

## **Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee: Recommended Scope for Parents as Teachers Evaluation RFP**

### **SCOPE OF PROPOSAL**

It is the intent of the State of the South Carolina, Materials Management Office, to solicit proposals for a contractor to a) develop an evaluation design and b) implement a programmatic and outcomes evaluation of the Parents as Teachers program as administered in South Carolina by SC First Steps to School Readiness.

All proposals should be complete and carefully worded and should convey all of the information requested in order to be considered responsive. If the proposal fails to conform to the essential requirements of the RFP, the State and the State alone will be the judge as to whether that variance is significant enough to consider the proposal non-responsive and therefore not considered for award. Proposals which include either modifications to any of the Contractual Requirements of the RFP or an offeror's standard terms and conditions may be deemed non-responsive and therefore not considered for award.

Unless stated otherwise herein, the basic and governing language of the contract resulting from this solicitation shall be comprised of the RFP documents, including any attachments and amendments, and the successful offeror's signed proposal. In the event of a conflict between the two documents, the RFP shall govern.

### **PART III INTRODUCTION**

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness ("First Steps") is the state's comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development. Section 59-152-20 of the SC Code of Laws describes the purpose of the First Steps initiative as follows:

*"The purpose of the First Steps initiative is to develop, promote, and assist efforts of agencies, private providers, and public and private organizations and entities, at the state level and the community level, to collaborate and cooperate in order to focus and intensify services, assure the most efficient use of all available resources, and eliminate duplication of efforts to serve the needs of young children and their families. First Steps funds must not be used to supplant or replace any other funds being spent on services but must be used to expand, extend, improve, or increase access to services or to enable a community to begin to offer new or previously unavailable services in their community. The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees, Office of First Steps to School Readiness, and the local First Steps Partnerships shall ensure that collaborations, the existence and continued development of partnerships, and the sharing and maximizing of resources occur so that the funding of grants and services, as provided in this chapter, may continue."*

Section 59-152-30 establishes five goals for First Steps:

1. *provide parents with access to the support they might seek and to strengthen the families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;*
2. *increase comprehensive services so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;*
3. *promote high quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;*
4. *provide services so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to learn; and*

5. *mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to learn.*

To ensure the success of each significant program investment, Section 59-152-50(7) requires that the Office of First Steps shall:

*“contract with an external evaluator to develop a schedule for an in-depth and independent performance audit designed to measure the success of each prevalent program in regard to its success in supporting the goals of the State Board and those set forth in Section 59-152-20 and Section 59-152-30.”*

Pursuant to 59-152-50(7), the First Steps Board of Trustees has established an evaluation schedule for its prevalent programs [those comprising 10% or more of total programmatic spending] and seeks a qualified vendor to conduct a programmatic and outcome evaluation of Parents as Teachers, an evidence-based home visitation model administered by the agency.

#### **PART IV**

##### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Contractor shall a) develop an evaluation design, and b) implement a programmatic and outcomes evaluation (primarily secondary analysis) of the Parents as Teachers program as administered by South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness. The final report must be presented to the First Steps Board of Trustees by April 1, 2016.

##### **A. Task Requirements:**

###### **1. Evaluation Design**

The Contractor shall propose components for an evaluation of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program designed – at minimum - to explore the following research questions:

*What is the relationship between exposure to PAT between the ages of 0-3 years and children’s Pre-K or Kindergarten readiness outcomes (as measured by the CIRCLE early literacy assessment during the 2014-2015 school year)? Targeted outcomes will include:*

- a. *Performance on the CIRCLE assessment (focused on early language and literacy skills) at PreK (4K) and K (two cohorts of children in 4K in 2014-2015 and those in K in 2014-2015);*
  - b. *Receipt of, or referral to, special education services at Pre-K and kindergarten*
  - c. *Behavioral data (e.g., suspensions, expulsions, discipline referrals)*
  - d. *Grade-level retention*
- *What is the relationship between exposure to PAT and parenting outcomes (as measured by the Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale), and between parenting outcomes and children’s Pre-K or Kindergarten readiness outcomes.*
  - *What is the relationship between exposure to PAT and interactive literacy behaviors (as measured by the Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory)?*

- *Are there any observed relationships between PAT exposure and the above outcomes (a through d), are maintained after accounting for factors that influence selection into PAT (e.g., student's gender, family size, income/socioeconomic status, family risk characteristics, etc.*
- *Are there characteristics of children/families that moderate the impact of PAT (e.g., student's gender, family size, income/socioeconomic status, family risk characteristics, etc.)?*

2. Evaluation Implementation

Upon approval by First Steps of the proposed evaluation design, the Contractor shall implement a programmatic and outcomes-based evaluation.

3. Submit the Parents as Teachers Evaluation Report by April 1, 2016.

The Contractor shall consult with state and county stakeholders to explain and operationalize evaluation findings and recommendations.

4. The Contractor shall incorporate information from First Steps' internal evaluations and the data of partner agencies as useful and appropriate.

5. The Contractor shall participate in periodic committee meetings of the First Steps Board of Trustees. (Note that the number of meetings required will depend on the phase of the project, with most conducted via telephone. The Board and Office of First Steps will seek to minimize contractor travel costs.)

6. The Contractor shall participate in the presentation of the final report to the public, in conjunction with the Board and Office of First Steps in April 2016.

C. Deliverables, Reports, and Delivery Dates:

1. Written evaluation design by December 1, 2015 or earlier;

2. Written Parents as Teachers Evaluation Report to the Office of First Steps by April 1, 2016.

- a. The report shall be delivered in both .pdf and "graphically designed" (print ready) formats. The print ready version file be delivered electronically and formatted for use by a commercial printer.

(Note that no specific requirements relating to font size or page limits have been identified.)

D. Timeline:

The evaluation design work to be performed in the contract will take place over a six (6) month period, unless the contractor and the First Steps Office mutually agree upon a revised timeline.

**PART V  
QUALIFICATIONS**

The offeror must demonstrate that he or she possesses the following qualifications:

1. Specific and recognized expertise in evaluating evidence-based early childhood programming as evidenced by at least four previous projects, preferably of a similarly large-scale and/or statewide nature;
2. Demonstrable expertise in the field of early childhood education, assessment methodologies, statistical analysis, instrument development, and early childhood technical assistance as

evidenced by staff qualifications (Ph.D. level investigators and statisticians are strongly preferred), peer-reviewed research publications, and past projects and performance.

**PART VI**  
**BUDGET**

The five-year budget must not exceed \$40,000.