**Request for Applications**

RFA – 2020-21.2.3b

**Making Alternatives to Guardianship a Reality in North Carolina**

**FUNDING AGENCY: North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)*,*** NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Secretary

**ISSUE DATE: November 15th, 2019**

**DEADLINE DATE: January 8th, 2020**

**Receipt of applications online at** [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org) **is preferred, but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm EST on January 8th, 2020. Please notify at least two weeks in advance of the due date if you need application materials in an alternate format or otherwise require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Direct all inquiries concerning this Request for Applications (RFA) to:

**Mailing Address:**

NCCDD-RFA

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3125 Poplarwood Court, Suite 200

Raleigh, NC 27604

**Via Email:** RFAinfo@nccdd.org

**Delivery Information:**

Applicants for this RFA are strongly encouraged to submit the application electronically in the DD Suite online database found at [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org). Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

**Table of Contents**

1. Introduction Page 3
2. About NCCDD Page 4
3. Request for Applications Page 5

 Intent

 Background

 Deliverables

 Contractor Responsibilities

1. Applicant Eligibility Page 10

Use of funds

Performance Monitoring/Quality Assurance

1. Application Procurement Process and Application Review Page 11
2. Attachments to be completed upon award Page 13

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Council’s Five-Year State Plan. The NCCDD’s major funding source is the United States Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Disabilities, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The NCCDD makes funds available primarily through competitive bids or Requests for Applications (RFAs). A general description of the current RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available through DD Suite ([www.ddsuite.org](https://www.ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=1247)) or may be requested in alternate formats or by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply if your organization or agency intends to apply.

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organization, agency, or non-profit demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, the non-profit private entity that is awarded this contract must submit proof of 501(c)(3) status with a [**current IRS determination letter**](http://501c3go.com/irs/need-copy-of-501c3-letter/)**.** The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Private non-profit and for-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

**II. ABOUT NCCDD**

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, is one of 56 entities of its type in the United States and the territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Its activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council’s quarterly meetings are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to assure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, contribution, self-determination, integration and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC DHHS.

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its Five-Year Plan (2017-2021). These goals represent the most pressing needs as identified by stakeholders in North Carolina. These goals are approved by the Council as the framework for its work within the context of the Five-Year Plan.

GOAL 1: By 2021, increase financial security through asset development for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 2: By 2021, increase community living for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 3: By 2021, increase advocacy for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

This RFA will address **Goal 2**.

For further information on the work of the NCCDD, please see the NCCDD Five-Year State Plan at our website by clicking <https://nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html>

**III. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) intends to fund an initiative that will build on the momentum achieved by its Rethinking Guardianship initiatives by providing in-depth education on Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive alternatives to guardianship aimed at two primary audiences:

1. Youth with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) transitioning into adulthood; and
2. Adults transitioning into the community from long-term residential facilities.

***BACKGROUND:***

Guardianship is the most restrictive option of legal substitute decision-making for adults with disabilities. With 100 counties and thus 100 Clerks of Superior Court offices in North Carolina, existing guardianship laws, policies, and procedures, do not receive uniform interpretation and implementation across the state. From January 1st, 2015 through December 31st, 2017, the NCCDD supported the Rethinking Guardianship: Building a Case for Less Restrictive Alternatives initiative through a contract with the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services. The purpose of this initiative was to build on the 2013 public guardianship efforts and expand the discussion to the full range of guardianship and its alternatives. This initiative used data and stories to build a baseline for shared measurement toward a goal of system improvements and less restrictive alternatives and invited the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to play a more central leadership role.

Then, with support from the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program and the Transitions to Community Living Initiative (TCLI), the NCCDD supported a Rethinking Guardianship: A Person-Centered Approach initiative that started on July 1st, 2018 and will continue until December 31st, 2019. The current initiative aims to educate and inform the North Carolina General Assembly on reforming North Carolina General Statute 35A and to encourage more guardians to support individuals living in long-term residential facilities to transition into a less restrictive setting with less restrictive decision-making constraints.

The Rethinking Guardianship Statewide Workgroup has worked diligently for four years to build a sustainable infrastructure to effect long-term changes in North Carolina’s guardianship system that respects the rights of individuals in guardianship and those facing guardianship. Simultaneously, the group has developed a website (<http://rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/>) and other materials, including a brochure titled “An Introduction to Options” and a portion of the Supported Living guidebook titled “How Do We Support People in Making Decisions?” in order to make individuals and families aware of the guardianship process and less restrictive alternatives to guardianship.

Still, the Council recognizes that there is much work to be done in not only making people aware of less restrictive alternatives, such as Supported Decision-Making, but also in building capacity for individuals and families across North Carolina to successfully initiate and incorporate alternatives into their daily lives.

In June 2019, the National Council on Disability published a report titled “Turning Rights Into Reality: How Guardianship and Alternatives Impact the Autonomy of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.” The report alleges the existence of a school-to-guardianship pipeline and includes recommendations for policymakers. It also emphasizes the need for states to invest in creating a “culture shift” to ensure that individuals with I/DD actually have a full range of decision-making supports available to them. The report is available at:

<https://ncd.gov/publications/2019/turning-rights-into-reality>.

