



Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community Request for Proposals (RFP): Phase II



Vision: We envision an America in which a legacy of health and well-being, educational success, and economic security passes from one generation to the next.

Mission: Ascend at the Aspen Institute is the national hub for breakthrough ideas and collaborations that move children and their parents toward educational success, economic security, and health and well-being.

Ascend at the Aspen Institute

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Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community: Phase II

Overview

When the Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community (Family Prosperity) launched three years ago, and up until late February 2020, the U.S. economy had experienced its longest period of economic growth and stability. And then the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic hit. COVID-19 is a public health crisis of unprecedented proportion, and has caused a seismic economic shock that will include millions of lost jobs, the shrinking of GDP, and has highlighted the weakness and outdated nature of our family supportive policies. The impact on workers, families, and communities that are low-income has and will be devastating, further exacerbating structural and systemic inequities that undercut economic, health, and well-being for parents and their children. This must not be the outcome.

At this moment, we have an opportunity to reset the conversation on family economic security and health and well-being for parents, families, and the next generation. With the enactment of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), we have the largest economic stimulus investment – two trillion dollars – in our nation’s history and a critical window of opportunity to lift up and invest in innovations and solutions that focus on the population, sectors, and strategies that will drive more effective and equitable outcomes. As we rebuild, we also have an opportunity to shift mindsets and behaviors of policymakers, employers, and service providers.

Even at its best, the U.S. economy was not working for all, and in this moment of uncertainty, Ascend at the Aspen Institute remains committed to our core principles while acknowledging that the 20 organizations selected must be committed to agility and boldness when addressing the needs of and expanding opportunities for families with low-incomes. With continuing federal efforts to infuse the economy with resources, as well as policy opportunities like the states’ revision of WIOA at the end of the year, we have an opportunity to catalyze a much-needed policy conversation that more effectively engages the private sector with policy and on-the-ground innovators. Family Prosperity will invest in and accelerate solutions that have the highest potential to advance family economic security and well-being. We must accelerate robust innovation; advance effective policies, practices, and pathways to meaningful work and health and well-being; and build the solid political will necessary to implement new solutions that set the foundation for economic security.

Who: Cohort of up to twenty (20) leading organizations, with strong policy expertise and/or on-the-ground service delivery expertise; passionate about innovation; achieving greater impact; and working collaboratively with a focus on families 200 percent or below the poverty line and an emphasis on solutions that move those families into living-wage, quality jobs. A select group of organizations has been invited to submit a proposal following an open-sourced request for letters of intent (LOI). Ascend received 195 LOIs from 42 states and territories, reflecting a

highly competitive and innovative cohort of ideas and solutions; 55 organizations have been invited to move forward to the full-proposal stage.

In addition to the 20 nonprofit organizations, Ascend will create a National Advisory Board comprised of experts and innovators to provide additional perspective, expertise, and partnership.

What: The [Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community](#) (Family Prosperity) is an innovation and action community focused on developing bold strategies and solutions that strengthen parents' and families' employment, economic security, and health and well-being with an equity lens. Launched in December 2017, Phase I of Family Prosperity included seven policy partners; 10 community-based partners; and 13 National Advisors. More on Phase I can be found [here](#) and in the next section.

Family Prosperity Phase II is seeking solutions with scale and/or high-influence potential. Solutions should contribute to shifting behaviors and mindsets of employers, policymakers, health providers, and influence public-private partnerships, resulting in a portfolio of strategies with significant potential for transforming the lives of working families. Ascend will invest up to \$2.6 million in grants in the selected organizations.

How: Rethink, develop, and advance policies and practices that strengthen the health and economic stability of families with low-incomes, with an emphasis on solutions that fuel well-being where it has been short-circuited, recognizing the profound impact the Coronavirus pandemic is having and will continue to have on families, systems, employers, and policies. Launching Phase II shortly after one of the largest federal stimulus efforts in history, Family Prosperity will provide financial support to policy experts and community innovators to deepen and leverage their organization's expertise and capacity to enhance their impact as well as the collective reach and results of the learning community. In addition to the grant award, Ascend will design and host strategic convenings and support collaborative work, including a communications and messaging strategy, as well as leverage the expertise and thought leadership of a group of Advisors spanning multiple sectors. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is supporting this work. Ascend and RWJF are committed to building on the important work underway and exploring new opportunities to build, strengthen, and align a set of policies that support working families, build political will and new allies, and foster multi-sector collaboration and innovation.

