



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: RFP# WF-CCISI25R CHILD CARE INDUSTRY SUPPORT INITIATIVE 2025 RFP

**David A. Cleveland, Executive Director, ETCOG**

**Doug Shryock, Dir. Workforce & Economic Development**

### **RFP TIMELINE SCHEDULE** (dates/times subject to change)

<b>Bid Released</b>	<b>Tuesday, April 1, 2025</b>
<b>Pre-Bid Conference</b>	<b>Monday, April 7, 2025 , 1:00 PM</b>
<b>Questions Due</b>	<b>Thursday, April 10, 2025 5:00PM</b>
<b>Staff Responses Post</b>	<b>Monday, April 14, 2025 5:00 PM</b>
<b>Request Access Link</b>	<b>Monday, April 21, 2025 3:00 PM</b>
<b>Bids Due</b>	<b>Tuesday, April 22, 2025 3:00 PM</b>

All programs and employers under the auspices of ETCOG is in compliance with  
EO (29 CFR 38.25).

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **East Texas Council of Governments**

East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within a fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating sound regional development. Either directly or through contractors, ETCOG provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG also builds the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provides peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and delivers rural transportation services, business finance programs, grant writing services and environmental grant funding for the region.

### **WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EAST TEXAS (WSET)**

The Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET) service area consists of the following counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood. The 14 County East Texas Workforce Development Area had a population of 905,134 in 2025.

### **WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS EAST TEXAS BOARD**

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board (WSETB) is a volunteer board appointed by the Chief Elected Officials (CEO Board) of the East Texas Workforce Development Area and operates all facets of procedure and function in accordance with established WSETB Policies and Procedures. WSETB is composed of a majority membership of individuals from the private sector along with individuals representing labor, education, social services, community-based organizations, rehabilitation agencies and other local interests.

Workforce Solutions East Texas has five workforce center locations, and three Mobile Workforce Centers in the East Texas area for job seekers and employers. Workforce Center locations are as follows:

- Workforce Solutions - Tyler 4100 Troup Hwy, Tyler, TX, 75703, United States  
(Smith County)
- Workforce Solutions - Longview 1905 W. Loop 281 Ste. 40, Longview, TX, 75601, United States  
(Gregg County)
- Workforce Solutions - Marshall 4300 East End Blvd S, Marshall, TX 75672, United States  
(Harrison County)
- Workforce Solutions - Athens 205 N Murchison St, Athens, TX 75751, United States  
(Henderson County)
- Workforce Solutions - Palestine 500 E Murchison St, Palestine, TX 75801, United States  
(Anderson County)

**NOTE:** More information about WSETB is available at <http://www.easttexasworkforce.org> and more information about ETCOG is available at <http://www.etcog.org>.

### **Child Care Services**

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Child Care Services (CCS) program provides financial aid (also known as subsidy/scholarship) for child care to families who meet income requirements, promoting long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work or attend workforce training or education activities. This program strives to educate parents about the availability of quality child care, enhance children's early learning, and support early learning programs working to improve the quality of child care services.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board provides Child Care Services to families who meet the eligibility criteria in accordance with the state and federal rules, regulations, and guidelines. The Board's Contractor, BakerRipley, manages the delivery of Child Care Services through regulated providers or eligible relatives whose parents or caretakers have chosen to care for their children. BakerRipley staff are positioned in the Longview and Tyler Workforce Centers.

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program. A Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider is a child care provider with an agreement to serve Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)-subsidized children and meets requirements which exceed the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing (CCL) Standards. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

## **GRANT AUTHORITY**

ETCOG demands compliance with all applicable federal/state and local statutes, regulations, policies, and guidance as presently in effect and as may become effective during the contract term. Please see **ATTACHMENT A**.

## **PURPOSE**

The Texas Workforce Commission approved an application submitted by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for the Child Care Industry Support Initiative. Through a Request for Proposals, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board contracted for Child Care Industry Support Initiative activities.

