

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

CHILDCARE CENTER CONSULTANT AND CHILDCARE SERVICES PROVIDER
CLEVELAND COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Requested By: Cleveland County, North Carolina

Proposal Due Date: By 4:00 p.m. on November 1, 2022

Proposal Submission: Cleveland County, North Carolina
C/O: Kerri Melton, Assistant County Manager
P.O. Box 1210
Shelby, NC 28151
Proposals shall be submitted in .pdf format via email ONLY.

Proposal Available From: Proposal packages are available to download from www.clevelandcounty.com or by contacting the Assistant County Manager at kerri.melton@clevelandcountync.gov.

Contact & Question Submission: Kerri Melton, Assistant County Manager
kerri.melton@clevelandcountync.gov
(704) 692-6505

Addenda: Any addenda will be available to download from www.clevelandcounty.com or by contacting the Assistant County Manager at kerri.melton@clevelandcountync.gov. Proposers are responsible for checking the website for addenda until the proposal closing date.

The County reserves the right to reject any or all bids submitted, in whole or part, and to waive any informalities or nonconformance of any one or series of bids that the County deems immaterial and non-prejudicial to other bidders.

BACKGROUND

Cleveland County, North Carolina (the “County”) requests qualifications (“RFQ”) for a party (“Vendor”) to (1) consult in the development of and (2) operate and manage childcare services in a County-owned childcare center, which will be constructed by Cleveland County Government. The childcare services will be provided in the Facility to children of County employees. The Vendor must have the experience to consult in the construction and design of, and then the ability to furnish, age and developmentally appropriate childcare. The County envisions a partnership with a Vendor who will offer an enriching curriculum and a safe, secure environment where children are able to engage in activities that develop their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs.

CHILDCARE CENTER OPERATIONS

A. Childcare Design Consulting

The Vendor will work with the County in design and development of a 5-Star County employee childcare center.

B. Childcare Services to be Performed

Upon the opening of the Center, the Vendor will provide daily childcare services between the hours of 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. for County employees. The specifics for each of these childcare services are the following:

Daily Childcare Services

Children Eligible for this Service – children whose parent or legal guardian is a county employee.

Rates – the Vendor shall offer daily childcare services at a weekly rate that shall not exceed the amounts set forth in the tables below. Rates are subject to a yearly review and written approval by the County.

Infants and Young Toddlers

Schedule	Weekly Rate
Full-Time (5 days)	\$75

Older Toddlers and Preschool

Schedule	Weekly Rate
Full-Time (5 days)	\$65

Party Responsible for Payment – payroll deduction from employee’s wages. Vendor to be paid by the County.

Hours of Operation – the Facility shall be open weekdays, County recognized holidays excluded, for daily childcare services from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

C. Facility

The Facility will be constructed over the next year on property adjacent to the Cleveland County Public Health Center, with a 12-month construction timeline. The facility will be approximately 6,000 square feet and would accommodate approximately 100 children, 6 weeks old to kindergarten age. The facility will be designed to meet all the necessary requirements of North Carolina law for opening a childcare facility.

D. Licensing Requirements

The Vendor shall be a state-licensed childcare provider and will be required to stay in compliance with such licensure during the term of the agreement. The licensure will dictate the capacity of the Facility and of the Vendor’s daycare services.

D. Vendor’s Employee Requirements

The Vendor shall be responsible for the employment of the staff for the childcare services, which will include the obligation to hire, pay, and manage the staff. The Vendor and the staff will not be considered employees of the County for any purposes. The Vendor and their employees will be required to undergo any background checks conducted or required by the appropriate State licensing agencies.

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. Term

The term of the lease agreement will be two (2) years. The term may be extended for an additional term upon mutual agreement between the Vendor and the County.

B. Insurance

At minimum, the Vendor shall maintain a Worker's Compensation insurance policy in compliance with state law covering all employees and subcontractors of the Vendor and a comprehensive general liability insurance policy in the amount of \$2,000,000. All insurance policies of the Vendor shall name the County as an additional insured.

C. Maintenance

The County will be responsible for routine maintenance of the plumbing system, heating, ventilation and air condition system, structural components, and routine repairs in the Facility.

D. Janitorial Service

The County be responsible for the janitorial cleaning of the Facility. The County shall be responsible for exterior paint, stain, snow removal, lawn mowing and watering, and site maintenance. The Vendor shall be responsible for housekeeping maintenance and to keep the kitchen, childcare areas, food preparation, and serving areas clean, sanitary, and free from refuse and debris at all times and in compliance with health department food service standards and their State licensing requirements.

E. Utilities

The County will provide sewer, water, gas, electrical services, internet, and telephone services at the Facility.

F. Alterations

Any alterations to the Facility shall be done by the County in partnership with the Vendor.

G. Financial Objectives

The County's objective is to select a Vendor with the financial capability to operate the childcare center using the fees generated with a County subsidy of approximately \$150,000, with the County providing the space and all associated utilities. The Vendor must have the demonstrated ability to operate a childcare center and must have the financial and operational capacity to ensure uninterrupted service to the children and caregivers who use this service.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A. Minimum Performance Standards

The Vendor is expected to meet the following minimum performance standards:

1. Ensure each child receives an individual program based on their needs;
2. Ensure the Facility is clean and sanitary at all times;
3. Employ a staff of **cordial and qualified individuals**;

4. Ensure the environment and equipment is maintained in a manner conducive to the children's health, safety, comfort, and developmental needs; and
5. Provide a pleasant and attractive environment for the people they serve.

