



Request for Proposals: Policy Strategy Consultant

About Family Connects International

Family Connects International (FCI) launched as an independent non-profit organization in 2022, after developing as a community-based intervention at Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy. FCI oversees the implementation of the evidence-based Family Connects Model in over 90 communities in 21 U.S. states and growing.

Family Connects is a proven, highly effective evidence-based model that gets population-level results by connecting families to preventive community-based services at a crucial moment of transition in the life of a family: the arrival of a newborn. Family Connects achieves profound results by offering services universally to every birthing family in the community, reducing the risk of adverse outcomes in the postnatal period, such as maternal depression and infant hospitalization. FCI trains nurses and program staff to carry out the program with fidelity; oversees implementation in diverse settings around the US; collects, analyzes, and reports implementation and outcome data; and advocates for support for universal nurse visiting programs in state legislatures and at the federal level.

Context

Community partners implementing the Family Connects model use multiple funding streams to support program start-up, ongoing operations, and expansion. Ideally, sites have access to a dedicated, consistent source of funding to cover the full cost of implementation. However, communities often must combine multiple temporary funding sources to maintain operations. Family Connects is seeking expert advice to either build upon and maximize existing funding streams or secure a dedicated federal funding stream to support the long-term sustainability and scaling of the model.

Before 2022, the Family Connects model was included as an approved model eligible for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funding. The 2022 MIECHV reauthorization added new language limiting funding to "targeted, intensive home visiting services," which effectively excludes the Family Connects model because of the model's universal reach and short duration. Family Connects is eligible for limited MIECHV support through the 25% set-aside for non-direct

services, and states may fund the model through their non-federal match; however, states have many competing needs for this set-aside, and there is ultimately no longer a primary federal funding source for funding the Family Connects model.

Family Connects is now positioned to identify the most feasible path toward a dedicated federal funding stream, pursue mechanisms to maximize existing federal funding streams, and develop a strategy that advances the full potential of the Family Connects model to reach scale to benefit families nationwide.

Major themes to be addressed include:

Sustainability Strategy. The strategy must identify clear pathways to sustainability for both Family Connects (as the underlying support for implementation, fidelity, and quality) and the Family Connects model. This pathway will likely include a combination of policy advocacy strategies.

Funding Type. Family Connects seeks guidance on the funding mechanism or combination of mechanisms that offer the strongest fit for the model and the greatest likelihood of long-term success. The selected consultant should help Family Connects evaluate the feasibility, advantages, limitations, and political considerations associated with each approach and recommend the most viable funding pathway or combination of pathways.

Legislative Vehicle. Family Connects seeks guidance on the best legislative approach to advance its policy goals and effectively navigate the available pathways.

Identification of Key Champions. Family Connects has engaged with multiple congressional offices and agency staff to discuss the model and seeks guidance on developing a more focused approach to identifying, cultivating, and engaging key champions.

The Family Connects model sits at the intersection of postpartum care and newborn well-being. It helps families get off to a strong start while also saving lives and reducing costs. The model aligns with current recommendations for this critical period coming from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) which recommends a touchpoint with a healthcare provider at three weeks postpartum (and cites Family Connects research as a viable option for a healthcare provider coming to the postpartum parent) and has remained nonpartisan, appealing to states, communities, and families across demographics, political contexts, and resource levels.

Scope of Work

Family Connects seeks a consultant to develop a federal policy and funding strategy that identifies the most viable pathway or pathways to sustainable public funding for universal newborn nurse home visiting. The selected consultant will work closely with Family Connects leadership to assess the current policy landscape, evaluate potential

funding and legislative options, and recommend a practical strategy for advancing Family Connects' federal policy goals. The scope of work is expected to include, but may not be limited to, the following activities:

- Review relevant background materials, prior legislative language, policy proposals, and existing funding strategies related to the Family Connects model and universal newborn nurse home visiting.
- Conduct targeted discovery as needed with Family Connects leadership and, as appropriate, congressional offices, agency staff, community partners, or other key stakeholders.
- Assess the feasibility, advantages, limitations, and political considerations associated with potential funding mechanisms, legislative vehicles, and administrative pathways.
- Identify and prioritize federal champions, agencies, committees, coalitions, and external partners that could support advancement of the strategy.
- Recommend a near-term and medium-term federal policy and advocacy strategy, including key decision points, sequencing (with a 12-to-24-month advocacy calendar), risks, and opportunities
- Meet regularly with Family Connects team members to review findings and present updates on progress.
- Prepare clear written deliverables and facilitate discussions with Family Connects leadership to refine and finalize recommendations.

Expected deliverables should include a written strategic plan, a recommended federal funding pathway, a prioritized stakeholder and champion engagement plan, and supporting materials that Family Connects can use to guide internal decision-making and external advocacy.

Leadership

FCI is governed by a 10-member Board of Directors and led by President & CEO, Jade Woodard, who began her tenure in April 2025. FCI has 29 staff, including registered nurses, public health specialists, data managers, public policy advocates, and operations staff. This diverse team has its headquarters in Durham, North Carolina, but many staff work remotely from locations around North Carolina, and other states. The Board of Directors is similarly situated, with local directors in North Carolina, as well as across the country in Illinois, New York, and Maryland.

Family Connects' Senior Policy Director, Jordan Wildermuth, will manage the planning process on behalf of Family Connects, in partnership with Chief Program Officer Kimberly Friedman.

Timeline

Family Connects aims to launch the policy and funding strategy development process in September 2026, with deliverables completed by the end of December 2026.



Budget

The target budget for this initiative is up to \$40,000 inclusive of any travel, expenses, or meeting costs. Firms or consultants are encouraged to maximize value and outline exactly what scope can be delivered within this financial boundary.

Next Steps

Interested firms or consultants should submit a brief proposal by email to Jordan Wildermuth at jordan@familyconnects.org no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, August 14, 2026. Proposals should include: a brief overview of the firm or consultant's relevant experience; identification of the key staff who would support the engagement; a description of the proposed approach, including anticipated activities and deliverables; and a proposed budget.

Family Connects expects to hold alignment conversations with selected firms or consultants during the weeks of August 17 and August 24. The engagement is anticipated to begin with contracting during the first week of September. Family Connects appreciates your interest in this opportunity and looks forward to reviewing proposals from qualified partners.