Where: Aspen Institute campus in Aspen, Colorado; Cambridge, Maryland; Washington, DC; and other locations in addition to virtual tools that facilitate collaboration. Select site visits may be offered.

When: July 2020 – June 2022

The Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community: Expectations and Results

Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community Objective: To rethink, develop, and align bipartisan and cross-sector solutions, strategies, and resources that tap the creativity, knowledge, and assets of organizations and the families they serve to advance family health and mobility through stronger workplace, early childhood, and health services.

With its partners, Ascend is building a new wave of public policy culture and collaboration that promotes intentional implementation across state and local agencies and structures, funding streams, and services that put the health and well-being of child and family outcomes at the center. Family Prosperity, like Ascend at the Aspen Institute, embraces both a racial equity and gender lens. Critical to this work is ensuring all families have access to the education and workforce training, social supports, and health care, including mental health care, they need to create a legacy of economic stability and overall well-being that passes from one generation to the next. Also critical is the recognition of the urgent need for greater collaboration and support for organizations addressing the policies and practices that will support families and communities as we manage the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

As noted earlier, Family Prosperity was launched in late 2017 with a cohort of leading policy organizations with the vision that family and individual well-being is built, much as a house is constructed, with a variety of materials including opportunities to learn, access to health care, and social relationships. The materials needed at different stages of life vary. In the earliest stages of life, when the brain is developing, children need opportunities to learn and grow. Young adults with children may need access to meaningful, sustaining work and access to quality early learning environments for their children. Yet, as of late February 2020, nearly 45 percent of all children – more than 32 million – live in families with low-incomes, and young adults with children experience the highest rates of poverty in the United States. This number has likely increased exponentially, given that 3.2 million people filed for unemployment in the last two weeks of March 2020. There is much more to do if we want our communities to enjoy the civic, social, and economic well-being that comes when family well-being is built, maintained, and shored up during life's storms.

Family Prosperity takes a strategic lens to increasing the economic mobility and health and well-being of families, recognizing there is also an opportunity to more effectively communicate new learning and action among leading organizations around the country who do not otherwise collaborate or find themselves aligned on these issues. We are launching Phase II of Family Prosperity with a strengthened objective to continue to build the case and set of strategies that support this important premise: the policies that support families' economic mobility and workforce participation must also acknowledge that parents' multifaceted roles and responsibilities are essential to family health and well-being.

What Organizations Will Contribute: To ensure a stronger, more relevant set of policies and practices with potential for scale and/or high influence are advanced at the local, state, and federal levels to advance whole family stability and health, and engage employers at the private and public levels, Ascend is requesting proposals for an innovation and action community which is Phase II of Family Prosperity. Ascend will identify up to twenty (20) organizations to receive funding in the amount of between \$75,000 - \$125,000 over 24-months, which will support the development of actionable ideas, strategies, products, and tools to improve parents' and families' lives at the intersection of work and health, and participate in a series of convenings focused on advancing forward-thinking policies and communications strategies for family economic and health supports in the United States.

We encourage organizations to elevate the challenges and opportunities that the Coronavirus pandemic presents for their proposed projects, and how they view Family Prosperity as an opportunity to leverage their efforts to support families in the face of this crisis. This includes how organizations will tap the federal stimulus to support its innovation efforts, and how they will work with state leaders to pull on levers such as health, child care, income, and workforce policies.

Organizations in Family Prosperity will be invited and expected to rethink and develop a set of policies and practices that illuminate parent voices and research around the social and structural determinants of health to significantly improve workforce opportunities for families with low-incomes. Selected organizations will also demonstrate capacity and be expected to align new partners around innovative policy; engage employers who can be influenced or leveraged to shift their practices and policies; build political will at the local, state, and national levels; package lessons and ideas through dynamic tools and products; and engage parents as messengers, leaders, and advocates within their work. Organizations selected will benefit from a comprehensive communications strategy, which will include support from a hired communications firm to strategically disseminate the content created by organizations under the purview of their grant.

For purposes of this grantmaking round, as with Phase I, we are focused on results in the categories of innovation, influence, and impact, as defined below.

