

2021- 2022 Wellness Research in NH Schools & Home School Environments

RPF questions

1. Who is the incumbent? This is a new project. There is no incumbent.
2. What is the contract amount with the incumbent? N/A
3. What is the business reason for posting this RFP now? Long-term objective of improving student wellness with the resulting effect of increased student engagement in learning and better student educational attainment.
4. What are the challenges that your agency hopes to resolve with this engagement? Improved student engagement and wellness leading to better educational outcomes.
5. What are the pain points with the current processes and services? Increasing indicators of poor student wellness that negatively affect engagement and student educational attainment.
6. What are the specific improvements your agency would like the next contractor to bring to your processes and services? N/A
7. What is the budget range that has been established for each of these 3 research questions? Potential bidders are expected to provide a “best offer” response to one or more of the proposed projects in the RFP.
8. Is this opportunity to be funded with Federal monies? Yes.
9. If so, will any federal responsibilities convey to the awardee? All relevant compliance responsibilities for sub-grantees.
10. May this work be conducted on an entirely remote basis? The research projects are described in detail in the RFP. The proposed bidders will include their proposed approach to completing the research in the response to the RFP. Remote work will not be a disqualifying consideration, though the project anticipates return to in-person instruction.

11. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our organization is working separately and remotely in our home offices which do not have the production capacity to print and bind multiple proposal copies. Sending multiple paper copies will require us to outsource to a printing company which will be expensive and take away a week of our proposal writing time. **Since we are in a worldwide health crisis, will your agency agree to accept an emailed proposal exclusively?** There are vendors available to do this at low cost. There is no change being made to the RFP at this time. There is also a requirement an electronic copy.
12. Is this opportunity open to institutions outside of NH? The goal would be to utilize NH Schools to answer the research questions. If your institution is able to do that they would not be precluded.
13. What are the approximate resources available for each of the studies? The wide range of numbers of schools potentially involved and suggestions about study expansion or enhancements make it difficult to estimate costs. No specific budget has been set for these projects. We are looking for the bidders to give us their best estimates on the implementation of the projects as described in the RFP. The proposed scope of study should be large enough for meaningful results.
14. What is the source of funding for each of the studies? Principally federal grant funds.
15. What is the date for proposers receiving responses to questions? As soon as possible but no later than 2/01/2021
16. What are NH DOE's expectations with respect to the role of the researcher in recruiting participants?
The role of the researchers includes participant recruitment. The department will aid in any way that it can, including contact information as well as communications by the department recommended by the researcher to solicit and encourage participation. Further, the department

will also, to the extent the researcher requests, work with them to select potential participants that are more likely to want to participate.

17. Does NH DOE expect that the research projects will need to be approved through local school district IRBs, and if so, how might that impact the expected project timelines? Would there be supports such as site managers, MOUs, or financial resources available to support the process?

The department does not anticipate that there will be a need for local IRB approval. The supports should come from school personnel, school volunteers. Site managers, MOU would also be based upon best practice at the local level. Financial resources if anticipated would come from the local level.

Research Study 1

1. We see in the Research Design that “the manner in which Play Club is administered could vary from school to school in accordance with the schools’ needs and preferences”, and that specifics of Let Grow implementation could vary as well. Have Play Club and Let Grow defined core elements and acceptable variations and/or some measures of fidelity or implementation? If not, how does NH DOE see possible variation in the implementation of these programs impacting the research design and how the results are interpreted?

The core elements of Play Club are: (a) At least a 40 minute period at least once a week for at least 10 weeks. (Ideally 60-minute periods); (b) all grades (K-5) together, as age mixing is a key component; (c) a large group of student playing at the same time in the same space or set of spaces— maybe between 50 and 100 depending on size of school; (d) monitors (who have been teachers in most cases so far) are instructed in non-intervention except when truly needed; (e) adequate space and playthings (typically the gymnasium and outdoor playground are available, but in some cases school hallways, art room, and other rooms are also available. Schools might vary in time of day when Play Club is offered (before school hours, after school hours, or during school hours, in which case it might be a special recess).

For Let Grow's description of Play Club and the Let Grow project see here <https://letgrow.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Let-Grow-Play-Club-Flyer.pdf> and here <https://letgrow.org/program/the-let-grow-project/>

2. Similarly, if schools adapt the programs to meet their needs, it would be important for the researchers to understand and document what implementation of Play Club and Let Grow look like at different sites. We anticipate that analyzing the Play Club logs would help us do that to some extent. We also understand NH DOE is committed to avoiding 'demand bias' on the part of participants who respond to the questionnaires. However, in order to fully document the variance in implementation, would NH DOE be comfortable with the research design including some gathering of information about the implementation of Play Club and/or Let Grow at each school?

The researchers would work collaboratively with each of the school principals to work out a way of implementation that meets the needs of the school and of the research.

3. Will schools that choose to implement Play Club and/or Let Grow receive any ongoing implementation support, technical assistance, or financial resources? If so, please specify.

That has not been determined and will be dependent on the outcome of the research.

4. What are NH DOE's thoughts on how COVID-19 may impact the implementation of Play Club and Let Grow programs and the research study? For example, would it be acceptable to perform some parts of the study (such as initial participant identification and recruitment) remotely, with implementation and additional research postponed if needed until schools are able to fully implement the programs?

We anticipate that for this research, participate schools will be conducting substantially in-person, at a level that would facilitate effective

implementation of the research objectives. There is not prohibition on the use of remote work.

5. Is there a cost associated with participating in Play Club or Let Grow for families?

Play Club has some costs associated with the hiring of monitors.

6. The proposal suggests a one year study approval and is slated to start in April. Is the intention that the study period is Fall 2021 through Jan/Feb to allow for data analysis and reporting? Please clarify intended timeline.

That is correct.

Research Study 2

1. If in-person focus groups are possible, would NH DOE be open to conducting focus groups with students on site and with school staff present? Generally, students would not be allowed to be alone with outside adults (and it is a liability issue for the researchers). While we understand the desire to have students feel very free to share opinions, schools and parents are likely to be more comfortable with an in-school focus group location and perhaps a school representative present.

The department is not holding the focus groups the researchers would have to include that in the scope of work. The Department would not prohibit the presence of adults, school staff or parents, as part of the project proposal.

Research Study 3

1. The questionnaire item examples are largely open-ended, and the research design suggestion is for these to be online surveys. Given that it is difficult to get good response rates to online surveys with so many open-ended questions, especially with busy homeschooling parents, is the Department open to changes in the types of items, or to different

methods (such as focus groups or interviews), which might also affect the size of the sample?

Researchers should feel free to propose any changes that make sense to them and offer their rationale for the changes.

2. How should the contractor address in budgeting the suggestions for follow-up interviews, especially given that the work is approved for one year? Does this suggest that approval of Research Study #3 will be later given the preference for implementing later?

The bidder is expected to present a timetable for implementation. The department is interested in completing the research in a timely manner and has not established any timetable restrictions on bidders.