

# UNSS RFP: Application

Complete this request for proposals (RFP) application by 5:00pm central on Friday, February 27, 2026.

Each applicant must have access to the internet. The full RFP description and background information can be accessed through [this Start Early webpage](#). It is the responsibility of each applicant to monitor the website and comply with any instructions or requirements relating to the RFP.

Applications will only be accepted by submitting [this form](#). Scoring of applications will follow the point values. Scoring will be done independently from the total amount of funding requested. You can also download the RFP to work offline. You still need to submit this form online. This RFP is limited to Illinois communities.

- 1) **Executive Summary** – This section is not weighted in the scoring rubric, but must be completed.
  - a. Applicant Information: Provide the lead agency name and agency mailing address, along with the name, phone number, and email address of the contact person for this application.
  - b. Budget: Provide the total amount of your budget request for this project. Note that a detailed budget narrative is also requested in the section below.
  - c. Community and population: Briefly describe the geographic area for which the UNSS feasibility assessment will be conducted, including county(ies) and zip codes. Briefly describe the demographics of the local community to be served.
  - d. Activities: Briefly summarize the high-level activities that will be completed in the proposed project. More detailed descriptions of proposed activities will be requested further below in the RFP.
  - e. Self-assessment: Please complete the self-assessment in [Appendix B](#) by uploading the fillable PDF with your responses. Check each box according to your current community activities. What is your point total?
  
- 2) **Grant activities** – suggested limit of 2 pages, 45 points.
  - a. Activities (10 points): Please detail how and which activities ([Appendix A](#)) will be addressed throughout the project.
  - b. Activity indicators (5 points): By the end of 2026, what indicator(s) would measure progress in your local efforts to assess community around the development of a UNSS program? These can include

public awareness, new partnerships, completion of planning activities associated with launching a particular UNSS model (ie; Family Connects planning activities).

- c. Family representation (15 points): How are families that would be served by a UNSS represented (or how will they be represented) in the feasibility process? How would you ensure that your efforts are informed by voices of lived experience, particularly the voices that have historically been under-represented in your community?
- d. UNSS Model: Will your project focus on a particular UNSS model (e.g. Family Connects, BabyTALK)? *This answer is not weighted in the application review, and applicants may also simply choose to focus on UNSS feasibility, agnostic of a particular model.*

3) **Statement of need and community readiness** – suggested limit of 4 pages, 45 points.

- a. Statement of need (15 points): Briefly describe the need for UNSS in the community or geographic region being considered. Please include a demographic description of the specific county(ies) or sub-county geographic area(s) to be served, including the number of births annually in the community.
  - i. Births per year
  - ii. Detail a brief picture of where births happen in your community (which birthing hospitals, birth centers, home births, etc.) We recognize applicants may not have detailed data; any lack of data will not negatively impact your application.
- b. Community indicators (10 points): What are some of the key maternal and child health and family well-being indicators that might be addressed by UNSS in the community? Please include any relevant data on the current demographic profile of your community. The following data sources may be helpful, but these are not an exhaustive list.
  - i. [Illinois Maternal Mortality Data Report, Illinois Department of Public Health, November 2025](#)
  - ii. [2022 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System \(PRAMS\) Detailed Data Tables](#)
  - iii. [Universal Newborn Support Systems: A Review of Readiness](#)
- c. Current awareness of UNSS (5 points): Describe the community's current level of awareness of UNSS. Is UNSS, in any form, being discussed in early childhood collaboratives, at birthing hospitals, within maternal/child health programs, etc.? How familiar are families and ECE and MCH providers with the concept of UNSS?

- d. Community support or hinderances (15 points): UNSS is an approach wherein all families, not just the highest risk families, are offered services. Describe any community history, current structure, services, and/or opportunities that would facilitate or hinder the development of a universal newborn support system that will reach all families welcoming a new baby, regardless of income and other usually identified family risk factors.

*We are curious about how you are thinking about UNSS in the context of reaching all families welcoming a new baby. This question seeks to assess your ability to evaluate barriers and opportunities regarding universal approaches; existing barriers will not negatively impact an application's review.*

#### **4) Organizational capacity** – suggested limit 3 pages, 50 points.

- a. Mission/Experience (15 points): Describe the fit between the proposed project and the agency mission, as well as the agency's knowledge of and standing in the community to be served. Briefly describe the organization's experience in supporting families, health and early learning providers, or other community resources within the prenatal-to-three space.
- b. UNSS Role (5 points): Please describe the applicant's agency's role in the feasibility process and in any future UNSS implementation. The applicant agency is not required to be the anticipated implementation lead for future UNSS. If the applicant agency is serving as a convener for feasibility only and would not play a direct role in future UNSS implementation, please indicate that below.  
*Whether or not the lead applicant would be the potential future implementing agency will not impact scoring but helps the reviewers understand the structure of the feasibility process.*
- c. Staffing (5 points): Please describe the staff members from the lead agency that will support the proposed activities, along with their highest appropriate credential and/or relevant experience.
- d. Partner organizations (15 points): Please describe any organizations that will formally collaborate on any of the proposed activities. Please detail the role that each additional partner organization will play and describe the mission of each organization along with any relevant experience.
- e. Existing collaborative tables (10 points): Please describe any existing maternal and child health, early learning, community support, or other relevant prenatal-to-three tables that you participate in, and how these tables might be supportive to your proposed activities. If you do not participate in any tables currently, please list any that you

are aware of in your community that might support your work in exploring UNSS feasibility.

- 5) **Budget** – suggested limit 1 page for the budget narrative, not weighted in scoring rubric, but must be completed.
  - a. Budget spreadsheet: Please upload a proposed budget spreadsheet at the end of this application. Please utilize the provided [budget template](#).
  - b. Budget Narrative: Please submit a proposed budget narrative. Use your worksheet as a guide for your narrative. Grant funds may not be used for direct service, capital expenditures, or lobbying.