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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS EVALUATION



**MARCH 2, 2023**  
**PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
341 South Bellefield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS EVALUATION OPPORTUNITY**

**Invitation Date:** March 02, 2023  
**Due Date:** March 23, 2023  
**For (address):** Pittsburgh Public School District  
Office of Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment  
341 South Bellefield Ave,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

## **SECTION 1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL INVITATION**

Pittsburgh Public School District invites qualified external evaluators to submit a proposal to evaluate its Afterschool programs for **55** schools located throughout the district.

Copies of the Request for Proposal (RFP) are available on the Pittsburgh Public Schools website: <https://www.pghschools.org/>.

It is the responsibility of all bidders and other interested parties to examine the entire RFP and seek clarification in writing, if they do not understand any information and/or instructions. The Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to answer or not answer any question(s) received.

The contract agreement for this evaluation will be based on per agreed services within the stated timeframe. The elements of the desired educational activities to be evaluated, scope of the work, detailed proposal requirements, milestones and terms are discussed in the RFP.

To be considered as the evaluator of this project, your proposal submission must be received **on or before Opening of Business (8:00am EST) on Thursday, March 23, 2023**, via email to [drea@pghschools.org](mailto:drea@pghschools.org).

Please note that proposals submitted by mail **ONLY** will **NOT** be considered.

Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to extend this deadline by providing a written addendum to the RFP.

The School District also reserves the right to modification and/or cancellation of the RFP contingent upon the amount of budget allocated to the external evaluation of the Afterschool programs.

Pittsburgh Public School District also reserves the right to contact any external evaluation contractors to clarify its proposal.

## **SECTION 2**

### **SCOPE OF THE WORK**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which is signed into law to provide an additional funds to States Education Departments and Local Education Agencies, allocate funds for Elementary and Secondary Schools from 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

The Afterschool programs, in Pittsburgh Public Schools and funded by ARP - ESSER III, were to address disrupted learning using evidence-based academic, social, and emotional learning strategies for vulnerable populations of students, who were disproportionately impacted by covid-19.

Pittsburgh Public School District is inviting qualified independent external evaluators or researchers to submit a proposal to evaluate the impacts of its Afterschool programs.

Students attended the Afterschool programs at 55 schools throughout Pittsburgh Public School District. They include: Twenty-two K-5 schools, eighteen K-8 and 6-8 schools, nine 6-12 and 9-12 schools, and six special schools. The Afterschool programming was designed at the school level within parameters that are based on indicators of quality in Afterschool programming, specifically grounded in the work of Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network and Allegheny Partners for Out of School Time. Afterschool outlines the necessary elements of a quality program in four core areas: (1) Structure and Management (2) Positive Connections (3) Safety and Health, and (4) Activities. Complete details regarding these core areas can be found at: <https://www.psaydn.org/home/quality-and-sustainability-work/>

It is the Pittsburgh Public School District's goal to ensure that all Afterschool programming will embody these core elements. Programming will also be focused on academic and/or social, emotional learning goals specific to each school and responsive to the need demonstrated by their student population.

The overall intended outcome of the project evaluation will be to provide evidence of program effectiveness, which is essential in informing improvement, i.e., to examine the degree to which the program is successful in producing the desired results. This evaluation is also important to recommend the ways the Afterschool programs can be improved, i.e., based on the findings, to suggest recommendations or possible actions.

The principal questions to be evaluated are investigating the impacts of the Afterschool programs on addressing learning loss through the implementation of evidence - based interventions and how the interventions respond to students' social, emotional, and academic needs that address the disproportionate impact of covid-19 on underrepresented student subgroups.

The Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation criteria, which assess the core values of the Afterschool programs will be used. There should be two tiers in the programs' evaluation process. In the first tier, the primary questions will be: (i) What needs to be done? (Context evaluation); (ii) How should it be done? (Input evaluation); and (iii) Is it being done? (Process evaluation). The second tier of the evaluation deals with the impact evaluation based on the ARP ESSER III grant expectations (did it succeed?)

The impact evaluation will be focused on four key areas: Students' outcomes, chronic absenteeism, stakeholders' engagement, and students' social, emotional wellbeing (disaggregated on major racial/ethnic group, gender, economic status, SEL, EL, students experiencing homelessness, etc.). The key impact evaluation questions to be investigated will be:

1. What is the impact of implementing Afterschool programs on students' academic growth?

Expectation:

- 1.1 Students who attended 80% of the available program days will demonstrate greater than the projected improvement in their standardized scores on Math and ELA.
  - 1.2 80% of students who participate in at least 80% of available program days will demonstrate greater increases in their national percentile rank in ELA and Math compared to a matched sample of students (match based on demographic and prior performance).
  - 1.3 Students who participated in the program improved literacy/reading skills better than a matched sample of students based on their DIBELS scores.
2. What is the impact of implementing Afterschool programs in reducing chronic absenteeism?

