

**Proposal for RFP #8807**  
**Community Development Division**  
**Building Human Capital: Early Childhood Funding**

1. Applicant

- a. Organization Name: Animal Crackers, Inc.
- b. Contact Person: Christie Howell-Yrios/Executive Director
- c. Address: 6402 Hammersley Road Madison, WI 53711
- d. Telephone Number: 608-277-99990
- e. Email Address: [yrios@charter.net](mailto:yrios@charter.net)
- f. Federal EIN: 39-1639970
- g. Legal Status: Non-profit 501 (c)(3)
- h. Yes, we will present for 3-5 minutes at the March 14, 2019 PM Early Childhood Care and Education Committee Meeting held in room 215 of the Madison Municipal Building, 215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Madison, WI.

## 2. Required Proposal Narrative

### Organizational Capacity

1. Organization Description: Animal Crackers, Inc. was established in February 1987 by a small group of inspired families who desired to create a group childcare and preschool program whose mission was to provide all children, regardless of their socioeconomic situations, with a loving and caring early childhood program where they could learn and grow through meaningful and purposeful play. Animal Crackers, Inc. is a private, non-profit non-sectarian family-centered childcare, preschool, 4K and afterschool program. Animal Crackers, Inc. is licensed through the state of Wisconsin for 85 children between the ages of 6 weeks to 11 years of age. Animal Crackers, Inc. has been City Accredited through the Office of Community Services since 1989 and was awarded 5 STARS through YoungStar in 2011. Animal Crackers, Inc. has also partnered with the Madison Metropolitan School District since 2011 to provide a Model II 4K program for 4-year-olds. Animal Crackers, Inc. is currently overseen by a volunteer Parent Board of Directors who work in collaboration with agency staff and the Office of Community Services Child Care Specialists in an ongoing effort to continue providing the highest quality care and education for all children and their families. In 1992 Animal Crackers, Inc. relocated from the Nakoma Road area to the southwest side of Madison in the Hammersley Road Neighborhood. Currently over 85 % of our families reside in the Hammersley Road, Jacob's Way, Elver Park, Waterleaf Apartments on Schroeder Road, Balsam Road, Raymond Road, Parkridge, Meadowood and Greentree Neighborhoods. Operating a childcare program in a low-income neighborhood presents many obstacles and barriers such as high mobility of families, homelessness, poverty, crime, unemployment, and the disenfranchisement of many neighborhood residents. However, operating a childcare in a low-income neighborhood also provides many opportunities for our agency such as serving a diverse population of families, engaging in ongoing community efforts and support, building strategic partnerships with service agencies while addressing and overcoming barriers affecting children and their families. Animal Crackers, Inc. has been successfully serving and stabilizing a high population of low-income children that ranged between 60-85% since 2000 and has been at an average of 83% since 2011. Animal Crackers,

Inc. is dedicated to supporting all children and their families through equitable access to a high-quality childcare and preschool program.

2. **Organizational Experience:** Over the 32 years Animal Crackers, Inc. has been in operation, the core mission has been to provide equitable access to a high-quality childcare/preschool programming for all children and their families regardless of their socioeconomic situations. Animal Crackers, Inc.'s agency staff have worked tirelessly to establish and nurture relationships based on mutual respect with the families we service, provide a curriculum that is both research-based and culturally competent for programming, support children and families who are experiencing trauma, provide a consistent, respectful approach to behavior guidance, maintain open-ended cross-cultural communicative approaches, while working to overcome barriers facing families by working strategically in collaboration with local community resources. Through these approaches, we can reach out to families who may require varying levels of support in order to stabilize their children's childcare/preschool. There are many obstacles and barriers that present themselves to low income families, the most challenging being transportation and financial. Animal Crackers, Inc. is located on the Madison Metro Bus line which is essential for families traveling within and outside our neighborhood. We also work with the local cab services and have assisted in arranging transportation for our homeless 4K children through the Madison Metropolitan School District's Transition Education Program. We have also worked with Badger Bus Services and the YMCA ride shares to provide transportation to eligible families. For families facing financial difficulties, we provide scholarship money in the form of stabilization funds which are awarded through the Office of Community Services. We use these funds to support families during transitions from programming, loss of employment, and ever-changing parent shares (co-pays) that can change from month to month. We support families by creating payment plans that work with their employer's payment schedules. We have never disenrolled a family due to financial hardship. Animal Crackers, Inc. works with a volunteer Parent Board of Directors who work alongside agency staff to operate a fiscally responsible program that meets and exceeds the standards set forth by the State of Wisconsin Licensing Standards and the Office of Community Services Accreditive Standards. The Parent Board provides strategic planning and policy oversight that directly supports the mission, practices, approaches, and procedures needed to operate an agency that can support and serve a diverse population of children while creating strong referral pathways