The Child Care Industry Support Initiative contract with TWC ended and Workforce boards were allowed to continue the CCSI using their own child care funds. WSETB continues to support the CCIS Initiative.

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG), as the administrative unit for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board (WSETB) is soliciting proposals from qualified entities to expand business services resources for the child care industry by hiring staff members to focus on child care business outreach and support.

## **WHO MAY APPLY**

Proposer(s) may be governmental units, economic development corporations, community and technical colleges, public agencies, business organizations, labor organizations, public or private not-for-profit corporations, or private for-profit corporations organized in accordance with state and federal laws.

## **FUNDING**

A total of \$300,000.00 is available through this Request for Proposals, contingent upon availability. \$150,000 will be allocated for the first contract year, with an additional \$150,000 designated for the sole option year.

## **PERFORMANCE PERIOD & PROPOSAL TERM**

The anticipated period of performance will be for one base year beginning May 15, 2025, and ending April 30, 2026. This contract may be renewed for one additional 12-month option year.

## PRE-BID CONFERENCE

**Pre-Bid Conference** will be held on **Monday, April 7, 2025, 1:00 PM**. A Pre-Bid Conference is an opportunity for potential Proposers to ask questions and receive responses from key staff concerning RFP requirements and scope of service requirements pertaining to proposal content. Although attendance is not mandatory it is highly recommended. **Please email [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) if you plan to attend virtually and a meeting invite will be emailed.**

**Notice:** Proposers are requested to please **(1)** read the RFP and any related documentation before attending the Pre-Bid Conference; **(2)** bring their RFP copy and related documents to the meeting with them, and **(3)** have all questions and/or concerns already prepared before attending.

## SCOPE of WORK/OUTCOMES

The Subrecipient funded through this Request for Proposals will employ Business Operations Specialists, whose Salary/Wages, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Supplies and other expenses will be paid through this project. It is anticipated that two Business Operations Specialists will be hired.

Child Care Industry Support (CCIS) funding is meant to directly support expansion efforts in the East Texas Workforce Development Area.

The CCIS funding is an opportunity to gain additional resources to assist with building child care capacity within the 14-county ETWDB area.

The staff positions funded through the Initiative will allow more targeted business outreach and support to the Child Care industry.

**Business Operations Specialists, who will fulfill the following goals, will have offices provided by East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) at Workforce Solutions of East Texas (WSET) facilities, but they will be direct employees of, and accountable to the Subrecipient. All facilities costs for Business Operations Specialist will be paid by ETCOG to include computer equipment, copier access, desk set up and desk phone)**

Outcomes will include, but not be limited to:

1. The development of new contracted child care providers,
2. An increase in employer sponsored child care centers, as well as,
3. Increased capacity for infants (0-17 months) and,
4. Contracted centers within child care desert areas

**NOTE:** *Child care desert is an area where the number of children younger than six years of age who have working parents is at least three times greater than the capacity of licensed child care providers in that area - [child-care-desert-by-zip-code-twc.xlsx](#)*

5. Connecting centers with TWC's Child Care provider expansion entity/entities.

To support these outcomes, Child Care industry support funding will be used to expand business services resources which target business outreach support to the Child Care industry, including, but not limited to assistance with the following:

1. Connecting with TWC's Child Care provider expansion entity/entities
2. Connecting with TWC-funded business coaching and business training
3. Learning how Workforce Solutions Office staff can help them hire support and other workforce assistance services.
4. Learning about participating in the Child Care Services program and the Texas Rising Star quality rating system. Texas Rising Star staff employed by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will offer information to share with Child Care Services Providers.
5. Connecting with the Texas Human Health and Services Commission's Child Care Regulation department to learn about Texas' regulatory requirements for Child Care operations.
6. Connecting with the Texas Department of Agriculture to learn about the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
7. Learning about the Texas Child Care Availability Portal and the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

Successful proposer will coordinate CCIS activities with Child Care Services and TRS staff, as applicable.

