INTRODUCTION

ROC the Future is Rochester’s collective impact initiative dedicated to improving outcomes for children and youth, from cradle-to-career. We are currently housed at The Children’s Agenda, our backbone organization, and achieve our goals through the engagement and actions of committed leaders and organizations in education, philanthropy, government, business, parents and family members, and other stakeholders in the community. We are seeking proposals from qualified organizations interested in serving as the Backbone Host/Anchor Entity for ROC the Future, beginning April 1, 2021. Interested organizations must submit an application with complete responses to the questions below no later than May 8, 2020.

ROC THE FUTURE HOST/ANCHOR ENTITY PROPOSAL QUESTIONS:

Please provide written responses to the following, using no more than 5 pages for the entire narrative submission (excluding attachments).

SECTION I: Please state the rationale for this application to be the Backbone Host/Anchor Entity for ROC the Future. Describe why your organization wants to serve in this capacity (no more that 1 page).

SECTION II:
Core Backbone Host/Anchor Entity Requirements:

ROC the Future Conveners are seeking proposals from organizations with interest in serving as the host/anchor entity under the direction of the Executive Committee, beginning April 1, 2021. We seek an innovative, forward-thinking and community-connected host/anchor entity that can support our pivot to the systems level (see Historical Information). Please respond to the inquiries below, about your organization’s ability to provide the core functions of a Host/Anchor Entity for ROC the Future:

A. Backbone Support
   ROC the Future currently has 6 backbone staff and is seeking to fill 2 vacancies in the upcoming months. Please share your organizations experience, and/or willingness to support bringing on a fully staffed backbone for this community initiative. Please refer to and address the four specific host/anchor entity requirements identified in the proposal background/overview.

B. Administration and General Management Support
   Describe the structure of your organization, and include itemized detail of sufficient administration and overhead to support the work of ROC the Future’s backbone staff, including office and logistical support, as well as all required human resources, and legal support specified in the proposal background/overview. Additionally, include the proposed percentage to be charged for administrative cost allocation, and the rationale for it.

C. Fiduciary and Fiscal Agent
   Detail your organization’s experience as a fiduciary and/or fiscal agent and your ability to support the specified requirements in the proposal background overview. Please include a copy of your organizational most recent annual report, financial statement, and proof of 501C3 designation.
SECTION III:
Organizational Characteristics:
The ideal Host/Anchor Entity for ROC the Future will embody organizational principles and characteristics will align to our work and core mission. Please indicate your organization’s alignment with the principles and characteristics listed below that support the mission and goals of ROC the Future. Please identify examples of previous experiences where this has been demonstrated.

A. Decision-Making
Support for the role and authority of the Executive Committee and Convener body overall, as its ultimate decision-making body for ROC the Future.

B. Neutrality
Ability to embrace and maintain a neutral position as the Host/Anchor Entity, while also functioning as a unique and separate Convener Member Organization.

C. Alignment of Focus
Shared alignment with ROC the Future’s goals to improve cradle-to-career outcomes. If applicable, include details of organizational alignment to one or more focus areas: school readiness; early grade literacy and high school graduation (strategic goals/objectives; targeted indicators/measures; etc.).

D. Focus Racial Equity
Please describe your organizations racial equity principles and guidelines, and how this is embedded within its structure, practices, policies and programs. If applicable, provide attach copies of: policies for awarding contracts to minority and women-owned business; plans for diversifying staff, and/or supporting professional development of underrepresented employees; training on race equity and/or other forms of oppression; other internal initiatives to address race equity.

E. Evidence and Data for Decision-making
Provide detailed examples of your organizations efforts to prioritize and use research, data and content knowledge to improve education and or health outcomes for children and families.

F. Systems Level Focus
Describe your organizations focus, or ability to focus on systems level challenges, and/or work on changing harmful policies that produce barriers for children and families.

G. Advocate and Supporter of RTF
Please provide examples of your organization demonstrated advocacy and support for ROC the Future as a collective, and of its value-add to the community. If this has not happened in the past, please indicate how this will be supported should your organization become the host/anchor entity.

Additional Information
Please feel free to submit any additional information not covered above, but that you feel relevant to this proposal, within the 5-page limit.

