

Application Report



Applicant Organization: Early Years Therapy
Project Name: Increasing Access to Early Start in Tribal Communities
Application ID: App-22-676
Funding Announcement: FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant
Awarded Amount: \$62,300

Project Summary: To increase the access to and quality of Redwood Coast Regional Center’s Early Start and Lanterman services in one under-resourced, geographically isolated, primarily Native American Tribal community in Mendocino County: Covelo. To serve as a potential model for replication in communities with similar barriers.

Authorized Certifying Official: Gina Wermuth gina@earlyyearstherapy.com (707) 472-7099

Project Director/Manager: Gina Wermuth gina@earlyyearstherapy.com (707) 472-7099

Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

1. Applicant Question: Project Title

What is the Project Title?

Applicant Response:

Increasing Access to Early Start and Lanterman Services in Tribal Communities

2. Applicant Question: Awarded Amount

What is the total amount awarded for the project?

Applicant Response:

\$62,300

3. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

Applicant Response:

Community Based Organization, non-501(c)(3) EIN

4. Applicant Question: Description of Organization/Group

Provide a brief description of the organization or group. Explain what experience your organization has managing a project similar to the proposal and state the outcomes of that project. You may upload your brochure or add a website link.

Applicant Response:

Early Years Therapy is the sole-proprietor Community-Based Organization for a licensed and certified Spanish bilingual speech-language pathologist specializing in birth-to-three assessment and intervention for communicative and developmental disorders with a mission to improve outcomes of very young children in underserved communities.

- Successful 15-year record of delivering reliable and high-quality Early Intervention services to culturally and linguistically diverse populations through building trust, rapport and bridges of connection.
- Extensive training and experience in culturally- and linguistically-informed service delivery, as well as in provision of services that are holistic, family-centered, relationship-based, strengths-based, culturally-appropriate, and trauma-informed.
- Currently established with services and parent/professional collaborations in the target community.
- Accomplished in meeting goals related to interprofessional outreach, collaboration and community-building

5. Applicant Question: Applicant in Good Standing

Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Please upload confirmation letter(s) or proof of good standing.

Applicant Response:

Yes

6. Applicant Question: Subcontractors in Good Standing

Are the applicant's subcontractors in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration?

Applicant Response:

Not Applicable

Section Name: Grant Reapplication Information

Sub Section Name: Grant Reapplications Only

1. Applicant Question: Previous Award(s)

Did your organization receive DDS grant funding in fiscal year 2020-21 or 2021-22? If yes, go to question 2 to complete each column. If no, skip this category and go to category 3.

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Award(s)

Since fiscal year 2020, complete a row for each DDS Service Access and Equity grant your organization was awarded funding.

Applicant Response:

Year Awarded	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Amount
2021-22	Increasing Access to Early Start in Tribal Communities	21-C38	29000

3. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Outcomes

Provide a brief grant summary of your project outcomes for fiscal year 2020-21 and/or 2021-22.

Applicant Response:

The previous project started in March of 2022 and will run through the end of February 2023. During the initial seven months, several key deliverables have so far been accomplished:

1. Established a bi-weekly birth-3 playgroup that has been operational for 5 consecutive months and continues presently; conducted variety of promotional activities to increase family access to and participation in playgroup.
 2. Established a developmental referral and screening protocol within the Indian Health Clinic such that physicians and other medical providers can schedule a follow-up appointment with the project clinician in real time during their encounters with families.
 3. Conducted 14 screenings at the clinic as a result of new referral protocol
 4. Conducted 2 assessments.
 5. Provided ongoing pre-referral direct intervention to 4 hesitant families.
 6. Trained and provided Early Start referral forms and brochures to clinic medical providers in Early Start referrals, including informal screenings, and direct referral.
 7. Screened and assessed 6 children under 5 years of age through word of mouth referrals from community partners resulting in 2 referrals to Regional Center.
 8. Distributed 44 developmental play kits including books, toys and parent-friendly written guidance on developmental milestones and promoting early development.
 9. Provided direct support on-site to the school district preschool staff to facilitate identification and referral of students of concern.
 10. Conducted outreach activities and networking at community events including the monthly Food Bank distribution day and an all-day community training on the topic of Native-informed Trauma Care
 11. Corresponded with 3 potential candidates in search for finding a trainer to present to the early start workforce on considerations of service delivery in Native American communities.
 12. Identified and initiated contact with 2 new additional community partners, ICWA and Yuki Trails (behavioral health clinic).
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4. Applicant Question: Project Transition

