**Request for Applications**

RFA – 2021-22.2.1a

**Supported Living: A How-to Guidebook**

**FUNDING AGENCY: North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)*,*** NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Secretary

**ISSUE DATE: November 13th, 2020**

**DEADLINE DATE: January 22nd, 2021**

**Receipt of applications online at** [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org) **is preferred, but not required. All applications must be received by 5:00 pm EST on January 22nd, 2021. Please notify at least two weeks in advance of the due date if you need application materials in an alternate format or otherwise require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

Direct all inquiries concerning this Request for Applications (RFA) to:

**Mailing Address:**

NCCDD-RFA

North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

2010 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-2010

**Via Email:** RFAinfo@nccdd.org

**Delivery Information:**

Applicants for this RFA are strongly encouraged to submit the application electronically in the DD Suite online database found at [**www.ddsuite.org**](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CSStrom%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5C5J9DR2L6%5Cwww.ddsuite.org). Applicants that submit in hard copy are responsible for including all required elements in the submission packet.

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

The NCCDD makes funds available to fulfill its mission in accordance with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and the Council’s Five-Year State Plan. The NCCDD’s major funding source is the United States Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Disabilities, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The NCCDD makes funds available primarily through competitive bids or Requests for Applications (RFAs). A general description of the current RFA is included in this document. The complete RFA package is available through DD Suite ([www.ddsuite.org](https://www.ddsuite.org/?nofa_id=1247)) or may be requested in alternate formats or by mail. Please complete and submit the Notification of Intent to Apply if your organization or agency intends to apply.

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for profit, or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organization, agency, or non-profit demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, the non-profit private entity that is awarded this contract must submit proof of 501(c)(3) status with a [**current IRS determination letter**](http://501c3go.com/irs/need-copy-of-501c3-letter/)**.** The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Private non-profit and for-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents (see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

**II. ABOUT NCCDD**

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), authorized under Public Law 106-402, the DD Act, is one of 56 entities of its type in the United States and the territories. The NCCDD is an independent agency located in the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Its activities are governed by a 40-member body, appointed by the Governor, and comprised of at least 60 percent people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Other members include legislators and policymakers representing various agencies and organizations having a vested interest in people with I/DD. The Council’s quarterly meetings are open to the public.

The mission of the NCCDD is to assure that individuals with I/DD and their families participate in the design of and have access to culturally competent services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, contribution, self-determination, integration and inclusion in the community. The NCCDD achieves this mission by promoting advocacy and leadership, community capacity building and systems change activities. It also serves in an advisory capacity, under state law, to the NC DHHS.

The NCCDD has established goals and objectives in its Five-Year Plan (2017-2021). These goals represent the most pressing needs as identified by stakeholders in North Carolina. These goals are approved by the Council as the framework for its work within the context of the Five-Year Plan.

GOAL 1: By 2021, increase financial security through asset development for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 2: By 2021, increase community living for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

GOAL 3: By 2021, increase advocacy for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

This RFA will address **Goal 2**.

For further information on the work of the NCCDD, please see the NCCDD Five-Year State Plan at our website by clicking <https://nccdd.org/the-council/five-year-plan.html>

**III. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***INTENT:***

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) intends to fund an initiative that will produce a how-to Guidebook to help individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD), particularly those with the highest level of needs, and their families successfully utilize the Supported Living service in North Carolina.