Workforce Solutions East Texas Board staff will be responsible for management of this contract with the Subrecipient Board staff will meet regularly (in-person and virtually) with the Business Services Specialists and Subrecipient Management staff to discuss progress and strategies. These meetings will occur as appropriate.

Subrecipient will submit Quarterly Narrative reports describing activities and progress in achieving the goals for the project. Subrecipient will use a format prepared by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

#### **Business Operations Specialists – Tasks**

1. Business Operations Specialists will provide outreach support to the Child Care industry. Additionally, the Business Operations Specialists will investigate opportunities to provide shared service arrangements to bring affordable business solutions that reduce costs.
2. Subrecipient will guide the Business Operations Specialists in recruiting and supporting owners and directors as they create new child care options. This will include identifying potential business owners and successful caregivers who would like to move into director

roles.

3. Business Operations Specialists will connect with local employers to challenge them to recognize how important child care is to their employees and seek out businesses to sponsor new or existing child care centers.
4. The Business Operations Specialists will work with existing and new centers to build shared services programs that can reduce the cost of infant (0-17 month) care and build sustainable budgets that allow them to expand their capacity for infants.
5. Business Operations Specialists will identify child care deserts and guide new potential donors to consider these areas. The Business Operations Specialists will also seek funding to support businesses who consider sponsorship or providing care to infants or children in Child Care deserts.
6. Business Operations Specialists will seek out and develop relationships with TWC programs which can support the development of child care in East Texas and connect them with new and existing child care businesses for additional support. This includes connecting centers with TWC business coaches to help build sustainable business plans, Workforce Solutions for personnel recruitment, Texas Rising Star, Child Care Services, and Child Care Regulations for quality improvement guidance and updates on changes in standards of care, and the Child and Adult Food Program to support the nutritional needs of children in our community and provide high quality and nurturing food to children in child care.
7. Business Operations Specialists will research the Texas Child Care Availability Portal and the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System and provide guidance to centers on how these services can benefit their businesses. Business Operations Specialists will host periodic training sessions to introduce Child Care businesses to these programs and other programs to build their long-term stability.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Allocate budget items proprietary in nature into a cost reimbursement format unless sold to the general public at the same price as offered in this RFP. The general public must comprise a substantial number of purchasers of Selected Proposer's product or service.

Ensure all funds provided through this RFP do not supplant other available federal, state, local, or private funds. This will be verified through subaward negotiations and language to this effect will be included in all subawards resulting from this RFP.

Demonstrate administrative capability and fiscal responsibility needed to operate the programs proposed and to meet federal financial accountability requirements for most federal grants. Proposers with multiple funding sources must have a cost allocation plan and may not double bill for items to be charged to WSETB.

As a part of this RFP process, proposers will be subject to an on-site pre-award fiscal integrity review, which may include, but not limited to a review of proposer's record keeping procedures, management systems, accounting and administrative systems, training facilities, and curriculum as

required by TWC Rule 802.21. Proposers will be notified of date and time of the review.

Response to RFP does not commit WSETB to award a subaward and/or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal response, nor pay for any other costs incurred prior to the execution of a formal subaward resulting from this RFP.

## **PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**

### **PROPOSAL NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

Using these instructions write a proposal narrative fully addressing each of the narrative items. Keep in mind your proposal will be reviewed for completeness of each response, clarity of the response, demonstrated knowledge of requested services and applicable program laws, rules, and requirements. The proposal narrative must present each question and the response.

#### **I. QUALITY OF PROGRAM DESIGN (0-25 Points, minimum 15 pts required for this criteria)**

Describe the how your organization will attain the following outcomes/tasks –

- a. Employment and management of Business Operations Specialists (two are anticipated) to target business outreach support to the child care industry.
- b. Development of new contracted child care providers
- c. An increase in employer sponsored child care centers as well as increased capacity for infants (0-17 months) and contracted centers within child care desert areas.
- d. Connecting with TWC's child care provider expansion entity/entities –
  - Connecting with TWC-funded business coaching and business training
  - Learning how Workforce Solutions Office staff can help them hire support and other workforce assistance services
  - Learning about participating in the Child Care Services program and the Texas Rising Star quality rating system
  - Connecting with the Texas Human Health and Services Commission's Child Care Regulation department to learn about Texas' regulatory requirements for child care operations
  - Connecting with the Texas Department of Agriculture to learn about the Child and Adult Care Food Program
  - Learning about the Texas Child Care Availability Portal and the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