for any multidisciplinary needs that may arise. The average Board member as served 10+ years, with the longest active member serving 21 years. Animal Crackers, Inc. supports agency staff by providing ongoing and relevant educational trainings such as trauma-informed care, conscious discipline, curriculum development, social and emotional competence pyramid trainings, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, leadership trainings, and advanced security protocol. Animal Crackers, Inc. also supports TEACH Scholarships, continuing education funds, tuition discounts for children of agency staff, holiday, health care and paid time off benefits while paying staff a livable wage. Since 2011, Animal Crackers, Inc. has stabilized its core agency staff and experienced only an average of three Teacher turnovers a year, with many of those Teachers returning to the agency. This stabilizing affect on the agency staff has directly benefited the programming for children and their families. As reflected in our past 8 years of CDD Service Reports, our agency has exceeded our outcome goals every year which was to stabilize the enrollment of our children for 9 or more months while supporting them to meet appropriate developmental levels of growth. Since 2011 Animal Crackers, Inc. has served an average of 83% low income children from the Madison Area. Animal Crackers, Inc. also serves the Hammersley Road, Jacob's Way, Elver Park, Waterleaf Apartments on Schroeder Road, Balsam Road, Raymond Road, Parkridge, Meadowood and Greentree Neighborhoods. Per our 2017 CDD Demographic Report, our DPI Federal Food Racial Data Sheet and our DPI Household Size-Income Statements from families we served indicated that we served 79.4% children of color and per those same reports from 2018 we served 80% children of color.

3. Staff: Animal Crackers, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer and supports an inclusive workplace. Animal Crackers, Inc. has worked over the past 9 years to diversify the agency staff to more directly reflect the families we serve. In 2011 we had 19 agency staff members comprised of 17 Teachers, 1 food Programmer and 1 Executive Director. During 2011 the agency staff self-identified as 15% African-American, 1% as Multi-race, 0% as Hispanic and 84% as Caucasian. In 2019 we have 18 agency staff members- 58% identified as African-American, 10% identified as Multi-race, 10% identified as Hispanic and 22% identified as Caucasian. 85% of our agency staff also reside within our service Neighborhoods. Animal Crackers, Inc. seeks to recruit agency staff that come from a variety of diverse backgrounds, all of which enrich our programs' understanding of diversity and enhance our cultural awareness. All our Lead classroom Teachers currently have or are working towards the

following degrees; a bachelor's degree/ associate degree in Early Childhood and/or an Infant/Toddler or Preschool Credential. All Lead Staff have 3 to 5 years of experience in early education. All support Teachers have 1 to 3 years of experience and are also working towards the Infant/Toddler and/or Preschool Credentials. The Assistant Director has 18 years of experience and has completed credentials in Infant/Toddler, Preschool and Program Development. The Executive Director has 30 years of experience in the field of early education, holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Philosophy, a Bachelor's of Letters and Science in Political Science, 26 credits in UNOS/School of Education, 21 credits in the Marquette School of Business, holds credentials in Administration, Infant/Toddler, Program Development, Preschool and completed an apprenticeship credential in Child Care Development. All agency staff have ongoing training in the following areas of; Creative Curriculum development, ASQ screening, trauma informed care, conscious discipline, safety and security protocols, the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, homelessness and high mobility, anti-biased curriculum, policy development and strategic planning. Animal Crackers, Inc. also created three new leadership positions for Teachers to grow into. We created a Mentor Teacher, a Coaching Teacher, and an Events Coordinator position. These positions come with job descriptions, an adjustment in pay, and additional opportunities for training. By creating more opportunities for growth and development, Animal Crackers, Inc. has committed to providing a workplace where agency staff can grow as professionals.

