

City of Lawrence
2007 Alcohol Tax Funds
Request for Proposals
Calendar Year 2007 (January – December)
Cover Page

Agency Name: Elizabeth Ballard Community Center, Inc.

Program Name: Ballard Community Center Early Education Program

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Request is for funding in the following categories and amounts:

<u> X </u>	Prevention	\$ <u>17,440</u>
<u> </u>	Treatment	\$ <u> </u>
<u> </u>	Intervention	\$ <u> </u>
<u> </u>	Coordination	\$ <u> </u>

City of Lawrence
2007 Alcohol Tax Funds Proposal
Ballard Community Center
Narrative

Program Description

Ballard Community Center is proposing the implementation of a pre-school conflict resolution/interpersonal skills program called Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices. We are proposing this particular project because research has shown that children who are classified as "undercontrolled" (i.e. impulsive, restless, and distractible) at age 3 were twice as likely as those who were "inhibited" or "well-adjusted" to be diagnosed with alcohol dependence at age 21. Aggressiveness in children as young as age 5 has been found to predict alcohol and substance use in adolescence. Childhood antisocial behavior is also associated with alcohol-related problems in adolescence and alcohol abuse or dependence in adulthood. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has stated that "the risk of becoming a drug abuser involves the relationship among the number and type of risk factors such as, deviant attitudes and behaviors and protective factors, parental support." The NIDA also states that "early intervention with risk factors (e.g., aggressive behavior and poor self-control) often has a greater impact than later intervention by changing a child's life path (trajectory) away from problems and toward positive behaviors." The population of children who are served by the Ballard Center early education program includes children that typically fall in the highest category for those at risk to become substance and alcohol abusers. These children come from very low-income families, there is often some form of substance abuse occurring in a number of the households where these children reside, and approximately 45% of these children exhibit aggressive, impulsive, distractible and antisocial behavior. Unfortunately, there are currently no programs that are targeted towards these types of behaviors. The most serious cases are referred to the school district for behavioral screening. However, there are a very low number of children who actually receive services due to the factor that the parents are required to participate by completing paperwork that is often overwhelming and stipulates that the child is being screened for "special education services." To the parents of these children, this identifies that their child has a learning disability and they refuse to participate so that their child is not "labeled" as they enter the public school system. Often, early education programs will refer children to Bert Nash Mental Health Center. Again, the parents of our children are those that are very low-income families and they do not understand the system of working with a mental health facility and are often overwhelmed by the fact that their child is being referred in the first place. They often believe that their child may be removed from the home or that they will be judged on their parenting skills if they participate. That is why we are proposing to incorporate into our own early education program a curriculum that will involve parents and the children and will be proactive in the way that we deal with behavioral issues. This curriculum is designated "Effective" by the United States Department of Education in meeting the standards for Conflict Resolution/Interpersonal Skills in the school/classroom environment. It is appropriate for all ethnicities and both male and female students and can be adapted for children ages 3 to 8.

The Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices curriculum is an early education program designed to increase the protective factor of social and emotional competence in young children and to decrease the risk factor of early and persistent aggression or antisocial behavior. The

program follows from the premise that by intervening during the early years when children are forming patterns of behaviors and attitudes, reductions can be made in the likelihood of their later developing aggressive, antisocial, or violent behavior. Al's Pals is based heavily on resiliency research as a framework for developing an intervention. The curriculum is designed to build resiliency by presenting children with real-life situations that introduce them to health-promoting concepts and pro-social skills. The program also recognizes the ongoing nature of resilience-building and trains teachers to use resilience-promoting concepts in their teaching and classroom management practices. Al's Pals uses 46 interactive lessons to teach children how to practice positive ways to express feelings, relate to others, communicate, brainstorm ideas, solve problems, and differentiate between safe and unsafe substances and situations. Several studies of Al's Pals conducted in preschools, elementary schools, and childcare centers since the program was first piloted in 1993 show promising results. For example, a pilot evaluation study conducted in Virginia during the 1994–95 school year used a quasi-experimental design to assess program impacts on child social-emotional competence. In this study, results of repeated measures analysis of variance (known as ANOVA) showed that intervention children had significantly greater improvements in behavior than control group children. In another study, an experimental design was used to evaluate Al's Pals in a large Michigan Head Start program during the 1996–97 school year. Seventeen classrooms were randomly assigned to receive the intervention, and 16 classrooms served as controls. The results of statistical analysis on this project showed significant improvements in prosocial behavior in children in the intervention group, with no improvement in the control group. Findings from similar studies in several states from 1997-2000 had similar results, including increases in prosocial and positive coping behaviors and decreases in antisocial and negative coping behaviors in children whose curricula included the Al's Pals program.

Needs Assessment

As recently as October 2005, the Lawrence Journal World reported that alcohol usage at local high school dances is a "Serious Matter." The Journal World quoted the staffer who oversees drug and alcohol prevention efforts in the district as stating that "42.9 percent of Free State seniors indicated in a survey last year that they had consumed five or more alcoholic drinks in a single sitting at least once in the previous two weeks. This year, that figure dropped to 42.2 percent but that's well above the state average of 36.6 percent." As reported in a February, 2005 Journal World article by Joel Mathis, a 2004 survey by the Greenbush Institute reported that 10% of sixth graders said that they had at least one alcoholic drink in the past 30 days. These figures do not include information about the children in our community who are using substances other than alcohol.