#### **II. QUALIFICATIONS OF PROPOSED STAFFING/SUPERVISION (0-25 Points, minimum 15 pts required for this criteria)**

Describe how your organization will accomplish the employment and management of Business

Operations Specialists who target business outreach support to the child care industry. Include:

- a. Qualifications
- b. Recruitment Strategy
- c. Preliminary Job Description
- d. Supervision and Management
- e. Performance Accountability

**III. DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS/EXPERIENCE (0-25 Points, minimum 15 pts required for this criteria)**

- a. Provide the following information along with any other information the proposer considers to be relevant to the evaluation of Demonstrated Effectiveness and Proposer Experience
- b. Number of successful projects/clients (Child Care and/or Child Care Industry Expansion Specific) within the last 3 years
- c. Describe any monitoring/audit findings and/or corrective action plans and effort to respond
- d. Provide 3 customer references, (Current References, p. 11).

**IV. REASONABLENESS OF COSTS (0-25 Points, minimum 15 pts required for this criteria)**

- 1. Utilizing the attached forms, proposer must prepare a detailed and accurate budget reflecting the proposer's best estimate of the cost of operating the project. Total funds available are identified under Funding, (p.3) of RFP document.
- 2. Budget Supporting Detail – Attachment A, Excel Budget, Salary Addendum, and Narrative Forms must be completed and Salaries and Fringe amounts list on the Budget sheet must tie to the 'Salaries' and 'Fringe Benefits' totals on the Salary Addendum. In addition, a narrative must be included explaining how costs were determined.
- 3. Include with the proposal submission a cost allocation plan detailing how costs are charged across your organization's funding sources and grants. If your organization utilizes an indirect rate, please list the rate requested under this proposal, describe how the rate was established, and include a copy of the approval letter from the appropriate cognizant agency. Proposers may use the de minimis indirect rate allowed in the Uniform Guidance, but the proposer must demonstrate they are allowed to use the de minus rate and ETCOG must be able to confirm the de minimus rate is being used in all programs funded with federal funds.
- 4. Facilities costs (rent, utilities, etc.) will be paid by WSETB as positions will be housed in a local workforce center.



## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals will be evaluated using a predetermined point ranking method to ascertain which Subrecipient best meets the needs of Workforce Solutions East Texas Board interests and responsibilities. The number of proposals selected for consideration will be at the sole discretion of ETCOG and WSETB.

Submitted proposals will be reviewed for but not limited to the evaluation criteria listed below:

CRITERIA TABLE	POINTS
<b>QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN (p.7)</b> (minimum required: 15 pts.)	25
<b>QUALIFICATIONS OF PROPOSED STAFFING/SUPERVISION (p.7-8 )</b> (minimum required: 15 pts.)	25
<b>DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS/EXPERIENCE (p.8 )</b> (minimum required: 15 pts.)	25
<b>REASONABLENESS OF COSTS (p.8 )</b> (minimum required: 15 pts.)	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**NOTE: A \*Minimum of 70 points must be achieved with no exceptions.** The ratings will be based on the information provided in the proposal by the closing date/time of the RFP.

## PROPOSAL FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS

ETCOG aspires to achieve as uniform a review process as possible to ensure the maximum degree of comparable balance among proposals received. Therefore, before submitting a proposal, make sure all items indicated below are returned with submitted proposals, tabbed and organized in the manner specified below:

- 1. TITLE OR COVER PAGE:** Listing the following:
  - a. RFP name,
  - b. Name of Firm, individual or company
  - c. Local Address
  - d. Telephone number
  - e. Fax number
  - f. Contact name
  - g. Email address
  - h. Date
- 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS (TOC):** Clearly identify the material by section and page number
- 3. LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL:** Limit to one or two pages.

