REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
QUALITY CHILD CARE CALL CENTER AND REFERRAL SITE
for
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Issued by:
The Mayor’s Fund for Philadelphia (“the Fund”)

Deadline to submit questions is May 26th, 2016. Responses must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST, on Friday, June 10th, 2016.

Proposals should be submitted (as a single document) to Ariana Zeno at Ariana.Zeno@phila.gov

Ashley Del Bianco, Executive Director, Mayors Fund
I. Project Overview

A. Introduction; Statement of Purpose

The Mayor’s Fund for Philadelphia (“the Fund”) is seeking proposals from qualified and experienced call center and referral agencies to provide information, referrals, and enrollment assistance telephonically to low income parents and caregivers seeking child care. Call center specialists will connect parents and caregivers to quality early learning programs and supports to pay for it.

The Quality Child Care Call Center will screen low-income Philadelphia residents for federal, state, and local child care benefits/entitlements and services for which they are eligible, and assist those individuals with successfully applying for those benefits and services. In addition, call center specialists will help residents to identify quality child care programs they can access in their area and outline the characteristics to look for in quality programs. This RFP provides an overview of the project’s scope of work and expected outcomes. It also includes information about proposal submission requirements, and the selection process.

B. Department Overview

The Fund works in close partnership with the City of Philadelphia and private sector partners to develop and run initiatives that reflect Mayoral priorities and seek to improve the quality of life for all Philadelphians. The Fund will serve as the fiscal administrator for this contract opportunity. The Mayor’s Office of Education’s Director of Parental Engagement will serve as the project manager for this effort on behalf of the Fund. MOE works with public and private partners to support Philadelphia’s schools and to increase educational resources for citizens of all ages. MOE’s goals include providing quality Pre-K to three- and four-year-olds who currently lack access and expanding the number of Community Schools in Philadelphia that deliver wrap-around services for students, families, and community members.

C. Project Background

This project is designed to encourage parents and caregivers to prioritize the importance of quality early learning experiences and ensure that Philadelphia’s children enter school prepared to learn and succeed. This work is expected to provide critical support to the Mayor’s Office of Education’s Pre-K effort, and was initiated under Shared Prosperity Philadelphia, the City’s plan to fight poverty. The Quality Call Center will be in service of the overall goals of the project: Increase access to under-enrolled quality early learning sites by removing some barriers to enrollment and raising awareness of the availability of existing quality slots; Use data-driven and market-researched approaches to communicate to parents and caregivers the importance of choosing quality and how to identify, locate, and afford it (including through the Keystone STARS quality improvement rating system and other approaches); Develop a set of best practices of how to engage parents and caregivers at scale on issues of quality in early learning through an in-depth evaluation of approaches to this work.

39% of Philadelphia’s children, ages 0 to 5, live in poverty. Two-thirds of the achievement gap among high school students is rooted in learning loss beginning in elementary school. Investments in quality early learning significantly improve the likelihood of academic success among low-income individuals, and have positive effects reaching into adulthood. For every
dollar spent on early learning, we receive a return of 7 to 10% per year over the lifetime of that child in the form of increased taxes, and savings in public safety and other expenses.

Despite the benefits of these investments, Philadelphia struggles to serve children before kindergarten and the need for quality child care consistently outstrips the demand. To combat these challenges, we need to do more to support and engage parents and caregivers in discussions on the long-term positive impacts of quality child care and Pre-K, and to demystify the process of how to identify, locate, and afford it.

In a survey of more than 200 Philadelphia parents on the child care subsidy waiting list, 57% indicated that they were not familiar with Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania’s early childhood education quality rating system. For those familiar with the system, 71% said it influenced their child care decision. Similarly, in a survey of over 200 parents and caregivers of children under five, 93% of parents surveyed reported having heard of Head Start and Early Head Start; of the parents surveyed, 75% said they would be “extremely likely” to enroll their child in a Head Start/Early Head Start program in the future. With more information, support navigating the system, and help with enrollment parents and caregivers will be more empowered to make more informed choices around quality.

This work will target low-income, hard-to-reach parents and caregivers of children under five. This group will consist of “easier-to-reach” parents and caregivers – those already engaging in services for young children – and “harder-to-reach” parents and caregivers – those not yet engaged in services and those who are geographically remote, non-English language speakers or members of culturally isolated groups. The Quality Child Care Call Center will serve as an important resource for both groups, but particularly those “harder-to-reach” parents not yet utilizing child care services.

