

**WAKE COUNTY SMART START, INC.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

TITLE: Early Childhood Educational Materials and Furniture

ISSUE DATE: March 22, 2024

ISSUING AGENCY: Wake County Smart Start
Attn: Christina Mitchell
4901 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 101
Raleigh, NC 27606
TEL 919-723-9274

Proposals subject to the conditions made a part hereof will be received until **5:00 p.m., Friday, April 19, 2024**, for the early childhood educational materials and furniture as described herein.

SEND ALL PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO WAKE COUNTY SMART START, INC. VIA EMAIL at ECI@WAKESMARTSTART.ORG

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to Lynn Policastro at the telephone number shown above or by email at lpolicastro@wakesmartstart.org.

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

INTRODUCTION

Wake County Smart Start, (hereinafter referred to as “WCSS”) is soliciting proposals for the provision of early childhood educational materials and furniture. WCSS is the not-for-profit grantee for Smart Start in Wake County, North Carolina. Smart Start is a comprehensive initiative designed to provide every child in North Carolina access to affordable, high quality early childhood education, health care and family support services. The initiative is focused on children from birth to age five to ensure they come to school healthy and prepared for success.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND FURNITURE

Quotes are solicited for a comprehensive list of early childhood educational materials and furniture. The following is a general list of requirements of prospective Contractors.

1. Qualified Contractors must be able to provide a comprehensive selection of goods that includes the following types of items at a minimum:
 - a. Infant furniture such as cribs, changing tables, high chairs, multi-child strollers;
 - b. Toddler and preschool furniture such as tables, chairs, shelves, cubbies, cots;
 - c. Dramatic play items such as pretend kitchen appliances, dishes, doll houses and furniture, multi-cultural doll sets and discovery boxes;
 - d. Sand and water tables and related items;
 - e. Manipulatives such as puzzles, pegs and peg boards, blocks, simple help frames (button, zip, tie);
 - f. Block play items;
 - g. Art items such as paint, easels, brushes, crayons, smocks;
 - h. Early literacy language items;
 - i. Music items such as rhythm instruments;
 - j. Active play items such as tricycles, wagons, balls; and
 - k. Outdoor learning center materials such as water tables, mud kitchens, outdoor blocks and/or building materials, outdoor dramatic play materials.
2. Qualified Contractors must provide catalogs that may be accessed from the Contractor’s own web site on the Internet. This site shall provide browsing capability plus “shopping cart” pick list, pricing, and on-line ordering directly from the Internet. The site must also list a net unit price for each item offered.

Orders may be placed throughout the contract period on an as-needed basis for the quantities required at the time.

Attachment A

The Partnership may decide to share these proposals and/or the results of the evaluation with other child care-related entities. Please provide a “yes” or “no” response on the check list as to whether or not your Company would honor these prices for our funding agencies, other local Smart Start partnerships, and our subcontractors and grantees, including child care programs.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

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

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective Contractors.
2. Proposals must be received from each Contractor, signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the firm. A verified electronic signature platform such as DocuSign must be used. Unsigned proposals will **not** be considered.
3. All proposals must be received by WCSS no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP. Proposals received subsequent to this date and time will **not** be considered.
4. All proposals must be complete and include all required information. Incomplete proposals will **not** be considered.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request oral presentations or discussion with any or all Contractors for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. However, 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 Contractor.**
6. Proposals will be evaluated according to comprehensiveness of product selection, price, quality, reputation for service and performance, warranty provisions, guaranteed delivery schedule and financial stability of the prospective Contractor. Proposals from more than one prospective Contractor may be selected, and a multi-year contract period may or may not be utilized.
7. Contractors are cautioned that this is a request for offers, not a request to contract, and WCSS reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all offers when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of WCSS.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The response to this RFP shall consist of the following sections: 1) Bidder's Checklist; 2) Cover Letter; 3) References; 4) Cost Proposal; 5) Electronic Copy of Catalog; and 6) Audited or Reviewed Financial Statements.

1. Bidder's Checklist

The Bidder's Checklist included herein as Attachment A must be included as the proposal cover page.

2. Cover Letter

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

The cover letter must contain a statement that the person signing the proposal is a legal representative of the Contractor and is authorized to bind the Contractor.

The cover letter must also contain a certification that:

- 1) The bid is submitted competitively and without collusion;
- 2) None of the officers or directors have been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and
- 3) The business has no overdue tax debts, as defined by North Carolina General Statute 105-243.1.

