



Alexander County Partnership for Children REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**TITLE: Three Year Bids for Smart Start Services
For fiscal years 22-23 thru 24-25**

ISSUE DATE: April 6, 2022

ISSUING AGENCY: Alexander County Partnership for Children
PO Box 1661
Taylorsville, NC 28681
(828) 632-3799

Sealed Proposals subject to the conditions made a part hereof will be received until **4:00 p.m., April 27, 2022** for furnishing services described herein.

SEND ALL PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO THE **Alexander County Partnership for Children to the attention of Paula E. Cline** AT THE ADDRESS AS SHOWN ABOVE.

Interested parties must submit **an original and 5 hard copies of the proposal**, along with electronic copies of the Alexander County Partnership for Children Full Activity Description format which includes a contract activity description, logic model, budget, and budget narrative. The Full Activity Description Format is activity specific. Prospective bidders must contact **Paula E. Cline, Executive Director** at 828-632-3799, paula@alexanderchildren.org to request a copy of the appropriate format for use during bid submission.

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to **Paula E. Cline, Executive Director** at 828-632-3799, paula@alexanderchildren.org.

NOTE: An individual PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE is available upon request during the afternoon of April 19, 2022. Prospective bidders are encouraged but not required to request a conference prior to completing the proposal. All requests for Preproposal conferences must be made by April 13, 2022.

Contractual relationships for this RFP are limited only to governmental agencies or businesses, such as corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, etc.

It is the Contractor's responsibility to assure that all information has been reviewed.

INTRODUCTION

The **Alexander County Partnership for Children** (hereinafter referred to as the “Local Partnership”) is soliciting proposals to establish contracts through competitive negotiations. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to acquire the services of qualified contractors (hereinafter referred to as the “Contractor”) for the following services:

The identified needs that the Partnership desires to address and descriptions of the services for which the Partnership seeks proposals are as follows:

Enhancing services to support the availability, affordability and quality of early care and education experiences for young children:

CCR&R, Activity ID# 001 PSC:3104 PBISID:PLA40

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is an activity aligned with the North Carolina CCR&R System and will participate with, and report data to, the designated CCR&R region. Services that are provided using Smart Start dollars in this activity include: (1) Technical assistance: Technical assistance (in the form of coaching and modeling) provided to early childhood educators working in licensed or start-up child care facilities serving children birth to five years old. The Technical Assistance activity will be focused on improving ITERS/ECERS scores and Participating Facilities Star Levels. (2) Training for child care providers: Training for DCDEE credit hours provided on child care related topics and coordination of CEU opportunities. Smart Start funds may be used to cover expenses for child care provider meetings (specify the meetings) and/or a quality recognition event (specify the events) (3) a Lending Library offering with a variety of materials to support child care providers and families with young children's learning and development. It will provide access to child development resources and materials such as, but not limited to, books, manipulatives, reference materials, curriculum kits, etc. Items for check out will be available to [educators, families with children ages birth to five years, early interventionists, other early childhood professionals, etc.]. It will also serve as a resource room with access to die cuts, laminating machines, etc.

Providing services to support and educate parents of young children:

Circle of Parents, Activity ID# 019 PSC:5505 PBISID:FS30

The Circle of Parents activity will provide parenting support using the Circle of Parents model for families with a child or children between the ages of birth to 5, not yet enrolled in kindergarten. Families engage in shared leadership of the meetings. Up to 4 groups will be offered at times, days, and places convenient to the group. Children's programs are offered as part of Circle of Parents programming. Children's programs are staffed by child care workers who have been screened and trained by individual programs. Food, transportation and incentives may be offered to encourage participation.

Raising a Reader, Activity ID# 431 PSC:5512 PBISID:FS20

A Raising A Reader (RAR) Community Coordinator will implement Raising A Reader, a program that promotes improved literacy development through daily book sharing between caregivers and young children. The RAR Coordinator will hold a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related human service field and is required to attend the RAR National Coordinator Training prior to initial

implementation. Coordinators will host two trainings for the site implementers that have been identified to participate in this project. Identified families will be loaned a book bag containing high quality developmentally appropriate children's books. The books will be exchanged each week. Parents of the children in the project will be invited to participate in at least two parent workshops where they will learn book sharing strategies. At least one library event will be provided for RAR participants and their families. Participants and their families will be provided with library information, library card application, and other community literacy resources. The program will be implemented with model fidelity as described above. Child care centers and child care homes with a high percentage of low income children will be targeted. Smart Start funds may also be used for books for children, child care for participants, and/or incentives for eligible participant.

Play To Learn, Activity ID# 021 PSC:5506 PBISID:FS30

A Play to Learn Coordinator will offer eight-week long Play and Learn Groups featuring hands-on activities using a variety of developmentally appropriate materials, books, and learning activities to focus on emergent literacy skills. Play and Learn Groups will be offered to families of two age groups infants/toddlers and preschoolers who are not currently enrolled in licensed child care. Caregivers will learn what to expect from their children as they grow and develop as well as the ways children learn through play. They will also have the opportunity to meet other parents and learn about available community resources. Using the resources from the Center for Early Literacy Learning, caregivers will be introduced to strategies to develop children's oral language, phonological awareness, and emergent writing skills and how to incorporate activities into everyday situations with their children. Up to four eight-week series will be offered. Smart Start funds may be used for meeting expenses, food, incentives and educational materials.

