintained at 1:6 with the majority of the children having a visual impairment or who are blind.

The only expectation of the children and caregivers is to fully participate in the services of the programs to the best of their ability. VIPS does not charge a fee for the Early Childhood Intervention Program. The Little Learners Enrichment Program asks caregivers to pay a nominal $17.50 per session, but does not turn any child away if the caregivers are unable to fulfill this request.

5.1.4 Evidence-Based/Best Practice **10 Points**

Describe the evidence-based or promising practice model on which this service approach is based. Provide particular sources that indicate what you are doing is best-practice.

The Early Childhood Intervention program utilizes the Consultative Model for providing early intervention services to children who are blind and visually impaired. With this model the caregiver works collaboratively with the VIPS teacher to address the caregiver's concerns about the child's developmental needs and the implementation of strategies to use to meet those needs. This model empowers caregivers by giving them the tools they need to incorporate strategies into their daily routines to improve their child's development in between visits from the teacher. Caregivers' consistent, regular application of the strategies throughout their day increases their child's ability to reach his/her goals. It is the model currently being used by the Kentucky Early Intervention System's state-wide program, First Steps.

For best practices in providing early intervention services, both the Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs adhere to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The ECC includes skills that students with blindness/visual impairments must also learn in addition to their general education. The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired states, "The ECC is specialized instruction with students who are blind or visually impaired in order to compensate for decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by observing others...In addition to the general education core curriculum that all students are taught, students with visual impairments, starting at birth, also need instruction in the ECC." The ECC is inclusive of assistive technology, career education, compensatory skills, independent living skills, orientation & mobility, recreation & leisure, self-determination, sensory efficiency, and social interaction skills.

5.2 Program Measures & Evaluation

5.2.1 Service Efficacy & Desired Outcomes **10 Points**

What do you hope to help your clients achieve? What are some examples of goals you will set with clients? What is your service philosophy in terms of helping your clients achieve these goals? Describe how you define "successful" completion of services. (e.g. service is complete if: client remains for entire three-hour training; client continues services until judge orders otherwise; etc.) What percentage of clients meet that criteria for success?

One of the objectives of both VIPS' Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs is for each child to achieve every one of his/her goals in the areas of language/communication, cognitive, social/emotional, self-help, and gross/fine motor skills. The goals will vary depending on the age and the needs of the child. For example, an infant may have a goal to reach for an object while a child who is around twenty-four months may have a goal to sort objects by shape and color. Another objective is to prepare children academically and socially to enter preschool/kindergarten. VIPS' TVIs and DIs teach simple, age-appropriate academics and pre-literacy skills. VIPS' COMS A child who is blind is capable of doing the same things as a child with sight, but may have to learn how to do them in a different way.

VIPS' philosophy is that parents are their child's first and best teachers, and its parents that ultimately help a child reach his/her goals. The program is designed to teach parents about their child's specific visual impairment, and how it impacts his/her learning capabilities. Parents are also taught techniques to use in their everyday routines in between visits from VIPS teachers. By doing this, parents are able to consistently teach and help their child cultivate and master developmental and social skills, and his/her understanding of age appropriate concepts.

Successful completion of services for both programs is when a child either reaches all of his/her goals, or ages out of the program(s).

5.2.2 Client Empowerment & Community Impact **10 Points**

Describe what meaningful difference these services make in the lives of people served. What value is added to the community? Provide examples. (e.g. client demonstrates change in attitude; client has behavior change; etc.)

The Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs establish a foundation for learning for children, birth to 3, who are blind/visually impaired. Meeting developmental goals, being prepared educationally to enter preschool/kindergarten, learning socialization and having pre-literacy skills are all intertwined within this foundation. The program is a short-term solution to the long-term issue of education for children who are blind/visually impaired.

In the long-term, this foundation for learning builds into a lifetime of independence, learning, and self-sufficiency. It allows the child to participate more fully in his/her academic career, and later, in his/her career of choice. Through the accomplishments of reaching developmental goals, understanding how to interact with others, learning age-appropriate academics in preparation for preschool/kindergarten, and exploring their environment children who are blind/visually impaired will gain confidence, knowledge, independence and increased self-esteem. "The emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community" (Center on the Developing Child, 2007).

These programs make a meaningful difference in the lives of the caregivers. They receive support, resources and information about their child's vision loss. They are taught how to guide their child in learning skills to meet goals. They are connected to other caregivers through their child's participation in the programs, family events, and social media. They understand their child is more than capable of learning though he/she has vision loss. They see their child's true potential.

