

Request for Proposal:

Seeking Research Partner for a Participatory Action Research Project
Exploring Caregiver Experiences within Family Support Systems and Services

Position Overview: The [Colorado Partnership for Thriving Families'](#) (CPTF) [Family & Caregiver Space](#) (FCS) is seeking a research partner to support a participatory action research (PAR) project called the Story of the System (SOS). The research partner will work closely with the Family & Caregiver Space's SOS Project Team to provide ongoing guidance on all stages of the research process, from project design to findings dissemination. Project details, key responsibilities, and qualifications of the research partner are described below.

Family and Caregiving Space (FCS) Overview: The FCS is a group of Lived Experience Experts who identify as family leaders and who have experienced, been involved in, or otherwise touched various systems that influence family health and well-being in Colorado. The overarching goal of the FCS is to work collaboratively across the state to engage families in creating conditions that allow all families to thrive.

Story of the System (SOS) Project Objectives, Phases, and Status: The SOS project is a co-designed, multi-phase qualitative research project led by the Family & Caregiver Space's SOS Project Team. Through this project, the SOS Project Team aims to explore the following research questions:

1. How do Colorado families navigate obstacles in the intersections of Child Welfare/Department of Human Services and Public Health/Prevention and other connected **systems**?
2. To what extent is the participatory action research (PAR) approach an effective method for promoting the adoption of family-centered research practices in child welfare and related areas of policy and practice?

The overarching goals of the SOS Project are twofold:

1. Uplift Coloradans' stories to understand barriers and facilitators around navigating systems, including public health, human services, and healthcare.
2. Identify strategies for addressing barriers and opportunities and shifting the narrative around systems and families.

The SOS Project Team seeks to accomplish these goals through two primary phases. Phase I is focused on piloting the PAR approach by conducting story mapping and interviews with FCS members and generating lessons learned for further data collection. Phase II is focused on scaling data collection and disseminating findings

to inform family-centered child welfare, human services, and public health policies and practices. The SOS Project Team is currently in Phase I, and the following tasks have been completed: design of the PAR project, including methodology and research questions; data collection, including story mapping and FCS co-interviews; and trainings on qualitative data analysis, participatory action research, and trauma-informed practice.

Key Responsibilities of the Research Partner: To aid in the next stages of the SOS project, the research partner will:

1. **Advise on Phase I of SOS Project:** Provide strategic research guidance on continuation and completion of Phase I of the Story of a System Project. This will include advising on the completion of Phase I data collection, analysis, and findings translation. In addition, the research partner will facilitate the documentation of the SOS Project as a participatory action research effort and support the synthesis of lessons learned to promote the adoption of family-centered research practices in child welfare and related areas of policy and practice.
 - **In Phase I, specific areas of support from the research partner may include:** supporting analysis of qualitative data, creating coding/theming structures, facilitating listening circles and meaning-making sessions around findings, contextualizing SOS work within the broader social science literature, determining needed and actionable deliverables to meet project goals, designing audience-targeted deliverables, and facilitating the dissemination of findings in both an academic journal and to community and system stakeholders.
2. **Advise on Phase II of SOS Project:** Advise on design and methods for Phase II of the SOS Project. Phase II will focus on elevating the findings from Phase I and scaling the data collection and the PAR approach to new areas.
 - **In Phase I, specific areas of support from the research partner may include:** methodology and research design, refinement of research questions, recruitment and data collection approach, development of tools and processes, analytic approach, IRB navigation, meaning-making and interpretation, publication, and dissemination of findings.
3. **Support Execution, as Needed:** As directed by the SOS Project Team and FCS, take on specific execution activities, while ensuring the SOS Project Team remains in the primary leadership role, both internally and with external

partners.

4. **Support CPTF Backbone Team, As Needed:** Work with backbone support, Illuminate Colorado, to build the capacity of the SOS Project Team and FCS.

Experience, Skills, and Qualifications: The research partner must bring the following (statements are listed in order of priority):

- Demonstrable commitment to racial and social justice and equity-oriented action.
- An understanding that ultimate ownership of the project belongs with the lived experts of the SOS Project Team and FCS, and a commitment to upholding this value.
- Demonstrable success in closely collaborating and building trust with family and community lived experience experts.
- Experience and commitment to trauma-informed research and evaluation.
- Strong understanding of family well-being systems in Colorado, including child welfare, human services, and public health.
- Experience in co-design and community-engaged research, including PAR.
- Experience in designing deliverables for government systems, community-based organizations, and families with lived expertise.
- Experience in navigating the academic journal publication process, from article conception to publication.
- Experience with navigating Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes and, ideally, an affiliation with an IRB.

Budget: \$10,000 will be provided upon contract to support Phase 1 of this project. An additional \$10,000 may be available to support Phase 2, pending mutual interest and Phase 1 progress.

Term of Contract: November 15, 2023 - February 29, 2024 (Phase 1), with the possibility of extension from March 1 - September 30, 2024 (Phase 2).

RFP Submission: Proposals should be digitally submitted to Illuminate Colorado's Community Initiatives Associate, Karci Lockwood, at klockwood@illuminatecolorado.org by 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time on Friday, October 20, 2023. Proposals should not exceed 3 pages.

Candidate Selection & Virtual Interviews: Proposals will be reviewed by the SOS Project Team and the project's fiscal agent (Illuminate Colorado), and final candidates will be invited for an interview on the week of November 6, 2023.

RFP Requirements: Each proposal should include the elements below to demonstrate both capacity and approach and should not exceed 3 pages.

1. **About You:** Describe your organization, agency, or position.
2. **Qualifications:** What makes you uniquely positioned to serve as the research partner for this work? As applicable, in your response please describe your experience with the following:
 - i. Participatory action research and/or qualitative research methodologies
 - ii. Collaboration with and capacity building for Lived Experience Experts
 - iii. IRB and publication processes
3. **Collaboration Approach:** Describe how you would collaborate with the SOS Project Team to provide research guidance while ensuring project direction and ownership remains with the Project Team and Family & Caregiver Space.
4. **Proposed Scope of Work:** Provide a high-level plan for how you would support Phase I and Phase II of the Story of a System Project.