***BACKGROUND:***

Supported Living is an Innovations Waiver-funded service that launched in North Carolina in 2016 in which people with I/DD receive supports in their own home while living independently. The Council funded a three-year initiative, which ended on December 31st, 2019 to promote the new Supported Living service statewide while providing technical assistance to Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and providers on the roll-out of this new waiver service. The initiative resulted in the creation of a guidebook/resource manual with ten success story videos that provided important information related to Supported Living, including foundational principles, housing, guardianship, Person-Centered Planning, and more. View the initiative website and the guidebook/resource manual here:

<https://www.nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.html>

<https://www.nccdd.org/supported-living-guidebook-resource-manual.html>

As the three-year initiative concluded, a diverse group of stakeholders and family members formed to explore ideas, issues, and policy matters related to Supported Living for individuals with higher level needs. This group, called the Supported Living Level 2 & 3 (SL 2/3) Action Team, identified barriers and challenges for these individuals, including recruitment and retention of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), lack of affordable housing, limited information and resources for overcoming barriers, and funding limitations. The Action Team recommended that a new two-year initiative be developed to address these concerns and create a practical Guidebook that can provide families, individuals, and providers with “nuts and bolts” strategies to successfully expand Supported Living for people who are identified as having more intensive support needs at Supported Living Levels 1, 2, and 3. North Carolina Money Follows the Person (MFP) is willing to provide two years of financial support in the amount of $150,000 ($75,000 per year) to support this initiative.

The proposed initiative will take place during a time of significant need and change within the I/DD system in North Carolina. The COVID-19 pandemic, potential budget cuts, and Medicaid Transformation will all have an impact on the I/DD system. The Council also plans to start an initiative related to the thousands of individuals with I/DD on the Registry of Unmet Needs. This Supported Living: A How-to Guidebook initiative will need to take all of these issues into account and work collaboratively with the Council and its partners as part of a cohesive strategy to positively impact the I/DD system.

**Proposed Objectives:**

1. Work closely with the SL 2/3 Action Team, particularly the members of the Family Guidebook subgroup, to develop a “nuts and bolts” Guidebook that will help more individuals with I/DD successfully access Supported Living and not revert back to living in a congregate setting.
2. Produce the Guidebook in a format that will allow it to be updated easily as conditions change in North Carolina’s I/DD system of services and as North Carolina moves into Medicaid Transformation.
3. Provide opportunities for families, particularly those with individuals with I/DD who have the highest level of needs (defined as Level 2 and Level 3), to provide feedback for the Guidebook and to engage with each other to share knowledge that will enhance learning across the state.
4. Provide opportunities for stakeholder feedback to help the Supported Living service expand sustainably in North Carolina and enable policymakers to more readily understand the barriers to Supported Living.

***DELIVERABLES:***

The organization chosen by the NCCDD will be expected to:

1. Develop a “nuts and bolts” Guidebook for SL 2/3 with practical guidance for individuals with I/DD, families, providers/DSPs, and policymakers. The Guidebook should be written in plain language with clear strategies and should include information for families who may be considering Supported Living to know what they should think about and be prepared for. It should provide practical guidance on working with DSPs, including issues that may arise with respect to the recruitment and retention of DSPs, guidance on daily activities and employment, guidance on overcoming barriers and where to turn when issues arise, guidance on annual assessments and reviews, guidance on housing and paying for housing, guidance on best practices, and ways individuals and families can get involved in improving the system and advocacy. It should also address any unique needs of individuals transitioning out of institutions and include tips and strategies for providers and DSPs on working with individuals with SL 2/3 needs.

2. Create, convene, and facilitate a quarterly Stakeholder Task Force to provide advice to this initiative and to review outlines and drafts of the Guidebook.

3. Conduct focus groups for individuals with I/DD and their families, providers, DSPs, state agency leaders, Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations’ (LME/MCOs) care coordinators, and future Tailored Plans care managers to understand the barriers, opportunities, and best practices related to the provision of SL 2/3 services as well as the diverse needs of individuals who use these services or who are considering using these services.

4. Collect, review, and identify best practices (including those collected by the Supported Living Action Team), content, and format ideas from relevant resources from other states, experts, and organizations who have experience with supported living.

5. Host, in partnership with the Council and the SL 2/3 Action Team and the Stakeholder Taskforce that meets quarterly, virtual statewide Conversations with the Council on Supported Living with a focus on SL 2/3.

6. Develop the step-by-step procedures that need to be followed to achieve success in Supported Living (with expectations for variation in addressing individual needs and diverse contextual factors).

