

## Request for Proposals – Questions and Answers

Supporting Community-Serving Organizations to Pilot Basic Swimming and Water Safety Training for School-Aged Children in Select States

Question	Answer
<b>Program Eligibility – Age</b>	
What is the age range for this RFP? Is there any flexibility in the age requirements?	This RFP is available for programs serving children ages 5–17 only.
Why is the program limited to children ages 5–17?	This particular program focuses on school partnerships. There is evidence that programs for school-aged children can be incorporated to scale within school systems, require fewer instructors, and are associated with faster skill acquisition.
Are you open to programs that serve middle or high schools?	Yes, as long as the students served fall within the 5–17 age range.
<b>Program Eligibility – Organizational Eligibility &amp; Partnerships</b>	
Is partnering with a school required?	Yes, eligible applicants must be partnered with a school, multiple schools, or a school district. <i>Please refer to the School Partnerships section for more information.</i>
In addition to a school partner, can other partners be included too?	Yes, but one of the partners involved in the program must be a school or school district.
Can a partnership be with a charitable organization?	Yes, but one of the partners involved in the program must be a school or school district.
Would a Boys & Girls Club count as a partner?	Yes, but one of the partners involved in the program must be a school or school district.
Are Army MWR programs eligible to apply?	Programs must partner with a local school or school district, serve children 5–17 and offer lessons at no or minimal cost. If these criteria are met, the program would be eligible.
Can we partner with a daycare or Pre-K program if the children are over five years old?	Programs must partner with a local school or school district, serve children 5–17 and offer lessons at no or minimal cost. If these criteria are met, the program would be eligible.
Are the previous grantees and subrecipients from the June 2023 award eligible to apply?	Yes, previous grantees and subrecipients awarded under the June 2023 Request for Interest are eligible.
Are school districts eligible to apply directly?	Yes, school districts may apply directly.
Are private, charter and/or religious schools eligible?	Partnerships must be with schools that are publicly funded, therefore public and charter schools are eligible, but private schools are not.
How could we incorporate home school students?	The focus of this grant is on partnerships with public schools.
Can nonprofit foundations send funds to smaller businesses to allocate funding and work with the schools?	Yes, we would be open to this model but will need to work with the instructor team to train and collect evaluation data.
<b>Program Eligibility – Program Components &amp; Format</b>	

Are dry-land instruction programs eligible for funding, or are you looking to specifically fund in-water programs?	Eligible programs must have an in-water component. A minimum of 240 minutes of in-water time per participant is required.
Can classroom education and school assemblies on water safety be included alongside swim lessons?	Dryland water safety training would need to be directly linked to in-water swim skills training. If these are the same students who are getting some water safety education prior to entering the water for swim skills training this could be included in the grant. A minimum of 240 minutes of in-water time per participant is required (e.g., eight 30 min lessons or four one-hour lessons).
Can we offer open, free swim classes not affiliated with a school?	No, open, free classes not connected directly with a school would not be eligible.
Can grant funds support open swim time?	The focus of this opportunity is funding instruction time.
Is the grantee required to directly provide the swim instruction, or can they subcontract with a community pool or provider?	We need more information to answer this question. Please reach out to <a href="mailto:drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org">drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org</a> to clarify your question.
Is there a required number of lessons per participant?	There is not a specific number of lessons required but a minimum of 240 minutes of in-water time per participant is required (e.g., eight 30 min lessons or four one-hour lessons).
Is there a minimum number of participants?	There is not a minimum number of participants.
Who makes the decision regarding student eligibility for the program? Should schools send that student list to the grantee?	The specific arrangements of school partnerships differ. In some cases, the school identifies the participants for the program (e.g., the entire third grade class).
Would working with an afterschool care program that's on site at a public school for their students be eligible to apply? Or does the program need to be partnered during school hours or with the school itself?	Yes, school partnerships can have different formats. Please detail the partnership clearly in your application.
Our Swim School teaches at a preschool that has a pool. We would have the opportunity to use the school partnership on the weekends. Would this be a possibility?	Yes, school partnerships can have different formats. Please detail the partnership clearly in your application.
Does the United States Swim School Association qualify as a provider provider/aquatic professional membership/curriculum?	We need more information to answer this question. Please reach out to <a href="mailto:drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org">drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org</a> to clarify your question.
Can programs offer swim lessons through summer school or summer care affiliated with local schools?	Yes, swim skills programs implemented in the summer, in collaboration with a school, will be considered.