B. Customer Service Surveys

The Vendor shall conduct customer service surveys and report the results to the County on an annual basis. County staff will meet with the Vendor annually to address any concerns raised in customer service surveys, and the Vendor must demonstrate that such concerns have been addressed.

C. County Access

A County representative shall always have full access to the childcare center for scheduled and unscheduled visits to inspect the Facility.

QUALIFICATIONS INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Proposal Requirements

Interested parties shall submit a proposal to be considered for the award of this contract from the County. To be considered, a proposal must include all the information requested. Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee using the criteria set forth in the Evaluation Criteria section. The following information must be provided:

1. Cover Letter
2. Outline of Experience
 - a. Experience with childcare centers and providing similar childcare services.
 - b. Experience with past childcare facilities.
 - c. Customer service experience.
 - d. Experience with State licensing system.
 - e. Related trainings and certifications.
3. Outline of Operations
 - a. A business plan with pricing.
 - b. Approach to provide and achieve the requested services.
 - c. List of programs and activities to be offered through the services.
 - d. Statement of how the Facility will be utilized for the childcare center and services.
4. Team Members
 - a. List of identified team members and qualifications.
5. References
 - a. At least three (3) references that address past and present childcare center and services experience.
6. Statement of Financial Capabilities
 - a. Experience in bookkeeping and auditing financial data related to childcare operations.
 - b. Experience and demonstrated ability to pay salaries at the living wage required and operate the Facility at the maximum yearly rates allowed.

B. Deadlines

RFQ submissions must be received by the County by 4:00 p.m, on November 1, 2022. Proposals must be provided in .pdf format via email to kerri.melton@clevelandcountync.gov.

C. Process and Timeline for Selection

A selection committee will review the RFQs. The committee may select prospective Vendors for further consideration or may directly select and negotiate with the leading candidate. If more than one Vendor is considered, then interviews will be conducted, or additional information requested. The schedule is contingent

upon the County's project schedule and may be changed at any time. The selection process will proceed on the following anticipated schedule:

October 4, 2022 – RFQ released

November 1, 2022 4:00 p.m. Deadline for RFQ submittal via email to kerri.melton@clevelandcountync.gov

November 15, 2022 – Deadline review and selection of candidates

The selection committee will select candidate(s) from submittals received. This process will include review of submittals, references, and other information as necessary. The County may conduct interviews with potential candidates if applicable. In making this selection, the County reserves the right to request supplemental information from any responding party. The County reserves the right to award the contract to the responding entity or entities which best meets the needs and interests of the County or to reject all proposals. The County further reserves the right to make multiple contract awards and to make a selection without conducting interviews.

December 2022 – Award of agreement and negotiations

The County will attempt to negotiate a satisfactory per hour consulting fee for the design services, and then secure a contract with a preferred Vendor. If the County determines, at its sole discretion, that the negotiation is not proceeding satisfactorily, the County may terminate negotiation with the preferred Vendor and begin negotiations with another candidate.

TBD – Commencement of services

Upon award, the design consultation will begin immediately. The desired opening and start date for the childcare center will ultimately be established in cooperation with the selected Vendor. Interested parties are advised that project timeline and schedule will be considered as part of the review and evaluation process.

E. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the selection committee using the following criteria:

1. Experience – 30%
 - a. Vendor experience and proven ability to operate and manage a successful daycare center
 - b. Vendor experience in managing childcare facilities of similar size and amenities.
 - c. Vendor customer service experience
 - d. Vendor history with and compliance with licensing standards and Department of Family Services
 - e. Vendor training and certifications above and beyond state minimums
2. Operations – 15%
 - a. Vendor business plan viability
 - b. Match between proposal and the requirements and services to be performed
 - c. Programs and activities proposed to be provided as part of the services.
3. Qualifications of the Team Members – 20%
 - a. Qualification of identified team members.
 - b. Experience of the identified team members with respect to similar services
4. References – 20%
 - a. Strength and relevance of references provided
5. Financial Capability – 15%
 - a. Demonstrated financial stability and likelihood of long-term success
 - b. Vendor experience in bookkeeping and auditing financial data related to childcare operations
 - c. Demonstrated ability to pay salaries at the living wage required and operate the Facility at

the maximum yearly rates allowed

- d. Any planned investment in the Facility and services
- e. Dollar amount (if any) the County would be required to invest to implement their business plan

F. Reservation of Rights

The County reserves the right to waive minor informalities and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, reserves the right to:

- o Reject any and all proposals received
- o Select a proposal for contract negotiation other than the one with the lowest cost
- o Negotiate any aspect of the proposal with any party
- o Terminate negotiations and select another proposal for contract negotiation
- o Terminate negotiations and prepare and release a new RFQ
- o Terminate negotiations and take such other action as deemed appropriate.

G. Withdrawal

The County reserves the right to withdraw this RFQ at any time without prior notice.

H. Non-Binding Agreement

The provisions outlined herein are non-binding. A binding agreement will not be created until and unless the contract contemplated herein is fully executed by the selected Vendor. The County is not bound by the terms of any contract until it has been fully executed by the authorized parties.