To develop the Quality Child Care Call Center, the agency will work closely with MOE’s Director of Parental Engagement and in coordination with staff at the Mayor’s Office of Education. The Director of Parental Engagement will coordinate the development of the call center curriculum(s), meeting with the agency at the project start to track progress; identify training needs; and develop call centers standards and metrics.

The Consultant(s) may also work with members of the early learning community and MOE’s external partners who may serve as advisors in the development of the training curriculum, benefits screening, and application assistance tools.

**D. Request for Proposals**

The Mayor’s Fund seeks services from a qualified and experienced call center and referral agency. Proposals should be submitted by email as a single document to Ariana Zeno at Ariana.Zeno@phila.gov no later than June 10th at 5:00 pm EST.

Key dates related to this RFP:
- **Webinar on RFP** - May 23rd at 12:00 noon EST. Contact Kitt.Disston@phila.gov to register.
- **Final Questions submitted about RFP** – May 26th
- **Answers submitted to questions posted** – May 31st
- **Deadline to submit proposal** – June 10th at 5:00 pm
- **Final selection is made** – June 24th
• Work commences – July 11th

E. General Disclaimer of the Fund/City

This RFP does not commit the Mayor’s Fund to award a contract. This RFP and the process it describes are proprietary to the Fund and are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Fund and the City of Philadelphia. No other party, including any Applicant, is intended to be granted any rights hereunder. Any response, including written documents and verbal communication, by any Applicant to this RFP, shall become the property of the Fund or the City and may be subject to public disclosure by the Fund or the City, or any authorized agent of the Fund or the City. The Fund or the City is not liable for any costs incurred by Applicants in preparing and submitting a proposal in response to this RFP or for any costs and expenses incurred in meeting with, or making oral presentations to the Fund or the City if so requested.

II. Scope of Work

A. Project Goals

The Mayor’s Fund seeks services from a qualified and experienced call center and referral agency to achieve the following objectives:

• Increase the percentage of eligible Philadelphians that place their children in quality child care programs, as well as, the number of eligible parents who utilize federal and state child care benefits programs and resources to enroll in those quality child care programs;
• Provide in-depth, accessible telephonic support with short wait times and broad knowledge base of the early childhood education environment to low income parents and caregivers struggling to navigate the child care system;
• Serve as an resource, referral, and enrollment line for quality child care options in Philadelphia including where to find them and how to afford them;
• Reduce barriers to accessing quality child care through application and enrollment support, including supporting document submission and troubleshooting application issues with respective federal, local, and state entities;
• Collect comprehensive data on clients served, applications submitted, and enrollments completed to use in a rigorous evaluation of the program. Findings will be used to inform future programming and improve service delivery.

B. Services and Tangible Work Products

In service of the above goals, the Fund requires at least the services and tangible work product listed below. Applicants may propose additional or revised services and tangible work products, but should explain why each is necessary to achieve the objective.

1. Direct Client Support:
   To provide information, social service screenings, application, and referrals assistance in English and Spanish, a Quality Child Care Call Center provider is expected to:

   a) Employ bilingual Spanish-speaking staff and have access to language interpretation services to accommodate callers in other languages.
b) Conduct comprehensive screening of parents to determine their child care needs and eligibility for programs and services.

c) Utilize an electronic benefits screening tool and enrollment system that ensures clients do not need to provide the same information multiple times to apply to different child care assistance programs.

d) Develop and/or maintain partnerships with other community based organizations to generate referrals “in” for child care benefit screenings and referrals “out” to quality child care programs and other services.

e) Provide targeted outreach to individuals who are likely to be under-enrolled in key child care benefits.
   i. Conduct City of Philadelphia Pre-K enrollment outreach and application completion support as spots become available

f) Provide information, screening and application assistance for key programs, including but not limited to:
   i. Child Care Subsidy
   ii. Early Head Start
   iii. Head Start
   iv. Pre-K Counts
   v. City of Philadelphia Pre-K

This includes supporting all the steps of successful enrollment, including (but not limited to) submitting the application; ensuring appropriate documents are collected, submitted, and received; troubleshooting issues with the application with the agency overseeing processing the application and providing benefit recertification support when needed.

g) Advise parents across the city on quality child care options in their areas and make referrals to quality child care programs.

h) Provide parents with information on how to assess for quality, including but not limited to:
   i. Using child care programs such as City of Philadelphia Pre-K, Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K Counts, and STAR 3 and 4 facilities
   ii. How to utilize the Key Stone STARS quality rating system
   iii. Lists of quality characteristics to look for in a child care facility
   iv. Questions to ask providers to evaluate for quality

i) Enter into appropriate data sharing agreements, in form acceptable to the City and other parties, to protect the confidentiality of private or otherwise protected data received or obtained in the course of this work.