SECTION IV: Please include the following attachments with your submission:
- Organizational Chart
- 2020 Operational Budget
- 2019 Annual Report – or most recent

TIMELINE AND PROCESS
April 10, 2020: RFP Release to Conveners, and targeted organizations
April 17, 2020: Questions due to ryan@thechildrensagenda.org; responses posted by April 21st
May 8, 2020: Written proposals due to ryan@thechildrensagenda.org by 11:59 pm
May 11-15, 2020: Clarification period; Q&A from Proposal Review Committee
May 22, 2020: Decision; Notification to organizations, followed by agreement
April 1, 2021: Effective date of Backbone Host/Anchor Entity for ROC the Future
Background/Overview

ROC THE FUTURE’S GOALS & APPROACH:

ROC the Future Alliance is a unique initiative of community leaders, including educators and parents, local government, business and community non-profits, working together to collectively improve cradle-to-career outcomes for Rochester’s children. We advance our work by convening a unique set of leaders committed to using a “collective impact” approach to meet our core goals:

- Every Child is School Ready
- Every Child is Supported
- Every Child is Successful
- Every Child is College and Career Ready

To accomplish our goals, Outcome Teams of key stakeholders and partners set targets to improve prioritized outcomes: School Readiness; Early Grade Literacy; and High School Graduation. Outcome Teams focus their research and efforts on what works, to identify systems level opportunities to improve outcomes.

We are a member of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network, a national movement of 68 communities impacting the lives of 13.7 million youth across the country, including 5 communities in New York State. Each community uses collective impact to identify system level approaches that leads to sustainable change.

ORGANIZATIONAL/OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE:

ROC the Future is a complex alliance of more than 100 organizations and individuals using a systems level approach to bring about substantive and sustained change to improve outcomes for children and families. We are supported by a strong, committed group of Convener Member Organizations and Individuals, who are the decision-making authority for ROC the Future, and who work as stewards by dedicating and aligning resources, and otherwise use their influence to advance systems level approaches to ensure that children receive what they need to be successful. Convener roles and responsibilities are spelled out in governance documents and actualized by the following Committees and Teams/Workgroups (See attached Organization Chart):

- Executive Committee
- Governance Committee
- Community School Leadership Team (CSLT)

Additionally, more than 60 partner organizations and initiatives are engaged in ROC the Future through our Outcome Teams (with Strategy Sub-Teams) and Collaborative Action Networks, to identify strategies and interventions leading to improved outcomes, with an eye toward improvements at scale. The roles and responsibilities for the following workgroups are spelled out in our Outcomes Framework (attached):

- Schools Readiness Outcome Team (SROT)
- Early Grade Literacy Outcome Team (EGLOT)
- High School Graduation Outcome Team (HSGOT)
- Parent Engagement Collaborative Action Network (PECAN)
- Expanded Learning Opportunities Collaborative Action Network (ELO-CAN)
- Rochester College Access Network (RCAN)
- Community Commission on the Future of Public Education (Task Force)
ROC the Future has a fully staffed and funded backbone with roles and responsibilities shared in the attached StriveTogether staffing summary, which includes:

- Alliance Director, Jackie Campbell, MSM
- Director of Research and Analytics, Stephanie Townsend, PhD
- Manager of Continuous Improvement, Camille Simmons, MSL
- Family & Community Empowerment Manager, Tanishia Johnson, MS.Ed
- Communications Specialist, Jessica Lewis, M.Ed
- Administrative/Grants Assistant, Ryan Lavoie, BA
- Community Engagement Specialist, Vacant
- Continuous Improvement Specialist, Vacant

**OUR UNIQUE VALUE:**

As a “collective impact” initiative, ROC the Future’s unique value to the community, and to potential aligned, host organizations that are likewise engaged in work to improve outcomes for children. We offer:

- ROC the Future is financially supported by its own grants’ development efforts. Funding to cover administration and general management is included in its budget and should not result in a financial strain to a host organization.
- Convened body of strategically aligned stakeholders committed to the shared goal of improving cradle-to-career outcomes for the Rochester community. This collective thinking of community leadership on education AND that is committed to supporting the strategic goals of RCSD does not exist anywhere else in Rochester.
- Data research and analysis to support decision-making, continuous improvement and reporting.
- Communications resources for a coordinated approach to improve the narrative of public education in Rochester as a whole.
- Continuous improvement resources, training, processes and practices to improve targeted outcomes, by working directly with targeted organizations, and /or schools, principals and educators.
- Commitment of financial resources to support systems-level, evidence-based and/or proven practices that impact improvement in targeted outcomes.
- Dedicated backbone support and alignment with national organization to support parent & family engagement (National Parent Leadership Institute)
- Annual State of Our Children event is a unique opportunity for lifting our collective commitment to shared measurements and transparency of reporting our collective success and learnings with the community:
  - Annual report card on achievement
  - Media engagement
  - Opportunity to build a shared community message and increased action from partners and attendees
- Access to StriveTogether national network aligned to similar work in 5 communities across the state, and 68 communities nationally.
**HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

