

Cooperative Agreement for Evaluation Research

Announcement of a Request for Proposal

Mind Matters - Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience

The Dibble Institute is pleased to announce a competitive cooperative agreement opportunity to conduct an initial evaluation of [Mind Matters – Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience](#).

Mind Matters, a research-based program, consists of 12 one-hour lessons that teach adolescents to respond to negative experiences with innovative methods based on current neuroscience. The skills taught in this program give adolescents, particularly those who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), a way to take charge of their emotions and improve their states of mind. Through this program students learn to address their physical, relational, and mental health needs. Mind Matters was originally published by The Dibble Institute in August 2017. Since then, it has been placed into practice in a [wide variety of settings](#) across the country. An evaluation is the next step for examining its effectiveness and assuring its broader use.

The Dibble Institute will fund up to \$15,000 for an 18-month (from award to final report) evaluative study to understand what participants learn, what changes they have seen in their lives, and what the instructors have observed over the course of the instruction. Example outcomes include, but are not limited to: emotion regulation, anxiety, interpersonal skills, and physical health. An experimental or quasi-experimental design with control or comparison group is encouraged but not required.

Eligibility

We are seeking proposals from researchers of all levels, but would this opportunity would be an ideal dissertation or mentored project for an advanced-level doctoral student. Preference is given to researchers with an interest in ACEs or healthy relationships. The award will be made to a single organization, which will be responsible for accepting and administering the evaluation. Eligible applicant organizations must be a university, research organization, or a 501(c)3 non-profit. The researcher (advanced-doctoral student, post-doctoral fellow, or faculty member) should have program evaluation experience, particularly in the areas of ACEs and/or healthy relationships.

Costs associated with the delivery of the program may be covered by this award. Instructor and participant materials as well as training will be provided by Dibble.

Indirect costs may not exceed 10%. These costs will be included as part of the total award.

Application Process

The application process involves two steps. First, an eligible organization must submit a *letter of interest* to The Dibble Institute for the evaluation funding. Dibble will review the letters and invite applicants who meet the eligibility criteria and address the items noted below to submit a *full proposal*.

The following table shows the requested application materials and expected timeline from award to final summative report submission:

	Date Due
All prospective applicants must submit a letter of interest (maximum 2 pages, single-spaced)	January 4, 2019
Applicants will be notified whether they are invited to submit a full proposal (full proposals must be invited)	February 1, 2019
Invited applicants must submit a full proposal including budget, timeline, and assurances (maximum 15 pages, double-spaced, not including attachments outlined below)	April 5, 2019
Applicants will be notified whether they have been selected for an award	May 3, 2019
Start date	May 20, 2019
Draft final report	October 16, 2020
Revised final report	November 20, 2020

Letter of Interest

A two-page, single-spaced letter of interest must include the following information and be signed by the party who will be responsible for the successful completion of the study. Letters of interest must be submitted in a single pdf document via email to Dr. Rachel Savasuk-Luxton (Rachel@dibbleinstitute.org) no later than 5 p.m. EST on Friday, January 4, 2019 and must include the following:

1. Brief description of the research design, proposed research activities, program implementation plan, data collection strategies, and primary outcomes to be evaluated.
2. A brief description of the population that will be studied. This description should also include the expected/intended sample size.
3. Identification of applicant organization and description of the program implementation partner (if different from the applicant). This should include a brief biography of the researcher (and mentor if applicant is a graduate student).
4. Brief statement of the amount of funding dollars sought, the research activities that the agreement will fund (e.g., researcher's time, data collection), the proposed timeframe for the conduct of evaluation activities, and, though not required, any expected match or funding from other sources.

Full proposals:

Full proposals should not exceed 10 pages (suggested page lengths included in parentheses below), double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and a font of 12 or larger. Suggested page lengths are noted in parentheses. The page limit does not include the detailed, line-item budget and attachments, including letters or other documents specifically requested in this RFP. Please submit all items in a single pdf document via email to Dr. Rachel Savasuk-Luxton (Rachel@dibbleinstitute.org) no later than 5 p.m. EST on Friday, April 5, 2019.

Full proposals should include:

1. Study Design (5 pages)

- A detailed description of the study design including: the type of design, research questions and hypotheses, recruitment techniques, plans for data collection, storage, and management, as well as any anticipated limitations or barriers in the study design and methods for mitigating or overcoming potential limitations or barriers.
- A summary of the target population, including the intended sample size and details on how these estimates were obtained (e.g., previous experience, number of classes expected to visit, etc.).
- A description of expected outcomes to be assessed related to participants' improvements and instructors' experiences.
- A reasonable plan to obtain IRB approval.

2. Capacity and Partnerships (2 pages)

- A description of the applicant's capacity and readiness to manage and implement the project, including any and all relevant experience related to the successful implementation and evaluation of ACES interventions or healthy relationship programs or basic research on social interventions.
- How the applicant will monitor and manage the overall project. Describe the approach that will be used to monitor and track progress, completion, and quality of all objectives and activities.
- A detailed description of all partners, if any, that will be involved in the project as well as their roles and responsibilities. This description should also include the partners' demonstrated abilities to recruit, serve, and retain a sufficient number of youth within the required time period for an effective evaluation.