Can providers offer swim programs both during the school day (with school-provided transportation) and after school (with parent-provided transportation)?	Yes, programs during the school day and after-school programs have been successful in the past. Applicants may want to consider how to ensure attendance with an after-school program as that has been a challenge identified in the past.
<b>School Partnerships</b>	
Can programs apply for funding if they already have an established school partnership, or is this only for new partnerships?	Both new and existing partnerships are eligible for funding.
Can we apply with a pending partnership agreement with a school?	Yes, you may apply with a pending agreement.
Do we have to have an identified school partnership when we apply?	A school letter of support is not required with the application, but applicants must clearly describe the scope and nature of the planned partnership.
Can you partner with multiple districts?	Yes, partnerships with multiple schools or districts are allowed. If awarded funding, a letter of support will be required from each participating school or district.
Does the partnership have to be with an entire district, or can it be a single school?	The program can partner with a single school, several schools, or a district – any of these configurations are eligible.
Will the CDC Foundation assist in forming school partnerships?	No, the CDC Foundation does not facilitate partnerships between community-serving organizations and schools.
What qualifies as a school “partnership”? Does a school promoting the program in their newsletter qualify as a partnership? Can you clarify what you mean by an established partnership with a school?	The more involved the school is the stronger the proposal. More active school partnerships (e.g., children who participate in swimming lessons during the school day) are more likely to be competitive for this grant opportunity than newsletter advertising. An established partnership means there’s an existing relationship with the school but not necessarily existing programming.
Do participating children have to attend the partnered school?	Typically yes, all children attend the partnered school. Please outline any proposed exceptions or extenuating circumstances in your proposal.
Can siblings attend that are not attending the partnered school?	Yes, if engagement happened through the school partnership, the sibling is within the required age range and part of the targeted community then they would qualify for the program.
Can the CDC Foundation provide documentation to help communicate with the school district?	Yes, the CDC Foundation can provide a support letter outlining the program and its benefits to students for successful applicants. We are unable to offer a letter to applicants prior to selection.
If a partnership is established with a school in City A, and the organization operates in multiple cities, is it necessary to have school partnerships in each city, or is one partnership sufficient to operate this program in other cities?	All lessons funded through this grant opportunity must be in partnership with a school.

<b>Evaluation</b>	
What does program evaluation involve for awarded grantees?	The CDC Foundation provides training and ongoing support to help grantees properly evaluate their programs. Details will be discussed with grantees after awards are made.
Is there a specific evaluation tool that must be used? Are there required tracking measures?	Yes. Grantees are required to use a standardized evaluation tool developed by the CDC Foundation. This tool aligns with existing curricula, including the SAW curriculum, and includes specific measures to track participant progress.
Who needs to participate in the evaluation training? Is it limited to Data Managers and Quality Control staff?	All personnel involved in the evaluation, including swim instructors, are required to complete the virtual training.
What training or time commitments will be required from the service provider's management team for program tracking and evaluation?	Personnel managing the evaluation process will be expected to attend two training sessions. The first will be with the broader team on the training process (1.5-2 hours), the second will be on quality control of the evaluation process (1-1.5 hours).
Can we review the evaluation tool before submitting our application?	Yes, the CDC Foundation can share the swim skills assessment tool upon request.
How often are meetings held between the CDC Foundation and grantees during the program period?	Grantees are expected to participate in monthly meetings with the CDC Foundation and maintain regular email communication. Please refer to the Scope of Work section in the RFP for additional details.
How should we handle evaluation if a child misses the first or final day?	CDC Foundation recognizes that children miss lessons. If you have the capacity to evaluate the student for their first or last lesson outside of the planned session time, that would be beneficial, but it is not required.
<b>Budget and Proposal Attachment Questions</b>	
How many children do winning proposals typically serve? What is the average cost per child?	The number of children served varies significantly across programs. While there is no strict target, awarded proposals often serve a range of participants depending on capacity and program model. The cost per child will be evaluated in context — taking into account regional pricing, staffing, and resources. Applicants are encouraged to submit a realistic, justified budget based on local needs and infrastructure.
Are equipment costs like swim lane guides, kick boards, or other supplies allowed?	Supplies are an eligible expense if they are directly tied to program delivery.
What does the 5% level of effort mean for the data manager and quality control roles?	The estimated 5% level of effort is a good-faith estimate of the time a data manager or quality assurance staff member should allocate to support program tracking and evaluation. Actual time may vary depending on the organization's staffing model and capacity, and budgeting can be adjusted accordingly.
Are there guidelines to the budget narrative?	Yes, applicants should use the Word template provided with the RFP to structure their budget narrative.
Is a letter from the school district required at the time of application?	No, a letter of engagement is not required when submitting your application. However, if selected for funding, this letter will be required as part of the contracting process.