4. Organization Relationships: Over the years, Animal Crackers, Inc. has strived to build and maintain strong relationships with as many service agencies as possible, the overarching goal being to develop seamless pipelines and accessible access points for our children and their families. We have created a large and diverse network of strategic partnerships with agencies that provide direct support for families experiencing homelessness, unemployment, relationship concerns, food insecurity, access to high quality childcare, health concerns, and legal issues. We work directly with the Madison School District, Orchard Ridge Elementary, the YWCA, the Theresa Terrace and Meadowood Neighborhood Centers, Wisconsin Shares, and the childcare assistance program through the Office of Community Development, Joining Forces for Families, all neighboring food pantries, the Tenant Resource Center, the Dane County Housing Authority, Commonwealth, The Rainbow Project, Journey Mental Health, The United Way, Coordinated Entry, the Transition Education Program (MMSD), Child Find, Birth to 3, The Beacon, the Salvation Army, the

Road Home, W-2, DAIS, Partnership Inc., the Waisman Center, Forward Service Coordination, Legal Action, the Urban League, 4-C's, several local churches that provide direct support to families, Goodwill, RSVP, the libraries, the landlord association, Wisconsin Early Autism Project, and First Readers. We began developing these relationships to better service our current and future families, with the intent to assist in removing as many barriers as possible. We developed reciprocal relationships with the people in these organizations to advocate for children and their families, while providing education about our mission at Animal Crackers, Inc. We also feel that our ongoing relationships with the community act to shed light on the marginalized and disenfranchised population we serve as well as develop a scaffold for addressing as many issues in a timely manner. By creating direct links with agencies, we can mitigate the access points needed to address the more serious problems facing all families, but especially families living in and working to overcome poverty. Animal Crackers, Inc.'s most recent collaboration is with the Transition Education Program through the Madison Public Schools. This partnership was created to address the high population of homeless families that we were serving in our 4K program. Through this partnership, we were also about to create relationships with Commonwealth, 2 large neighborhood apartment complexes, Legal Action, The Beacon, and the Road Home all of which have played instrumental parts in finding our families sustainable housing opportunities. We are currently developing a needs assessment to use with families during their initial enrollment process that will provide a more systematic way to identify any pending issues facing families.

5. Impact of our program: The core of our Animal Crackers, Inc. mission has been to provide all children and their families, regardless of their socioeconomic situations, equitable access to our program. We are considered a cornerstone in the Hammersley Road Neighborhood and are known for our ability to work with all children. We continually work with our City Specialist and network with a variety of specialists to continue providing high quality and adaptable programming to children with a wide variety of emotional and developmental situations. Animal Crackers, Inc. has agency staff serve on organizations and boards that directly advocate for the rights of children and their families while we work in the community to continue educating the lay public on issues surrounding social justice and racial inequality. Currently, agency staff are serving on the TEP Coalition, ELL/Dual language Dept in MMSD, The National League of Cities, The Early Learning Collaborative Network

through the Madison Public Schools, The Hammersley NRT, and the community coalition housed within Falk School. Animal Crackers, Inc. worked directly with Falk School to start an onsite food pantry within the school that supports the families in the community. This year, Animal Crackers, Inc. also partnered with Falk on their Open School House program. This is another example of our commitment partnerships that support our children and our community. We have created a diverse agency staff that are directly reflective of the families we serve and who are able to cross-culturally communicate with families while building strong relationships. We accept all forms of tuition payment, waive certain fees for families using tuition assistance programs and can work directly with families needing to create payment plans that reflect their payroll schedules. We also provide scholarships to families facing financial hardships. We work with families that use cab services and we are located near a Madison Metro Bus Stop. We offer flexible enrollment opportunities and part times spots. We added an additional 6 spots to our school age summer camp to accommodate more school age children during the summer. We have also worked directly with the school to support children who may be referred to summer school by making sure they have care during the month of August. Animal Crackers, Inc. continues to utilize culturally responsive teaching approaches, practice mindfulness and reflection and work diligently to build measurable efficacy through ongoing professional development of our staff. We pride ourselves on our family-centered programming and collaborative approaches through strategic partnerships. It is these partnerships that provide direct support in our efforts to empower all the children and families we serve.

#### Proposed Programs/Services

1. Methods of programming and services: a. direct provision of care for children ages birth to 5 years of age.
2. Specific programming and services
  - a. Animal Crackers, Inc. is a City Accredited and a 5 STAR group early education and care program located in the Hammersley Road Neighborhood. We are one of two accredited programs in our surrounding area. Animal Crackers, Inc. provides full time and part time childcare and preschool for children birth to 11 years of age. Animal Crackers, Inc. provides a high-quality early care and education program for all children and work to support children and their families who face housing and

food insecurity, trauma, poverty, and employment issues. We work to stabilize the care of children so families can focus on stabilizing the other areas of their lives. Animal Crackers, Inc. is considered a cornerstone in the Hammersley Road Neighborhood and we are known for our ability to work with all children. We have 16 spots for infant and toddler children. We work with our City Specialist and network with a variety of specialists to continue providing high quality and adaptable programming to children with a wide variety of emotional and developmental situations. We provide trauma-informed care approaches within our curriculum, while using the conscious discipline approach to work with challenging behaviors. We are able to adapt curriculum components while using carefully scaffolded approaches to meet the children's developmental levels. Animal Crackers, Inc.'s agency staff has direct access to a variety of ongoing training opportunities that are paid for by Animal Crackers, Inc. Animal Crackers, Inc. Animal Crackers, Inc. pays for all educational time and supports all staff participating in the TEACH Program. We have two native Spanish speaking Teachers, one toddler and one preschool teacher, that help support our dual language learners.

