



**The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.
Request for Proposals
for
The North Carolina Partnership for Children**

The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) will conduct a competitive selection process to seek a qualified applicant with expertise in marketing and public awareness campaigns.

NCPC limits contractual relationships to only those with governmental agencies or businesses such as corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, or sole proprietorships conducting the business as described herein.

Except where otherwise prohibited by law, proposals are invited from all colleges and universities, research institutions, state, and local agencies, nonprofit and for-profit private organizations, corporations, and sole proprietorships. Eligible non-profit, community-based organizations or institutions of higher education are defined by 2 C.F.R. § 200.70.

Applicants are cautioned that this is a Request for Proposals (RFP), not a request to contract. NCPC and/or its agent reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, and to be the sole judge of suitability of the services for its intended use and specifically reserves the right to make awards based on what is determined by NCPC to be in the best interest of the State of North Carolina.

PLEASE READ THIS RFP CAREFULLY. Late applications will not be accepted.

RFP Release Date:	April 18, 2025
Location of RFP:	http://www.smartstart.org/jobs/
Questions:	Questions must be received by 5:00 PM (ET) April 30, 2025. Submit Questions to: Carey Ann Watkins submissions@smartstart.org Answers to any submitted questions will be posted on May 2, 2025, at the same location as the RFP.
Deadline for Proposals:	Proposals must be received by 5:00 pm, May 7, 2025 for furnishing services specified herein.
Submission:	Email to: submissions@smartstart.org Subject: The Basics Public Awareness – Contractor Name
Award Notification:	Applicants will be contacted via email by May 16, 2025 with the award decision.

I. BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) guides and facilitates the Smart Start Network, supporting the work of [local partnerships](#) and connecting them to the statewide early childhood system.

Smart Start’s mission is to advance a high quality, comprehensive, accountable early childhood system that benefits each child in North Carolina, beginning with a healthy birth. Smart Start brings together families, teachers, doctors, dentists, libraries, schools, and many others to create a comprehensive system of early childhood services for children across the state, including health, early care and education, and family support. More information about Smart Start can be found online at www.smartstart.org.

II. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to acquire the services of a qualified contractor (hereinafter referred to as the “Respondent”) with expertise in marketing and public awareness to grow The Basics across North Carolina.

The Basics is a nationwide movement with the mission to bolster brain development for social, emotional, and cognitive skill building among children from birth to age 5 as a sturdy foundation for school readiness across whole communities. Five simple, science-backed principles help parents and caregivers turn everyday moments into powerful learning opportunities.

The Basics Principles are:

1. Maximize Love, Manage Stress
2. Talk, Sing, and Point
3. Count, Group, Compare
4. Explore Through Movement and Play
5. Read and Discuss Stories

By embedding these principles into homes, communities, and organizations, we ensure that all children get the strong start they deserve. The Basics, NC is expanding this impact by tailoring resources, marketing initiatives, and community strategies to our state.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

NCPC is conducting an open and competitive bidding process to select a highly qualified marketing agency to develop and execute a comprehensive public awareness campaign. This campaign aims to increase awareness of The Basics' five principles for early childhood development among parents, caregivers, and community stakeholders across North Carolina. The selected vendor will create and implement a strategic marketing plan that leverages various channels to maximize engagement and impact.

Objectives

1. Raise statewide awareness of The Basics' early childhood development principles.
2. Drive engagement among parents and caregivers to adopt and implement The Basics in daily interactions.
3. Support local community partners in amplifying the campaign at a grassroots level.
4. Establish The Basics, NC as a trusted and recognizable resource for early childhood education.
5. Measure and report on the effectiveness of the campaign.

Proposals should include a plan to address the core activities in the scope of work listed below, a timeline, and a budget. Payments under this contract are on a cost-reimbursement basis.

Core Activities

1. Develop a research-based strategy to identify target audiences, key messaging, and optimal outreach strategies tailored to North Carolina's demographics.
2. Develop key campaign messaging aligned with The Basics' mission and target audience needs.
3. Produce and implement high-quality content (including but not limited to videos, social media graphics, digital ads, radio spots, and print materials).
4. Develop a multi-channel media strategy including traditional and digital platforms.
5. Define key performance indicators to measure campaign effectiveness including reach, engagement, and behavioral change.

6. Provide guidance and recommendations for future efforts.

Reporting and Deliverables

If awarded funding, the following reporting to NCPC is required for all applicants:

	What/How	When Due
Financial reporting	Invoices outlining the deliverables	Due monthly for the previous month of service.
Annual Reporting	NCPC will request information on an on-going basis to complete quarterly progress reports due to funders. A final narrative report will be due at the end of the project to accompany the final invoice.	November 10, 2025

IV. CONTRACT PROVISIONS

Financial Capacity

This opportunity is funded by Invest Early, NC Find, a fund administered by the North Carolina Community Foundation. One contract will be issued for \$125,000, contingent on the terms below:

1. Funds are made available by funder.
2. The scope of work and program requirements do not change to the extent that the release of a new RFP is required.
3. Satisfactory performance is made in completing contract deliverables.

Approximate Contract Period

Funding for this project is available from **June 1, 2025** through **November 10, 2025**.

V. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Respondents must include the following components to be considered complete and responsive for funding. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed or evaluated:

1. Cover Letter

Each proposal must include a cover letter, signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the Respondent. If said individual is not the corporate president, submit evidence showing the individual's authority to bind the Respondent.

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

2. Background and Experience of Respondent

This section should include background information on the organization and should give details of experience with similar projects.