Innovation: *The improvement of an existing policy or practice with the goal of producing better outcomes for both children and parents.*

Influence: *Increased engagement and education of policy leaders, employers, and influencers who have the capacity to make changes in policies and/or funding that allow for the implementation or expansion of family support approaches that serve families holistically.*

Impact: *The effect that policies and practices have on workplace and early childhood supports to build family health and stability.*

In evaluating the proposals, Ascend will assess the innovation potential of policy development and service delivery; opportunities to leverage new policies and resources in response to Coronavirus legislative measures; capacity to shift mindsets and cultures within and beyond

organizations, with a special focus on the public and private sectors, notably those who employ workers with low-incomes; and impact of the policy and communications strategies that result.

Key learning questions that Ascend will explore and respond to through the course of the Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community (Phase II) include:

1. How do the motivations, feedback loops with employees, understanding of regulations, and capacity to implement policies impact decisions that employers make on behalf of their employees? How can those lessons be leveraged for better outcomes for families?
2. What are ways to and conditions that promote effective and equitable opportunities for families (e.g., young parents, or other relevant populations) in low-wage work industries, including promoting entry and advancement opportunities in high-growth sectors?
3. How to identify and increase awareness of the connection between economic asset-building, family mental health, and child health and early development outcomes?
4. How to improve coordination between organizations committed to family stability, childhood health, and elimination of structural barriers that create disparities? What are ways and conditions to improve and accelerate community and state models and innovations to the national level?
5. In a divided political climate and uncertain economy, how to bridge gaps, create fresh framing, and engage new partners across sectors and parties in the effort to move all families toward economic stability and health and well-being?

Ascend will identify, convene, and elevate select organizations poised to make significant shifts in policy and practice for families with low-incomes, with an emphasis on supports that help families thrive in the workplace and beyond. We recognize that policies that support families' economic stability and acknowledge parents' multifaceted roles and responsibilities are essential to family well-being. We also recognize that well-established organizations have been making important progress on these issues for decades, and this effort builds on those advancements while forging new ground by creating new collaborations, conversations, and innovations as well as policy and communications strategies.

To support these efforts, Ascend will again identify an Advisory Board of national thought leaders on economic, education, health, business, and media issues to provide guidance and input on the cohort's development and impact. This Advisory Board will include several advisors from Phase I and build on lessons from Phase I engagement with advisors.

Family Prosperity will invest up to \$2.6 million to support cutting-edge learning, thought, and action across policy development, service delivery and partnership, communications, and research that can advance the economic stability and health of children and families in the United States. In addition to investing financial resources, Family Prosperity will broker technical assistance among Ascend staff and partners and elevate the voices and perspectives of families with low-incomes.

Awarded grants will be between \$75,000 - \$125,000 for a 24-month period. Resources should advance work that serves families with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. As a result of this work, and building on Phase I of Family Prosperity, Ascend will develop a community of learning and culture of collaboration among new and established organizations advancing policy solutions and practices that accelerate family health and economic stability, culminating in a portfolio of family supports solutions that build political will and new allies, significantly influence private sector employers of families with low-incomes, and address barriers to health, economic stability, and equity for families.

Organizations are expected to allocate the time and resources necessary for policy and practice development and packaging, evaluation and data collection activities, grant and results reporting, participation in convenings, check-in calls, and in-person meetings. Organizations will have input into convening agendas and their work will be elevated and highlighted by the platform of the Aspen Institute. Minimally two senior policy/program leaders from each grantee partner will be expected to participate in each of the three learning convenings. This is a professional leadership opportunity as well as contribution to the action and innovation community. Selected organizations will also be invited to nominate parent participants for convenings and technical assistance, as parent voices will be critical to informing the solutions that emerge from Family Prosperity. Applicants are advised to consider whether they have the capacity and organizational commitment to effectively participate in these opportunities before submitting a proposal, as well as the mechanisms that they have in place to engage parents in their projects.

Convening dates:

- **September 22-25, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, Maryland**
- **April 6-9, 2021 at the Aspen Institute campus in Aspen, Colorado**
- **October 12-15, 2021 at the Aspen Institute campus in Aspen, Colorado**

Please note that Ascend will notify Partners at least three months in advance if any dates need to be adjusted.

