

Request for Qualifications – Early Childhood Environment Consultant

LISC is seeking to identify a pool of experienced and specialized professionals from which to retain to work with center-based child care providers and/or home-based child care providers in communities across Rhode Island over the next one to three years to help evaluate the feasibility of specific child care facility renovation and quality improvements. The consultant will assist RICCELFF staff as a first line of expertise in helping to make recommendations as to short-term and longer range fixes that may be made.

Background

Many early care & education providers, especially small, nonprofit operators that typically serve lower-income neighborhoods, have very limited knowledge of the real estate development process, and lack the internal staff capacity to undertake a major facility improvement or development project on their own. Given the hurdles involved in successfully undertaking a real estate development project, many communities that need to expand their child care capacity or improve the quality of existing early learning space have not been able to access appropriate technical assistance and affordable financing for their projects.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) manages a statewide child care facilities fund -- the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund (RICCELFF) – to help expand the supply and improve the quality of early childhood facilities in low-income neighborhoods across the state. In 2001, LISC secured a pool of private and public resources that enables RICCELFF to deliver flexible and affordable project financing, facilities-related training, and project-specific technical assistance to center-based early learning programs and community development corporations in lower-income neighborhoods throughout Rhode Island. Since the RICCELFF was launched in 2001, LISC has invested more than \$24 million in the Rhode Island early care and education community.

You can learn more about LISC and its work in the community development field at www.lisc.org. To learn more about the Rhode Island program visit www.rilisc.org.

Project Background

While the core work of RICCELFF continues to be focused on major real estate projects - on the development of new child care facilities and on major renovations to facilities - we know that in many instances some potentially modest enhancements to the indoor and outdoor learning environments can result in parallel improvements to

the quality of the overall program. Working in partnership with Rhode Island's other quality improvement support systems such as BrightStars we are providing targeted technical assistance to facilities across Rhode Island that need to make improvements to their physical environment but may not currently be in a position to undertake a major facility project. Any environmental enhancements recommended prioritize improving the health and safety of the environment and making changes that will impact overall quality – most notably as measured through the ERS (ECERS, ITES, SACERS, FCCERS) scales and in concert with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards, Licensing Standards, RIDE Preschool Approval Process Standards and the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvements System Measures.

Through funding that includes a State of Rhode Island Department of Human Services contract, LISC intends to: 1) provide high quality technical assistance to organizations who need to make modest enhancements to their space, with a priority on improving the health and safety of the environment and making changes that will impact overall quality and 2) identify common themes to develop community training programs and/or to develop resource materials for distribution.

Scope of Services

LISC is seeking to identify a pool of experienced and specialized consultants from which to retain to work with center-based child care providers and/or home-based child care providers in low income communities across Rhode Island over the next one to three years to help evaluate the feasibility of specific child care facility renovation or construction projects in Rhode Island. In many cases, centers are looking to make modest, low-cost improvements to their space. The consultant will assist RICCELFF staff as a first line of expertise in helping to make recommendations as to short-term and longer range fixes that may be made.

Specific tasks in a consulting assignment may include helping child care providers with one or more of the following:

- Providing information and technical assistance about services available to the organization through LISC;
- Guiding child care organizations through initial project planning, including utilizing available tools such as the ECERS, the RICCELFF Environment Checklist, the National Playground Safety Standards and Rhode Island specific regulations to develop a facility plan;
- Working in conjunction with LISC staff to advise these organizations regarding the feasibility of different approaches to improving their space;
- Assisting child care providers in developing temporary space plans that might help them to make interim improvements while the work on a longer-range plan;
- Working in conjunction with LISC staff to identify common themes and utilizing those themes to develop community training programs and or to develop resource materials for distribution

As potential child care facility projects are identified, consultants selected for specific assignments through this process will be contacted. In some cases, the short-term assignment through LSC may result in programs securing additional services as they progress with their project.

Submission Requirements

This is a two-step process. The first step is to submit qualifications based on the “Statement of Qualifications” described below. Responses will be evaluated based upon experience, expertise in specific topic areas, location, availability, and references – as detailed here. Information about individuals or firms selected under this RFQ may be shared with the Federal Awarding Agency for their approval. Once approved, entities will be pre-qualified for consideration of an award when a specific project or need is identified. LSC may reach out to responsive prequalified consultants for additional information, including pricing, if/when a specific project/need has been identified.