These statistics clearly delineate the concerning issue of alcohol and substance use and abuse by young people in our community. Research as set forth above clearly indicates that the absolute best time to address these potential problems is before children are school-age. As is also stated above, there are currently no programs available to children in community-based early education programs. There are no services that community-based early education programs can call to help with children who exhibit the violent and anti-social behaviors that are common predictors of alcohol and substance abuse, other than limited services as outlined above. In particular, during the summer months there are absolutely no services available for any

children needing intervention for anti-social and behavioral issues. These are the times when most early education programs struggle the most.

Outcomes

As is stated above, the children in our early education program (our target group) have several risk factors for later alcohol and/or substance abuse. The goals and strategies for this program are from the Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices program, which has as its goal to teach staff members to identify the following:

- A. The risks that children face today and protective factors that shield them.
- B. How to apply the concepts of prevention, resiliency, risk and protective factors to early childhood education.
- C. Key skills to effectively deliver the program such as techniques to guide children to brainstorm ideas, solve problems, make healthy decisions, and cope.
- D. Ways to establish an accepting, caring, cooperative classroom environment that fosters positive social-emotional growth and development in children and,
- E. Effective ways to communicate with families.

We will evaluate our progress in implementation of this curricula and success with our children by the following outcome measurements:

Process Outcomes:

1. Fifty percent of all teaching staff of the Ballard Community Center early education program will be trained by January of 2007.
2. Sixty percent of all teaching staff of the Ballard Community Center early education program will incorporate the Al's Pals curriculum into the teaching strategies of their classrooms by March 1, 2007.

Behavioral Outcomes:

1. During the last quarter of 2007 there will be a 25% reduction in the number of violent and aggressive outbursts by the children enrolled in the Ballard Community Center early education program.
2. During the last quarter of 2007 there will be a 50% reduction in the number of phone calls to parents reporting violent behavior by the children enrolled in the Ballard Center early education program.

Impact Outcome:

There will be a 100% reduction in the number of children leaving the Ballard Center early education program (either by administrative disenrollment or parental disenrollment) due to violent and aggressive behavior.

Coordination

This initial program involving the Al's Pals curriculum will lead to coordination among the community-based early education programs in Lawrence in addressing behaviors that are risk factors for later substance use and abuse issues. Because community-based programs such as ours do not have direct funding for preventative resources, our intent is to share the successes

and lessons of this project with other such programs in Lawrence. For instance, we would expect to have the Al's Pals curriculum specialist on our staff work with other early education programs' staffs to assist in training to address antisocial and violent behaviors. We will promote the successes of this curriculum with other early education programs in order to broaden the scope of the benefits to hundreds of preschool children.

Organizational Capacity

Ballard Community Services is an independent human services agency with a rich tradition of serving the needs of low-income Douglas County residents. The Ballard Center works to serve the "whole child" by providing early childhood education, food security programs, homelessness prevention programs such as rent and utility assistance, and health maintenance programs. The Ballard Center's early education program specifically serves the children of low-income working families. Our early education program has been providing structured learning for children ages 1-5 for over 40 years, while meeting families' sustenance needs through our human service programs. The organization is led by Dianne Ensminger, the President/CEO, who has led early education programs (including Head Start programs) for over 17 years. This particular project will be overseen by Ms. Ensminger and Michelle Scott, our early education Program Director, who has managed early education programs in Douglas and Shawnee counties for over 5 years. The Ballard Center maintains a professional teaching staff that includes teachers with specific training in early and special education. Our teaching staff also includes a trained literacy coach who works on early literacy projects with the children in our program. The proposed program would fit seamlessly into the curriculum currently provided to our children, while increasing the scope of the educational and emotional content provided to these children to specifically address risk factors identified with later alcohol and substance abuse.

Budget

Personnel: Float/special projects teacher, existing position	\$11,180
Fringe Benefits: Health Insurance, employer's share	\$ 1,200
Travel: Training for Al's Pals program	\$ 1,060
Office Space:	\$ 0
Supplies: office	\$ 0
Supplies: other: Teaching and curriculum supplies	\$ 4,000
Equipment:	\$ 0

Other sources of funding for this specific program and amount

The requested personnel funding will cover 50% of the wages and fringe benefits for this special position. We will match this funding with donations from private donors and other grantees, the attainment of which will be aided by publicity for this program. We will also provide volunteers, primarily university student volunteers, to assist with the provision of this program. The Ballard Center's current facilities will be utilized without charge to this project. All of the teachers in our program will participate in this project, whose wages and benefits are provided through other fundraising and donations. We expect this program to continue beyond the funded year, and we would likely seek similar assistance for this program through the alcohol tax fund in future years.

ASSESSMENT DATA	GOALS/ OBJECTIVES	TARGET GROUP	STRATEGIES	PROCESS OUTCOMES	BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES	IMPACT OUTCOMES
<p>The undercontrolled, aggressive or antisocial behavior of preschool children.</p>	<p>The Goals and Objectives are to increase the protective factors of social and emotional competence in young children while decreasing risk factors including undercontrolled behavior.</p>	<p>Preschool age children in the Ballard Center's early education program.</p>	<p>Training and implementation of AI's Pals curriculum in our program.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fifty percent of all teaching staff of the Ballard Center early education program will be trained by the end of March, 2007. 2. Sixty percent of all teaching staff of our program will incorporate the AI's Pals curriculum into the teaching strategies of their classrooms by June, 2007. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the last quarter of 2007 there will be a 25% reduction in the number of violent and aggressive outbursts by children enrolled in the Ballard Center early education program. 2. During the last quarter of 2007 there will be a 50% reduction in the number of reports to parents of violent behavior by children enrolled in the program. 	<p>There will be a 100% reduction in the number of children leaving the Ballard Center early education program (either by administrative or parental disenrollment) due to violent and aggressive behavior.</p>