Background

Who we are: The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Institute has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, and an international network of partners. Ascend is a program of the Aspen Institute and national hub for breakthrough ideas and collaborations that move children and their parents toward educational success, economic security, and improved health and well-being. We believe that education, economic supports, social capital, and health and well-being are the essential components needed to build opportunity and extend it across generations. We take a two-generation (2Gen) approach to our work — approaches that build family well-being by

intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together. We also take an equity lens to our work, focusing on the importance of diversity and inclusion across our practice, policy, and research areas. This includes bringing a gender¹ and racial equity² lens to analysis; a racial equity lens includes examining the ways that economic well-being and stability in communities of color have been short-circuited by structural racism.³ In addition, we are deepening our knowledge and capacity to advance work around the intersectionality of class, geography, age, and perspective.

As a model of social innovation, leadership development, and cross-sector collaboration, we are engaged in three strategies to spread, scale, and implement solutions for families with low-incomes:

- ❖ **Building a vibrant network of diverse leaders** through the national Ascend Network and Ascend Fellowship;
- ❖ **Elevating and advancing 2Gen best practices, policies, and aligning resources** through research, publications, convenings, media, online platforms, and financial investment; and
- ❖ **Engaging the perspectives, strengths, resilience, and aspirations of families to inform program design and policy development** through focus groups, storytelling, and forums.

Context: Meaningful work, underpinned by education, relevant skills, and networks, is essential to economic and social mobility. Yet in America, far too many families struggle to achieve intergenerational opportunity. This gap in economic security has profound health implications. As Healthy People 2020 highlights, poverty and education strongly influence peoples' ability to achieve and sustain good health.

¹ A gender lens examines whether programs, policies, or systems can affect women and men differently because of their different social situations. For example, a higher percentage of women than men in the United States are low-income. For more information, see *Grantmaking with a Gender Lens*:

<http://www.grantcraft.org/?pageid=1328>

² According to the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, racial equity is the substantive alternative to structural racism. It is a social outcomes “picture” in which race is not consistently associated with privilege and disadvantage. The goal of racial equity is to produce fairness and social justice – race would no longer be a factor in the assessment of merit, or in the distribution of opportunity. For more information, see:

<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/images/Roundtable%20on%20Community%20Change%20RETOC.pdf>

³ Economic exclusion and inequality are deeply linked. The racial wealth gap is one significant reason for the persistence and growth of economic inequality along racial and ethnic lines. For example, according to data from the Survey of Consumer Finances, the median white household possessed \$13 in net wealth for every dollar held by the median black household in 2013. That same year, median white households possessed \$10 for each dollar held by the median Latino/a household. <http://www.demos.org/publication/asset-value-whiteness-understanding-racial-wealth-gap>

As more families face economic uncertainty as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, the evidence continues to show that living with financial hardship comes with a wide range of risks to children and their parents, including behavioral, cognitive, social, and mental health challenges—many of which follow children into adulthood. Yet the effects of low-wage work on families go far beyond income alone. These are the jobs least likely to offer critical family supports, such as health insurance and paid sick and family leave; they give workers no say in their hours and demand last-minute scheduling. Taken together, these factors exponentially increase the challenges working parents face in supporting their children’s well-being and health: from breastfeeding and putting healthy food on the table to attending high-quality child care and affording a doctor. Given the siloed nature of government, alignment and coordination are difficult to achieve most of the time, and especially in a crisis. We believe this creates space for innovation, including opportunities for partnerships and scale. For all families to prosper, we need a stronger system of family-supportive policies that improve well-being like paid family leave, child care and early learning, lactation supports, flexible work schedules, SNAP, WIC, TANF, Medicaid, and transportation options.

To achieve this, we believe Family Prosperity is well-positioned to provide a cohort of up to 20 organizations with the following opportunities:

- Give cross-sector stakeholders and experts, who share common goals and values but differ on policy approaches, access to trusted spaces where they can speak freely and bridge their divides.
- Offer national and community-based organizations, policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders that rarely or inadequately tap local/state models and innovations guiding sources to inform and accelerate their discussions, policies, and actions.
- Infuse family voices that are absent from discussions about effective solutions for meaningful work and leverage undervalued talent to close the disconnect between the people who make policies and those impacted by it.
- Improve policymakers’ and the public’s understanding of how just workforce policies can also promote a more productive and successful workforce.
- Eliminate discussions about policies that impact families occurring in siloes that stifle innovative collaborations across the fields of health and economic security.
- Establish policy frameworks that embrace the combination of research, family expertise, best practice, and innovation.
- Engage employers who are innovators in adopting, supporting and promoting family-supportive policies so they can contribute to a solutions discussion.