- a. Briefly state the proposer's understanding of the service to be provided and make a positive commitment to perform the work in a timely manner.
- b. Provide the names of individuals who will be authorized to make representations for the proposer, their titles, addresses, fax numbers, email addresses (if applicable), and telephone numbers.

**4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS** (reference p.7-8).

- a. Proposal Narrative
- b. Pricing Breakdown

**REQUIRED SUBMISSION DOCUMENTATION**

**Submitted proposals/submissions must include the following:**

1. The required proposal documentation – Cover Letter, TOC, Letter of Submittal, Proposer Narrative, Pricing Breakdown, and all Sections and Attachments that required completing and signing; (return with submission)
2. Appendix I & Conflict of Interest form - signed; (return attachment with submission)
3. Appendix II - signed; (return attachment with submission)
4. Signed 'Affirmation & Signature' (p.19 ); (**must** return with submission) and,
5. All pages requiring initials, checkmarks, and/or signatures if not indicated above.

**Attention:** It is understood failure to provide the items listed, on pages 9 and 10, with a submitted proposal will diminish award consideration and ETCOG has the right to mark the proposal as non-compliant and treat it as a no-bid at their sole discretion.

**Note:** Only Proposals submitted with all the required proposal format (page 9) and the required documentation/response (page 10) shall be considered for award in conjunction with the Evaluation Criterion, (p.9)

**IMPORTANT:** All items above are to be returned by Proposers in the order requested, however, if any of the above items above marked '**required**' are missing when submitting a proposal, the submitted proposal will not be accepted and will be marked as '**Rejected/No Bid**' due to **non-compliance**. No exceptions.

## CURRENT REFERENCES

Please provide three (3) references from similar firms for whom your organization provided like services specific to this RFP, other than ETCOG, who can verify performance as a vendor/service is preferred. **NOTE:** Inaccurate, obsolete, or negative responses may result in rejection of quote

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract ame/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract ame/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract ame/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PROPOSER COMMUNICATION

There is to be no communication allowed, in any form, between ETCOG and their representatives, other than conducting daily business unrelated to this RFP procurement, during the entirety of the RFP process. Failure to follow this directive will result in rejection of Proposer participation and/or submitted RFP proposal.

## QUESTION/RESPONSES

**Proposer Questions:** Proposer questions concerning this RFP are due **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, if not sooner, and must be emailed to Christine Weems, Facilitator at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) and no one else.

**Staff Responses:** Proposers must go online at <http://www.etcog.org/procurements> and click on 'WSET' to retrieve responses to all questions asked, no earlier than **Monday, April 14, 2025 at 5:00PM**.

**NOTE:** Other than the above opportunity and unrelated daily business, there is to be no communication between Proposers and ETCOG staff or representatives during an active RFP process to ensure fair and open competition for all potential Proposers. To willingly do so may result in the disqualification of a Proposer for non-compliance of RFP restrictions.

## RFP RETRIEVAL

The RFP document, RFP updates, and additional RFP information or amendments will be posted on the ETCOG website and may be retrieved by clicking on 'Workforce Child Care Industry Support Initiative 2025 RFP' at <http://www.etcog.org/procurements> or request by emailing to Christine Weems at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org)

## SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

**Methods of bid submissions:** (Only 'one' submission method is required, not both)

## HARD COPY BID SUBMISSION

Hardcopy bid submissions must be clearly identified on the outermost return envelope or packaging and must be received by the bid submission date/time of **Tuesday, April 22, 2025 by 3:00 PM** regardless if by mail, courier/delivery services, or hand delivered, at:

**East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)**  
**Attn: Christine Weems, Strategic Procurement Manager**  
**3800 Stone Road, Kilgore, TX 75662**

***Write: Company Name, RFP# WF-CCISI25R, Tuesday, April 22, 2025 in bottom left-hand corner of the outermost Return Envelope/Package***

