

Exhibit C – Scope of Work

I. Introduction

The City of Austin (City) seeks proposals in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified social service providers (Offerors) with demonstrated experience in early childhood services to provide direct childcare, education, quality improvement in early childhood services, and parental education to individuals and households residing and/or working in Austin/Travis County.

II. Background and Purpose of Funding

In 2022, the City of Austin Joint Inclusion Committee, in partnership with the Early Childhood Council, advocated maintaining funding for early childhood programs through Recommendation 20220323-005a, citing that:

“In the City of Austin, only 36% of children under age 4 living in households with low-income are receiving early learning services... decades of research prove that disadvantages begin the moment children come into the world because children born into poverty and children of color are disproportionately born early, at a low-birth weight, or with chronic illnesses, and are less likely than their peers to be ready for, or successful at school...”

Increasing access to high quality early care for infants and toddlers is a state and local priority for both [the Austin-Travis County Success By 6 Coalition](#) and the [Texas Prenatal to Age 3 Collaborative](#). Additionally, the city has adopted a number of [strategies related to Economic Opportunity and Affordability](#). Strategy 10 speaks specifically to creating access to quality early childhood education (ECE) by supporting families who do not qualify for existing free programs and cannot afford quality programs on their own, increasing availability of quality ECE programs, and encouraging living wages for ECE providers. Strategy 11 is to advance economic mobility by equipping and empowering families with wraparound services over a multi-year period so that parents and guardians can succeed in the workforce and children are prepared to succeed in adulthood.

[Austin-Travis County Success by 6 Coalition](#) reported in 2019 the cost of high-quality infant care ranges from \$15,000 per year in East Austin to \$20,000 on the city’s west side. 45% of programs serving children from households with low-income are high quality. Austin Public Health (APH) defines high quality childcare as providers who have a Texas Rising Star four-star rating; having national accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) or other accrediting body recognized by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC); and/or being a head start or early head start provider. Child Care workers earn between \$10.67 and \$14.07 per hour, while the City of Austin’s living wage was increased to \$20 per hour in [October 2022](#).

The City of Austin has a long history of working to meet the needs of children and their families. In 2008, the [Families and Children Task Force Report](#) recommended that Austin be a city in which all families have access to affordable, high-quality childcare near their home or workplace. In Resolution [20160414-004](#), Austin City Council acknowledged that Child Care Continuity Services serve two generations to help break the cycle of poverty and promote family self-sufficiency, directing the city manager to provide recommendations for funding options for Child Care Continuity Services that ultimately laid the groundwork for the way Austin funds ECE today.

APH launched a community input survey requesting feedback from early childhood service providers, non-profit agencies, parents, caregivers, and the community at large. The survey opened on Friday, March 10, 2023, and closed on Friday, March 17, 2023. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese. The overwhelming feedback was that while all solicitation objectives were important and in need of funding, the biggest need in Austin/Travis County is for direct care and staffing to open more classrooms to serve more children, particularly infants and toddlers.

Solicitation Objectives

The objectives of this funding are to:

1. Provide affordable, high-quality Early Childhood Education (ECE).
2. Provide parental education that is culturally relevant and age appropriate.
3. Provide wraparound and support services, to foster successful caregiving to ensure children are happy, healthy, and prepared for school success.
4. Provide quality training to early childhood education staff that support responsive teacher-child interactions and other best practices to promote healthy child development.
5. Provide family-friendly transportation to and from pre-natal, well-child, and other medically necessary appointments.

III. Funding and Timeline

Department: Austin Public Health

Services Solicited: Early Childhood Services

Available Funding: Approximately \$2,400,000 of which at least \$62,400 is dedicated to Quality Improvement initiatives, \$737,000 is dedicated to Direct Care, and \$1,600,600 for all programming within this scope of work

Request Limits: The Minimum request amount is \$60,000.

Anticipated Number of Awarded Agreements: APH anticipates awarding 4-7 agreements.

Contract Term: The agreements will have an anticipated effective start date of April 1, 2024 for a 60-month period.

Note: Current funding is available for one 12-month period; additional years' funding is subject to budget approval and the terms of the agreement.