3. Key personnel (1 pages)

- Provide a list of any individuals (volunteer or otherwise) that will be working on the project and a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of all team members, including research personnel and personnel at the implementing partner program (if applicable).
- Describe the relevant experience and expertise of all known and proposed project personnel.

4. Budget Narrative (1 pages)

- A specified amount of funding requested as well as a description of any current or requested funding from other major donors.
- As a separate attachment: A detailed line-item budget for the full award period that includes the calculations for all costs and activities (e.g., personnel costs, equipment, participant incentives, supplies, etc.). Details should include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail to verify the calculations.
- Justifications for the proposed costs outlined in budget.

Attachments for Full Proposal

These attachments provide detail on the budget for the project, the timeline for project performance, and the capabilities and competencies of the applicant organization and its contractors. Award funds may cover research expenses only, including but not limited to: research salary and/or consultant fees, research assistance (no tuition remission), data collection costs, participant incentives, research travel, and software or hardware (not to exceed \$1,500).

- A list of team members and their contact information (e.g., email address, phone number)
- A detailed line-item budget (up to 3 pages) for the full award period showing all personnel costs, travel costs, supplies, participant incentives and administrative overhead for both research and program organizations. Please show any additional funding that has been committed to the project that would be added to the Dibble award.
- A timeline or milestone chart showing major research tasks and completion of each task by month or quarter (e.g., Month 1 or Quarter 1).
- Two-page biographical sketch for the lead applicant(s).
- For non-university or non-government applicants, a copy of the applicant's determination letter for 501(c) (3) tax-exempt status and a 2016 or 2017 audited financial report or federal tax return.
- If the application includes an implementing organization, a letter of support and agreement between the researcher and organization outlining the partnership and plan for working together.

Proposal Topics and Selection Criteria:

Full proposals should address the topics noted below. Bulleted items describe what the Dibble reviewers will be considering during their review of each proposal topic.

1. Study Design (50 points)

- The study is well-designed and will generate credible data.
- The data analyses proposed are appropriate.
- The applicant has provided a list of all expected outcomes of interest.
- The proposal identifies a clear plan about how needed data will be collected, who will be responsible for data collection during each phase of the study, who will supervise the collection of data, and how the data will be kept confidential.
- The project has a reasonable plan to obtain IRB approval.
- The study can be conducted (including data analysis and report writing) within a maximum of 18 months (Timeline or milestone chart must be submitted as a required Attachment).
- Anticipated limitations and barriers in the study design are discussed and proposed mitigation methods are reasonable.

2. Capacity and partnership (30 points)

- The applicant has experience in evaluating ACEs interventions or healthy relationships programs, doing evaluations of other psychoeducational programs/interventions, or in conducting basic research on social interventions.
- The applicant or partner has experience providing services to young people who have experienced ACEs.
- The applicant or partner has a demonstrated ability to recruit, serve and retain a sufficient number of youth within the required time period for an effective evaluation.
- The program staff will devote a sufficient amount of time and effort for recruitment and retention of young people during the period when the evaluation is being conducted.
- The applicant organization and any contractors that the applicant will use to implement and manage this project have the experience, capability, and capacity to conduct it.

3. Key personnel (10 points)

- The proposal describes the roles and responsibilities of key project staff including research personnel and, if applicable, personnel at the implementing partner program.
- The applicant has demonstrated the relevant experience and expertise of known and proposed project personnel.
- There are resumes/curriculum vitae for the lead investigator, graduate student(s), and implementing program partners as a separate attachment.

4. Budget narrative (10 points)

- The applicant organization is identified and has specified the amount of funding requested, and provided a detailed budget and budget narrative as an attachment.

- The applicant organization has the capacity to administer the evaluation and has included details on its system for fiscal accountability such as project cost accounting, internal controls, policies and procedures, and the ability to prepare financial reports.

What to Expect in the Cooperative Agreement

Dibble will collaborate with awardee(s) to ensure that the funded project is successfully executed.

As a condition of their award, awardee(s) will be asked to:

- Notify and seek prior approval for *major* changes to the original study plan.
- Participate in monthly telephone meetings to review progress of the evaluation.
- Submit a draft of the final report by 5 p.m. EST on Friday, October 16, 2020 and the revised final report that incorporates feedback by The Dibble Institute by 5 p.m. EST on Friday, November 20, 2020.
- Publish evaluation findings in peer-reviewed journal(s) within a year of study completion.
- Allow Dibble to post the final report on the Dibble website, allow Dibble access to the data for additional analysis and publications, and to utilize this information in the further improvements and promotions of Mind Matters.

Questions

Please contact Dr. Rachel Savasuk-Luxton (Rachel@dibbleinstitute.org) with any questions.