5.2.3 Data Assessment & Quality Improvement **10 Points**

While it doesn't have to be complicated, evaluation is more than saying "we provided this many 'units of service.'" How will you know if your services have been effective? How does this relate to the desired outcomes for your clients? How will the information gathered be used to improve your services in the future? Be specific (for example, data collection may be through focus groups, pre-and post-tests, client satisfaction surveys, etc.), and also **be specific regarding sampling size and frequency of evaluation.**

VIPS evaluates the effectiveness of the Early Childhood Intervention and Little Learners Enrichment programs by assessing the skill levels of all of the children approximately every six months of service by measuring the progress they have made toward their goals. The Oregon Project is an assessment tool designed specifically for children, birth to 6, who are blind and visually impaired to assess areas of development such as: cognitive, language, compensatory, vision, self-help, social fine motor, and gross motor skills. VIPS teachers use the Oregon Project in their initial, ongoing, and exit assessment of children throughout their time in the Early Childhood Intervention program. VIPS also has access to each child's First Steps initial, annual, and exit assessments known as the Five Area Assessment (5AA). 75-80% of children with visual impairments also experience other challenges (i.e. Prematurity, Cerebral Palsy, severe head trauma, Down Syndrome, etc.) that hinder their ability to meet their goals. VIPS teachers take into consideration these other challenges when using the information from the 5AA and the Oregon to determine if a child is making "Significant", "Good to Average", or "Little to No" progress toward their outcomes. VIPS also measures parental/caregiver knowledge of their child's vision and its impact on their child's development, and their utilization of techniques to help their child learn as demonstrated by VIPS' TVIs, DIs, and COMS. To evaluate caregiver knowledge and implementation of learned strategies VIPS Central KY collects data from a biannual parent survey.

5.3 Capacity & Sustainability

5.3.1 Staff Qualifications & Experience **5 Points**

Provide information on the key/primary individuals that will be involved in the provision of services and demonstrate that they have the capacity to address the stated need. List each position by title and name of employee, if available. Describe the anticipated roles and responsibilities for each person as it relates to this project. Describe the experience, expertise, and capacity of each individual to address the proposed activities.

Senior TVI - Dixie Marz, Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI), provides direct early intervention services and primary evaluations in the Early Childhood Intervention program. She is also the lead teacher in the Little Learners Enrichment program. Dixie has earned a Master of Science in Early Childhood Special Education from the University of Kentucky, and her certification in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) at the graduate level from the University of Louisville. She assists in the supervision of the contract Developmental Interventionists/Teachers of the Visually Impaired in the Early Childhood Intervention program.

Senior DI - Lesley Lusher, Developmental Interventionist (DI), provides direct early intervention services to children and families in the Early Childhood Intervention program. She is a substitute teacher in the Little Learners Enrichment program. She has earned her certification in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) at the graduate level from Eastern Kentucky University. She has been trained in the Vision Impaired Inservice in America (VISSA). She has over 15 years of experience as a classroom teacher in the public and private school systems. Additionally, she has been a DI for almost 10 years.

All teachers have an undergraduate degree in Education or related field, are certified at the graduate level in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE), and have been trained in early intervention and early childhood for children with visual impairments through the Vision Impaired Inservice in America (VIISA). Each COMS has been certified by their professional board, The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals.

5.3.2 Partnership & Resource Leverage **5 Points**

How do your programs and services support our community's comprehensive response to the identified priority area of Childhood and Youth Development ? Does your organization have any formal agreements or informal working relationship with other local service programs?

What role does your governing board members, volunteers, and / or donors play in facilitating viable service delivery and program administration? Does your program have any major civic benefactors or corporate sponsors? Describe other secured funding sources and committed operational resources your organization has allocated for the proposed program.

VIPS' programs and services support our community's comprehensive response to the Childhood & Youth Development priority in the areas of Kindergarten readiness, parental/caregiver/kinship resources and supports, and affordable access to early care & education for children under 5 years of age. VIPS is the only agency providing regular and ongoing early intervention and educational programming to children, birth to 5, who are blind/visually impaired in Kentucky. That being said, VIPS' Early Childhood Intervention program does collaborate with other service providers in the state-wide program, First Steps. These service providers include physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, dieticians/nutritionists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and assistive technology experts. Working with the caregivers as a team, VIPS and these other service providers are better able to help children develop, grow, and learn while empowering caregivers with knowledge, resources, and supports. Through the efforts of the team, children are better prepared to enter kindergarten.

VIPS' Central KY location is within the building of the Hearing & Speech Center (HSC). It is here that the center-based Little Learners Enrichment program takes place. Part of the Little Learners curriculum includes visits to VIPS' sensory room which is also shared with the children of HSC and independent service providers within the community.

VIPS' Governing Board Members oversee the service delivery and program administration of all VIPS programs and services. Neither the Early Childhood Intervention nor Little Learners Enrichment programs have major civic benefactors or corporate sponsors. VIPS has already secured partial funding for both programs through fundraising events, donors, and grants.

5.3.3 Outreach & Inclusion Strategy **15 Points**

Demonstrate how the program will ensure services are available and accessible by all potential participants, especially related to language barriers for persons with limited English proficiency; persons with physical or other disabilities; and persons impacted by poverty and economic distress.

Has your organization enacted any policies (or employs any standard operating procedures) to ensure equitable service opportunity and / or benefit program to a diverse cross-section of the greater community?