Ascend seeks to offer solutions that forge a more equitable path forward for far more families. Ascend has a strong 10-year track record of identifying opportunities to uplift families by advancing policies focused on addressing the needs of children and their families simultaneously, known as a 2Gen approach. At Ascend, we believe that the most effective policy change is informed by family voices, data and research, and best and promising practices from the field.

We also believe that to create a legacy of economic security and health and well-being for all families, the work of many organizations and many types of effort are required. We embrace co-creating solutions and dynamic collaborations with leaders from all sectors of society. We seek partners who are committed, strategic, forward-thinking, and passionate in pursuit of improving the lives of children and their families through innovative, evidence-based, family-informed policies and practices. These policies and practices are one aspect of [2Gen approaches](#), which provide opportunities for and meet the needs of children and their parents together. Ascend engages in policy advancement at multiple levels and works with the Ascend Network to increase access to family supports through a range of 2Gen approaches. We focus on strategies that align services and policies for children and their parents, but our “North Star” is ensuring a cycle of well-being is built and passed on from one generation to the next.

What Can Selected Partners Expect?

In addition to financial resources to support policy and practice development rooted in family voices, partners selected to receive investments from Family Prosperity will have the opportunity to join the Ascend Network (if they are not already partners), a diverse group of more than 390 “thought and action” leaders from across the country who are creating pathways to opportunity for families with low-incomes. Requirements and benefits of participation in Family Prosperity include:

- ❖ A minimum of two senior program leaders’ participation in three (3) Ascend-hosted convenings that result in policy and practice recommendations, briefs, and resources – such as guidelines and case studies – to advance local, state, and federal policies and practices (all dates included in this RFP);
- ❖ Guidance and input into a research/learning agenda for family-supportive innovations in key policy levers, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Childcare Tax Credits (CTC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the implications of the cliff effect, as well as other policies such as paid leave, workforce supports, and systems such as Head Start and Medicaid.
- ❖ Online and media platforms for leaders and organizations to showcase solutions, challenges, outcomes, and voices of families;
- ❖ Briefings for targeted audiences and webinars designed to influence and elevate innovations and recommendations from work across the cohort;
- ❖ Influence strategy with private sector employers, including contributing to briefings and outreach sessions;
- ❖ Peer learning, training, and technical assistance, particularly around communications and messaging;
- ❖ Opportunities to share learning and impact with policy, program, media, and philanthropic leaders; and
- ❖ Opportunities to join Ascend Network convenings.

Proposal Guidelines

Key Criteria

The criteria that Ascend will seek in developing a cohort of up to 20 organizations with a focus on moving families with low-incomes toward economic mobility and success includes but is not limited to:

- ❖ Identification of cross-sector or cross-issue collaborations that lead to advanced and aligned policies to produce better outcomes (this could include efforts to transform TANF in several key states to better support working student parents; innovations around paid family leave; policies and best practices emerging from 2Gen pilots with regards to Childcare Tax Credits; tapping EITC for families building assets; and innovations in key states that have used the Affordable Care Act to expand coverage for maternal depression, among others);
- ❖ Identification of how the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted the organization, including but not limited to strategic focus, leadership, population served, and capacity;
- ❖ Recognition of and a strategy for an equity, inclusion, and intersectional approach;
- ❖ Commitment to participating in and contributing actively to a learning agenda and the broader Ascend Network;
- ❖ Identification of a strategy to engage parent(s) in project, including convening participation;
- ❖ Commitment to documenting and sharing results, learning, and tools with the field;
- ❖ Participation in a policy advocacy training and technical assistance during the grant;
- ❖ Identify commitment to a minimum of one (1) learning question listed on page, with a focus on how the project will inform and respond to the question;
- ❖ Identification of long-term results through a results chart; and
- ❖ Engagement with colleagues and partners from diverse perspectives.

Eligibility

The Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community is limited to organizations that successfully advanced from the LOI phase. During the full-proposal stage we are engaging organizations with multi-issue policy and practice depth and an understanding of the interplay and nuances of policy innovation and implementation at the local, state, and federal level. We seek organizations with a track record of serving families in communities effectively, through innovative partnerships and strong workforce collaborations. Our emphasis is on action, results, and learning. We are looking for efforts that are well-positioned to plan, test, and implement policies and practices that will significantly improve the lives of parents and their children, with an explicit focus on supporting parents in achieving economic stability through education and work. Successful proposals will detail how organizations will leverage their participation in

Family Prosperity and will lead to documented results and/or learning in the categories of influence and innovation during the grant period.