Awarded programs may be structured as a reimbursable-based agreement or a deliverables-based agreement, as defined below:

- Reimbursable Agreement- An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for expenses incurred and paid through the provision of adequate supporting documentation that verifies the expenses.
- Deliverable Agreement- An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for a report or product that must be delivered to the City by the grantee (or by the Subgrantee to the Grantee) to satisfy contractual requirements. It can include goods or finished works, documentation of services provided or activities undertaken, and/or other related documentation.

IV. Priority Populations

Primary populations are:

- Children ages 0-5 from families with low income
- Teen and adult parents and/or guardians with low income
- Early childhood educators making \$25 per hour or less

City of Austin Eligibility Requirements

Adult clients must be residents of or work in the City of Austin and/or Travis County. Child clients must be residents of, enrolled in school in, or have a parent or guardian who works in Austin and/or Travis County. Clients must meet all other requirements to be eligible as described in Exhibit A.3: City of Austin Client Eligibility Requirements (Exhibit D of this Solicitation Package).

Some eligibility criteria may be waived for specific program models. Changes to eligibility are subject to negotiation and approval by APH staff.

Programs serving a variety of populations will be considered. Priority will be given to programs that include a focus on:

- **Teens and young adults:** Research from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) indicates that even brief parenting and/or life skills intervention revealed higher maternal self-esteem, including care taking ability, and decreased risk of repeat pregnancy.
- **People identifying as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC):** Decades of occupational and residential segregation have left BIPOC persons in childcare deserts, areas with inadequate amounts of licensed childcare options. [Data from the National Survey of Children's Health](#) reveals that [Black and multiracial families are more likely than white families to experience job disruptions due to lack of childcare](#), and as a result, parents and guardians of color are often left more vulnerable to future economic downturns, which exacerbates the [racial wealth gap](#).
- **People living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line:** [Children at Risk](#) estimates there are 197,000 more low-income children than subsidized childcare seats in Texas. Fewer than 1 in 5 subsidized seats are certified in the Texas Rising Star quality rating system. In Travis County, only 25 of every 100 seats are subsidized for families with low income.
- **Residents of Austin/Travis County living in childcare deserts:** Children at Risk finds that 34 Austin/Travis County Zip Codes are childcare deserts, with both a lack of quality and subsidized care. These zip codes span from North to South Austin and are most prevalent in the eastern crescent.

V. Austin Public Health Emergency Response

All agencies which are awarded funding through Austin Public Health Requests for Proposals are expected to provide emergency services in the event of a public health emergency (see Sections 8.6 and 8.6.1 of Exhibit E: Standard Boilerplate). Should agencies be called upon to engage in response activities, contract resources may be shifted or new uses of resources approved within an awarded program budget at the discretion of the City.

**VI. Services Solicited
Program Services**

The City allows and encourages Offerors to propose solutions to meet community needs effectively. The below list is a non-exhaustive summary of possible programs.

- **Direct Care** to ensure continuity of high-quality early childhood education services for families with low-income in instances in which childcare would otherwise terminate as a result of Federal Childcare Development Fund (CCDF) rules. These reasons can include waitlists, exhausted funding, waiting periods for reapplication, age, family income, caregiver reduced work hours, or any other instance where care would terminate as a result of CCDF rules.
- Direct Care also includes high-quality care during extended hours, such as after school programs, nontraditional work schedules, weekend hours and/or summer programs.
- **Staffing and wages** to ensure appropriate ratios for optimal early childhood education and intervention with wages to attract high quality professional candidates. This may include low-cost tuition or subsidies for childcare of employees' children at the center where employees are working.
- **Quality improvement activities** to include, but not limited to, teacher, administrator, and support staff training; early childhood certification training expenses, tuition, and related wrap-around support services; early childhood education curriculum; and activities to support achieving Texas Rising Star quality rating or National Accreditation.
- **Wraparound services** such as parenting education, case management, early childhood intervention for children with physical, developmental, visual, or auditory impairments, referral services, and direct financial assistance.
- **Transportation** to and from childcare facilities for after school, after hours, or summer programming. Transportation for parents and/or guardians, families, and minor children to necessary pre-natal, well-child, or other medical appointments.