ROC the Future launched in 2011 through Monroe Community College. Since 2013, it has been housed/anchored in The Children’s Agenda, which has hired the backbone staff to support the work of the alliance. This work began with one staff person and is now supported by a team of 8 staff. Since 2015, ROC the Future has experienced many transitions, including:

- **2015:** New leadership – New Director (Jackie Campbell) hired in September.
- **2016:** Staffing transition – replaced Communications Specialist (Jessica Lewis); Launch of PECAN
- **2017:** Reorientation to Outcomes – new framework to align focus on outcomes; new Convener leadership chair (Ajamu Kitwana) launched High School Graduation Outcome Team (HSGOT)
- **2018:** New funding to increase community engagement, Family & Community Engagement Manager hired (Tanishia Johnson); launched Early Grade Literacy Outcome Team (EGLOT)
- **2019:** New funding to support focus on outcomes; Hired Director of Research and Analytics (Stephanie Townsend), and Manager of Continuous Improvement (Camille Simmons); Received Strive Accelerator Grant which included substantial technical assistance to bring focus to systems change work, and to support acceleration through their Theory of Change; New leadership chair (Dr. Shaun Nelms) elected.
- **2020:** Funding increase to add 3 new staff: Admin/Grants Assistant (Ryan Lavoie); Continuous Improvement Specialist to support improvement within workgroups (vacant); Community Engagement Specialists (vacant) to help facilitate our outreach to the community; Pivot to Systems Change.

Over the past two years, ROC the Future has experienced tremendous growth, and we are making plans for the years ahead. As we move forward, we are setting our sights on identifying strategic opportunities to leverage systems level change to create the outcomes we want for our children, and our community. Our efforts will move from programmatic interventions or approaches targeted at the individual level, to those that support adjustments and changes to the systems that produce poor outcomes for children, especially those who are most vulnerable. Our “pivot” means a focus on changes at the system level rather than the individual level, with a particular focus on racial equity.

These and other crucial and time-sensitive matters are the focus of ROC the Future’s current strategic planning process. This is the most opportune time to determine the best backbone host/anchor entity for ROC the Future that can support our multi-layered structure to produce the collective results we are hoping to achieve.

ROC the Future is seeking proposals from organizations with interest in serving as the backbone host/anchor entity under the direction of the Executive Committee, **beginning April 1, 2021**. We seek an innovative, forward-thinking and community-connected host/anchor entity that can support our pivot to the systems change level.

**CURRENT BACKBONE HOST/ANCHOR ENTITY— THE CHILDREN’S AGENDA**

The Children’s Agenda has served as the host/anchor entity for ROC the Future since 2013 and has provided the critical support and foundational elements that have allowed the above growth to occur. In addition to the growth of ROC the Future, The Children’s Agenda has similarly experienced its own expansion, increasing in size from 6 to 10 during this same period. The Children’s Agenda is contracted to provide anchor/hosting and fiduciary support for the ROC the Future backbone through March 31, 2021, and a likely office move to accommodate the growth of both entities will coincide with the end of the current agreement. The rationale for this proposal is to determine if another 501C3 organization with the appropriate interest and alignment may serve as the Backbone anchor/host entity for ROC the Future’s next phase of growth, beginning in 2021.
Core Functions of the Backbone Host/Anchor Entity:

2. **Backbone Support:** Hire ROC the Future Alliance Director, to provide overall coordination and management services in four main areas of responsibility:

   A. Provide overall thought leadership and direction, and create strategies for RTF:
      - Work the ROC the Future Chair and Executive Committee to establish priorities and focus the work
      - Serve as primary spokesperson for communications
      - Build expertise of community knowledge and ensure inclusion of diverse perspectives
      - Develop a community-wide strategy to align support and resources (funding, social capital, public information, etc.) to improve educational outcomes
      - Collaborate with institutional partners to research best practices and emerging policies, systems and models to improve outcomes cradle-to-career