To be eligible for Family Prosperity Phase II grant, applicant organizations must be:

- ❖ Working to implement or expand policies that benefit families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level;
- ❖ Focused on or highlighting cross-sector or cross-issue collaborations that lead to improved and aligned policies and resources to produce better outcomes for children and parents;
- ❖ Committed to participating in and contributing to Family Prosperity and its objectives;
- ❖ Committed to documenting and sharing results, learning, and tools with the field;
- ❖ A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (*Note: Public and for-profit entities should identify 501(c) nonprofit partners with whom to submit proposals.*);
- ❖ Governed by a board of directors; and
- ❖ Located within the United States.

Grant recipients will be notified of their status by June 25, 2020. Note that all grant agreements will be due to Ascend by May 15, 2020, and all grants will begin on July 15, 2020 and end on June 15, 2022. Alternate grant periods will not be considered.

Priority

Priority will be given to applicants whose organizations:

- ❖ Have a track record of leading a policy and/or practice effort with significant potential to shift mindsets and impact policies and outcomes for families with low-incomes;
- ❖ Interested in fully collaborating with new or unlikely partners with the aim of developing new mindsets and approaches to solving problems and advancing their existing or new ideas;
- ❖ Have a strong relationship with local and/or national employer(s);
- ❖ Bring an equity lens to their work;
- ❖ Demonstrate capacity to engage parents' voices to inform and shift policies and practices internally and externally;
- ❖ Can identify opportunities to leverage public resources (local, state, federal) provided for the Coronavirus pandemic and identify ways to support family workforce pathways and health and well-being outcomes through those resources;
- ❖ Propose to produce new tools, knowledge, and strategies; and
- ❖ Have access to and broad reach within a system or potential dissemination network.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals must include the following items:

1. Cover sheet – a cover sheet that includes the following information (please complete in the form provided [here](#))

- ❖ Name of applicant organization
- ❖ Employer Identification Number
- ❖ Address of organization
- ❖ Website address of organization
- ❖ Executive Director/CEO's name, title, phone number, and email
- ❖ Project director's name, title, phone number, and email (this is the person who is responsible for overall project management of the proposed work)
- ❖ One sentence summary of purpose of project being proposed
- ❖ Amount of funds requested from the Aspen Family Prosperity Innovation Community
(*Note: organizations may apply for the amount indicated in the LOI submitted in February 2020*)
- ❖ Total project budget
- ❖ Total organizational budget
- ❖ Date of the proposal submission

2. Narrative – that includes the following items (maximum of six pages, minimum 12-pt. font, one-inch margins; proposals of more than seven pages long will not be considered):

Executive Summary (1/2 page)

Please include a half-page executive summary of the proposal.

Project Description (2 pages)

Your project description should include the following:

- ❖ A brief statement (one paragraph) about why the organization is interested in joining the Family Prosperity cohort, and what the organization hopes to contribute to and receive from both the cohort and the Ascend Network;
- ❖ The organization's track record for advancing policy approaches for children and their families, and clear articulation of the opportunity to advance reframed or new policies for families;
- ❖ Purpose of the request (need being addressed, how the project will impact the economic well-being of parents and children at the national level, relationship of the request/proposed project to the organization's primary mission);
- ❖ Policies being addressed and shifted as a result of proposed project (i.e., federal, state, and/or local policies and levers);
- ❖ The demographics of the population that will be served or that will benefit from your work (specifically, include data on race/ethnicity, gender, economic status, family structure, and age);
- ❖ How the project will expand on and/or build on existing policies that support family health and economic security for both children and parents; and

- ❖ A description of how voices and perspectives of parents with low-incomes and/or children informed the proposed work.