Reach Out and Read, Activity ID# 016 PSC:5523 PBISID:FS20

[This activity will collaborate with medical care practices to provide pre-literacy opportunities for children and their parents. The participating trained medical care providers will voluntarily incorporate Reach Out and Read (ROR), an evidence-based model, into young children's regular pediatric checkups or well-child visits. The medical care providers will implement ROR in their practices according to the National ROR guidelines. During each of the routine visits, children will receive a new, culturally- and developmentally-appropriate book to take home and read with their parents. The medical care providers will discuss the importance of reading, model reading a book aloud to the child, and encourage parent-child interactions as part of pre-literacy and language development. The program begins at the child's 6-month checkup and continues through age 5, with a special emphasis on children growing up in low-income communities. Medical practices will participate in the parent survey period and submit parent surveys to ROR Carolinas.] This activity will provide a Project Coordinator to support the medical practice with book ordering, data collection, literacy rich waiting room development, and overall program coordination. The medical care practice will display a literacy-rich waiting room area that reinforces the doctor's prescription to read. This activity may also provide books for distribution to parents by participating practices. Smart Start funds may be used for meeting expenses, food, and educational materials.

Other Services to support the systems building work of Alexander Partnership for Children

Program Coordination, Activity ID# 007 PSC:5603 PBISID:PS10

The Program Coordination activity will measure and report the progress of programs and activities funded by the Alexander County Partnership for Children (ACPC). The activity will monitor program

outcomes, outputs, service delivery and contract compliance. The activity will make site visits and provide technical assistance to the funded programs as needed. Each Smart Start funded activity will receive at least one on-site monitoring visit per fiscal year. The activity will provide information to assist board and staff with effective planning including the development of logic models with appropriate outcomes, will collect and submit quarterly reporting information to the North Carolina Partnership for Children and submit Program Evaluation reports to the ACPC Board of Directors. Outreach to the community may be provided to report results and inform the community of the value of early experiences to future learning and success. The Program Coordination activity may utilize both staff and contractors who will report directly to the Executive Director.

Community Awareness and Education, Activity ID# 020 PSC:5517 PBISID:KEA10

This activity will promote the benefits of early childhood programs/ services and family involvement, as well as activities to inform families of available services and resources, and may seek to increase access to services. This activity will engage in outreach and engagement through a) increasing the awareness of available Partnership services and resources b) developing a consistent and persistent message to the community and its families to help them envision a better future through education and healthy lifestyles; c) increasing community awareness and involvement concerning the importance of early learning, literacy and other issues affecting young children ages 0-5 and their families; d) expanding parents' knowledge of child development, early learning, literacy and available resources in the community. The activity will engage in a variety of outreach activities which may include designing and producing educational materials/literature, website management, use of social media, press releases, presentations and participation in special community events such as community fairs and volunteer recognition events. Trained staff may conduct car seat safety checks, distribute information related to proper car seat installation and distribute age and size appropriate car seats to Alexander County residents in immediate need as private grant funding permits. Staff time may also support and oversee diaper bank administration (diapers funded with non-SS funds.) Partnership staff will implement this activity. Contractors may be used as needed for specific tasks. Smart Start funds may be used for meeting expenses, including food, incentives and educational materials.

Contractors may submit proposals for one or more of these service activities. Alexander County Partnership for Children activities must address the needs of families with children ages Prenatal thru 5 years of age.

BACKGROUND

The Local Partnership is responsible for developing or assisting in the development of, evidence informed or evidence based services that foster growth, encourage learning, and provide resources and support to child care professionals & families of children, ages 0-5 in Alexander County. These functions include enhancing available health services to support the growth and development of young children, services to support early learning environments and activities to support and educate parents. Consistent with State and Federal laws and regulations where applicable, the Local Partnership's activities work toward ensuring that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

The initial contract will begin **July 1, 2022** and end **June 30, 2023** and dependent upon satisfactory service delivery and availability of funds designated for the activity may be renewed for two additional one year terms.

Multi-year Bids for On-Going Services: For on-going services, prospective Contractors must submit a cost proposal for **3 consecutive years beginning with fiscal year 2022-23 and ending with fiscal year 2024-25**. The Contractor must submit an annual budget ending June 30th for each fiscal year of the proposal period. Contract(s) for subsequent fiscal years will be executed only after confirmation of satisfactory performance by the Contractor and of the availability of funds for this purpose.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Contractor must have demonstrated competency in performing services defined in the Needs and Activities Section of this RFP. Specifically, the Contractor must demonstrate a successful history of providing similar services. The Contractor should describe all project experience in North Carolina or other states with similar program operations. Contractor should provide the name, address, and telephone number of a reference for each project in the last five years.