Proposal Content

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should include the following:

Statement of Qualifications: Please describe the general capacity of the respondent to provide development consulting assistance, including:

- ✓ An overview of the respondent’s background, knowledge, and expertise in children’s environments and in particular in utilization of tools such as the ECERS & ITERS, the RI Licensing Regulations, RIDE Preschool Approval Standards, Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and National Public Playground Safety Standards. Please attach a resume.
- ✓ Please describe your practice or firm and specify any staff, partners, or collaborators who the respondent would expect to assign to carry out certain tasks. Indicate which tasks might be delegated or subcontracted, how the work would be supervised, and how the client can maintain accountability.
- ✓ A list of applicable clients that you have performed consulting services for.
- ✓ The name, addresses, and phone numbers of three references for the respondent, who can comment on the respondent’s qualifications based on previous experience as clients for the respondent on similar tasks.

Cost Proposal: Please provide an hourly or daily rates or schedules for respondent’s consulting services and any other relevant terms that might affect the total cost of services.

Reporting Requirements

Should a contract be awarded, consultants will prepare periodic progress reports to accompany their invoices. Consultants will also prepare a final report upon the completion of each engagement. Final reports must be submitted no more than 10 business days after the completion of the engagement.

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by LISC based on the following criteria:

- Response Presentation – The information is presented in a clear, logical manner and is well organized
- Responsiveness to the Specifications set forth in this RFQ (see “Proposal Content”)
- Value/Pricing Structure and Price Levels
- Availability
- Ability and Willingness to Comply with Funding Source Requirements (set forth in attached Appendix I)

Submission of a response to this RFQ reflects permission by the respondent for LISC to contact the references supplied by the respondent as well as to make other inquiries that will enable LISC to assess the capacity of the respondent for this task.

When a specific task or project is identified, LISC will contact pre-approved individuals and firms. **Responding to this solicitation does not constitute a guarantee that the responder will be engaged to perform work; it simply means that the individual or firm is pre-qualified and may be asked for additional information and updated pricing if necessary when the specific task or project pertinent to the responder’s proposal is available.**

Contract for Services and Notification

Formal scopes of work and project timelines will be negotiated on a project-by-project basis. Additional information may be required.

Responses

Please submit an electronic copy of your response by March 31, 2022 to the LISC RICCELFF at riccelff@lisc.org. For questions, please contact Erin Cox at 401.519.5684 or ecox@lisc.org.

Appendix I

All contracts funded with federal funds, including small purchases, shall contain, and each consultant selected for an engagement must be able to comply with, the following provisions as applicable:

1. Contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain contractual provisions or conditions that allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances in which a contractor violates or breaches the contract terms, and provide for such remedial actions as may be appropriate.
2. All contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain suitable provisions for termination by the recipient, including the manner by which termination shall be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, such contracts shall describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for default as well as conditions where the contract may be terminated because of circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.
3. Except as otherwise required by statute, an award that requires the contracting (or subcontracting) for construction or facility improvements shall provide for the recipient to follow its own requirements relating to bid guarantees, performance bonds, and payment bonds unless the construction contract or subcontract exceeds \$100,000. For those contracts or subcontracts exceeding \$100,000, the applicable federal agency may accept the bonding policy and requirements of the recipient, provided such federal agency has made a determination that the Federal Government's interest is adequately protected. If such a determination has not been made, the minimum requirements shall be as follows:
 - (a) A bid guarantee from each bidder equivalent to five percent of the bid price. The “bid guarantee” shall consist of a firm commitment such as a bid bond, certified check, or other negotiable instrument accompanying a bid as assurance that the bidder shall, upon acceptance of his bid, execute such contractual documents as may be required within the time specified.
 - (b) A performance bond on the part of the contractor for 100 percent of the contract price. A “performance bond” is one executed in connection with a contract to secure fulfillment of all the contractor's obligations under such contract.
 - (c) A payment bond on the part of the contractor for 100 percent of the contract price. A “payment bond” is one executed in connection with a contract to assure payment as required by statute of all persons supplying labor and material in the execution of the work provided for in the contract.
 - (d) Where bonds are required in the situations described herein, the bonds shall be obtained from companies holding certificates of authority as acceptable sureties pursuant to 31 CFR part 223, “Surety Companies Doing Business with the United States.”

4. All negotiated contracts (except those for less than the small purchase threshold) awarded by recipients shall include a provision to the effect that the recipient, the applicable federal agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.

5. Equal Employment Opportunity—All contracts shall contain a provision requiring compliance with E.O. 11246, “Equal Employment Opportunity” (30 FR 12319, 12935, 3 CFR, 1964-1965 Comp., p. 339), as amended by E.O. 11375, “Amending Executive Order 11246 Relating to Equal Employment Opportunity,” and as supplemented by regulations at 41 CFR part 60, “Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Equal Employment Opportunity, Department of Labor.”