If awarded, how will your current project(s) transition into the 2022-23 proposed project? Does your proposed project expand or continue your current project, if so how? What activities, measures, or target groups are being added? Provide a summary of the differences and reasons why you are proposing the change.

Applicant Response:

The project seamlessly continues into Year 2 with continuation of current activities and measures. Expansion activities are also proposed and described below, based on the knowledge gleaned from the first 7 months of project implementation.

- Expand the project scope to include identification and referral of 3-18 year old children for Lanterman services in addition to Early Start, based on the number of 3+ year old children identified thus far as un- or under-served.
- Increase the birth-3 playgroup frequency from every-other week to weekly, with anticipation of increased attendance with a weekly option for families.
- Build collaboration with newly identified community partners: ICWA (on any given day there are an average of 75 youth in ICWA-supervised foster care), Yuki Trails (Indian Health Clinic's youth and adult behavioral health program). Partnering with these agencies will afford opportunities to promote infant/early childhood mental health awareness and generate warm-handoff opportunities for foster caregivers to receive Regional Center assessments and services.

Section Name: General Application**Sub Section Name:** Proposal Summary

1. Applicant Question: Project Type

Choose the project type that best describes your activities from the list below:

Applicant Response:

Engagement and Outreach

Applicant Comment:

The chief aim of the project is improving engagement with Regional Center services through outreach activities. Additionally, the project facilitates direct access to developmental screenings and evaluations, as well as pre-referral intervention for parents who are hesitant to complete a formal referral to RCRC but are willing to engage with intervention as a means of building trust toward an eventual referral.

2. Applicant Question: Duration of project

Choose the duration of your project.

Applicant Response:

12 months

3. Applicant Question: Regional Centers

Choose the Regional Center(s) that your project will serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, select the All Regional Centers/Statewide option.

Applicant Response:

- Redwood Coast Regional Center
-

4. Applicant Question: Counties Served

List the county or counties your project proposes to serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, the select All Counties / Statewide option.

Applicant Response:

- Mendocino County
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5. Applicant Question: Community Based Organizations

Will you be working with one or more Community Based Organizations? If so, provide the name of the organization and how you will be working together.

Applicant Response:

1. Round Valley Indian Health Clinic: Staff training, RCRC brochures and forms, developmental screenings and assessments 2. Round Valley Native American Head Start: Staff development, developmental screenings, referrals 3. Round Valley Family Resource Center: outreach activities and host birth-to-five developmental play group 4. Yuki Trails (Behavioral Health Clinic): Child Find and infant mental health promotion 5. ICWA and Round Valley Tribal Court: Child Find and outreach activities

6. Applicant Question: Multiple Organizations

Does your project include partnership with one or more organizations either as a co-applicant or subcontractor? If "yes", please upload a letter of support from each organization, that includes an explanation of their role in the partnership.

Applicant Response:

No

7. Applicant Question: Strategies and Sustainability

How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?

Applicant Response:

The current proposed project builds upon already existing resources within the region. The requested funding would be used to expand and strengthen child find capacities among local staff interfacing with children and families. By the end of Year 22-23, we expect that: local staff will be independently conducting child find activities, be fully stocked with Regional Center brochures and referral forms, and feel competent and skilled in making referrals independently; families will have increased awareness of early childhood developmental skills, familiarity and trust in Early Start personnel, and overall increased likelihood of following through with services for their children. We expect that the birth-to-five developmental play group will have been established and staffed and able to continue independently. The successes of the project will serve as a model for replication in other communities with similar barriers.

