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**Request for Smart Start Funding Proposals**

**For the Period of July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025**

The Guilford County Partnership for Children, Inc. (GCPC) is seeking qualified organizations with expertise in early childhood to support our local community with evidence based or evidence informed services for children birth to five and their families.

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| **RFP Release Date:**  | September 15, 2022 |
| **RFP Information Session** | Sept. 15, 2022 by Zoom |
| **Submit Questions to:** | Susan Brady, Director of Programssusanb@guilfordchildren.org |
| **Deadline to submit questions:** |  Oct. 20, 2022 |
| **Deadline for Proposals:** |  Oct. 25, 2022 |
| **Electronic Submission to:**  | Attention: Susan Bradysusanb@guilfordchildren.org |
| **Grant Award notices:** | April 19, 2022 |

**Applications should be submitted in electronic format no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 25, 2022. Late applications will not be accepted. Faxed applications will not be accepted.**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Introduction**

Smart Start is North Carolina’s nationally recognized and award-winning early childhood initiative designed to ensure that every young child living in North Carolina enters school healthy and ready to succeed. The Guilford County Partnership for Children is the local non-profit organization that administers Smart Start funds in Guilford County. We collaborate with existing programs and support the creation of new ones to measurably strengthen families and improve the lives of children.

**Purpose of the Request**

Guilford County Partnership for Children is seeking proposals from programs that provide data driven, collaborative, measurable and meaningful early childhood related services and support that enable the community to reach as many families as possible.

**Funding priorities include:**

* **Early Care and Education –**Increase quality early learning and care experiences for children birth to five. Strategies may include:
	+ Annual planning for collaborative training and technical assistance that includes program level and market level goals. Planning will demonstrate the inclusion of feedback from the childcare market, and other agencies that fund training and technical assistance in Guilford County.
	+ Specific planning to ensure high utilization of existing childcare related resources such as TEACH, WAGE$, and AWARD$.
	+ An annual one day conference for early educators in Guilford County.
	+ Training for staff that ensures TA’s are current in best practices including those related to ITERS, ECERS, CLASS widely used curriculum and other NCPC approved classroom assessments.
	+ Recommended resources and approach to move historically underserved childcare programs from 1-2; 2-3; or 3-4 stars, especially those serving economically disadvantaged children.
	+ A clear menu of support services that address gaps in technical assistance in Guilford County. Examples might include environment, challenging behaviors, classroom management, curriculum, business development, family engagement, outdoor learning environments or other support needs.
	+ Technical assistance options that may include an intensive, 35 hours onsite coaching component driven by a measurable quality improvement plan. Qualified independent contractors could be utilized to expand reach in this category.
* **Family Support:** Increasing the availability and usage of evidence-based programs or services that improve parenting skills and family stability. Strategies may include:
* Home visiting programs.
* Parenting education programs hosted in partnership with childcare providers or other community partners with access to young children and families.
* **Health and Wellness:** Increasing the availability and usage of evidence-based services or support that promote physical health of young children birth to five. Strategies may include:
* Preventing and/or supporting premature babies
* Ensuring as many children as possible attend all well-child checkups
* Increasing pediatric mental health or other specialized services in need
* Ensure all children receive age appropriate developmental screenings and have supports to follow through on treatment recommendations
* **Intellectual Readiness:** Increasing the availability and usage of evidence-based pre-literacy programs in alignment with other agencies funding pre-literacy programs. Strategies may include:
* Increasing literacy rich home environments
* Training for parents or caretakers on how to support pre-literacy at home

**II. AVAILABLE FUNDING AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

**Award Term and Requirements**

Funding for these proposals will be provided for a two-year term and is contingent on funding availability and adherence to the requirements of the grant.

1. The term of any resulting award is anticipated to be for two fiscal years from July 1, 2023 until June 30, 2025.
2. The bidder must submit annual budgets ending June 30th with its proposal~~.~~ Contracts for subsequent fiscal years in the multi-year bidding period will be executed only after a satisfactory evaluation of performance, availability of funds, and review and approval of proposed activities.
3. Funds may not be used for goods or activities that are currently funded by other government sources to ensure no supplantation of funds.
4. A 19% in kind program match is required that may include, but is not limited to, parent and community volunteer time, donations of goods and services, etc.
5. GCPC will not contract with any applicant that fails to provide all required information and documentation. After all required information and documentation has been submitted, GCPC will prepare the contract, notify the applicant, and submit the contract for signature. A template of the Contract that the applicant will be required to sign is available upon request.
6. If all proposals are rejected, applicants will be notified promptly by GCPC.

