



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):**

**B'more for Healthy Babies Communications**

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## INTRODUCTION

**Family League of Baltimore** (Family League) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore. Since 1991, it has served as an architect of change in Baltimore by promoting data-driven, collaborative initiatives and aligning resources to create lasting outcomes for children, families and communities. Stewardship, performance, trust, respect, innovation, and equity are the core values that guide its work.

Family League believes that racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines the life trajectory of people in Baltimore. As such, it applies a racial equity lens to our policies, practices, and organizational culture. It will evaluate and develop new practices and rebuild relationships that are based upon a commitment to justice and the dismantling of institutional racism. Family League expects to be held accountable to equitable practices by the communities with whom we work and are committed to holding our partners accountable for implementing equity practices as well.

Family League serves as a lead implementation partner for B'more for Healthy Babies (BHB), Baltimore's citywide initiative to improve birth and early childhood outcomes. BHB was launched in 2009 and brings together city agencies, health care institutions, community-based organizations, and academic partners to ensure that all of Baltimore's babies are born healthy and ready to thrive in healthy families.

Through this RFP opportunity, Family League is seeking a provider to implement an effective health promotion campaign with a commitment to racial equity. For more information, please visit our website at [www.familyleague.org](http://www.familyleague.org).

## DEFINITIONS

Nine years ago, Baltimore had one of the worst rates of infant mortality in the country—128 babies died before their first birthdays in 2009 alone, and the rate had been climbing for a decade. Black babies were five times more likely to die than white babies, a reflection of the deep inequities in health and resources faced by Baltimore families. The city struggled to confront its two leading causes of infant mortality—babies born too soon and too small, and babies dying in their sleep.

In response to this public health crisis, leaders from the government, nonprofit, and academic sectors came together to launch B'more for Healthy Babies (BHB). This groundbreaking initiative, led by the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD), with Family League of Baltimore and HealthCare Access Maryland (HCAM) as lead implementation partners, works to improve policies and services that support mothers, babies, and families from preconception (prior to pregnancy) to age three; mobilize community residents; and conduct social marketing to promote healthy behaviors.

And the initiative is working. Together with community residents and more than 150 partners, BHB made history by not only reversing the rising infant mortality rate but also bringing it to its lowest point ever six years later. The gap between black and white infant deaths has closed by 64%. The teen birth rate has decreased by 49%, a harbinger of better outcomes for families down the road. But there is still much more work to be done. With everyone's continued support, Baltimore can and will become a city where every baby thrives.

Our vision: All of Baltimore's children are born healthy and grow and thrive in healthy families. This year in Baltimore, at least 30 more babies will celebrate their first birthdays than did in 2009. In five years, we intend for that number to grow by 10 to more than 40 babies.

Achieving more first birthdays for Baltimore babies depends on BHB’s 150 partners—city agencies, health care systems, community-based organizations, academic institutions, and more—taking a collective impact approach to improving health citywide. And it requires a life course approach, one that understands infant survival is influenced not only by a mother’s health in pregnancy, but also by the health of parents well before pregnancy, the community in which they live, and the social and economic factors—particularly racism—that shape their lives.

But infant survival is not the final goal. A healthy start lays the foundation for young children who are ready to learn, youth who thrive, and young adults who are productive members of their communities. Yet the same racial and economic inequities that drive poor birth outcomes in Baltimore also harm the health and development of children during the crucial first years of life. As a result, black babies still die at twice the rate of white babies and many black children enter kindergarten less prepared than their peers, already disadvantaged from living in segregated communities that lack the resources needed for a child’s optimal growth and development.

While Baltimore’s parents and caregivers work hard to overcome these built-in challenges, BHB is responding to its own clear call to action: addressing inequities in our systems and services that contribute to health disparities and becoming more accountable to the families we serve. Now is the time to reinvest in our youngest residents and make the future we desire for Baltimore a reality.

