



Wake County Smart Start
Request for Proposal
Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

Wake County Smart Start (WCSS) invests in young children, their families, and a connected early childhood system that supports and prepares them for school and life ahead. In support of this mission, WCSS seeks a consultant to provide support for our Community Needs Assessment and lead the development of our new strategic plan.

Our Community Needs Assessment will be targeted to focus on the following research questions:

- 1) What are the social emotional health needs of children ages 0 to 5 that are disproportionately impacted by poor health and well-being outcomes?
- 2) What are the available resources to support the social emotional health of children ages 0 to 5 disproportionately impacted by poor health and well-being outcomes?

The primary responsibilities for the consultant for our community needs assessment will include the following:

- Support the development of the research plan and data tools
- Support in asset mapping related to the community needs assessment
- Support data analysis and reporting

While the community needs assessment will be targeted around social emotional health needs, our hope is that the assessment will inform our strategic planning process.

The current strategic plan includes goals and objectives which guide our work for the fiscal years (FY) 23-27. The plan currently includes four goal areas which reflect the Board's commitment to WCSS' mission and vision: 1) children are healthy and developmentally ready for school; 2) children are in safe, supportive home environments; 3) children are in high quality care that contributes to positive child outcomes; and our system's goal) children and families are supported by a strong, diverse, connected, and integrated early childhood system that promotes results. In addition, our strategic framework has four pillars 1) Family Engagement and Leadership (FEL), 2) Ensuring Access, 3) Data-Informed Decision Making and 4) Culturally Affirming Care, Programs and Services.

The strategic plan is the cornerstone document for our partnership. It is a document which informs our 3-year funding cycle, the work of internal programs and external funded partners, and the Board's measurement of impact and achievement.

The primary responsibilities for the consultant regarding the strategic plan will include the following:

- Support WCSS in the development of a new strategic plan that includes metrics and a structure for measuring goals and objectives
- Provide implementation support and guidance to WCSS Leadership to ensure a successful rollout of the new strategic plan

1) RFP Requirements

All applicants must:

- Submit proposal via email by 5 pm on August 14, 2025, to Alex Livas-Dlott at alivas-dlott@wakesmartstart.org
- Direct clarifying questions to Alex Livas-Dlott at alivas-dlott@wakesmartstart.org

All applicants must have the following previous experience:

- Experience working with a Board and organization staff members to support community needs assessments and development of a strategic plan
- Experience facilitating strategic planning processes which address our agency pillars of family engagement and leadership (FEL), ensuring access, data-informed decision making and culturally affirming care.
- Experience working with non-profit organizations, ideally those who fund activities/community programs that meet the goals of the strategic plan

2) Proposed Project Phases

1. Phase 1: Support of Community Needs Assessment and Planning for Strategic Plan
 - Support in developing community needs assessment research plan and data collection tools
 - Support in asset mapping related to the community needs assessment
 - Support in community needs assessment data analysis and report (Report due to Board in February of 2026)
 - Review of current WCSS Strategic Plan and agency work structure/service delivery
 - Development of outline/timeline of the process that will be used to create the strategic plan (plan is due to WCSS Board by August of 2026)

2. Phase 2 – Development of Strategic Plan
 - Facilitation of meetings with the strategic planning team, conversations with the Executive Director, Board Members, and WCSS staff as needed
 - Development of strategic plan document, that incorporates goals, objectives, metrics and a structure for measuring progress
3. Phase 3 – Implementation Support and Guidance
 - Identification of areas where support is needed to achieve a successful rollout of the strategic plan
 - Facilitation of meetings/information sharing with staff and Board members
 - Facilitation of meetings with WCSS leadership to align in-house department work and funded partner work with new strategic plan goals and objectives

3) Please include the following in your proposal:

- **Contact information**, including email and daytime telephone number
- **Description of the proposed process and qualifications necessary to complete this work including:**
 - Detailed timeline for completing each phase of the project and how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the process
 - Expertise and approach (outlining process and methodology) in supporting community needs assessments, asset mapping and developing strategic plans
 - Ability to implement a multi-method approach to capture strategic planning input, progress, and plans for the dissemination of information (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, retreats, data visualization, etc.)
 - Experience in stakeholder and family engagement, including capturing feedback from community grassroot organizations
 - Provision of implementation support related to strategic plan rollout
- **Budget**
 - Provide total cost of work. Proposal must include breakdown of fees for each phase of the process and deliverables as outlined above
 - Provide information about hourly rate which is inclusive of all expenses such as mileage etc.
- **References**
 - Please provide 2-3 references, including contact information, and context for the work and relationship with those references.