2. Quality Assurance:
The Quality Child Care Call Center provider is expected to take the following steps to meet the highest quality of service:

a) Reach an estimated goal of providing 4,300 families with young children information on quality child care and referrals to high quality programs within the first year regardless of their eligibility for funding.

b) Provide application assistance to an estimated 1,300-1,700 families with young children within the first year for key child care support programs with an estimated 1,200-1,500 successful enrollments.

c) Train staff in screening, eligibility, and application enrollment tools.

d) Educate staff on initiative goals and expectations, benefits of quality early learning, programs and resources available to parents, eligibility requirements, application completion, customer service best practices, and privacy guidelines.
e) Develop quality assurance and customer service protocols to ensure positive user experience, consistent levels of service, and effective service delivery.
f) Identify need for and conduct refresher trainings as needed.
g) Ensure staff is treating clients professionally, respectfully and patiently.
h) Document procedures for protecting personally identifiable information.
i) Maintain record of client consent for receiving services.
j) Document procedures for collecting supporting application documentation and submitting them to the administering agency.
k) Document procedures for following up on application and service referral outcomes.
l) Participate in MOE quality assurance site visits.
m) Allow MOE to conduct customer satisfaction surveys to a portion of clients assisted.
n) Report any quality concerns immediately to MOE.
o) Maintain in confidence all information protected by applicable law, contract, or City policy, and report any known breach in privacy or confidentiality to the Fund and MOE in writing within 24 hours.

3. Communication:
   As communication and collaboration are critical to the success of this initiative, the agency is expected to:

   a) Engage in all regular check in calls with project manager and other child care stakeholders (weekly at the start of the project, and transitioning to bi-weekly and then monthly).
b) Participate in calls with Evaluation firm as needed.
c) Ensure benefits access and management staff are available for all site visits.
d) Communicate project successes and concerns during check in calls and by phone or email as necessary.
e) Identify and share best practices and lessons learned with project manager and other child care stakeholders.
f) Send required programmatic and fiscal reports in a timely manner and respond promptly to all inquiries regarding reports.

4. Reporting:
   To track performance goals and usage data to improve service delivery and evaluate effectiveness, the agency is expected to:

   a) Collect comprehensive data, including but not limited to:
      i. Number of calls received
      ii. Reason for call
      iii. Number of individuals screened
      iv. Number and type of applications submitted
         1. Early Head Start
         2. Head Start
         3. Pre-K Counts
         4. City of Philadelphia Pre-K
         5. Child Care Subsidy (CCIS)
      v. Number and type of applications successfully enrolled
         1. Early Head Start
         2. Head Start
3. Pre-K Counts
4. City of Philadelphia Pre-K
5. Child Care Subsidy (CCIS)
   vi. Numbers of referrals to quality child care programs made
   vii. Key household and demographic information
   viii. Frequently asked questions/concerns

   b) Submit monthly summary reports to track progress as well as quarterly narrative
      information on frequently asked questions, challenges identified, and any mid-
      stream recommendations.

III. Proposal Format, Content, and Submission Requirements

A. Proposal Format:

Please submit a proposal (as a single document) of no more than 15 single spaced pages
(excluding resumes, references, and work samples) using a 12-point font and one inch margins,
that addresses the following:

- **Proposed Service and Deliverables.** Include an outline of your approach based on the
goals laid out in the project description including how your firm or team:
  - Develops new call centers
  - Partners with outside referral organizations
  - Trains staff on new programs and application processes
    o Please include who in your organization will be trained to support
      screening, application completion, and referral activities
  - Ensures a consistent level of quality across staff and center(s)
  - Plans to provide benefits screening and application completion support, including
    flow chart describing how and when parents will be screened for which services
    and how applications will be submitted for enrollment
  - Plans to achieve goal number of parents served
  - If you plan to use subs for any of this work, identify them in this section. The
    Fund encourages full consideration of firms owned and operated by minorities,
    women, the disabled, and others reflecting the diverse experiences and
    backgrounds of the City of Philadelphia.
  - Include a sample staffing model including level of expertise; a list of what you
    view as the Fund’s responsibilities and your organization’s responsibilities; a
    description of challenges and strategies to overcome them
  - If proposing a team approach, please provide individual profiles on each member
    of the team, and details on the role of each member
  - If working with a partner, identify one firm to be designated as the “lead” and will
    be expected to subcontract with other team members

- **Time-phased work plan.** Include a proposed time-phased work plan and schedule
  including key tasks, timeline, and consultant or CEO time required for each activity.
  Please indicate your ability to begin work in July on a one year contract with the potential
  for renewal for one or more additional years at the Fund’s discretion.

- **Qualifications.** Describe your organization’s qualifications. Include a description of your
  firm’s capacity and experience in running call centers, handling call volume, screening
clients, and providing referral and application support for benefits or vital services. Also include or describe your firm’s information security policies, including data breach response actions, data center security standards, and any cyber liability insurance.

• **Budget.** Please submit two possible tiered budget options for how to complete the work — $75,000 and $125,000. Budgets are to be deliverables-based and at each budget level, define the services you can provide, the estimated number of people you can serve and applications you can complete. Number of referrals and successful enrollments may be parsed out separately.

• **References.** Provide three references who are recent clients and can speak to similar projects; ideally projects in which the key staff for this proposal have played similar roles. Please provide name and contact information for each reference, any work samples illustrating success reaching goals, and description of the project completed. We will be contacting these references in order to discuss working relationships with the client program and ability to complete projects on time, within budget, at high levels of rigor and quality.

Please contact Ariana Zeno by email at Ariana.Zeno@phila.gov with any questions about the project **no later than Thursday, May 26th.** All answers to submitted questions will be posted on the Mayor’s Fund website for public review at [www.mayorsfundphila.org/media](http://www.mayorsfundphila.org/media).

**B. Selection Criteria**

A successful proposal will illustrate:

• Superior Prior Experience in:
  - Successful provision of benefit screening, application completion, program enrollment, and referral services
  - Timely Call Center service delivery
  - Providing a quality customer service experience
  - Meeting project goals

• Capacity – selected organizations will illustrate clear capacity to support a call center with short wait times and ability to provide services at desired scale

• Proven Track Record – Selected organizations will have a proven track record of supporting empowering low-income clients and giving them the tools to stabilize their lives

• Excellent skills and reputation – including timeliness and demonstrable/measurable results

• Ability to begin work in July and to meet project deadlines on time and on budget.

**C. Timetable**

• A webinar for prospective applicants will be held on Monday, May 23rd at 12:00 pm EST. Contact Kitt Disston at Kitt.Disston@phila.gov to register.

• All RFP-related questions must be submitted by Thursday, May 26th. All answers to submitted questions will be posted on the Mayor’s Fund’s website for public review.

• Work on this project will commence in July with a service roll-out beginning summer 2016.
• The Applicant should state the number of days following the Fund’s authorization to proceed by which it will be ready to start the work, including any mobilization time.

D. Hours and Location of Work The Mayor’s Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity, which will serve as the key point of contact, is located at 1234 Market Street, with office hours operating from 8:30am to 5pm.

E. Monitoring; Security
By submission of a proposal in response to this RFP, the Applicant agrees that it will comply with all contract monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by the Fund and the City of Philadelphia, and with all security policies and requirements of either.

F. Reporting Requirements
The successful Applicant shall report to the project manager on a regular basis regarding the status of the project and its progress in providing the contracted services and/or products. At a minimum, the successful Applicant shall submit a monthly invoice detailing the services and/or products provided, the goals/tasks accomplished, and the associated costs. Upon review and approval of deliverables by the project manager, the invoice will be submitted for payment by the Fund.

G. Cost Proposal
Cost proposals must be “fixed price” proposals. The proposed price must include all costs that will be charged to the Fund for the services and tangible work products the Applicant proposes to perform and deliver to complete the project. Any contract resulting from this RFP will provide for a not-to-exceed amount in the compensation section of the contract.

This is a hybrid cost-reimbursement performance-based agreement where part of payment is contingent upon successful completion of performance-based metrics.