   B. Hire, supervise and direct all staff and volunteers to:
      - Guide vision and strategy
      - Support aligned activities
      - Establish shared measurement practices
      - Cultivate community engagement and ownership
      - Ensure effective internal and external communications
      - Advance Policy
      - Mobilize Resources

   C. Position ROC the Future favorably in local, cross-sector, state and national relationships
      - Serve as bridge-link across sectors (education, business, non-profit, for-profit, government, health) and communities (varied ethnic and cultural communities)
      - Coordinate and align institutional partners, key community leaders and stakeholders with RCSD efforts, strategies and priorities
      - Elevate national and state-wide presence and credibility
      - Build expertise and relationships with national experts and create alignment with similar collective impact and/or cradle-to-career models
      - Build and cultivate relationship with StriveTogether leadership and national network; adhere to requirements for continued membership and advancement in their Theory of Action Gateways

   D. Effective fund development necessary to support and sustain ROC the Future operations
      - Support and facilitate fundraising efforts
      - Grant development to support and maintain RTF backbone operations, as well as strategies developed by Outcome Teams and Collaborative Action Networks
      - Development of fundraising plan to sustain ROC the Future for 3-5 years, including diversifying funding
      - Actively seek and secure new sources of funding for ROC the Future

3. **Administration and General Management Support:** Sufficient administration and overhead to support the work of ROC the Future backbone, including, but not limited to:

   A. Office space enough to support 8 – 10 staff, as follows:
      - One office with a door for the Director
      - Offices and/or cubicle space for 7 staff
      - Office furniture (preferred)
      - Telephone/Communications support for 8 staff
• Internet Wi-Fi access and technical support
• Access to organizational duplication system
• Cubicle Space to support 2 interns (preferred)
• Conference Room (or access to) for 10 – 12
• Storage space for office supplies, cleaning equipment, etc.
• Easy access to restrooms
• Parking for 8 staff

B. All Human Resources Functions:
• All functions related to Payroll
• Benefits package, including health/dental/life insurance offerings, etc.
• Support for staff recruitment and hiring process
• Financial and Legal compliance to all local, state and federal employment mandates and requirements (i.e., processing of consultant agreements, etc.)

4. Fiduciary and Fiscal Agent for ROC the Future:
   a. Accept all funding, including grant funds, donations, program fees and additional financial resources awarded ROC the Future funds solely for the purposes of RTF
   b. Set up procedures and process for separate accounting of its finances.
   c. Provide periodic monthly and year-to-date financial statements on ROC the Future income and expenses.
   d. Set up separately auditable accounting system for ROC the Future’s assets and liabilities within the host organization’s annual audit.

Organizational Characteristics:
In addition to meeting the above core functions, the ideal Backbone Anchor entity must also meet the following requirements, and embody the following characteristics:
• Non-Profit Status: Possess IRS designation as a 501C3 non-profit entity.
• RTF Decision Making: Support the role and authority of the Executive Committee and Convener body overall, as its ultimate decision-making body for ROC the Future.
• Neutrality: Embrace and maintain a neutral position as the ROC the Future Host Anchor, while also functioning as a unique and separate Convener Member Organization.
• Alignment of Focus: Share alignment with ROC the Future’s goals to improve outcomes for children, cradle to career outcomes. Alignment to one or more of RTF focus areas (school readiness; early grade literacy and high school graduation) is a plus, but not required.
• Focus on Racial Equity: Have racial equity as a guiding principle. ROC the Future and StriveTogether’s prioritizes changing systems that create disparate outcomes for children and families; and prioritizes more equitable resources and supports for children and families of color.
• Use of Evidence and Data for Decision-making: Prioritize the use of research, data and content knowledge on education, health and human services.
• Systems Level Focus: Be committed to addressing systems level challenges or policies that produce barriers preventing children from accessing opportunities to improve.
• Advocate and Supporter for RTF: Is/becomes a consistent advocate and supporter of RTF, as a collective, and of its value-add to the community.

ROC the Future Attachments to Accompany RFP:
- Organizational Chart
- Outcomes Framework
- StriveTogether Staffing Summary