**NOTE:** Telephone, emailed, and facsimile bid submissions are not allowed in response to this RFP.

1. Proposers are to submit one (1) hardcopy marked 'Original' along with (4) four additional copies marked 'Copy' and submit one (1) electronic copy of proposal to include all related documentation. Please do not use 3-ring binders.
2. Pages should be numbered and contain an organized, paginated table of contents corresponding to the section and pages of the proposal. At least an eleven (11pt) point font of Calibri, Ariel, or Times New Roman is acceptable and must be legible.
3. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to prepare, submit, and deliver or arrange delivery of the RFP proposal(s) with all required exhibits and materials to the designated location on or before the published submittal deadline.
4. ETCOG will not bear liability for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of submissions in response to this RFP.
5. RFP submission deadline *time* will be determined by the ETCOG lobby clock.
6. If submitting more than one property to be considered, each property submission should be placed in a separate envelope and clearly identified with the RFP number, submittal deadline/opening date and time, as referenced on previous page.
7. Courier or delivery services may not deliver directly to the specified location; therefore, it is strongly recommended:
  - Proposers allow sufficient time for delivery of a hardcopy proposal prior to the published deadline date/time to the location specified.
  - Proposers understand that failure to submit a proposal by the designated deadline, for whatever reason, may not be grounds for disputing the procurement solicitation process or any resulting contract award.
8. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to ensure any addenda or additional materials pertinent to their proposal be included in or with their RFP submission. ETCOG will not be held liable for missing addenda or materials at the time of the RFP Opening and said addenda or additional materials will not be accepted past the RFP submission deadline date and time.

## **DIGITAL BID SUBMISSION**

### **Upload Requirements/Instructions**

1. Proposers must **email** Christine Weems at [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) to request an 'Access Link' by Monday, **April 21, 2025 by 3:00 PM**, if not sooner, to receive digital upload purposes.
2. Access code requests by phone, voicemail, or past the noted deadline date/time above will not be accepted, **no exceptions**.

3. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to upload their RFP proposal digitally with all required exhibits and materials by referenced '**RFP Submission Due' deadline date/time (p. 1)**, if not sooner.

#### **RFP RETRIEVAL**

The RFP document, related appendix, RFP bid updates, and any additional RFP information or amendments throughout the bid process will be posted as warranted on the ETCOG website. It may be retrieved by clicking on the '**Workforce Child Care Industry Support Initiative 2025 RFP**' link at <https://www.etcog.org/procurements> or request by emailing Christine Weems at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org). Please note, it is the Proposer's sole responsibility to stay informed of any RFP changes/updates.

### **PROPOSER COMMUNICATION**

Upon issuance of this RFP, unless otherwise noted, employees and representatives of ETCOG are not allowed to communicate in any form. Communication regarding this RFP with other potential proposers who may respond competitively, is prohibited. However, this restriction does not prohibit discussions between affected parties for the purpose of conducting daily business unrelated to this RFP process. **Note:** Failure to comply may result in disqualification of a submitted proposal at any time during the entirety of the formal competitive proposal process.

### **QUESTION/RESPONSES**

**Proposer Questions:** Proposer questions concerning this RFP are due **Thursday, April 10, 2025 by 5:00PM**, if not sooner, and must be emailed to Christine Weems, Facilitator at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) and no one else.

**Staff Responses:** Proposers **must** go online at <http://www.etcog.org/procurements> and click on '**Workforce Child Care Industry Support Initiative 2025 RFP**' to retrieve responses to all questions asked, no earlier than **Monday, April 14, 2025 at 5:00PM**.

### **HUB BEST PRACTICES**

ETCOG shall ensure that small, minority, disadvantaged, and women's businesses are considered as sources for acquisitions whenever possible.

Proposer is encouraged to make a good faith effort to consider DBEs and HUBs when subcontracting.

