



## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ACT EARLY STATE SYSTEMS GRANTS

**Application Deadline: Wednesday, November 2, 2011**

### **LEARN THE SIGNS ACT EARLY: PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* (LTSAE) campaign in 2004 to educate parents, health care professionals and child care providers about developmental milestones, and the importance of early identification and intervention for children with signs of autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities (ASD/DD). The LTSAE campaign has created tools and resources that have enhanced the quality and effectiveness of communication between parents and their children's health care and child care providers.

The Act Early Regional Summit Project (Summits) held in 2008-2010 in conjunction with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) furthered the LTSAE campaign by convening teams of key state early intervention leaders, including parents, state public health agencies, medical providers, educators and personnel from academic institutions. The Summits were designed to strengthen the capacity of states to respond to the increasing demand for coordinated systems to promote early identification and intervention for children with ASD/DD. The Summits furthered the mission of the LTSAE campaign and enhanced collaborations among stakeholders and state systems to create effective systems for the early identification, assessment, diagnosis, and provision of services for children with ASD/DD and their families.

At the completion of each Summit, state teams developed a state plan outlining resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and vision to improve coordination and awareness of early identification and early intervention service systems for children with ASD/DD within their states. The Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) in conjunction with AUCD, NCBDDD, and MCHB seeks to maintain and build upon the momentum from the collaborative state team work to strengthen state and community systems for early identification and intervention for children with signs of ASD/DD.

#### **ABOUT AMCHP**

*The Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs is a national resource, partner and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth and families, including those with special health care needs.*

*AMCHP supports state maternal and child health programs and partners by helping states build successful programs through such efforts as providing capacity building and technical assistance, disseminating best practices, convening leaders to share experiences and ideas, and advising states about involving partners to reach our common goal of healthy children, healthy families and healthy communities.*

### **PURPOSE OF ACT EARLY STATE SYSTEMS GRANTS**

AMCHP will award 10-15 grants to state public health programs in the amount of \$10,000 up to \$15,000 for a twelve-month period. Keeping in mind both the opportunities and limitations associated with this relatively modest amount of funding, the grantee will use this funding to:

1. Integrate "[\*Learn the Signs. Act Early.\*](#)" (LTSAE) materials and messages into programs that serve parents of young children,
2. Support the collaboration of Act Early State Teams, and
3. Evaluate progress.

Public health programs that 1) serve young children and their parents such as state Title V maternal and child health (MCH) and children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) programs; Part C Early Intervention Programs, and/or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and/or 2) administer early childhood programs such as the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; and/or work closely with other early childhood programs such as Early Head Start are encouraged to apply.

AMCHP will provide ongoing technical assistance, disseminate resource materials, and link grantees to other states and experts in ASD/DD. To access your state materials or find information about the Act Early Regional Summit Project, please refer to the AUCD website at: <http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=547>.

## **ACT EARLY STATE SYSTEMS GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

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**State Lead:** All applications should identify both a **state lead**, who will serve as the lead contact for AMCHP, and a **co-lead** who can serve as a secondary contact should the state lead not be available, and to ensure continuity in the event of leadership changes. The responsibilities of the state lead will include coordination, support and communication with state team members, AMCHP and other partner organizations. The state lead will also submit progress reports to AMCHP as requested.

**Requirements:** When reviewing the below requirements, please recognize that reviewers are aware of the limitations in project scope associated with the relatively small size and short time-frame for the grants. As you develop your team and activities, please focus on realistic, achievable goals.

**Requirement 1: Integrate “[Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#)” (LTSAE) materials and messages into programs that serve parents of young children.**

- Research and identify potential programs for partnership
  - Does the program serve the desired target audience?
  - Does the program directly reach parents, such as with one-on-one provider/parent interactions?
  - Do LTSAE materials and messages address a need currently felt by the partner?
  - Could LTSAE materials be readily integrated into the program?
- Develop a plan for building a partnership with the selected program
- Implement the partnership plan
- *Suggested partners could include the following:*
  - WIC, Home Visitation Programs, Early Intervention/Part C/Child Find, and Section 619/Part B, Dept of Education, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS) if available, MCH/Title V, Head Start/Early Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral Program, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service, state programs, health/medical care providers, parent organizations, advocacy organizations, families and foundations as appropriate.