* Incorporate guidance from focus groups and relevant resources.
* Incorporate principles of universal design to accommodate for a variety of learning styles.
* Incorporate fundamentals of business creation/micro board basics and other models of best practice to encourage sustainability in SL 2/3 options and housing options.

7. Identify 5 or more successful examples of people in North Carolina receiving SL 2 and SL 3 services to embed as illustrative stories through each of the steps, including barriers they faced and how they were able to overcome these barriers.

* Select teams for stories that illustrate diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, urban/rural/suburban location, transitions from family home/institution/group home, self-direction and provider-administered.
* Develop stories through narrative, visuals, video, and artifacts (e.g., weekly schedules, household maintenance duties, person-centered summaries, including what other waiver services the individual utilizing Supported Living uses, i.e. Community Networking, Day Supports, and/or Supported Employment) to chronicle the “highs and lows” of the team’s journeys through procedural implementation.
* Illustrate how Supported Living implementation can be led by families, individuals receiving services, care coordinators, and/or staff at provider agencies.
* Incorporate a variety of uses of assistive technology.
* Address the development of a “village,” including facilitation and incorporation of natural supports.
* Share the benefits of the business/microboard model for longer term sustainability.

8. Identify systemic barriers that continue to exist related to Supported Living, particularly Levels 2 and 3, and share these barriers and any suggested recommendations for systemic change with the Council and its partners.

9. Develop worksheets (print and on-line) and activities that readers can use to both transfer their learning and capture their support needs from each step of the process to their own unique circumstances in taking their own action in moving SL 2/3 forward.

10. Prepare the draft Guidebook in a simple and cognitively accessible format that incorporates the principles of plain language and/or the easy read format to make it easy for individuals with I/DD and their family members to read and understand. See cognitively accessible format guidelines here:

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Plain-Language-Webinar-SARTAC-August-22-2019.pdf>

Work with the Council to make key information available in Spanish for Spanish-speaking individuals with I/DD and their family members who speak and read Spanish.

11. Field test the draft Guidebook with stakeholders and experts in Supported Living and incorporate feedback prior to producing the final Guidebook to ensure that the information in the Guidebook benefits all people with I/DD, including those with the highest level of support needs.

12. Produce the final Guidebook in print and electronic formats. Make print copies available by request only and in a format that is feasible for another entity to print upon request. Develop the Guidebook in a way that will allow for it to be updated easily as conditions change within the context of the Supported Living service and the I/DD service system in North Carolina. Post the electronic format on the NCCDD website in a way that enables users to provide reviews and to describe their own use of the Guidebook in terms of benchmarks/actions they adapted, added, or skipped. This feature will provide a broad range of ideas for enhancing personalization for each individual and family in terms of characteristics (e.g., strengths, needs, and preferences) and contextual factors.

These deliverables are intended to bring the following results:

* More individuals with I/DD, particularly those individuals with the highest level of support needs, will be able to successfully access and utilize Supported Living services.
* More families of individuals using Supported Living will understand how to do it successfully.
* The Supported Living Innovations Waiver service will expand sustainably in North Carolina as more individuals with I/DD access and utilize it and as more provider agencies better understand how to provide this service successfully.
* More individuals with I/DD will live in a home of their choice in the community with the supports they need.
* More individuals with I/DD will be fully included, respected, valued, and supported in their communities.

***ADDITIONAL CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:***

**Performance Requirements**

Provide NCCDD the mandatory reports (i.e., quarterly/annual programmatic reports in the NCCDD’s DD Suite database, monthly fiscal reports for reimbursements, Initiative Information Sheet updates, and other relevant reports deemed necessary).