Some methods for locating DBEs and HUBs include:

- Choosing the HUB/DBE organization in the case of tie proposals;
- Soliciting these businesses whenever they are potential sources;

- When economically feasible, dividing total desired services into smaller components to permit maximum participation by these businesses;
- If the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules that will encourage small, Minority, disadvantaged, and women's businesses to participate; and
- Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration or the Minority Business Development Agency, as needed.

Proposer is encouraged to make a good faith effort to consider HUBs and DBEs when subcontracting. Some methods for locating these businesses include:

- Utilizing the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/cmb/cmbhub.html>.
- Utilizing Websites or other minority/women directory listings maintained by local Chambers of Commerce.
- Advertising subcontract work in local minority publications; and/or contacting the contracting state agency for assistance in locating available HUBs and DBEs.
- Encouraging eligible agencies to gain HUB or DBE certifications by providing all applicable information to do so.

## **PROPOSAL OPENING**

ETCOG reserves the right to a closed RFP process for bid submission review/analysis and award recommendation procedures to the best interest of and best benefit to ETCOG and programs served as well as ensure the best competitive edge for all parties, and in accordance to [Texas Local Government Code](#):

*Sec. 252.049. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION IN BIDS OR SUBMISSIONS.* Bid submissions will be received until the deadline date/time as referenced under 'RFP Timeline Schedule. p. 1', and public attendance is allowed. However, only the names of submitting Proposers will be read and disclosed if received by the deadline date/time.

1. All bid submissions become the property of ETCOG after the RFP deadline/opening date.
2. Responses submitted shall constitute an offer for a period of one hundred eighty (180) calendar days or until a preferred selection for the award is approved by ETCOG, whichever comes first.
3. All programs and employers under the auspices of ETCOG are following EEO. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities.

## **PROPOSAL REVIEW TERMS**

1. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness and will be numerically rated by an evaluation team made up of staff, outside evaluators, committee members, and/or other subject matter experts as deemed necessary for best possible results.

2. The Welfare-to-Work Committee of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will review evaluation team results and make award recommendation(s) to WSETB, which will consider the final selection of the successful Subrecipient(s) and will authorize subawards for services.
3. It is anticipated the Subrecipient with the highest ranked proposal will be fully funded for the amount requested, contingent upon funding availability (Appendix II, Funding Out, p. 1). WSETB reserves the right to vary funding awards if deemed in the best interest of the East Texas Workforce Development Area.
4. ETCOG reserves the right to contact any source regarding, but not limited to, vendor reputation, product/service quality, work history, and/or past performance to evaluate/award the bid submission(s) that best meet ETCOG program needs, and clients served.
5. The evaluation team's preferred proposal will be presented to governing bodies as a recommendation for award so the governing body(s) may make a final award decision.
6. Proposal must have original signature of the person having the authority to bind the organization to a contract or it may be rejected for non-compliance.

### **PROPOSAL AWARD TERMS**

1. ETCOG reserves the right to ask questions, request additional information or clarifications, hold individual interviews at any given time throughout the evaluation and negotiation process to determine the proposal which best meets the procurement needs being sought to the best benefit of ETCOG and programs served.
2. ETCOG reserves the right to allow corrections of non-material errors or omissions at ETCOG's sole discretion.
3. Submission of a proposal indicates Proposer's acceptance of the evaluation and award process and is in agreement the evaluation team may make subjective judgments in evaluating the proposals to determine best value to best benefit ETCOG and programs served.
4. ETCOG reserves the right to accept or reject any bid proposal received, as well as cancel the RFP in its entirety at any time during the bid process, without notice or explanation, which may result due to unforeseen irregularities, low response, or procurement needs not being met by submitted proposals.
5. ETCOG may modify or waive any provisions set forth in this RFP for any reason and all herein mentioned without notice to anyone if deemed in the best interest of ETCOG and programs served.
6. ETCOG reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of any potential contract or service agreement resulting from this RFP to include but not limited to the RFP document, Proposer(s) submitted proposal, and the RFP exhibits and attachments, i.e., 'ETCOG General Terms &



Conditions', and the 'Essential Clauses and Certifications' pages requiring signatures, all acting as binding documents to said contract or service agreement.