By shifting the focus of the statewide Workgroup towards Supported Decision-Making and other forms of decision-making support, the locus of control for this initiative will move more substantially to individuals and families outside of the courts. As one attorney and prominent member of the Uniform Law Commission stated during a workgroup meeting, “If you want less guardianships, stay out of the courtroom whenever possible!”

This initiative will shift the efforts of the Rethinking Guardianship Workgroup towards more in-depth education on Supported Decision-Making and other alternatives to guardianship aimed at two primary audiences: 1) youth with I/DD transitioning into adulthood and 2) adults transitioning to the community from long-term residential facilities.

**Proposed Objectives:**

1. Work with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to fundamentally influence policy and practices related to youth with I/DD transitioning into adulthood so that children and families understand the range of options available to them when nearing the age of 18.
2. Advocate for children with I/DD in middle school and high school to prepare for decision-making in adulthood within the school system and in their families.
3. Work with families to educate and to raise expectations regarding their child’s capacity.
4. Work with individuals and their families and guardians in transitioning back to the community from long-term residential facilities to build capacity for decision-making within and outside of guardianship.
5. Expand the practice of using Supported Decision-Making Agreements and other alternatives to guardianship.

**Proposed Timeline for Activities:**

**Year One:** On-line curriculum development.

**Year Two:** Piloting the curriculum with sample groups and working with individuals to use Supported Decision-Making and other alternatives.

**Year Three:** Scaling up to statewide training and use of alternatives and assessing state readiness for possible Supported Decision-Making legislation.

***DELIVERABLES:***

The entity chosen by the NCCDD will be expected to:

* Develop an on-line, interactive training on Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive alternatives, developing new resources in addition to using and adapting existing materials from other states.
* Train the twelve Family Support Network affiliates across the state so they can be conduits to training within their own local networks.
* Educate families on less restrictive alternatives through planned events.
* Train Transition Coordinators and other human service providers associated with Supported Living, MFP, and TCLI.
* Practice using Supported Decision-Making with individuals and families in partnership with First in Families, Family Support Network affiliates, MFP, TCLI, and any other community partners the applicant may identify.
* Work through the present Rethinking Guardianship Workgroup to:
	+ Explore Supported Decision-Making legislation passed in other states and applicable to North Carolina. Examples of states with Supported Decision-Making legislation include Wisconsin, the District of Columbia (DC), and Indiana.
	+ Influence policy and communications from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to Exceptional Children’s teachers and families to make less restrictive alternatives a clearer and more viable pathway in lieu of or in addition to guardianship.
	+ Continue to support the Rethinking Guardianship website and make existing and new resources available to individuals and families.
* Potential Partners include: the Rethinking Guardianship Workgroup, Family Support Network affiliates, First in Families of North Carolina, The Arc of North Carolina, NC DPI, MFP, TCLI, and other community partners that the applicant may identify.

***CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

**Performance Requirements**

* Work with NC DPI to fundamentally influence policy and practices related to youth with I/DD transitioning into adulthood so that children and families understand the range of options available to them when nearing the age of 18.
* Advocate for children with I/DD in middle school and high school to prepare for decision-making in adulthood within the school system and in their families.
* Work with families to educate and to raise expectations regarding their child’s capacity.
* Work with individuals and their families and guardians in transitioning back to the community from long-term residential facilities to build capacity for decision-making within and outside of guardianship.
* Expand the practice of using Supported Decision-Making Agreements and other alternatives to guardianship.
* Provide NCCDD the mandatory reports (i.e., quarterly/annual programmatic reports in the NCCDD’s DD Suite database, monthly fiscal reports for reimbursements, one-pager updates, and other relevant reports deemed necessary).

Also, the applicant selected for theinitiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate outreach to and inclusion of the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community. The 2017-2021 State Plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities must identify disparity among a subpopulation of the state’s I/DD community and address that disparity. The NCCDD identified a barrier to services and supports for the Hispanic/Latino community caused by language access issues in response to the Administration on Community Living’s (ACL) mandate. Outreach to, and collaboration with, the Hispanic/Latino community to increase engagement and involvement is the Council’s proposed intent.

In addition, the Council has identified **Collective Impact** as the model to be used during the 2017-2021 Five-Year Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the initiative will be expected to operationalize activities to facilitate the five essential elements to a Collective Impact project, including:

1. Common Agenda:

All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.

1. Shared Measurement:

All participating organizations **agree on the ways success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.

1. Continuous Communication:

All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

1. Backbone Support:

An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Examples of when communities are ready or near-ready for Collective Impact:

* There is a “champion” for this cause who has the ability to engage and encourage multiple sectors in the community and is willing to use that ability to help the community solve this problem;
* There is some local funding available to begin this effort or in-kind resources (protected time for selected staff members) to begin working to obtain funding;
* There is a history of other kinds of successful collaboration in the community among at least some of the relevant stakeholders;
* The general public is aware of this problem and cares about it or can be readily made aware and will care if they are aware.