**Requirement 2: Support the collaboration of the Act Early State Team.**

- Support the state team in its effort to improve coordination and awareness of early identification and early intervention services for children with ASD/DD.

**Requirement 3: Evaluation**

- Develop and implement an evaluation plan to monitor progress (outputs) and outcomes for the proposed activities. For example:
  - Record successes, challenges and lessons learned in working with a new partner.

- Monitor outputs such as materials disseminated, distribution methods and channels, and dissemination rates.
- Estimate the number of parents reached through dissemination channels.
- Monitor rates of parents referred to other providers.

**Reporting Requirements:** Reports will include one mid-year progress report and a final report to AMCHP. Reporting guidance will be given to grant recipients upon award notification.

**Fiscal Agent:** The grant application must clearly identify the fiscal agent, ideally the state Title V program or another state public health program. A letter of commitment is required from the fiscal agent. Other fiscal agents can be considered and designated on an as-needed basis. If another fiscal agent is requested, the application should include the name of, and contact information for, the fiscal agent (as well as an additional contact).

**Grant Funds:** Grant funds will be awarded in one lump sum of up to \$15,000. Please note that grant funds cannot be used to pay for salaried employees, equipment, software, individual trainings, conference or course registration, primary research, publications, personnel or indirect expenses.

#### **WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM AMCHP?**

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- Ongoing technical assistance, including specific guidance, talking points, process flow charts, and other resources to help with partnership development, via a variety of methods, including telephone, e-mail, online discussion boards and webinars from AMCHP staff and partners.
- Structured peer support, a forum to network, share ideas and problem-solve with colleagues nationwide working on similar issues.
- Technical expertise and consultation, information from leading national experts in the field of ASD/DD.

#### **ACT EARLY STATE SYSTEMS GRANTS TIMELINE**

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- RFA Announcement: Thursday, September 15, 2011
- Applicant Informational Conference Call: Early October 2011 (exact date TBD)
- Applications Due: November 2, 2011 at 5:00 pm EST
- Grantees Announced: November 24, 2011
- Grantee Orientation Call: Early December 2011 (exact date TBD)
- Grantee Mid-Term Check-in: May 2012
- Ongoing Support and Technical Assistance: November 2011-November 2012 (and beyond)
- Final Reports Due: November 21, 2012

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

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- Applications need to address Components I-VII (described below).
- The page limit for Components I-IV is four pages single-spaced, 11 minimum font-size; Components V, VI & VII are stand-alone one-page documents.
- Please send all required pieces as one PDF document.

- To be considered eligible, applicants are required to complete and submit all required pieces via e-mail by 5:00 pm (EST) on Wednesday, November 2, 2011, to [mcherny@amchp.org](mailto:mcherny@amchp.org).
- Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for review and will be returned to the applicant.

**Please Note:** You will receive notification of receipt of application no later than one week following submission. If you have not received a notification of receipt by then, please contact Melody Cherny at [mcherny@amchp.org](mailto:mcherny@amchp.org).

For any additional questions, contact Treeby Brown, Senior Project Manager for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs at [tbrown@amchp.org](mailto:tbrown@amchp.org) or (202) 775-0436, or Melody Cherny, Program Associate for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs at [mcherny@amchp.org](mailto:mcherny@amchp.org) or (202) 775-3049.

## **APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

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### **I. STATEMENT OF NEED AND OVERALL GOAL**

- Overview of the Problem:** This section should include a brief overview of the status of your state system for early identification and intervention for children with signs of ASD/DD. Please include any relevant information included in your state's Act Early State Plan.
- Rationale:** This section should articulate the need you plan to address with this opportunity.

### **II. EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- Project Goals, Objectives and Strategies:** Provide a specific goal for the project. Specify one or more objectives for the goal(s) and one to four activities to achieve the objective. This goal should address the three requirements of this opportunity: integration of LTSAE materials, supporting the Act Early State Team, and evaluation.
- Project Outcomes:** This section should include your team's thoughts on potential outcomes of undertaking this project. A key question to consider in this section is: what will be different when your team meets your goal?