VII. Principles of Service Delivery

1. **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Successful applicants will apply [the principles of trauma-informed practice](#) to program and service delivery: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment.
2. **Language Access Plan:** Applicants will be in development of or already have developed a [Language Access Plan](#). A language access plan is a document that guides the implementation of or plan to provide access to translation and interpretation services. Language access plans include a four-factor assessment that links service provision with the languages spoken in a grantee's geographic service area.
3. **Provider Agreement:** Applicants providing direct care will have or are willing to have a [provider agreement](#) with [Work Force Solutions Capital Area](#) to serve children receiving child care scholarships. A provider agreement opens a network of referrals for direct care, as well as gives direct care providers access to quality improvement programs and staff training.
4. **Referrals:** Applicants should offer access to referrals and information on how to access other aligned services and providers.

5. Program Accessibility: Programs should actively seek to eliminate barriers to services such as lack of transportation, limited communication and outreach, immigration documentation status, institutional barriers, and other restrictions.
6. Equitable Service Delivery: Offerors must ensure that programs are providing services that meet the needs of diverse populations, considering systemic, institutional, and environmental barriers and inequities that exist and seeking to mitigate the effects on participant outcomes.
7. Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite: Austin Public Health is requiring employers who receive this award to be a [designated mother-friendly worksite](#). Lactation-friendly worksites are businesses that proactively support employees with lactation accommodations. The most basic lactation-friendly policies provide a private space, flexible scheduling for break time, and other basic support so that parents may express and store milk for their babies.

Best Practices

All supportive services programs are encouraged to incorporate the following best practices:

- Evidence-based Practices: Evidence-based practices are those which have been developed from research, are found to produce meaningful outcomes, can be standardized and replicated, and often have existing tools to measure adherence to the model. The Offerors are encouraged to use evidence-based practices in their proposed program designs which should include developmentally appropriate practices and research based instructional practices for school readiness.
- Incorporating Perspectives from People with Lived Experience: Programs should be designed with input from individuals with lived expertise.
- Livable Wage: The City of Austin recommends offerors follow Strategic Direction measure EOA.C.3 and pay at least a livable wage to all staff working on the program ([EOA.C.3 - Dollars-per-hour wage that an individual must earn to support a family in Austin | Open Data | City of Austin Texas](#)).
- Collaboration with the Community: Successful candidates will participate in local working groups and engage with community stakeholders.
- Success by 6 Coalition: Programs should be designed to help advance the goals and objectives of the Austin-Travis County Success by 6 Coalition [2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#) and [Year 3 Plan Update](#). City of Austin encourages participation in regular meetings or workgroups should capacity allow.

VIII. Data Collection and Program Performance

Data Collection and Reporting

For all programs serving individuals or providing client services, agencies will track and report the number of unduplicated clients served and document proof of the services provided where applicable. Client tracking should include methods for securely recording identity, zip code, income, and demographics of the people served without violating client confidentiality. The City does not collect personal health information (PHI) or personal identifying information (PII). No PHI or PII should be submitted to the City and if collected by the agency, must be securely maintained.

For those not directly working with individuals or providing client services, alternative performance measures will be made.

Performance Measures

The awardee(s) will be required to report on the following:

Output:

1. Number of unduplicated individuals served in a 12-month period

At least one of the following Outcomes:

1. Percent of individuals making progress toward their treatment plan goal(s)
Numerator: Number of individuals making progress on their treatment plan goal(s)
Denominator: Number of individuals evaluated for progress on their treatment plan goal(s)
2. Percent of individuals who complete an educational program and show improved knowledge
Numerator: Number of individuals who complete an educational program that improves their knowledge
Denominator: Number of individuals participating in the educational program
3. Percent of individuals who demonstrate improved life skill(s)
Numerator: Number of individuals demonstrating improved life skill(s)
Denominator: Number of individuals participating in the activity
4. Percent of youth who progress to the next academic level
Numerator: Number of youth served who progress to the next academic level
Denominator: Number of youth who received services

IX. Application Evaluation

A total of 100 points may be awarded to the application. All applications will be evaluated as to how the proposed program aligns with the goals of this RFP and whether each question has been adequately addressed.