***Priority will be given to organizations that offer:***

* Clear evidence of the agency’s capacity to carry out the proposed initiative.
* Evidence of a history of providing related services that are demonstrated to be person-centered.
* Documentation of collaborative relationships in the I/DD field. This should include letters of commitment from partnering organizations and other collaborating agencies.
* That their work and the response in the RFA demonstrates a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of systems change.

The funding for this RFA will be up to **$100,000.00**  per year with required minimum of 25% non-federal matching funds (minimum of **$33,333.00**), for up to three years, with Year 1 beginning **July 1st, 2020** and ending **June 30th, 2021**. Within these parameters, an applicant shall propose a three-year work plan clearly identifying the outputs and outcomes for each year.  **The Year 1 budget is the only budget to be entered into the DD Suite application.**  Continuation of funding after each funded year depends on contractor’s performance, Council approval and continued funding from the United States Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Upon approval for continuation funding, the scope of work for upcoming year will be jointly reviewed and revised by the NCCDD staff and contractor 90 days prior to the start of the upcoming year.

Definition of a Developmental Disability

Per the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), “The term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

* is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
* is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
* is likely to continue indefinitely;
* results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;

(i) Self-care;

(ii) Receptive and expressive language;

(iii) Learning;

(iv) Mobility;

(v) Self-direction;

(vi) Capacity for independent living;

(vii) Economic self-sufficiency; and

reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.”

**IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for-profit or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organizations, agencies, or businesses demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must submit proof of current 501(c)3 status with a current IRS determination letter dated in the current year. The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Non-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents

(see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

***USE OF FUNDS:***

Contract funds may be used to support personnel services, operating expenses, and contracted services. Funds must be budgeted in the categories listed in the line item budget. Applicants must develop a budget narrative to accompany the line item budget. The line item budget and the budget narrative must show a clear relationship between the proposed budget and the proposed activities stated in the initiative plan**.**

**Funds may not support efforts to engage in any political activities or lobbying.**

***PERFORMANCE MONITORING/QUALITY ASSURANCE:***

To meet the requirements of the initiative, the contractor must collaborate with NCCDD staff to:

* participate in trainings and meetings;
* participate in initiative evaluation;
* participate in the NCCDD federally mandated Periodic Performance Review and;
* participate in other activities identified or conducted by NCCDD.

Performance and quality assurance of this contract will be conducted as follows:

* NCCDD will conduct monitoring activities during each contract period and will utilize the contractor’s objectives as its assurance criteria for meeting outcomes.
* The contractor must submit a quarterly progress report through DD Suite and a monthly expenditure report to NCCDD.
* The contractor must submit an Annual Performance Measure Summary form.
* The contractor must submit an End of Year Progress Report.
* The contractor must be available to present at the quarterly NCCDD meetings.

**V. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND APPLICATION REVIEW**

The following is a general description of the process by which applicants will be selected for funding for this initiative.

* 1. RFA announcements are sent to prospective agencies and organizations, via email, and/or posted on the NCCDD website, the DHHS website, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **December 4th, 2019** via email at RFAinfo@nccdd.org. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCCDD website (www.nccdd.org) and DD Suite within 5 business days after the Bidders’ Workshop on **December 11th, 2019** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on **January 8th, 2020**. Electronic submission is required, except as otherwise noted. Complete application and attach/upload all necessary documents in DD Suite before submitting. The complete RFA package and instructions are available through the DD Suite electronic submission program (ddsuite.org/).
	4. Applications will be evaluated by an RFA Review Committee. The recommendations of this committee will be reviewed by the NCCDD, which reserves the right to accept or reject the Review Committee’s recommendations.
	5. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a Request for Applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
	6. Application Process Dates Summary:
		+ **November 15th, 2019**: Request for applications distributed to eligible applicants and posted on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities website ([www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)).
		+ **December 4th, 2019**: Deadline for written RFA questions.
		+ **December 11th, 2019**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidders’ Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidders’ Workshop at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **January 8th, 2020**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.
		+ **February 7th, 2020**: Award announced.
		+ **July 1st, 2020**:Contract begins.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARD**

See DD Suite to download these attachments – all of these documents must be completed if your agency is awarded the contract for this RFA prior to the execution of the contract:

* Project Profile page
* NCCDD Assurances
* Notice of Certain Reporting and Audit Requirements
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Letter (Contractor’s COI)
* Conflict of Interest Verification – Annual
* Indirect Cost Rate Letter – if applicable
* 501(c)(3) Status Determination Letter/Form (private non-profit agencies) (Note: Public organizations shall submit a document verifying their legal name and tax identification number.)
* IRS Tax Letter
* Annual IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (private non-profit agencies)
* State Certifications
* Federal Certifications
* DUNS Letter
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Contracts
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Expenditure Reports
* Certification of No Overdue Taxes (applies to non-governmental entities)
* Proof of Insurance, if applicable

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit the attachments along with their application. If attachments are not submitted and the applicant is selected to receive the funding for this initiative, the attachments must be completed and submitted with the contract. The NCCDD will not execute a contract until it is in receipt of all attachments. Failure to provide these timely may result in disqualification for funding.