In the Early Childhood Intervention program, TVIs, DIs and COMS provide services to the children in their own home and community ensuring services are easily accessible and available to all children regardless of disability or socioeconomic status. VIPS' teachers travel to the child and family, meeting them in their home or their place of choice within their own community. This program is at no cost to the families. The Little Learners Enrichment Program's classroom is designed to accommodate all children, and is accessible via a wheelchair ramp and elevator. This program asks families to pay a small fee but it's not mandatory. Up to 75% of children with vision loss have a dual diagnosis. Loss of vision is no respecter of persons, and affects children of all racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Delivery of services for both programs is not based on a child's primary language, physical or other disabilities, or socio-economic status. As language barriers are encountered, the teachers use the interpretation services offered through the First Steps program to communicate with the family. Teachers schedule visits with the family based on equal availability. During the scheduling process teachers try to accommodate the families' needs and may meet with them at any time of the day, evening, and occasionally, on a weekend.

It is the standard operating procedure of VIPS to provide equal opportunities to all children who are blind/visually impaired in order for them to reach their highest potential. No child will ever be denied services by VIPS.

6.0 Program Budget Summary Form Instructions

Proposal Submittal shall be considered incomplete and shall be rejected without completed Budget Summary Form. *(Including total amount of ESR grant request.)* **The Program Budget will be the same for both FY21 and FY22; there will be no increases in award for Year 2 of the grant.**

For organizations requesting funding for more than one program in this RFP, combine into a single Program Budget narrative for the proposal.

Please note that the Program Budget will be part of the grantee agreement with LFUCG and regular tracking and expenditure reporting will be required.

To ensure readability and uniformity, please use the Program Budget form included. Provide brief line-item detail as specified in each section below and verify all calculations.

This section provides a summary of the total proposed Program Budget for FY 2021. It requests the allocation of all projected funding amounts (City and non-City sources) for anticipated FY 2021 program expenditures.

Total Program Budget

Column A should reflect projected expenditures for the entire program (not just the proposed LFUCG ESR grant funding request portion). When the chart is completed this column should equal ESR Grant Funding Request plus other/non-ESR program funding. (A=B+C)

ESR Grant Funding Request

Column B is the grant amount being requested from this RFP to support this program's services to eligible Fayette County Participants.

Non-LFUCG Program Funding

Column C is the non-LFUCG ESR funding that is allocated to the Total Program Budget (A-B = C).

This form is for the budget for the PROGRAM applying for ESR funds, not the total agency budget.

For each category identify the amount requested and the amount to be leveraged through other programs or organizations (if applicable).

Staff Salaries – Identify the number of Full-time position salaries allocated to the program, and part-time positions allocated to the program, and the amounts of each allocated to Columns A, B, & C.

Consultant Services – In the "List Details" box, **briefly** describe any expenses associated with providing expanded supportive services or other services for which the organization intends to contract with another entity. Any of these expenses to be provided by the proposing organization should be included in other line items.

Space/Facilities – In the "List Details" box, **briefly** list the basis of the allocation of rental costs, utilities, janitorial costs, and any other facility costs for the Program. Identify any office or program space in an LFUCG owned building, and any other costs (rent, monthly utilities, etc.) reimbursed to LFUCG.

Scholarships/Stipends – In the "List Details" box, **briefly** list the type of scholarships or stipends, and include the number of people or organizations to receive funds.

Operating Expenses – In the "List Details" box, **briefly** list the costs associated with expenses, supplies, utilities, and any other expense associated directly with the operation of the project.

Other – In the "List Details" box, **briefly** list any other costs for the Program not covered above.

PROGRAM BUDGET SUMMARY

Agency Name **Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)**

Program Name **Early Childhood Intervention & Little Learners Programs**

FY 2021 (July 1, 2020--June 30, 2021) Total Program Budget

	# of Employees:	Column A Total Program Budget [= B+C]	Column B ESR Grant Funding Request	Column C Non-ESR Program Funding [A-B]
1. Staff Salaries for Program				
Full-Time (FTE)	6	225,076	28,134	196,942
Part-Time		0		
Total Salaries		225,076	28,134	196,942
3. Consultant Services	$	25,462	25,462	0
list details	Contract teachers and early childhood intervention services			
4. Space/Facilities	$	25,462	1,782	23,680
list details	Rent			
5. Operating Expenses	$	32,428	4,824	27,604
list details	Insurance, family support, telephone, office supplies			
6. Scholarships / Stipends	$	0		
list details - numbers & amounts				
7. Other	$	38,111	8,498	29,613
list details	Travel for the home and community visits			
8. TOTAL FY21 PROGRAM BUDGET *(Program budget will be the same for FY22; no increase in award for Year 2 of the grant)*	$	346,539	68,700	277,839

Cost per Program Participant: $ 2,038

I understand that this document in its entirety is incorporated into my grant Agreement with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

Authorized Representative *(typed name)*: Mary Smyth

Title: Assistant Director, VIPS Central KY **Date**: 3/23/20