Also, the applicant selected for theinitiative will be expected to establish and operationalize activities to facilitate outreach to and inclusion of the Hispanic/Latino I/DD community. The 2017-2021 State Plans of Councils on Developmental Disabilities must identify disparity among a subpopulation of the state’s I/DD community and address that disparity. The NCCDD identified a barrier to services and supports for the Hispanic/Latino community caused by language access issues in response to the Administration on Community Living’s (ACL) mandate. Outreach to, and collaboration with, the Hispanic/Latino community to increase engagement and involvement is the Council’s proposed intent.

In addition, the Council has identified **Collective Impact** as the model to be used during the 2017-2021 Five-Year Plan to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives to produce systems change; therefore, the applicant selected for the initiative will be expected to operationalize activities to facilitate the five essential elements to a Collective Impact project, including:

1. Common Agenda:

All participants **share a vision for change** that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.

1. Shared Measurement:

All participating organizations **agree on the way success will be measured and reported**, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.

1. Mutually Reinforcing Activities:

A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a **mutually reinforcing plan of action**.

1. Continuous Communication:

All players engage in **frequent and structured open communication** to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

1. Backbone Support:

An **independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative** provides ongoing support by guiding the initiative’s vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.

Examples of when communities are ready or near ready for Collective Impact:

* There is a “champion” for this cause who has the ability to engage and encourage multiple sectors in the community and is willing to use that ability to help the community solve this problem;
* There is some local funding available to begin this effort or in-kind resources (protected time for selected staff members) to begin working to obtain funding;
* There is a history of other kinds of successful collaboration in the community among at least some of the relevant stakeholders;
* The general public is aware of this problem and cares about it or can be readily made aware and will care if they are aware.

***Priority will be given to organizations that offer:***

* Clear evidence of the agency’s capacity to carry out the proposed initiative.
* Evidence of a history of providing related services that are demonstrated to be person-centered.
* Documentation of collaborative relationships in the I/DD field. This should include letters of commitment from partnering organizations and other collaborating agencies.
* Demonstration of a clear understanding of the Collective Impact model of systems change.
* Entities based in North Carolina that are already familiar with the Supported Living service and how the I/DD system of services works in this state.

The funding for this RFA will be up to **$75,000.00** per year for up to two years, with Year One beginning **July 1st, 2021** and ending **June 30th, 2022**. The match requirement is waived because the funds are MFP Rebalancing Account state funds. Within these parameters, an applicant shall propose a two-year work plan clearly identifying the outputs and outcomes for each year.  **The Year 1 budget is the only budget to be entered into the DD Suite application.**  Continuation of funding after each funded year depends on contractor’s performance, Council approval, and continued funding from the MFP Rebalancing Account state funds. Upon approval for continuation funding, the scope of work for upcoming year will be jointly reviewed and revised by the NCCDD staff and contractor 90 days prior to the start of the upcoming year.

Definition of a Developmental Disability

Per the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 2000, section 102(8), “The term 'developmental disability' means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that:

* is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments;
* is manifested before the individual attains age 22;
* is likely to continue indefinitely;
* results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity;

(i) Self-care;

(ii) Receptive and expressive language;

(iii) Learning;

(iv) Mobility;

(v) Self-direction;

(vi) Capacity for independent living;

(vii) Economic self-sufficiency; and

reflects the individual’s need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.”

**IV. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are welcomed from any university, non-profit, for-profit or government agency that demonstrates that their agency is qualified, responsible, and capable of conducting the activities described. Eligible entities include any organizations, agencies, or businesses demonstrating an expertise in the focus area of this initiative. To be eligible, non-profit private entities must submit proof of current 501(c)3 status with a current IRS determination letter dated in the current year. The Council will not consider applications submitted by agencies that do not meet eligibility to apply for funding.

Non-profit applicants must be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to conduct business in North Carolina, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents

(see [www.sosnc.gov/corporations](http://www.sosnc.gov/corporations)).