Results and Learning (2 pages + attachment)

- ❖ What is your organization's plan for assessing and documenting results and lessons learned about the project? How does evaluation fit into your project?
- ❖ How will your organization integrate the voices of families as part of the project, and what specific results do you think will be different because of integrating the voices of families?
- ❖ Specifically, what new tools or products (e.g., an app, a policy brief, a toolkit, an assessment tool, a video, a PowerPoint presentation) will your project produce that will be shared with the cohort and the larger field?
- ❖ How will learning be shared with Family Prosperity Partners and Advisors and the larger field (e.g., webinars or audio conferences you would be willing to host or co-host; convenings to which you will invite Family Prosperity and Ascend Network members; presentations you plan to give at national or regional conferences)?
- ❖ Beyond the targeted short-term (i.e., during grant period of 24-months) outcomes outlined in the Results Chart attachment, describe longer-term outcomes (e.g., three to five years out) you hope to achieve as a result of the work.
- ❖ Complete the Results Chart attachment: outline dates of completion of proposed activities, activities, and targeted short-term outcomes. Results can be in the categories of innovation and influence (e.g., as a policy organization, your work is focused on policy or awareness-building and your results should be demonstrable in both influence and innovation).

Organizational Capacity and Leverage Opportunities (1 page)

- ❖ Include a brief statement (one paragraph) of the organization's mission, history, and significant accomplishments within the past two-years, focused specifically on how your organization has shifted or influenced practices or policies for families with low-incomes;
- ❖ Describe a communications strategy that successfully implemented a policy idea or product and how you harnessed technology to do so;
- ❖ How/why is the organization well-served to achieve the results outlined above?
- ❖ How does your organization take into account equity in its work?
 - If it is not currently a priority, how will your organization consider racial equity, inclusion, and intersectionality in the development and implementation of the proposed work?
 - How does your organization consider gender in its work? If you are not currently applying a gender lens to your work, how will your organization consider gender in the development and implementation of the proposed work?

- ❖ Please describe your organization's communications capacity or potential dissemination network (e.g., size and scope of your membership, size of your e-news distribution list, Twitter followers, number of sites or locations in which you operate, other formal networks of which your organization is a member);
- ❖ Please note any previous affiliation or engagement your organization has had with the Aspen Institute;
- ❖ Will this project be sustained after the grant period has ended? If so, how?

Budget Narrative (1/2 page)

- ❖ Complete the Project Budget attachment.
- ❖ Include a description of each line item in your project budget and how the costs were calculated (e.g., personnel line item includes 50% of Project Director's time; meeting costs line item includes food and beverages for three focus group sessions, etc.).
- ❖ Note: Each Family Prosperity Partner will be invited to send two senior program representatives (e.g., CEO, Executive Director, or other senior program staff person) to participate in the three (3) cohort convenings. We will also consider organizations sending a senior communications representative. Ascend will cover lodging and food costs for participants, but applicants should budget air and ground transportation for two (2) participants to attend three (3) convenings over the course of the grant period.
- ❖ Ascend will also consider asking each organization in the cohort to bring a parent leader from their networks to convenings. Please consider how you might do so in other parts of the proposal and identify costs in your budget.

3. Attachments – attach the following required items:

- Results chart (using the Excel template provided);
- Project budget (using the Excel template provided; note that a maximum of 12% of Family Prosperity resources can be allocated to indirect costs);
- Organizational budget;
- Organizational profile (demographics of employees and key family-supportive policies offered to all employees);
- Biographies of key project staff, including race/ethnicity and gender;
- List of Board of Directors, including race/ethnicity and gender; and
- List of key partners and/or employers who will be engaged in the proposed work.

Note: Ascend at the Aspen Institute's review of your proposal may include a review of your organization's most recent Form 990 tax return available at www.guidestar.org.

Grantmaking Process and Timeline

The grant selection process for Family Prosperity funding for Phase II is comprised of multiple stages. Those stages are:

- [Notification of LOI status and distribution of Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#): (April 2, 2020)
- [Optional webinar with Ascend staff](#): (April 9, 2020, 3:30 pm)

- [Proposals due to Ascend:](#) (May 15, 2020)
- [Final selection of grantees:](#) (June 25, 2020)
- [Grant agreements signed:](#) (July 3, 2020)
- [Grant agreements start:](#) (July 15, 2020)

Submitting a Proposal

To submit a proposal, please submit the following in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and/or PDF format (other electronic formats will not be accepted):

- ___ [Cover sheet:](#) as outlined above
- ___ [Narrative:](#) responding to the “Proposal Guidelines” (up to six pages maximum)
- ___ [Attachments:](#) results chart, project budget, organizational budget, organizational profile, bios of key staff, list of board of directors, and list of key partners/employers

Submit your proposal (cover sheet, narrative, and attachments) by 5:00 pm ET on May 15, 2020, to <https://www.tfaforms.com/4813818>
Please direct questions to: lucy.gibson@aspeninstitute.org