- b. Animal Crackers, Inc. following the City of Madison Accreditive Standards, uses the 5<sup>th</sup> Gold Addition Creative Curriculum for program planning, a variety of formal and informal observational tools track developmental growth, focused portfolios for archival and tracking purposes, the Developmental Continuum for ongoing assessment and yearly evaluations, and utilized the Madison Public Schools for growth and development as it pertains to 4K. Animal Crackers, Inc. is licensed for 85 children (6 weeks to 11 years of age) with an average enrollment of 74 children (up to 123 unduplicated children per calendar year). Our goal is to continue providing accredited care and research-based, culturally relevant education that ensures appropriate developmental growth for children while stabilizing enrollment
3. Location of services: Programming and services will be provided on location at Animal Crackers, Inc. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue serving all families regardless of their socioeconomic status to children birth to 11 years of age. We are currently serving 72 children, 89% who are low income. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue serving families that reside in the Hammersley Road, Jacob's Way, Elver Park, Willow Street Apartments on



Schroeder Road, Balsam Road, Raymond Road, Parkridge, Meadowood and Greentree Neighborhoods.

4. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue following our mission and serving all children regardless of their individual circumstances. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue supporting a diverse work place while working with our City Specialist, Parent Board to continue providing high quality and adaptable programming to children with a wide variety of emotional and developmental situations.
5. Our timeline is on a continuum as we have already implemented our services for children 6 weeks to 11 years of age. Animal Crackers, Inc. is open year-around, Monday-Friday from 7:00AM-6:00PM. We will continue the ongoing assessment of our program using our annual family surveys, the quarterly service reports to the city, our yearly City of Madison accreditations, and ongoing ITERS, ECCERS and PAS (Program Administration Scale).

#### Measurement of Success

1. System Level Indicators: Animal Crackers, Inc. has a commitment to ongoing and increased collaboration between early childhood service providers by providing direct, hands-on support for those providers seeking to serve families with high barriers to success. We plan to do this through brainstorming innovative ideas, sharing of systems that have worked for our agency, and sharing any knowledge our agency staff currently has to provide ideas and strategies when working with families facing barriers to success. We plan to continue working with the City through their Pathways to Quality. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue investing in its agency staff, giving them the support, access to education, and training that support their work with children. Through a quality work environment, we have stabilized our agency staff, thus providing a strong commitment to continuity of care for the children. A stable staff is a key component to reducing expulsion rates of children.
2. Population Level Indicators: Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue serving infants and toddlers, providing care to all children regardless of their current and future barriers to success, continue offering flexible schedules to families, providing direct access to other services agencies that can assist in breaking down many barriers facing low income families, using a research based curriculum for programming, conducting ongoing assessments using the Developmental Continuum tool while working to continue providing a family-centered

environment where families are respected as children's first and most important Teachers. Teachers will continue working with families to monitor children's growth and development through daily anecdotal observations, checklists, focused portfolios, formal assessments and family conferences held 2 times a year or as needed.

3. Success assessments and Evaluations- Animal Crackers, Inc. will work to stabilize up to 123 children per calendar year with an average enrollment of 71, use the 5<sup>th</sup> Addition Gold Standard Creative Curriculum for programming, conduct assessments 3 times a year and the yearly evaluation completed for all children. Animal Crackers, Inc. will collect racial/ethnic and financial information from all families upon enrollment utilizing the Department of Public Instruction Food Income verification and eligibility reports which are updated every June on a yearly basis. We will continue documenting racial/ethnic data on our agency staff through our Affirmative Action Reports and data reports. Animal Crackers Inc. will continue serving children in the Hammersley Road, Jacob's Way, Elver Park, Willow Street Apartments on Schroeder Road, Balsam Road, Raymond Road, Parkridge, Meadowood and Greentree area neighborhoods and this will be tracked on our demographic intake forms for enrollment. Animal Crackers, Inc. will also continue to work directly with our City Specialist on any situation where a behavioral or a developmental plan needs to be implemented. Animal Crackers, Inc. will continue to be accredited through the City of Madison and participate in the yearly re-accreditation process.