Sub Section Name: Target Population

1. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Groups Served

Select the ethnicity group(s) the project will serve. For "Indian", "Pacific Islander", "Slavic" or "Other" use comment section to list specific groups.

Applicant Response:

- Native American
 - Hispanic
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2. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Group(s), Language(s) and Number of Individuals Served

For each ethnicity group, provide the number of individuals your project intends to serve and the related language(s).

Applicant Response:

Ethnicity Group(s)	Individuals Served	Language(s)
Native American	48	English
Hispanic	10	Spanish

3. Applicant Question: Age Group(s) Served

Select all Age Groups the project will serve.

Applicant Response:

- Birth up to Three (Early Start)
 - Three to 21
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Section Name: Project Application

Sub Section Name: Project Application

1. Applicant Question: Project Summary and Organizational Experience

Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined target population, catchment area, and project design. Specifically describe what your project will accomplish and how it will benefit the community served. In your answer, include what experience your organization has working with the target population and how your organization will work with the local RC(s).

Applicant Response:

Purpose: To increase the access to and quality of Redwood Coast Regional Center's Early Start services in one under-resourced, geographically isolated, primarily Native American Tribal community in Mendocino County: Covelo. To serve as a potential model for replication in communities with similar barriers.

Background: Current POS-based Early Start services are failing to meet the unique needs of one of the most culturally diverse, poor, isolated communities at high-risk for childhood developmental needs. Early Start providers come from out of town, are limited in availability, are sporadically present due to POS driven services, and are often met with mistrust by families; culturally competent providers are not always available; the natural environments model of service delivery is often inappropriate for families that do not want services at home, and there is a lack of appropriate community meeting spaces; traditional provider service constraints are an obstacle for families with life stressors that require more flexible scheduling options.

Focus: Increase Covelo community awareness of and trust in Early Start services via funding a dedicated, consistent, culturally-competent, bilingual Early Start clinical professional to establish a community presence two-to-three days per month for two years. Provider will partner with community agencies to decrease barriers to access, conduct an array of service delivery models, and provide training to community resources for sustained child-find activities and enhanced developmental awareness.

Area of need: RCRC identified the need to increase disproportionate POS utilization among families with infants and toddlers in Covelo.

Organizational Experience: The project seeks to fund an Early Start clinical professional with extensive history working with marginalized and diverse communities, and an existing relationship with Covelo community partners and families.

Goals: 1) Increase community trust and knowledge of child development through the consistency and familiarity of a dedicated provider. 2) Increase local agencies' staff capacity for parent education, screening, identification, and referral. 3) Increase local childcare providers' capacity to support children with disabilities and their families. 4) Increase cultural competency of county Early Start workforce for working in Native American communities.

2. Applicant Question: Data and Community Input

Explain why you have selected your priority population(s) using RC POS data and other data as supporting evidence of the disparity or inequity. Include how your organization used input from the community, target population, and RC to design the proposal.

Applicant Response:

We conducted multiple interviews in Covelo over a span of 6 months in 2021 with parents of children with disabilities, Head Start leadership and staff, school district special education leadership, health clinic providers, and FRC management to learn what rates and types of disability are being seen, what barriers exist, and what supports community members say they need to improve access. Interviews supported established RCRC data showing disproportionately low access to Early Start. Local preschool teachers and Round Valley School District special education leadership reported that 20-55% of children age 3-5 in preschool are identified after age 3 with significant needs and resultant IEP's. Current Child Find activities in Covelo are reaching a fraction of children under 3 that have significant delays and disabilities. Of the children identified, family responsiveness to IFSP services is well below average.

Attached are letters of support from our current project partners.