7. ETCOG reserves the right, should contract negotiations fail, to enter negotiations with the next highest ranked Proposer with a proposal considered best to meet program needs, and may continue in like manner until successful negotiations have been reached. Furthermore, although ETCOG has the right to negotiate with the next highest ranked Proposer, it is not required to do so and may re-procure or cancel the RFP at ETCOG's sole discretion.
8. Execution of any resulting contract or service agreement is required prior to processing any payments to the successful Proposer.
9. Pursuant to protocol to advise of the right to appeal, a protest must be submitted to ETCOG's Executive Director within ten (10) calendar days of the time the basis of the protest became known and said protest(s) limited to: 1) violations of federal law or regulations; 2) violations of State or local law under the jurisdiction of State or local authorities; and 3) violations of ETCOG's protest procedures for failing to review a complaint or protest. The protest must be submitted in writing and must identify the protestor, the solicitation being protested and specifically identify the basis for the protest, providing all pertinent information regarding the solicitation, contract and/or actions of ETCOG.

### **PATENTS or COPYRIGHTS**

Proposer agrees to protect ETCOG from claims involving infringement of patent or copyrights, if warranted.

### **PROPOSER COMPLIANCE**

Proposer shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations, and the orders and decrees of any court or administrative bodies or tribunals in any matter affecting the performance of the agreement including, if applicable, workers' compensation laws, minimum and maximum salary and wage statutes and regulations, and licensing laws and regulations. Proposers will be prepared to provide satisfactory proof of compliance if requested.

### **PROPOSAL AWARD NOTIFICATION**

1. It is expected an award will be made on **May 8, 2025**. (date subject to change)
2. Upon award notification all Proposers who responded to this RFP will be contacted.

### **CONTRACT PAYMENT**

The subaward negotiated as a result of this request for proposals will be cost reimbursement. A cost reimbursement subaward is an agreement format wherein all *allowable* costs detailed in the

budget attached to the executed subaward are reimbursed. (*Allowable* means allowable under the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts and the Uniform Administrative Requirements). The Selected Proposer must maintain documentation that substantiates the expenditures.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board allows advance payments in accordance with the Uniform Guidance Administrative Requirements and TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the entity in carrying out the purpose of the approved subaward. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the subrecipient for direct program costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs. If the subrecipient chooses not to obtain cash advances, the entity's request for reimbursement will be generally processed within 30 days of receipt. The proposer selected must be able to support all costs of the operation not advanced until they are reimbursed. **NOTE:** Further discussion of how direct costs will be reimbursed and the amount and timing of cash advances will be agreed upon during subaward negotiations.

In the event funding under this award is delayed by TWC, Proposer acknowledges that ETCOG shall not be held liable.

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

Proposer affirms understanding and acknowledgement of all referenced bid and program requirements contained within the RFP document; Appendix I - ETCOG Terms and Conditions/Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (CIQ) form; Appendix II - Essential Clauses & Certifications; Attachments and any Exhibits (if provided) including any Child Care program related documentation, explicit to this bidding procurement. Proposer must return any and all such pages requiring action, signatures, or checkmarks from the RFP document, Appendices, and Attachments with any submitted bid proposal. Proposer further understands and acknowledges making a false statement or a false proclamation of compliance is a material breach and any subsequent award of product/equipment purchase(s), offered services, and/or contract/service agreement are grounds for award cancellation.

**SIGNATURE**

The undersigned individual hereby certifies and warrants that he/she has been fully authorized to execute this proposal/bid submission on behalf of their firm and to legally bind the firm to all the terms, performances, and provisions as herein set forth.

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Company/Provider Name

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Phone Number

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Signature

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Date

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Printed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

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Email

**IMPORTANT:** Proposer must return this page fully executed and complete with proper signatures and signature dates for current/active RFP or the submitted proposal will be marked 'Rejected/No Bid' due to non-compliance.