#### BHB Strategies, 2019–2024

1. Rally providers and partners around seven priority health areas in which strengthened policies and systems, improved services, social marketing, and community mobilization will turn the curve on the well-being of families, babies, and toddlers: mental health and stress, nutrition, parenting, safe infant sleep, sexual health, social-emotional development, and substance use.
2. Advocate for equitable policies that improve local and state family services, increase access to resources, address the social and economic factors that harm health, and ensure sustainability of a high functioning preconception, pregnancy, and early childhood system for Baltimore.
3. Mobilize communities by expanding BHB’s flourishing neighborhood-based initiatives in Upton/Druid Heights and Patterson Park to more city neighborhoods, marshalling faith-based leaders to support healthy babies, organizing community events, and sustaining the innovative work of the BHB Community Advisory Board.
4. Transform the city’s preconception, pregnancy, and early childhood (0–3) system so that it is accountable and responsive to the residents of Baltimore City, delivers equitable and trauma-responsive services, and supports families’ strengths, while tightly collaborating with the city’s child welfare, child care, education, and health care systems.
5. Ensure every facet of BHB systematically connects people to resources—public benefits, programs and services, material goods, and social supports—to boost family power and counter the racism and other social and economic factors that harm the health of families.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

BHB’s established communication strategy is a critical driver in changed behaviors, resulting in improved outcomes. The selected provider will collaborate with public health officials, nonprofit partners, community members and other stakeholders to disseminate clear, effective messages with the goal of further improving maternal and infant mortality rates as articulated in the BHB Strategic Refresh. This would include, but not be limited to:

- a. Evaluation – Identify key data points, attitudes and understandings amongst target audiences to assess scope and thrust of BHB’s communications strategy and establish a baseline for measuring effectiveness of communications campaign efforts.

- b. Planning– Utilizing the BHB Strategic Refresh as a guide, develop a comprehensive communications and community engagement strategy for all key BHB campaigns, leveraging multiple communications vehicles and functions for the different provider levels. These include traditional, digital and social media management; collateral material design and brand execution; and event communications management. Plan should include budget and timeline.
- c. Implementation:
  - i. Campaign Development & Implementation - Proactively recommend data-informed, evidence-based messages to impact each of the three causes of infant death. Execute a strategic calendar of coordinated campaign activations based on historical trends in each of the three areas.
  - ii. Digital & Social Media Management - Leverage BHB’s existing social media platforms and Website in support of campaign effectiveness. This includes development and maintenance of yearlong editorial and content calendars and reporting on engagement metrics.
  - iii. Brand & Collateral - Create a BHB Brand Usage Guide to define standards for the BHB identity and how it is translated in promotional materials, online presence, and in the media.
  - iv. Event Communications – Coordinate with BHB Partners to develop and implement communications strategies & tactics in support of signature BHB events.
  - v. Media Relations Plan- Create a comprehensive plan for when and how media is engaged. PIOs will then collaborate with them to ensure that messages are framed to reflect the broad set of stakeholders and partners represented by BHB.
- d. Assessment & Reporting – Establish metrics for tracking the effectiveness of efforts against initial evaluation and desired outcomes of the BHB Strategic Refresh and Annual Work Plan, and report monthly on progress. Also co-lead the Data and Evaluation workgroup with the Health Department.

## KEY DELIVERABLES

- Comprehensive Communications Plan that includes research, messaging, targeted audiences, traditional and social media strategy with timeline, budget, and accountability matrix.
- Monthly report including: social media analytics, progress toward established success metrics.
- Promotional Materials and Collateral including but not limited to: videos, social media posts, brochure, poster, infographic, ads and user- friendly toolkits.

## GRANT TERMS & APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

### Grant Terms

Grant Period: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020; with two one-year renewal options

Available Funding (not to exceed): \$250,000 - \$300,000

### Applicant Eligibility/Requirements

To apply, interested individuals or organizations must:

- Qualify as a nonprofit corporation with 501(c)(3) status, a for-profit corporation, or a public entity;
- Have a status of 501(c)(3) in “Good Standing.” Must provide a PDF copy of the certificate within the 2019 calendar year (January 1, 2019 to present). Certificate can be obtained from [here](#);

- Provide a copy of the organization’s independently audited financial statements for its fiscal year-end within the past 12 months;
- Provide evidence of organizational capacity to implement a quality program as outlined in the RFP;
- Have experience using social behavior change theory in public health.
- Possess a demonstrated capacity to collect, manage, and utilize participant-level and programmatic data; AND
- Provide a clear and concise operating budget.

As Baltimore City’s appointed local management board (LMB), Family League is committed to strengthening Baltimore City-based businesses and providing equity and inclusion in its procurement process. It is the policy of Family League to provide all Baltimore City-based small, minority and/or woman-owned or -led business and other historically underrepresented and underutilized business enterprises the maximum practicable opportunity to compete and be awarded contracts to provide goods, services, and activities administered by the Organization.