Attachment:

[Joel Letter SAE Y2.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[Sharon Letter SAE Y2.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

[Sarah Letter SAE Y2.pdf](#) - PDF FILE

3. Applicant Question: Uniqueness

How is the proposed project unique from a currently funded grant (e.g., strategies, activities, and goals) in the proposed RC catchment area? If the project is similar to a currently funded grant listed on the Department's website, how is the proposed project different?

Applicant Response:

Our project specifically targets one isolated and underserved Native American community that has an historical mistrust of outsiders and government services. We employ the unique strategy of placing an Early Start clinical professional directly in the community on a consistent, frequent and sustained basis over the course of two years to overcome barriers to access via family endorsement through partnership with trusted community leaders, relationship-building, trust-building, and capacity-building within organizations that work with children and families. RCRC's current 2021-2023 MHSA "F.A.S.T." grant broadly targets social-emotional health of birth-to-five age children across the 4-county catchment area and has also identified Covelo as an area of specific, high concern. RCRC has a Diversity Grant through which it provides outreach to local Native American and Latino communities.

4. Applicant Question: Improve Equity and Service Access

How will your project measurably improve equity, access, and reduce barriers to services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?

Applicant Response:

Child Find:

- Provide consistent access to developmental and social emotional screenings, evaluations and therapies
- Train pediatric healthcare providers at Round Valley Indian Health Clinic to identify and refer
- Train birth-to-three childcare providers to identify, refer
- Collaborate with local ICWA/Tribal Court to identify, refer
- Collaborate with Yuki Trails behavioral health clinic to identify, refer
- Improve parent/community knowledge of and trust in currently non-local early intervention resources

Service Delivery:

- Eliminate critical shortage of Early Intervention Providers traveling to community
 - Implement culturally-informed Early Intervention services and practices
 - Create safe and appropriate service location options for families who do not want home-based services
 - Create service scheduling that accommodates families who require flexible or drop-in visits
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5. Applicant Question: Support of RC Plan

Does the project support the RC plan to promote equity and reduce disparities in their catchment? If you are a RC, how does this project support your recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce your identified disparities? How

will your project collaborate with other organizations to promote community inclusion?

Applicant Response:

RCRC covers 4 rural counties in the Northwest portion of California, which are among the poorest, least resourced and most geographically challenged areas in the state. We serve a culturally diverse population with high needs (e.g. significant incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, pre-natal toxic exposure to meth, repeated years in which the area has experienced Federally Declared Natural Disasters- Fire and Flood). Infants, toddlers and young children are particularly disadvantaged by poorly developed healthcare, educational and family resources. Collaborative partnerships to provide a strong network of support in our local area are particularly needed, as individuals may be several hours away from more populated and better resourced towns and cities. RCRC's catchment area includes a significant Native American population. Development and delivery of culturally appropriate services and approaches to serve this community has been a barrier. This grant will facilitate, introduce and expand services and supports which utilize the strengths and honor the traditions that are unique to this population. This project will expand RCRC partnership with local Covelo medical, childcare, educational and family resource centers.

6. Applicant Question: Project Activities and Measures

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Activities Template located in the middle tab directly above.

The schedule of activities clearly and specifically demonstrates the steps that the project will take to achieve its stated objective and measures. Do the proposed measures appropriately track the project objective and activities, provide insight into the effectiveness of project, and demonstrate impact on the target population?

Applicant Response:

We are recommending that the Objectives and Measures from Year 1 of the project continue into Year 2 without modification. This reflects the goal of the work of the project in taking time to establish itself in the community and for the project staff to become familiar and trusted partners in the community.

The project proposes to concurrently target its component activities from the beginning throughout the lifespan of the project. The activities mutually enhance each other, but none are contingent upon another.

Project progress measures will be obtained and reported on quarterly:

- Survey of partner organization staff satisfaction with training and support being provided
 - Number of families consulted, screened, assessed
 - Number of IFSP's and IPP's developed
 - Number of developmental materials kits distributed to families
 - Tasks completed toward Webinar Trainings on cultural competency
 - Tasks completed toward establishing developmental playgroup
 - Community gatherings attended and results
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7. Applicant Question: Budget Template and Narrative

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Budget Template located in the tab directly above.