## Early Childhood Funding RFP Total Budget

Name of Agency: Animal Crackers, Inc.

Name of Proposal: CDD Early Childhood Funding RFP # 8807

### Instructions

Complete the table below by filling in the yellow cells. Formulas within this spreadsheet will autofill into the white Total Revenue cells.

Proposals for a Single Program/Service: If you are proposing one program, for example, direct child care programming at a single location, you will only need to fill in columns B and C.

Proposals for Multiple Programs/Services: If you are proposing to include multiple methods of services or programs, for example, on-site child care programming and separately provide consultation services for other programs, two proposals (each with a separate budget) should be submitted separately. If you are proposing to do the same service at multiple locations, for example, child care at two different locations, one proposal and budget may be submitted. In this case, use columns C, D and E below to delineate the budget for each program within your proposal. You may insert more columns, if needed.

Please contact Coral Manning (cmanning@cityofmadison.com) for any questions about clarifications regarding joint or singular proposals.

| Revenue Source                | Agency 2020 Total | Program A     | Program B | Program C |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Dane County                   | \$ -              | \$ -          | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| United Way of Dane County     | \$ -              | \$ -          | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| City of Madison-This program  | \$ 40,000.00      | \$ 40,000.00  | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| City of Madison-Other Funding | \$ -              | \$ -          | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| Other Government*             | \$ 681,480.00     | \$ 681,480.00 | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| Fundraising/Donations**       | \$ -              | \$ -          | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| User Fee                      | \$ 85,658.00      | \$ 85,658.00  | \$ -      | \$ -      |
| Total Revenue                 | 807138            | 807138        | 0         | 0         |

\*Other Government: includes all federal and state funds, as well as funds from other counties (outside Dane County), other cities, villages or townships

\*\*Fundraising: includes funds received from foundations, corporations, churches and individuals, as well as those raised from fundraising events

## Early Childhood Funding RFP Program Budget Breakout

Animal Crackers, Inc.

### Instructions

Complete the table below by filling in the yellow cells. Formulas within this spreadsheet will autofill into the white Total Revenue cells.

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| Account Category            | Agency 2020          | Program A Budget    | Program A City Request | Program B Budget | Program B City Request | Program C Budget | Program C City Request | Total City Request |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>A. Personnel</b>         |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        |                    |
| Salary                      | \$ 543,214.00        |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Taxes/Benefits              | \$ 51,573.00         |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>             | <b>\$ 594,787.00</b> |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>B. Other Operating</b>   |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        |                    |
| Insurance                   | \$ 16,500.00         | \$ 5,000.00         |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Professional Fees/Audit     | \$ 14,753.00         |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Postage/Office & Program    | \$ 17,580.00         | \$ 5,000.00         |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Supplies/Printing/Photocopy | \$ 12,611.00         | \$ 5,000.00         |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Equipment/Furnishings/Depr. | \$ 7,800.00          | \$ 5,000.00         |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Telecommunications          | \$ 1,800.00          |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Training/Conferences        | \$ 18,050.00         | \$ 10,000.00        |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Food/Household Supplies     | \$ 27,900.00         |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Travel                      | \$ 3,000.00          |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Vehicle Costs/Depreciation  |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Other*                      |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>             | <b>\$ 119,994.00</b> | <b>\$ 30,000.00</b> |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>B. Space</b>             |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        |                    |
| Rent/Utilities/Maintenance  | \$ 51,754.00         | \$ 10,000.00        |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Mortgage Principal/Interest | \$ 10,603.00         |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Depreciation/Taxes          | \$ 30,000.00         |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>             | <b>\$ 92,357.00</b>  | <b>\$ 10,000.00</b> |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>D. Special Costs</b>     |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        |                    |
| Assistance to Individuals   |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Payment to Affiliate Orgs.  |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Service/Program Subcontrs.  |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| Other*                      |                      |                     |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | \$ -               |
| <b>Subtotal</b>             | <b>\$ -</b>          | <b>\$ -</b>         |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | <b>\$ -</b>        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>\$ 807,138.00</b> | <b>\$ 40,000.00</b> |                        |                  |                        |                  |                        | <b>\$ -</b>        |

\*If costs are included in Other rows, please provide an explanation of those costs below:  
 Other Operating:  
 Other Special Costs: