

RFP Focus Areas

Introduction:

The 2014 IRC Children's Needs Assessment has provided valuable information to help guide the Child Services Advisory Committee (CSAC). The following outlines what will be considered for all grant requests.

Larger Picture

The community must start taking a long-term view focusing 15-25 years out. We have a cycle of poverty in IRC that has been increasing and needs to be broken.

Interventions should start as early as possible in a child's life in order to have the greatest impact.

IRC agencies should use best practices.

- a. Evidence based with measurable outcomes over time
- b. Cost effective/efficient
- c. Skilled executive, program, and board leadership
- d. Strong fiscal management
- e. Opportunity for broad impact (replicable, scalable, leveragable)

Focus should be on the pockets of poverty. Given that IRC poverty is in geographically disbursed pockets and that we have unique transportation problems, we must always keep in mind that services need to be available where and when people need and can access them. We must utilize the best mediums to clearly communicate what, when and where these services are available

Collaboration in the community is essential and can help optimize human and financial resources, expose and eliminate overlap.

We are supportive of the IRC Funders Forum hosting a series of educational workshops to be conducted by *Nonprofits First*. Additional preference will be given to agencies that participate in these workshops.

The considerations highlighted above have precedence over the actual CSAC Focus Areas listed below.

2015 CSAC Focus Areas (ranked in order by the Advisory Team at the completion of the Needs Assessment process.)

1. Early Childhood Development

This encompasses birth to age 5. For the younger children this would mean improving the interactions they have beginning at birth with their caregivers. It would include improving the quality (and transparency of relative quality) at childcare, PreK and Voluntary PreK

providers as well as improving financial accessibility to by leveraging available federal and state funds.

Why: Research shows that the period 0-5 is the most important time for brain development and cognitive and emotional skills can be significantly impacted.

2. Build Parent Capacity

This encompasses improving parenting skills at every age of a child's life and providing support mechanisms for parents. A priority would be new parents in particular first time and single parents and those in the poverty pockets.

Why: A parent is a child's first and most important teacher. We need to equip parents to be the good parents that they all want to be.

3. Out of school recreational activities and enrichment programs

They need to be free/affordable and accessible (transportation) to parents and children. Where possible, they should include a literacy/tutoring component. Mentoring programs are included. There is a large gap of programs for children 12+.

Why: Children need to develop positive out of school outlets that keep them engaged in school, promote their health and provide connections (to sports/hobbies, a person or group, etc). There is a wealth of data supporting extended day and extended year.

4. Middle and High School programs that address risky behavior

It appears that the *LifeSkills* class in middle school has had a positive impact. We need to investigate how programs like this can be continued into high school as well as include delinquent behavior, teen pregnancy, STDs, bullying etc.

Why: There is a lot of at risk behavior and we need to ensure that it is addressed early and repeatedly.