**If your application/proposal is approved for funding the applicant must agree to and provide the following:**

1. Work collaboratively with GCPC and across agency lines in a community context.
2. Regularly disclose that the activity receives funding from Smart Start and GCPC.
3. Be available for monitoring visits and meetings held by GCPC.
4. Comply with fiscal, program and evaluation reporting requirements and deadlines. Agree to evaluation of data collection to capture information around racial equity.
5. Revert funds not spent by the end of the fiscal year, unless requested to do so prior to that date.
6. Understand that funds must be spent according to Smart Start Cost Principles [link to website]. If contract terms are not met, funds may be discontinued and any unspent funds returned to GCPC.
7. Comply with NCGS 143C-6.2 reporting requirements <https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/BySection/Chapter_143C/GS_143C-6-23.html>
8. Participate in any audit/evaluation of the Partnership that is required by the NC General Assembly or any other State officials/agencies.
9. Maintain the necessary fidelity bond and commercial liability insurance coverage required.
10. Return items purchased with Smart Start funds should the entity no longer perform the services for which the assets were purchased.
11. Provide the following information for the contract administrator--name; title; telephone and fax numbers; and mailing address, including street address and zip code.
12. If a nonprofit entity, provide a copy of the Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)3 determination letter received from the IRS.
13. Provide No Overdue Taxes Certification.
14. Provide Board of Directors list (if a 501(c)3).
15. Provide a copy of the Board Approved Bylaws (if a 501(c)3).
16. Provide proof of insurance which may include, but not be limited to, the following:
	1. Workers’ compensation.
	2. General business liability.
	3. Professional liability.
	4. Fidelity bonding (e.g., employee crime or dishonesty).
	5. Automobile (owned, hired or non-owned).
17. Completed Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-9.
18. Most recent audit report and/or financial statements.
19. The contract between GCPC and the applicant must be executed prior to the start of work and incurring any expenses.

**Eligibility**

Eligible applicants include non-profit, government agencies, community-based organizations and institutions of higher education with experience in delivering services to children, their families and child care professionals.

All proposals must impact children from birth through age five. Programs directed at children older than five years old cannot be considered, by legislative mandate. Only Evidence-Based/Evidence Informed Programming will be accepted. Level 11 Certification from the NC Institute for Child Development is *required* for technical assistance providers in child care-related activities. For other activities, a bachelor’s degree in a Human Service or related field is strongly *preferred*.

To be eligible to apply for this funding, applicants must demonstrate sound organizational and fiscal capacity. Funds should be used for activities, experiences, or other resources that have a beneficial impact on children and follow Smart Start legislative mandates and Cost Principles.

To ensure that applicants and their providers have a strong understanding of our community’s needs and assets while having established relationships with other stakeholders, eligible applicant’s programs must be located in Guilford County.

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

**Selection Process**

All applications received by the required deadline will be reviewed to ensure all necessary attachments and documentation are complete and included. Applications that are **incomplete, late, or submitted by non-eligible applicants will not be reviewed by the grant review committee**. **Nothing may be added to any application after it has been submitted, including a signed certification page**. Complete applications from eligible applicants will then be forwarded to the grant review committee who will review, score, and rank the applications.

Applicants may be asked to make a 15-minute presentation to the Program, Planning & Accountability Committee briefly describe their activity and answer specific questions committee members may have. Presentation times will be scheduled after proposal submission.

The Program Planning and Accountability will meet to formulate recommendations to the full Board. Committee members will not include any representative who may have a conflict of interest regarding any funding decision.

Award notices will be provided after the April 18, 2022, Guilford County Partnership for Children Board meeting, no later than April 19, 2022.

The grant review committee will be recalled if funding levels made by the General Assembly are not adequate to fully meet the approved program budgets.

**III. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Application Format**

Applications (proposals) must include the following components to be considered complete and responsive for funding. **Incomplete** applications (proposals) will **not** be reviewed or scored:

 ALL APPLICANTS NEW APPLICANTS ONLY

[ ] RFP Application (including signatures) Attachment A [ ] Three(3) letters of support

[ ] RFP Attachment B (Excel workbook)

 [ ] Logic Model tab (2 yrs)

 [ ] Detailed and Narrative Budget tab (2 yrs)

 [ ] Summary budget tab (this will auto populate)

 Basic format:

* The RFP Application should be completed in the Proposal Application document and submitted electronically with one printed copy on 8 ½ x 11 inch white paper submitted. Font sizes of responses should not be changed.
* Respond to each criterion in the order listed in the Application Narrative.
* Page limit of the Application Narrative section, not including first 2 pages of application and attachments, is 9 pages. Reviewers will not consider material past the page limit in the printed report.
* The RFP Attachment should be completed in, and submitted as, an Excel workbook.

**Application Deadline**

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M. ON October 25, 2022**.

* One (1) electronic submission of the Application, Attachment (and if applicable, new applicant documents) should be sent to susanb@guilfordchildren.org and must be received on or before the due date/time.
* One (1) signed original should be submitted via mail or placed in the GCPC drop box within one week of electronic submission. To use the GCPC drop box you must enter the building between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday.

 **Guilford County Partnership for Children 500 W. Friendly Avenue Greensboro, NC 27401**

**Questions and Answers**

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) list will be posted and maintained on our website at <http://www.guilfordchildren.org/> during the RFA period. All questions must be submitted in writing (email preferred to susanb@guilfordchildren.org ) and responses will be updated twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays with a final list posted on Oct. 20, 2022.

It is strongly recommended that applicants review the FAQ List regularly prior to submission of the final application.

**Technical Assistance**

**A virtual Information Session will be held on Sept. 15 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82026826549> .

All interested applicants are strongly encouraged to participate.

All questions must be submitted in writing and responses will be posted in writing on the FAQ list (see above). No questions will be responded to verbally except during the Information Session on Sept. 15, 2022.