



2023 Sparkler CT Community Engagement Support Grant Request for Proposals

Sparkler Learning is launching a competitive process where up to 16 Connecticut communities could each receive a grant to support local family engagement and implementation of Sparkler. Each selected community will receive an award of \$25,000 to support Sparkler implementation over a six-month grant period.

About Sparkler

The CT Office of Early Childhood is implementing Sparkler statewide as a support for families with young children (birth through 5 years old) and the programs serving families with children in that age range. Sparkler's mobile apps are available for free to any family with young children, and more than 90 communities across the state have started to implement Sparkler as part of their community's family engagement, screening, and support programs. Programs using Sparkler include: Home Visiting, Early Childhood Education Programs, School Districts, School Readiness Organizations, Community Organizations, Healthcare Providers, Family Resource Centers, Birth to Three Providers, and more. Sparkler empowers parents with a first-of-its-kind mobile developmental screening, promotion, and engagement tool, which is integrated with existing support systems. Working with CT OEC, 211 Child Development and other state and local partners, Sparkler seeks to improve early child development outcomes through expanding access to developmental screening, surveillance, promotion, and linkages from birth through kindergarten.

About Sparkler's Connecticut Community Engagement Support Grants

Successful implementation of Sparkler in a community requires local buy-in and local support to share Sparkler with families and then to weave Sparkler into the local network of early childhood supports. This means using Sparkler to understand trends in early childhood development locally and to use Sparkler to engage meaningfully with families.

Communities that are already using Sparkler OR communities that want to start using Sparkler may apply for a Connecticut Community Engagement Support Grant in order to support robust local implementation through planning, outreach, engagement, tracking, learning, and support. Proposals might include supporting local efforts/teams, engaging parent ambassadors, or other strategies that take local contexts and needs into account. Our hope is that these grants will help participating communities onboard and engage families over time, support local programs' implementation of Sparkler, and help communities across the State of Connecticut learn lessons to improve implementation of this program, including encouraging repeat screening, promotion, and ongoing family engagement and support.

Participating Communities will be asked to report on the strategies they employ and measure impact to help OEC and other communities across the state to learn how to successfully implement this program. The team is particularly interested in measuring not just the registrations for Sparkler access, but also family behavior: screening and repeat screening, play and engagement, follow-up and referral.

In addition to the grant itself, participating communities will receive free access to Sparkler for the



families in their community, including screening through Sparkler’s mobile Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, play activities and parenting tips to encourage caregiver interaction and child development, and coaching and support. In addition to the Sparkler platform, we will provide community with:

- Printed and Digital materials to share Sparkler with families, including local codes that
- enable families to sign up and link themselves with your community;
- Access to the Sparkler web-based dashboard and family-facing ASQ reports, which enable you to track registration, screening, and other components of family engagement, as well as directly engaging with families using Sparkler’s messaging platform;
- Training on the app from Sparkler staff;
- Ongoing project support and technical assistance.
- Participation in monthly community of practice meetings with other participating communities from August 2023 through February 2024.
- The ability to attend a one-day workshop conference in Fall 2023

Timeline:

RFP Release Date	June 5, 2023
RFP Information Session	June 12, 2023 (3:00 - 4:00 pm)
Due Date for Communities’ Proposals	June 23, 2023
Review and Selection	June 26 - July 13, 2023
Notice of Award	July 14, 2023
Contracts and Paperwork	July 14 - July 21, 2023
First Meeting of Grantee	August 1, 2023 (12:00 - 1:00)
Goals and Budget Due	August 15, 2023
Community of Learning	September 5, 2023 (12:00 - 1:00)
Fall Workshop for Grantees	October 2023 (Date TBD)
Community of Learning	November 7, 2023 (12:00 - 1:00)
Interim Report Due	November 17, 2023
Community of Learning	December 5, 2023 (12:00 - 1:00)
Community of Learning	January 9, 2023 (12:00 - 1:00)
Final Report Due	February 29, 2024
Final Wrap-Up Meeting for Cohort II	February 2024 (time TBD)

Grant Term: August 1, 2023 - January 31, 2024



Priorities:

Applications will be evaluated on the following four core priority areas:

- Priority #1: Collaborative Teamwork
- Priority #2: Effective Family and Community Engagement
- Priority #3: Effective Developmental Screening, Promotion, Intervention, and Support
- Priority #4: Commitment to Ongoing Learning and Sustainability

Eligibility

In order to participate, you must be part of a Connecticut non-profit or government community-based program that serves children 0-5 years old and their families. Ideally, multiple local organizations and individuals can collaborate so that applications reflect a community-wide partnership. Sparkler values diversity and inclusion and seeks to create a diverse mix of participating communities and team members.

Application Procedure:

If your community is interested in being considered for this opportunity, [please submit your application using the form](#) by June 23, 2023.

Your application should contain answers to all questions, including:

- Project Narrative: Please provide a clear and concise description of your proposed approach. (400 Words Maximum)
- Team: Please provide a list of the team members (or descriptions of the roles of people) who will represent your community. Please describe how the team will work collaboratively on this project. Do the individuals involved have backgrounds in engaging communities and promoting early childhood development? Are parents members of the team? How well does the team represent the community? (300 Words Maximum)
- Please describe how you will engage and support families in your community using Sparkler. (100 Words Maximum)
- Please describe how your community will use Sparkler as part of the work to engage families in developmental monitoring, screening, promotion, early identification, and support. (100 Words Maximum)
- What are your community's desired outcomes, and how will you measure your success in achieving them? (100 Words Maximum)

You will receive a receipt notification of your application within 24 hours following submission. Applicants should expect to be notified of funding by July 14, 2023.

Questions/More Information

Please attend the info session on Monday, June 12, 2023 at 3-4 PM to learn more about this grant and to ask any questions you have. You can register for the info session in this [link](#). If you have any questions please email bethanne@playsparkler.org.