***USE OF FUNDS:***

Contract funds may be used to support personnel services, operating expenses, and contracted services. Funds must be budgeted in the categories listed in the line item budget. Applicants must develop a budget narrative to accompany the line item budget. The line item budget and the budget narrative must show a clear relationship between the proposed budget and the proposed activities stated in the initiative plan**.**

**Funds may not support efforts to engage in any political activities or lobbying.**

***PERFORMANCE MONITORING/QUALITY ASSURANCE:***

To meet the requirements of the initiative, the contractor must collaborate with NCCDD staff to:

* participate in trainings and meetings;
* participate in initiative evaluation;
* participate in the NCCDD federally mandated Periodic Performance Review and;
* participate in other activities identified or conducted by NCCDD.

Performance and quality assurance of this contract will be conducted as follows:

* NCCDD will conduct monitoring activities during each contract period and will utilize the contractor’s objectives as its assurance criteria for meeting outcomes.
* The contractor must submit a quarterly progress report through DD Suite and a monthly expenditure report to NCCDD.
* The contractor must submit an Annual Performance Measure Summary form.
* The contractor must submit an End of Year Progress Report.
* The contractor must be available to present at the quarterly NCCDD meetings.

**V. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND APPLICATION REVIEW**

The following is a general description of the process by which applicants will be selected for funding for this initiative.

* 1. RFA announcements are sent to prospective agencies and organizations, via email, and/or posted on the NCCDD website, the DHHS website, and the NCCDD social media pages.
	2. Written questions concerning the specifications in this RFA will be received until **January 5th, 2021** via email at RFAinfo@nccdd.org. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted on the NCCDD website (www.nccdd.org) and DD Suite within 5 business days after the Bidders’ Workshop on **January 7th, 2021** and e-mailed to all agencies and organizations completing the Intent to Apply Form.
	3. Applications are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on **January 22nd, 2021**. Electronic submission is required, except as otherwise noted. Complete application and attach/upload all necessary documents in DD Suite before submitting. The complete RFA package and instructions are available through the DD Suite electronic submission program (ddsuite.org/).
	4. Applications will be evaluated by an RFA Review Committee. The recommendations of this committee will be reviewed by the NCCDD, which reserves the right to accept or reject the Review Committee’s recommendations.
	5. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a Request for Applications, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
	6. Application Process Dates Summary:
		+ **November 13th, 2020**: Request for applications distributed to eligible applicants and posted on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities website ([www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)).
		+ **January 5th, 2021**: Deadline for written RFA questions.
		+ **January 7th, 2021**: Interested applicants may attend a Bidders’ Workshop. If feasible, NCCDD may schedule an additional Bidders’ Workshop at a date and location to be determined. Check [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org) for announcements.
		+ **January 22nd, 2021**: Applications due to the NCCDD by close of business, 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.
		+ **May 14th, 2021**: Award announced.
		+ **July 1st, 2021**:Contract begins.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS TO BE COMPLETED UPON AWARD**

See DD Suite to download these attachments – all of these documents must be completed if your agency is awarded the contract for this RFA prior to the execution of the contract:

* Project Profile page
* NCCDD Assurances
* Notice of Certain Reporting and Audit Requirements
* Conflict of Interest Policy/Letter (Contractor’s COI)
* Conflict of Interest Verification – Annual
* Indirect Cost Rate Letter – if applicable
* 501(c)(3) Status Determination Letter/Form (private non-profit agencies) (Note: Public organizations shall submit a document verifying their legal name and tax identification number.)
* IRS Tax Letter
* Annual IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (private non-profit agencies)
* State Certifications
* Federal Certifications
* DUNS Letter
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Contracts
* Completed Letter to Identify Individual to Sign Expenditure Reports
* Certification of No Overdue Taxes (applies to non-governmental entities)
* Proof of Insurance, if applicable

Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to submit the attachments along with their application. If attachments are not submitted and the applicant is selected to receive the funding for this initiative, the attachments must be completed and submitted with the contract. The NCCDD will not execute a contract until it is in receipt of all attachments. Failure to provide these timely may result in disqualification for funding.