The Contractor must provide details of any pertinent judgment, criminal conviction, investigation or litigation pending against the Contractor or any of its officers, directors, employees, agents or subcontractors of which the vendor has knowledge, or a statement that there is none. The Local Partnership reserves the right to reject a proposal based on this information.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process by which a prospective Contractor will be selected to provide services.

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective Contractors.
2. A preproposal conference is set as needed. (See cover sheet of this RFP for details.)
3. Proposals in **one original; 5 copies; and an electronic copy** of the Alexander County Partnership for Children Activity Description Format, Budget and Budget Narrative will be received from prospective Contractors. The original and 5 copies will be submitted in a sealed envelope or package. Each original shall be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the firm. Unsigned proposals will not be considered.
4. Prospective Contractors may submit proposals for one or more of the activities.
5. **All proposals must be received by the Local Partnership no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP.**
6. At their option, the Local Partnership's evaluators may request oral presentations or discussion with any or all prospective Contractors for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. However, prospective Contractors are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification; therefore, all proposals should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the prospective Contractor.

7. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that may include the need for the program, program content and evaluation, completeness, content, experience with similar projects, ability of the Contractor and its staff, cost, and financial stability of the prospective Contractor. Award of a contract to one prospective Contractor does not mean that the other proposals lacked merit, but that, all factors considered, the selected proposal was deemed most advantageous to the Local Partnership.
8. **If selected**, the Local Partnership will contact the selected Contractor to obtain information and documentation required for preparation of the contract which may include the following:
 - a. Name; title; telephone and fax numbers; and mailing address, including street address and zip code, of the contract administrator.
 - b. Name; title; telephone and fax numbers; and mailing address, including street address and zip code, of the person(s) authorized to sign financial status reports.
 - c. Copy of Conflict of Interest policy.
 - d. Proof of insurance that may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - 1) Workers' compensation;
 - 2) General business liability;
 - 3) Fidelity bonding (e.g., employee crime or dishonesty);
 - 4) Professional liability;
 - 5) Automobile (owned, hired or non-owned).

Providing and maintaining adequate insurance coverage is a material obligation of the Contractor and is of the essence of the contract.
 - e. Completed Internal Revenue Service (IRS) *Form W-9*.

or

 - f. If a nonprofit entity, a copy of the Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)3 determination letter received from the IRS.
9. The Local Partnership will not contract with any prospective Contractor that fails to provide **all** required information and documentation. After all required information and documentation has been submitted, the Local Partnership will prepare the contract, notify the selected Contractor and request that the Contract be signed. A template of the Contract that the selected Contractor will be required to sign is available upon request.
10. The Contract must be executed prior to the start of work and incurring any expenses.
11. If all proposals are rejected, prospective Contractors will be notified promptly by the Local Partnership.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The response to this RFP shall consist of the following sections:

Cover Letter

Proposal using the ACPC Full Activity Description Format which will include

Brief Activity Description

Background and Experience (if applicable)

Project Staffing and Organization

Logic Model

Budget and Narrative for 3 years

The ACPC Full Activity Description Format is activity specific. Prospective bidders must contact **Paula E. Cline, Executive Director** at 828-632-3799, paula@alexanderchildren.org to request a copy of the appropriate format for use during bid submission.

1. Cover Letter

Each proposal must include a cover letter, signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the prospective Contractor.

2. Proposal

The prospective Contractor must submit a separate Proposal for each activity for which it wishes to provide services. The Alexander County Partnership for Children Full Activity Description format must be used. The Full Activity Description Format is activity specific. Prospective bidders must contact **Paula E. Cline, Executive Director** at 828-632-3799, paula@alexanderchildren.org to request a copy of the appropriate format for use during bid submission.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

- TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** All proposals are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. The prospective Contractor specifically agrees to the conditions set forth by signature to the proposal.
- ORAL EXPLANATIONS.** The Local Partnership shall not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive bidding process or after award.
- REFERENCE TO OTHER DATA.** Only information which is received in response to this RFP will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted shall not be evaluated.
- COST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION.** Any costs incurred by prospective Contractors in preparing or submitting offers are the prospective Contractor's sole responsibility; the Local Partnership shall not reimburse any prospective Contractor for any costs incurred prior to award.
- RIGHT TO SUBMITTED MATERIAL.** All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFP, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other

documentation submitted by the prospective Contractors shall become the property of the Local Partnership when received.

6. **OFFEROR'S REPRESENTATIVE.** Each prospective Contractor shall submit with its proposal the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the firm and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the firm's proposal.
7. **SUBCONTRACTING.** In the event the prospective Contractor desires to subcontract any part of the contracted services, the proposal must clearly indicate what work it plans to subcontract and to whom and must provide all required information for each subcontractor. Only the subcontractors specified in the proposal shall be considered approved upon award of the Contract.
8. **PROPRIETARY INFORMATION.** Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the prospective Contractor does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation or contract administration will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by N.C.G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: each page shall be identified in bold face at the top and bottom as "Confidential." Any section of the proposal that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in bold face on the top of the title page of that section. Cost information may not be deemed confidential. In spite of what is labeled as confidential, the determination as to whether or not it is shall be as governed by North Carolina law.