Expectation:

- 2.1 At least 30% of the participants will attend a minimum of 80% of the available program days.
- 2.2 Average daily attendance will be greater than 50% of the targeted students.

3. What is the impact of implementing Afterschool programs on engagement?

Expectation:

- 3.1 Students who were not engaged fell even more behind academically and socially.
  - 3.2 Stakeholders' engagement: Due to the number of buildings within the Pittsburgh Public School District, schools will have their own process for engaging families in the Afterschool programs. The school officials engaged them at the inception and there will be a regular check in with the families/guardians to ensure they are aware of the students' progress.
4. What is the impact of implementing Afterschool programs on students' social-emotional well-being?
- Expectation:
- 4.1 There is a positive association between students' social & emotional skills and academic performance.

The following are also suggested evaluation questions to be used as guidance.

5. How are the Afterschool programs being implemented in PPS?
6. What are the contextual factors that afford or constraint the quality of the Afterschool programs implementation?
7. To what extent do the Afterschool programs address identified needs?
8. In what ways are the students who have experienced learning loss due to Covid-19 supported by the Afterschool programs?
9. How do the Afterschool programs produce unintended outcomes?
  - 9.1 Detailed positive and/or negative unintended outcomes.
  - 9.2 What is the evidence for any unintended outcome/s?
10. What lessons can be learned from implementing the Afterschool programs?

Pittsburgh Public School District requires evaluations to follow participatory methodology, which enables beneficiaries, especially students, to provide their feedback on the Afterschool programs. Therefore, we would suggest the methodology for this evaluation include (among other methods):

- a. Follow mixed methods and CIPP evaluation model,
- b. Follow the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) guidelines,
- c. ESSA principles should also be considered,
- d. Use available classroom achievements test scores,
- e. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)/Key Informant Interviews (KII) with Afterschool programs participants, providers, teachers & coordinators,
- f. KIIs with selected school officials and other relevant stakeholders,
- g. FGDs with families/guardians.

PPS will provide all available data for the external evaluators.

### **SECTION 3 DETAILED PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

All proposals that meet minimum requirements will receive equal treatment regarding the selection process. The short-listed organization/evaluators will be informed of the next steps. There may be more than one screening interview.

During the interviews and discussions, there shall be no disclosure of information derived from proposals submitted by other proposers.

Please provide your work plan for this proposal including but not limited to:

1. Summary of your organization's background, including licenses and legal actions, if any.
2. Detailed evaluation plan and general timeline,
3. Detailed budget and narrative,
4. Methods you will use to communicate and work with PPS,
5. Any challenge you would anticipate within this proposal's scope and the actions you will employ to overcome them,
6. Your process and/or performance guarantee regarding ensuring client satisfaction with your completed project evaluation,
7. References.

Please see below the detailed requirements of these in the RFP containing the following contents: Cover page, detailed evaluation plan, detailed budget and narrative, contract period, detailed timeframe, milestones, deliverables, organization's background summary, references, work history with PPS, legal actions within the last three years, licensures (if any), safeguarding and confidentiality statements, submission requirements, how to receive confirmation receipt, proposal evaluation criteria, intellectual property rights, clearance needed and contact person if you have further questions.

#### **3.1 Cover page**

The cover page will contain the following information:

##### **3.1.1 General Organization Information:**

- a. Name,
- b. Mailing address,
- c. phone number,
- d. Website,
- e. Submission date,
- f. Name of authorized organization contact signatory.

##### **3.1.2 Primary contact**

The Primary contact will receive all relevant communication about the proposal's status. Please provide Primary contact's name, phone number, and e-mail address.

### **3.2 Detailed evaluation plan**

The evaluation plan describes the details of the proposed plan. The plan will describe the following in detail (among others):

- Description of evaluation method,
- Goals and SMART objectives of the evaluation,
- Description of key evaluation questions,
- Detailed plan how to measure key data (identify key process, outcome data, identifying specific and defined measurements),
- Data collection, analysis, and reporting impact results,
- Key results communication plan with Pittsburgh School District's Board of Education, senior leaderships, schools' leaderships, stakeholders, and community members,
- Please attach written or published examples of related previous work as an appendix.