The project budget is consistent with the stated project objective and activities, and clearly and concisely explains how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design and outcomes. The project budget costs are clearly associated

with the activities and does not include non-allowable costs or costs funded by other sources.

- Budget Template example is located at [Attachment C](#).
- Budget Details and Restrictions are available [here](#).

Applicant Response:

This project is designed to minimize cost through the use of a single staff person who has already completed extensive research and development on the ground in the community in order to develop this project. This keeps costs limited to those associated with being up and running, versus preparing and planning. Costs are limited to direct personnel and supply expenses. We are requesting an increased budget this year chiefly to allow personnel the actual time required for carrying out the project activities implementation and the project administration. The Y1 project proposal underestimated both the administrative time necessary to manage the grant, as well as the time necessary in the community to conduct all of the activities. The Y2 budget proposal aims to rectify these errors that were discovered in the process of Y1 of the grant being carried out.

The primary budget change this year is increasing from 26 workdays in Y1 to 52 workdays for the 2023-24 year. In addition to providing adequate time for project implementation and administration, Year 1 activities revealed community-specific factors that call for the need to be physically present on as frequent as possible a basis as the most critical means of conducting meaningful outreach. Such factors include:

- Weekly presence will allow greater flexibility for missed appointments, family realities, cultural reality of appointment follow-through.
- Unexpected closures: All tribal offices programs close for at least one day when a tribal member passes away. Little to no notice is available.
- Geographically-based disruptions to scheduled activities such as power outages, internet outages, slides/accidents/road closures. These are common parts of life there, and grant clinician needs to be able to pivot to alternate tasks and activities when blocked from the planned or intended intended ones.
- Incidental and spontaneous conversations with community members are a critical part of outreach. The clerk at the grocery store, the gas station cashier, the parent dropping off at prek who wants to talk about their niece/nephew/neighbor's kid, the person in the parking lot at the clinic... These are the unplanned yet essential moments in a community of this size that build awareness of the Early Start presence, the person who can guide them through the process, and trust that this person will be available to them reliably.
- Project personnel attendance at community events where critical connections with can be sparked, which often occur on a weekend, evening or day when other grant activities do not take place.

Section Name: Proposal Certification

Sub Section Name: Certification

1. Applicant Question: Confirm Proposal Discussion with RC(s)

CBOs are required to discuss their proposal with each RC(s) the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, have you discussed your proposal with each RC you are intending to serve?

Applicant Response:

Yes

2. Applicant Question: RC Contact

CBOs are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) catchment the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, state the name(s) of the contact person(s) at each RC you have emailed your proposal application. The RC contact list is available here at [Attachment F](#).

Applicant Response:

Mariana Molina Nava

Alma Ingram

3. Applicant Question: Code of Conduct

Grantee Code of Conduct

The Department is committed to supporting services and programs with integrity that foster collaboration and professionalism. Grantees are expected to conduct project activities in a professional and respectful manner that include:

- **Valuing Diversity and Inclusion.** Grantees should embrace diversity that includes but is not limited to: ability, race, language, national origin, citizenship, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and religion.
- **Conducting Activities with Personal and Professional Integrity.** All activities with individuals, families, community organizations, regional centers, and state, local and federal agencies should be conducted with professionalism, dignity, respect, and fairness. Grantees should be open to listening to different points of view and fostering productive communication.
- **Providing a Positive Work Environment:** All projects should foster a positive and respectful work environment with their colleagues and other grantees.

Applicant Response:

- I acknowledge that I have reviewed the Code of Conduct.
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4. Applicant Question: Applicant Certification

By submitting this application, the Applicant is certifying the truth and accuracy of the proposal. The applicant also certifies that if you have subcontracting organizations, each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget.

Applicant Response:

Yes