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit proposals through **FUNDINGtrack**, Family League’s online grants management system accessible through <https://flb.fluxx.io>. **Submission must be completed by the date and time specified in this RFP and in the FUNDINGtrack application.** The deadlines will be strictly enforced. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application process is completed by the deadline. Hard copies, emailed copies, and late submissions will not be accepted. Furthermore, Family League reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend or modify any provision of this RFP, or to withdraw this RFP at any time prior to contract award. Family League shall not be bound by or liable under this RFP and/or any response thereto until a final written contract has been executed by Family League and the grantee incorporating the terms and conditions of the award.

### Registration

All applicants must be registered in **FUNDINGtrack**. This is done by selecting the “Register” link on the portal’s home page, found here: <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Applicants will receive login credentials via email within 72 hours of submission of the registration form. **Applicants are highly encouraged to register early.**

### Organization Information and Documentation

The Organizational profile enables all registered users of **FUNDINGtrack** to provide the key business and contact information needed from Funded Partners. All registered users should fully complete the requested information and upload the due diligence documentation required in this RFP.

### Help using the Online Application

For questions or problems, contact the Help Desk at [FUNDINGtrack@FamilyLeague.zendesk.com](mailto:FUNDINGtrack@FamilyLeague.zendesk.com), Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

## PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE/QUESTIONS

**Date/Time: April 30 at 12:00-1:00 PM**

Family League will host a pre-proposal face to face and Webinar to present this RFP and respond to questions. It is Family League’s aim to provide as much information and support to potential applicants as possible. While it is not mandatory to attend the meeting, it is strongly encouraged. Family League will compile and publish responses to questions from this meeting on our website at <https://familyleague.org/funded-partnerships/funding-opportunities/>

**Webinar:** <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/926793053>; Access Code: 926-793-053

Or

**Dial in by Phone:** (872) 240-3412

Note: Please limit your webinar connection to one per organization.

## **BUDGET GUIDELINES**

Be sure that the budget:

- Does not exceed the award amount;
- Does not include in-kind contributions;
- Is consistent with the program design/plans outlined in the corresponding proposal narrative; and
- Ensure administrative costs, if applicable, do not exceed 10% of total direct costs.

## **REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Review Panel**

Applications will be reviewed and rated by a panel comprised of individuals with experience, knowledge, and expertise in the field. This panel may include service professionals; community members; and parents, youth and/or family members of Baltimore City. Review panelists will serve at the invitation of Family League.

### **Selection Criteria**

The following criteria will be used in selecting the application to be awarded:

- Compliance with all RFP guidelines
- Detailed responses to application questions
- A clear and concise proposed program operating budget and supporting budget narrative
- Additional proposed resources not required by RFP

### **Announcement**

Funding decisions are expected to be announced by June 7, 2019

## **GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS**

### **Data Collection**

All Funded Partners will be required to submit data on every participant they serve. Funded Partners must have the capacity to collect, manage, utilize, and report participant-level and program data. The data will be entered into Family League's data system, Charm, or in such form as agreed upon by Family League.

### **Reporting**

All Funded Partners must submit quarterly financial and programmatic reports, unless otherwise specified by Family League. These include, but are not limited to, a narrative report; data specified in each Funded Partner's Scope of Work, including outcome and demographic information; and line-item financial information.

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

All Funded Partners must participate in staff development activities as required by Family League. Information related to training opportunities, both required and optional, will be shared with Funded Partners on a regular basis. Additionally, Family League is committed to providing technical assistance and welcomes Funded Partner feedback.

### **Grant Award**

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee an award. Family League is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. Family League reserves the right to withdraw an award prior to execution of a contract with a Funded Partner in Family League's sole and absolute

discretion.

**Contract Terms**

All Funded Partners must comply with all terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by Family League. These terms and conditions can be found on the Family League website at [www.familyleague.org](http://www.familyleague.org). By submitting a proposal to this RFP, applicants attest that they have read and accept these conditions fully. A Scope of Work with details about specific requirements and measurable outcomes will be a requirement of grant recipients as an addition to the contract.

**Criminal Background Checks**

All Funded Partners must conduct criminal background checks for employees. These practices must comply with the terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by Family League. All Funded Partners must have established standard operating policies and procedures for conducting, reviewing, and if necessary, responding to the results of the record checks.

**Additional Funder Conditions**

Any additional terms and conditions imposed by funders following the release of this RFP shall become a part of the contract between the Funded Partner and Family League.

**KEY DATES TIMELINE**

KEY DATE	ACTIVITY
4/22/19	RFP posted
4/30/19	Pre-proposal Conference
5/17/19	Submission deadline (by 4:00 pm)
5/23/19	Cure period
6/7/19	Award status announcement