### **3.3 Detailed budget and narrative**

Please submit a detailed budget and narrative aligned with the detailed implementation plan. The narrative explanation and its assumptions underlying the proposed cost will be provided by the evaluators, i.e., each line item in the budget needs to have a corresponding description in the narrative.

Cost categories will include, but not limited to, (i) Personnel, (ii) Travel and transportation (for in-person only, if applicable), and (iii) Equipment, materials, and supplies.

All costs for all plans in the detailed implementation plan need to be included in the budget and the corresponding budget narrative.

### **3.4 Contract Period**

The contract period shall be based on the provision of the stated services based on our agreement.

### **3.5 Detailed time limit**

Please submit a detailed timeframe that aligned with the detailed implementation plan.

This may be in the form of a Gantt chart.



### 3.6 Milestones (tentative)

S/N	Activity		Expected Date
1	Design RFP	1.1 Proposal writing	02/17/23
		1.2 Proposal review 1	02/24/23
		1.3 Proposal review 2	03/01/23
2	RFP Process	2.1 RFP Invitation	03/02/23
		2.2 Pre-bid questions	03/22/23
		2.3 Clarification questions	03/31/23
		2.4 Notification of short-listed firm	03/31/23
3	Completion of RFP	3.1 Interviews	4/24-4/30/23
		3.2 BoE approval	05/24/23
		3.3 Award of contract	05/24/23
4	Negotiation with Solicitor	Sign agreement	05/31/23
5	Execution of contract	5.1 Bi-weekly meetings	TBD
		5.2 Design (methodology and tools development)	TBD
		5.3 Context and Input evaluation	TBD
		5.4 Data collection period	TBD
		5.5 Data analysis period	TBD
		5.6 Draft report (context & input)	TBD
		5.7 Communication with key District staff, DREA & School Leadership	TBD
		5.8 Process evaluation	TBD
		5.9 Data collection period	TBD
		5.10 Data analysis period	TBD
		5.11 Draft report (process evaluation)	TBD
		5.12 Communication with key District staff, DREA & School Leadership	TBD
		5.13 Impact evaluation period	TBD
		5.14 Data collection period	TBD
		5.15 Impact analysis	TBD
		5.16 Draft report (impact evaluation)	TBD
		5.17 Communication with key District staff, DREA & School Leadership	TBD
		5.18 Final draft report	TBD
		5.19 Corrected final report	TBD

### **3.7 Deliverables**

The external evaluation consultant(s) will be expected to deliver the following.

- a) Outline draft methodology and detailed work plan, combining ongoing monitoring with some direct feedback from beneficiaries, staff, and other stakeholders.
- b) Presentation of initial findings to DREA, school leaderships and key District staff for their feedback.
- c) Summary sheets of findings for each evaluated schools separately and combined summary of all schools (disaggregated in grade levels (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), gender, ethnicity/race, economic status, SEL, ELA, etc.)
- d) Draft report for DREA, schools' leaderships, and key District staff for their feedback.
- e) Raw data.
- f) Detailed analysis approach, description of data and syntax that meet the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation guidelines.
- g) An in-depth analysis of the extant data, student data for the Afterschool program participants, in relation to attendance, student performance in District assessments, usage and achievement information from online learning systems, social, and emotional learning results.
- h) Final report.

A suggested format for the final evaluation report includes:

- a) Executive summary,
- b) Tables of contents,
- c) Body of report (introduction, literature review, analysis, and discussions of the results),
- d) Conclusions,
- e) recommendations, and
- f) Appendices.

### **3.8 Organization's background summary**

Please provide summary of the organization and the evaluator(s) background (your previous work experience and how it is related to the Afterschool programs evaluation).

Please also demonstrate your experience in evaluating educational programs and provide the evaluator(s) experience working with primary and secondary school students. The background summary should not be more than one page (APA format) and please attach your best example of similar or relevant work within the last three years (a research or evaluation report) as an appendix.

### **3.9 References**

Please provide at least three professional references. Please provide the individual's name, title, organization, e-mail address, and phone number for each professional reference.

A representative of Pittsburgh Public School District will contact the references of selected external evaluator(s) and seek information regarding:

- a. Overall project evaluation satisfaction.
- b. Timeliness with the completion of the evaluation and reporting.
- c. Leadership success.
- d. Collaborative activity, energy, success, and
- e. ability to develop important stakeholder engagement and relationships.

The Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to contact these references and to request additional references.

### **3.10 Work history with PPS**

Please list and describe any previous work history with Pittsburgh Public Schools, including the specific project (s), if applicable. Please also indicate if you have personal or business relationship with Pittsburgh Public Schools.

### **3.11 Legal actions**

Please list and describe if you have been involved in any legal action(s), any project cancellation or any contract cancellations settled in arbitration with any of your clients with in the past three years (if applicable, please give the name, date, and jurisdiction for each matter as well as a brief description of the nature of the dispute and the outcome).

### **3.12 Licenses**

Please provide copies of relevant certificate(s) or license(s) relevant to the performance of this contract as appendix, if applicable.

### **3.13 Safeguarding and confidentiality**

The contracted external evaluator(s) will be required to read, understand, sign, and abide by the Pittsburgh Public Schools Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, as well as our data and confidentiality agreements.

All materials and information made available for the conduct of the evaluation, as well as all data and information collected as part of the evaluation, are confidential and considered the property of Pittsburgh Public School District and must be returned to the organization upon completion of the evaluation.

### 3.14 Submission requirements

If you are interested in evaluating this project, please send the following listed documents:

1. Pages limit: between 10-20 pages according to APA format.
2. All providers **MUST** sign the signature page and it shall be the **FIRST PAGE** of your proposal (the signature form is attached in Section 4 of this proposal as 'PROPOSAL FORM-SIGNATURE PAGE'). The proposal must be signed and submitted by an authorized representative.
3. Please include the following proposal response to our RFP covering:
  - a. Respond to all areas outlined in the scope of the work and detailed proposal requirements.
  - b. Your methodology for this evaluation.
  - c. Provide a preliminary budget. This is a preliminary estimate - any final contract costs will be negotiated based on the needs of the district for this project.
  - d. Please also state the methods you will use to communicate and work with Pittsburgh Public School District.
  - e. Any challenge you would anticipate within this proposal's scope and the actions you will employ to overcome them.
4. Please copy and complete the following paragraphs pasting them into your RFP response (Please note that, this is **required** if it is not included the proposal will not be considered):
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your company name) is interested in and available to be contracted for the evaluation of Pittsburgh Public School's Afterschool Programs.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your company name) will be the primary evaluator for the project and will not outsource any of the analysis and work associated with this project.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your company name) understands that the proposal will be evaluated in relation to other submissions, this analysis will include a rubric that ranks the responses in relation to known criteria as listed in the invitation to submit a proposal. Final selection will be made from the top ranked responses, based on the needs of the district.
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your company name) will **NOT** be compensated for any communications or work that occurs prior to the confirmation of a contract by the school board. While the district will negotiate in good faith with those chosen based on their initial selection, if the negotiations are not consistent with the needs of the district, PPS reserves the right to approach other evaluators.

5. In your response, please also address the following:
  - a. Are there any evaluation or research activities that your firm has conducted that you feel are important to highlight in relation to evaluating the Afterschool programs. (Please provide examples, if releasable).
  - b. Are you affiliated with any professional organizations or groups that focus on the project's topic?
  - c. Provide references or research related to this project.
  - d. Provide an Evaluation plan which includes at a minimum evaluation / research question, analysis plan with a clear connection to evidence level for ESSA and WWC,
  - e. Provide an estimated timeline for the evaluation (e.g., data collection, analysis, report completion, etc.)
6. Provide a general description of evaluator(s) (Curriculum Vitae attached as appendices outlining relevant experience including additional evaluators as part of your team, if any).
7. Submit your letter of interest and Proposal **on or before Opening of Business (8:00am EST) on Thursday, March 23, 2023.**
8. ONLY proposals submitted by email to [drea@pghschools.org](mailto:drea@pghschools.org) with the subject line: *External Evaluators Proposal – PPS Afterschool Programs* will be considered. Please note that proposals submitted by mail only will **NOT** be considered.
9. Withdrawal or modification of the proposal must be in writing and will be allowed **ONLY** before Monday, March 20, 2023.  
Modification of any part of the proposal or withdrawal of the proposal will not be allowed on or after the Due Date.  
The proposal shall be considered an irrevocable offer and shall be valid for 90 days from the date the proposals are required to be submitted

### **3.15 Confirmation of receipt**

Confirmation of evaluation proposals will be generated via email.