Submit verification of the Applicant's Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), preferably a copy of the IRS letter assigning the federal tax identification number, or a letter signed by an official on agency letterhead indicating the federal tax identification number and the Respondent's legal name.

Submit the most recently issued Insurance Certification or include a detailed explanatory statement if the organization is not required to carry workers' compensation insurance.

3. Project Organization

This section must include the proposed staffing, deployment and organization of personnel to be assigned to this project.

The Respondent shall provide information as to the qualifications and experience of all personnel to be assigned to this project. Include a management/manpower summary that clearly specifies the number, type and time commitment of individual personnel who will be assigned to this project.

4. Technical Approach

This section shall include, in narrative, outline, and/or graph form, the Respondent's approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work Section of this RFP. Respond to each criterion listed in the Scope of Work in the order listed. A description of each task, deliverable and the schedule for accomplishing each shall be included.

5. Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal shall contain a proposed budget that includes the basic cost of services and an explanation of costs for the following:

- Cost allocation for activities (e.g. billboards, ads, social media)
- Creation of materials
- Estimated Travel (if any, prior approval by NCPC)
- TOTAL COST should include a break out for the requested timeframe from **June 01, 2025 – November 10, 2025**.

A total not-to-exceed cost representing the maximum amount for all work to be performed must be clearly indicated. The Respondent shall submit invoices on a monthly basis that align with deliverables.

VI. PROCUREMENT PROCESS

This section prescribes the format for all submissions. There is no intent to limit the content of the proposal, and additional information deemed appropriate by the Respondent should be included. However, proposals not conforming to these rules may be rejected.

Respondents must submit one (1) signed original application. Responses must include the following components to be considered complete. **Incomplete responses will not be reviewed or evaluated:**

1. Completed Cover Sheet.
2. Background and Experience of Applicant.
3. Project Organization.
4. Technical Approach.
5. Cost Proposal.
6. Acceptance of RFP Terms and Conditions.

Proposal Deadline

1. **All proposals must be received by 5:00 pm on May 7, 2025.**

All proposals must be submitted electronically to:

The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.

Carey Ann Watkins

submissions@smartstart.org

919-821-7999

Subject: The Basics Public Awareness – Contractor Name

2. Proposals received after the due date and deadline will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.
3. Complete proposals from eligible respondents will be reviewed and evaluated by an objective review panel using only the criteria described in *Section VII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria Process*. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include multiple reviewers and one chairperson.

VII. EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

A. Organizational Background and Experience

1. Describe the history of your organization/agency.
2. Describe the organization's experience in providing effective public awareness campaigns.

B. Proposed Approach

1. Describe the approach to providing effective public awareness campaigns.
2. Describe the organization's experience with data-driven planning and examples of measurable outcomes of success in previously implemented initiatives/campaigns.
3. Provide a proposal for implementing a public awareness campaign across North Carolina. Include evaluation processes with realistic goals and outcomes.

C. Proposed Staffing Model

1. Provide a complete list of staff identified to work on this project, their roles, experience and qualifications.

D. Budget and Justification Narrative

1. Provide a cost-effective budget that is aligned with all components of the application narrative. Be sure that the budget narrative aligns with the proposed strategy, and that calculations and costs are clearly outlined (include cost allocation formulas).

VII. RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** All proposals are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses shall be controlled by such terms and conditions and the submission of other terms and conditions, price lists, catalogs, and/or other documents as part of a respondent's proposal will be waived and have no effect either on this Request for Proposals or on any contract that may be awarded resulting from this solicitation.

Respondent specifically agrees to the conditions set forth in the above paragraph by signing and submitting "Acceptance of RFP Terms and Conditions" with the proposal.

2. **CERTIFICATION:** By executing the proposal, the signer certifies that this proposal is submitted competitively and without collusion (G.S. 143-54), that none of our officers, directors, or owners of an unincorporated business entity has been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (G.S. 143-59.2), and that we are not an ineligible vendor as set forth in G.S. 143-59.1.
3. **ORAL EXPLANATIONS:** NCPC shall not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding a contract.
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. **COST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION:** Any costs incurred by offerors in preparing or submitting responses are the respondents' sole responsibility; NCPC will not reimburse a respondent for any costs incurred prior to the award.
6. **TIME FOR ACCEPTANCE:** Each proposal shall state that it is a firm offer that may be accepted within a period of 45 days. Although the contract is expected to be awarded prior to that time, the 45-day period is requested to allow for unforeseen delays.
7. **TITLES:** Titles and headings in this RFP and any subsequent contract are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.
8. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROPOSALS:** In submitting its proposal the respondent agrees not to discuss or otherwise reveal the contents of the proposal to any source outside of NCPC, its agent, and the Office of State Auditor, until after the award of the contract. Respondents not in compliance with this provision may be disqualified, at the option of NCPC, from contract award. Only discussions authorized by NCPC are exempt from this provision.
9. **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 offerors shall become the property of NCPC when received by NCPC or its agent.

10. **OFFEROR'S REPRESENTATIVE:** Each offeror 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.
11. **PROPRIETARY INFORMATION:** Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the offeror does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation or contract administration will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by 01 NCAC 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL". Any section of the proposal that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section. Cost information may not be deemed confidential. Despite what is labeled as confidential, the determination as to whether or not it is shall be determined by North Carolina law.

ACCEPTANCE OF RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Respondent: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Federal Employer Identification Number: _____

Printed Name: _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED AND INCLUDED IN YOUR PROPOSAL.

Unsigned proposals will not be considered.