### **III. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- Current Efforts:** Include a description of current activities related to the proposed goal to improve early identification and intervention for children with signs of ASD/DD. Describe how your proposed goal(s), objectives and strategies will improve current efforts. Describe factors or capacity in your state/program that can facilitate your efforts (e.g. resources, pending legislation, programmatic work, relationships, etc.).
- Current Collaboration:** Identify existing or potential partnerships and community allies that you believe will be key to your planning and implementation efforts. Consider the question of the benefits of collaboration on these issues.
- Current Capacity:** Explain the specific assets/capacity of your team members to address your proposed strategy.
- Barriers:** Explain any challenges specific to your state that you might experience in implementing this project, how you plan to address them, and thoughts on how AMCHP might support you in addressing them. Please be specific (e.g. if time or money are barriers, discuss specifics about how they are barriers to this work).

**IV. SUSTAINABILITY**

- a. **Impact:** Describe your team’s long-term plans to sustain the activities and efforts originally supported by the grant.
  
- b. **Resources:** Identify resources needed (including partnerships, issue champions, financial resources, training and dissemination) and resources that might be available to sustain your team’s long-term efforts.

**V. BUDGET**

- a. **Include a Proposed Budget:** Grant funds may be used for the following: consultant fees, in-state travel support for state team members, and participation of parents and/or family members of a child with ASD/DD. Acceptable expenses are also those related to meetings, teleconferences or production of materials, including supplies, printing, copying and postage. Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to identify cash matches and/or in-kind supports from centers (e.g. staff time in project coordination), state agencies and other partner organizations. Provide a short budget following the example below.

<b><u>Budget Categories</u></b>	<b><u>Item Description</u></b> <i>(include per unit prices where applicable, e.g. \$10 supplies X 20 participants)</i>	<b><u>Cost Estimate (\$)</u></b>
<b><i>Trainer/Consultant Stipend</i></b> <i>(\$100/hr maximum)</i>		
<b><i>Travel/Lodging (staff)</i></b> <i>(ground: \$75/person/day maximum; air: \$500 r/t maximum; hotel: \$165/night/room plus tax)</i>		
<b><i>Meeting Expenses (room rental, AV)</i></b>		
<b><i>Teleconference/Webinar Expenses</i></b>		
<b><i>Production of Materials</i></b> <b><i>Materials</i></b>		
<b><i>Other</i></b>		

<i>Total Estimated Cost</i>	
<i>Total Grant Request (may not exceed \$15,000)</i>	

*Note: Grant funds may not be used in any amount to pay for equipment, software, individual trainings, conference or course registration, primary research, publications, personnel or indirect expenses.*

**VI. TEAM ROSTER**

- a. Provide a team roster, including a team leader.
- b. Provide detailed contact information of each team member, their expertise and/or role relevant to your team’s proposed work, and their role(s) and responsibility(s) on the team.

**VII. LETTER OF COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT**

- a. Provide a letter of commitment written from the fiscal agent/convening organization clearly indicating commitment to the team requirements and the length of the project. Letters of support are required from team members indicating support from their organizations and a willingness to participate in the activities as presented in the Act Early State Plan. In addition, a letter of support from the state Title V MCH and/or CYSHCN program is required. Additional letters of support from other relevant organizations are encouraged but not required.

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

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Does your application have the following required pieces and meet the criteria?

- I. STATEMENT OF NEED
- II. EXPECTED BENEFITS
- III. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
- IV. SUSTAINABILITY
- V. BUDGET
- VI. TEAM ROSTER
- VII. LETTER OF COMMITMENT

Does your team include all appropriate team members?

**SELECTION PROCESS**

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Applications will be rated on the following evaluation criteria:

**Statement of Need (Sections I & II): 20 points**

- Has the applicant clearly identified key areas of need and linked to the state plan?
- Are the overall goals and benefits appropriate to the scope of this project?

**Opportunities/Challenges/Sustainability (Sections III & IV): 40 points**

- How well does the applicant address current early identification and intervention issues and collaborations?
- How well does the applicant address current opportunities related to these issues?

**Team Roster (Section VI): 30 points**

- Does the application include all required and appropriate team members?
- Does the application identify team members' roles and responsibilities?
- Are there letters of commitment from team members and partner organizations?

**Budget: 5 points**

- Are the costs clearly outlined?
- Is the fiscal agent clearly identified?

**Checklist: 5 points**

- Does the application have all the required pieces (I – VII)?
- Does the application address all the required criteria?