Please note that Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to (i) select one or more providers to provide the services outlined herein; (ii) reject all proposals; (iii) identify any areas where a conflict of interest may exist; and (iv) utilize existing District staff and/or existing District resources without required submission of a proposal.

Please also note that the final selection will be confirmed by Pittsburgh Public School District Board of Education.

### **3.16 Proposal evaluation criteria**

All respondents will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Any proposal not meeting the minimum criteria will be disqualified and will not be evaluated further. The minimum evaluation criteria are:

- a. Completion of interest paragraphs and acknowledgment of required board action (**required** go/no-go),
- b. Existing research/reports conducted by firm/individual in related to project,
- c. Affiliation with professional organizations or groups that focus on the project topic,
- d. Provision of existing evaluation or research references related to Afterschool programs,
- e. Evaluation plan /logic model,
- f. Analysis capacity and methods proposed,
- g. Address evidence level in relation to ESSA and WWC (evaluators must identify ESSA and WWC requirements and state how to apply it in their evaluation proposal).
- h. Stakeholder involvement addressed,
- i. Evidence of program evaluation training or experience,
- j. Estimated timeline,
- k. Estimated costs/budget,

The following examples may demonstrate how we will weigh and evaluate the minimum criteria.

#### *A. Quality of Evaluation plan (35%)*

The Quality of the proposal's evaluation plan will be evaluated based on:

- a) Evaluation research method provides a level of evidence commensurate with the WWC requirements and the evaluators demonstrate that they are familiar with the requirements.
- b) Program Description (well described key evaluation questions for the Afterschool program, goals, SMART objectives).
- c) Describing the purpose and method of the evaluation.
- d) Plan to measure key data (identify key process, outcome data, identifying specific and defined measurements).
  - i. Data collection and reporting impact results,
  - ii. Key results communication plan (sharing evaluation results with PPS Board of Education, senior leaderships, schools' leaderships, DREA staff, stakeholders, community members).
  - iii. The evaluation plan and associated documentations submitted reflect everything else in the RFP.

*B. Experience of program evaluation, documentation of knowledge and access to expertise (30%)*

- i. Experience of program evaluation.
- ii. Demonstrates the evaluation group possess subject knowledge or access to subject knowledge expertise.
- iii. Evaluators have experience with evaluating similar programs.
- iv. The proposal needs to provide authentic depth and breadth examples of understanding deliverables.
- v. Published examples of related previous work attached as index.

*C. Time limit (10%)*

Ability to finalize the evaluation under the stated time (Yes or No).

*D. Total cost of the project (budget and its narrative) (25%)*

The External Evaluators Search Committee will compare the total cost and its explanation only for those organization/evaluators who will be invited for the interviews.

The Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals received pursuant to this request, if it is in the district's best interest to do so.

**3.17 Clearance needed**

The approved evaluators and their staff who will have direct contact with children shall complete the following 3 clearances:

- a. FBI Federal Criminal History check (Act 114 of 2006),
- b. PA Criminal Record check (Act 34), and
- c. PA Child Abuse History (Act 151).

The fees to complete the required clearances are to be paid by the contracted provider and should not be billed to the Pittsburgh Public School District in the proposed budget.

**3.18 Intellectual property rights**

The contracted external evaluator(s) will be required to grant authority at no cost an irrevocable, royalty-free perpetual license to use and to sub-license the use of any material created by the contracted consultant under the terms of this agreement for such purposes as the authority shall deem appropriate.

**3.19 Contact for further questions**

If you have any questions about the RFP, please email [drea@pghschools.org](mailto:drea@pghschools.org), with the subject line: *External Evaluators Proposal-PPS Afterschool Programs*.

**SECTION 4**

**PROPOSAL FORM - SIGNATURE PAGE**

The undersigned has carefully reviewed the complete Request for Proposal for Pittsburgh Public School District and certifies that they have complied with all the conditions and terms of this Request for Proposal and agrees to hold the contents and information as confidential except as indicated below. The External Evaluator further certifies that no commissions, fees, or any other compensation shall be received/or paid in connection with the development of the proposal including interviews or an on-site presentation (if invited). The External Evaluator agrees that the Pittsburgh Public School District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any irregularity or informality in any proposal received. The attached proposal shall be considered an irrevocable offer and shall be valid for ninety **(90)** days from the date the proposals are required to be submitted. The undersigned hereby affirms that s/he is an authorized agent for the company submitting this response.

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Company Name

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Signature

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Title

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Date

*Note: This page MUST be completed and is to be the FIRST PAGE of your proposal.*