RFP 2023-006 Early Childhood Issue Area Rubric		
Form 1: Offer Sheet	Offerors must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Offeror must submit signed form.
Form 2: RFP Proposal		
Part 1: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity	Agency Information	No points awarded, but Offeror must pass threshold defined in Offeror Minimum Qualifications in C - Scope of Work.
Part 2: Scored Proposal		
Section 1: Experience and Cultural Competence	Agency Experience & Performance Principles of Service Delivery Cultural Competence & Racial Equity	15 points

Section 2: Program Design	Program Work Statement Goals and Objectives Clients Served Outreach Program Services and Delivery Program Accessibility Referrals Evidence Based Practices Collaboration with Community	45 points
Section 3: Data Informed Program Management	Data Management Performance Measures	20 points
Section 4: Cost Effectiveness Form 3	Program Staffing & Time Program Budget & Funding Summary	10 points
	Cost Effectiveness & Number of individuals served/ total budget = Cost Analysis	10 points
		Total: 100 points
Form 4: COA Certifications and Disclosures	Offerors must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Offeror must submit signed form.

X. Applicant Minimum Qualifications

- Agencies, board of directors, or leadership staff submitting a proposal must have a minimum of two years established, successful experience providing services OR must already have one or more directors with a minimum of two years’ experience in related early childhood, legal, education, public communications, or advocacy role(s).
- Be a non-profit organization or quasi-governmental entity able to conduct business in the State of Texas, and legally contract with Austin Public Health.
- Have submitted all applicable tax returns to the IRS and the State of Texas (e.g., Form 990 or 990-EZ and State and Federal payroll tax filings).
- Be eligible to contract and are not debarred from contracting with the City of Austin, State of Texas, and Federal government, according to SAM.gov, and State and City Debarment information.
- Be current in its payment of Federal and State payroll taxes.
- Not owe past due taxes to the City.
- Have the ability to meet Austin Public Health’s standard agreement terms and conditions, which includes Social Services Insurance Requirements.
- Have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the agency budget. The Board of Directors shall have a strong commitment to fundraising to ensure well-funded, sustainable programs and operations.

XI. Application Format and Submission Requirements

See **Exhibit B: Solicitation Provisions, and Instructions** for all requirements.

The Application must be submitted in the [PartnerGrants database](#). No late submissions will be accepted.

Responses should be included for each question.

Please note: Only name your uploaded documents with letters and numbers. To reduce possible submission and/or review delays, please ensure any attached file from your local drive DOES NOT contain any special characters. Letters and numbers are acceptable.

Offerors Initial Steps: Registration

1. Confirm your organization is a registered vendor with the City of Austin.
 - To find the City of Austin Vendor Number please visit [Austin Finance Online](#) and search for the organization's legal name.
 - To register to become a potential City of Austin vendor, go to Austin Finance Online to register.
2. Be a registered user in the PartnerGrants system. The proposals will be submitted through this web-based system.
 - To register, visit PartnerGrants and click on "Register Here."
 - Note that the organization's City of Austin Vendor number is required to complete registration in PartnerGrants.

Offeror Initial Steps: Pre-Application

3. Complete an Annual Agency Threshold Application in the PartnerGrants database.
 - This form must be submitted once per 12 months and remains valid for all competitions closing within that time period. The threshold application will be reviewed by APH staff, and the agency will be notified once approved.
 - Once logged into PartnerGrants, click on "Opportunity" and then opportunity title "Annual Agency Threshold Application-Applicants for Funding Start Here" to complete a new threshold application.
 - Submit one per agency per 12-months and note the submission date for future use
4. Complete an **Intent to Apply form** for each proposal the offeror plans to submit by the due date identified in Form 1 – Offer Sheet.
 - Once logged into PartnerGrants, click on "Opportunity" and then opportunity title "RFP 2023-006 Early Childhood Issue Area" and complete an Intent to Apply form including a Threshold Certification verifying completion of Step 3 above.
 - Offerors may submit more than one Intent to Apply form and must submit a unique Intent to Apply form for each proposal per the guidelines of the RFP.