3. References

Prospective Contractors must submit the entity and contact names, addresses, and phone numbers of no fewer than three "high-volume" references. "High volume" is defined as those organizations for which the prospective Contractor furnished goods of \$25,000 or more within a one-year period.

4. Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal must contain the following information:

Attachment A

- 1) Item number, detailed product description, retail price for each item;
- 2) Percent discount from retail;
- 3) Shipping method to be used and amount of shipping charges, if any;
- 4) Restocking charges, if any;
- 5) Payment terms;
- 6) Any products/items to which the discount from retail does not apply (i.e., exclusions);
- 7) Quantity discount;
- 8) Warranty provisions;
- 9) Provision of teacher packing; and
- 10) Time of delivery.

5. Electronic Copy of Catalog

A current electronic copy of catalog(s) must be provided.

6. Audited or Reviewed Financial Statements

Current (i.e., issued within the most recent 18 months) audited or reviewed financial statements and related reports must be provided. Compiled or unaudited financial statements will **not** fulfill this requirement.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

1. **READ, REVIEW AND COMPLY:** It shall be the bidder's responsibility to read this entire document and comply with **all** requirements specified herein. **Failure to submit any of the required information may result in elimination from consideration.**
2. **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.
3. **ORAL EXPLANATIONS:** WCSS shall not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive bidding process or after award.
4. **REFERENCE TO OTHER DATA:** Only information that is received in response to this RFP will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted shall not be evaluated.
5. **TIME FOR CONSIDERATION:** Unless otherwise indicated in the proposal, bidder's offer shall be valid for 60 days from the date of bid opening. Preference may be given to bids allowing not less than 60 days for consideration and acceptance.

6. **COST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION:** Any costs incurred by prospective Contractors in preparing or submitting offers are the prospective Contractor's sole responsibility. Prospective Contractors shall not be reimbursed for any costs incurred prior to award.
7. **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 WCSS when received.
8. **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.
9. **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.

WAKE COUNTY SMART START, INC
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Early Childhood Educational Materials and Furniture
Bidders Checklist

Prospective
Contractor: _____

Date: _____

A. We attest the following required information is included:

Check if
Included*

Cover Letter

- Signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the prospective Contractor. ☐
- Contains a statement that the person signing the proposal is a legal representative of the prospective Contractor and is authorized to bind the prospective Contractor. ☐
- Contains a certification that:
 - The bid is submitted competitively and without collusion; ☐
 - None of the officers or directors have been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934; and ☐
 - The business has no overdue tax debts, as defined by North Carolina General Statute 105-243.1. ☐

2. References

- The entity and contact names, addresses, and phone numbers of no fewer than three references to which the prospective Contractor has sold \$25,000 or more within a one-year period. ☐

3. Cost Proposal

- Containing the following information:
 - a. Item number, detailed product description, retail price for each item;
 - b. Percent discount from retail;
 - c. Shipping method to be used and amount of shipping charges, if any;
 - d. Restocking charges, if any;
 - e. Payment terms;
 - f. Any products/items to which the discount from retail does not apply (i.e., exclusions);
 - g. Quantity discount;
 - h. Warranty provisions;
 - i. Provision of teacher packing; and ☐

Attachment A

j. Time of delivery.

4. Electronic Copy of Catalogs

- Current electronic copy of catalog(s).

☐

5. Audited or Reviewed Financial Statements

- Current (i.e., issued within the most recent 18 months) audited or reviewed financial statements and report.

☐

(Note: Compiled or unaudited financial statements do not fulfill this requirement.)

B. We attest that we comply with the following general requirements:

1. We attest that we offer a comprehensive selection of goods, including the following: Infant, toddler, and preschool furniture; dramatic play items; sand and water tables; manipulatives; block play; art, music and language items; science and math items; and active play items.

☐

2. Catalogs may be accessed from the Contractor's web site on the internet. The site will provide browsing capability plus "shopping cart" pick list, pricing, and on-line ordering directly from the Internet. The site will also list a net unit price for each item offered.

☐

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Date

We are willing to honor these prices for our funding agencies, other local Smart Start partnerships, and our subcontractors and grantees, including child care programs. ____yes
____no

***Failure to submit any of the required information or to comply with the general requirements will result in elimination from consideration.**