6. Copeland “Anti-Kickback” Act (18 U.S.C. 874 and 40 U.S.C. 276c)—All contracts and subgrants in excess of \$2000 for construction or repair awarded by recipients and subrecipients shall include a provision for compliance with the Copeland “Anti-Kickback” Act (18 U.S.C. 874), as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 3, “Contractors and Subcontractors on Public Building or Public Work Financed in Whole or in Part by Loans or Grants from the United States”). The Act provides that each contractor or subrecipient shall be prohibited from inducing, by any means, any person employed in the construction, completion, or repair of public work, to give up any part of the compensation to which he is otherwise entitled. The recipient shall report all suspected or reported violations to the Federal awarding agency.

7. Davis-Bacon Act, as amended (40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7)—When required by Federal program legislation, all construction contracts awarded by the recipients and subrecipients of more than \$2000 shall include a provision for compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7) and as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5, “Labor Standards Provisions Applicable to Contracts Governing Federally Financed and Assisted Construction”). Under this Act, contractors shall be required to pay wages to laborers and mechanics at a rate not less than the minimum wages specified in a wage determination made by the Secretary of Labor. In addition, contractors shall be required to pay wages not less than once a week. The recipient shall place a copy of the current prevailing wage determination issued by the Department of Labor in each solicitation and the award of a contract shall be conditioned upon the acceptance of the wage determination. The recipient shall report all suspected or reported violations to the Federal awarding agency.

8. Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333)—Where applicable, all contracts awarded by recipients in excess of \$2000 for construction contracts and in excess of \$2500 for other contracts that involve the employment of mechanics or laborers shall include a provision for compliance with sections 102 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333), as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). Under section 102 of the Act, each contractor shall be required to compute the wages of every mechanic and laborer on the basis of a standard work week of 40 hours. Work in excess of

the standard work week is permissible provided that the worker is compensated at a rate of not less than 1 1/2 times the basic rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in the work week. Section 107 of the Act is applicable to construction work and provides that no laborer or mechanic shall be required to work in surroundings or under working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous or dangerous. These requirements do not apply to the purchases of supplies or materials or articles ordinarily available on the open market, or contracts for transportation or transmission of intelligence.

9. Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement—Contracts or agreements for the performance of experimental, developmental, or research work shall provide for the rights of the Federal Government and the recipient in any resulting invention in accordance with 37 CFR part 401, “Rights to Inventions Made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms Under Government Grants, Contracts and Cooperative Agreements,” and any implementing regulations issued by the awarding agency.

9. Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended—Contracts and subgrants of amounts in excess of \$100,000 shall contain a provision that requires the recipient to agree to comply with all applicable standards, orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). Violations shall be reported to the Federal awarding agency and the Regional Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

10. Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352)—Contractors who apply or bid for an award of \$100,000 or more shall file the required certification. Each tier certifies to the tier above that it will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Each tier shall also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award. Such disclosures are forwarded from tier to tier up to the recipient.

11. Debarment and Suspension (E.O.s 12549 and 12689)—A contract award with an amount expected to equal or exceed \$25,000 and certain other contract awards (see 2 CFR 180.220) shall not be made to parties listed on the government-wide Excluded Parties List System, in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), “Debarment and Suspension.” The Excluded Parties List System contains the names of parties debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded by agencies, as well as parties declared ineligible under statutory or regulatory authority other than E.O. 12549.

12. Subaward Reporting. LISC may be required to report awards of contracts using certain federal funds in the federal government-wide website www.fsrs.gov or its successor system. Starting with awards made October 1,

2010, prime financial assistance awardees (such as LISC) receiving funds directly from a federal agency are required to report subawards and executive compensation information both for the prime award and subaward recipients, including awards made as pass-through awards or awards to vendors, where both the initial award is \$25,000 or greater or the cumulative award will be \$25,000 or greater if funded incrementally as directed by the applicable federal agency in accordance with OMB guidance. If subaward recipients' executive compensation is reported through the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) (now the System for Award Management (SAM)) system, the prime recipient (i.e. LISC) is not required to report this information. The reporting of award and subaward information is in accordance with the requirements of Federal Financial Assistance Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, as amended by section 6202 of Public Law 110-252, hereafter referred to as the "Transparency Act" and OMB Guidance issued to the Federal agencies on September 14, 2010 (75 FR 55669) and in OMB Policy guidance. If applicable, LISC would have until the end of the month plus one additional month after a subaward or pass-through award is obligated to fulfill the reporting requirement. Prime recipients (such as LISC) are required to report certain information pertaining to the consultant and/or the award for applicable subawards. This information will be displayed on a public government website pursuant to the Transparency Act.

13. Small Business Enterprises, Minority-Owned Business Enterprises, and Women-Owned Business Enterprises.. LISC is committed to working with Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBEs). LISC encourages submissions from SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs

14. Intellectual Property. Any reports or other deliverables produced pursuant to a scope of work or contract will be the sole property of LISC (except to the extent rights are reserved by the applicable federal agency).