Are scholarships for swim lessons—i.e., covering the cost of lessons for children from low-income families—an allowable expense?	As part of the grant, your program would be required to collect swim skills data from scholarship participants on their first and last lesson. We would consider funding the participation fee for students to take lessons, but you would need to train instructors and have them collect swim skills data.
Does the grant cover program administrative costs?	Yes, please refer to the budget narrative Word document for details on indirect costs covered.
How should we list swim instructors in the proposal if we're a larger facility?	You don't need to list each instructor by name. Instead, provide the number of instructors and their hourly rates as a staffing category.
Can one person fulfill multiple roles (e.g., instructor and data manager)?	Yes. A single staff member may take on multiple roles, provided that each responsibility is clearly defined and their time is accurately reflected in the budget narrative.
It's important to consider Adaptive Aquatics and the ratio for Student to Instructor. Many children with superpowers need 1:1. Would you consider this in the budget proposal? What is the best way to handle this?	Please clearly outline your budget costs; there is recognition that this would impact costs. There is flexibility to consider these factors.
Can grant funds be used for infrastructure improvements?	No. The program does not fund infrastructure development. However, funds may be used to build staff capacity, such as training lifeguards or instructors to deliver the swim skills program
What supporting documents should we provide to demonstrate community engagement?	No specific attachments are required. Simply use the proposal narrative to describe your history of service and engagement in the community, including the relationships and rapport you've built.
Given the variable nature of children's ability to learn a skill, the likelihood is that we will not have 100% success with each child. What is the ratio of success required for funding to continue, and are we able to request additional funds for a small contingent of those children as long as we have not maxed out the budget?	There is not a required ratio of success. The evaluation is designed to be able to demonstrate incremental progress.
<b>Funds Awarded</b>	
What is the maximum funding per proposal?	The maximum award is \$100,000 per applicant. Proposals requesting less funding for smaller participant pools are also welcome.
Can multiple community-serving organizations submit a joint proposal and exceed the \$100,000 cap?	The maximum award remains \$100,000 per applicant, even for joint or collaborative proposals.
What if a proposal includes multiple YMCAs that are separate organizations within the same state?	Each proposal is capped at \$100,000, regardless of the number of YMCAs represented. Each YMCA may also consider submitting individual applications.
If we have multiple states operated by the same owner, or even cover different counties and school	It is recommended that you submit a separate application for each state if your operations span across state lines.

districts, are they eligible for multiple grants, or is it restricted by business owner?	
Can funding be distributed across multiple locations under a single organization?	Yes. The awarded funds can be used across multiple delivery sites, as long as they're managed by the same applicant organization.
How many grants will be awarded?	There is no predetermined number of grants to be awarded.
Are similar funding opportunities available for Maryland or other states?	Unfortunately, grants are not available for Maryland at this time. We are hopeful that this opportunity will expand to other states in the future.
Is the \$100,000 intended to support a full year of programming, or is it considered seed funding?	Funds are expected to cover the proposed program in full. Applicants are encouraged to consider a school year or 12-month cycle when planning their proposal.
Can this grant be applied for annually?	This is currently a standalone opportunity.
Is the funding at risk with federal budget cuts?	No. The initiative is funded through a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies.
<b>Timeline</b>	
Does the funding need to be used within a single year, or can it span multiple years?	The preferred implementation timeline is within a school year or 12-month period. If your program requires a longer duration due to unique challenges, such as seasonal or staffing constraints, please clearly outline those extenuating circumstances in your proposal.
What is the anticipated start date for "Fall 2025"? Is there flexibility in launch timing?	The planned start date is early September 2025, but there is flexibility to accommodate your program's needs.
How should we handle the timeline if outdoor pools and weather pose scheduling challenges?	Programs impacted by weather or lack of indoor pool access should still aim to complete implementation within 12 months. However, please describe any limitations in your timeline and how you plan to navigate them.
When will funding decisions be announced, and when does the grant period begin?	Organizations will be notified of funding decisions beginning August 7, 2025. Award agreements will start on or around September 1, 2025.
<b>Transportation</b>	
Is transportation an allowable expense under this grant?	Yes. Transportation is an eligible expense.
Can we partner with a school to provide bussing, or does our organization need to manage transportation directly?	Partnering with a school or school district to provide bussing is encouraged as it is often the most cost-effective and logistically feasible model. However, applicants may also choose to include transportation costs in their own program budget if necessary.
We pay a set hourly rate for school bus transportation – how should we present this in the budget?	Please calculate and show the cost as: Number of hours needed × hourly rate.
Can the funds from this program be given to the school districts for transportation? And the other portion to the swim school that provides the actual lessons?	Yes. Funds from this grant may be allocated to multiple partners, such as the school district for transportation and the aquatic provider for instruction, as long as the expenses directly support program delivery and are clearly explained in your proposal.

Other	
Where are swim lessons typically conducted?	Swim instruction is usually delivered by a community-serving organization that partners with a school. Lessons may be held at a pool operated by the community-serving organization or, where available, at a school-owned pool.
Can you provide a previous proposal for a successful applicant?	No, the CDC Foundation is unable to provide proposals from past applicants.
What are the grant reporting requirements if awarded?	Funded organizations will be required to submit a final narrative and financial report within 30 days of the award's end date, using templates provided by the CDC Foundation. Additional reporting may be included, to be outlined in the resulting agreements for successful applicants. Please note report templates will not be provided at this time.
Is the program contract awarded at the city level or school district level?	Contracts are executed between the CDC Foundation and the RFP applicant. If you need tailored guidance based on your setup, feel free to reach out to <a href="mailto:drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org">drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org</a> .
Is a scoring rubric available?	No. Applicants should closely follow the program requirements outlined in the RFP to shape their proposal.