

## Smart Start Rowan REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**TITLE:** One Year Bid for Smart Start Services – Reach Out & Read Activity

**ISSUE DATE:** June 1, 2026

**ISSUING AGENCY:** Smart Start Rowan  
1329 Jake Alexander Blvd. South  
Salisbury, NC 28146  
704-630-9085  
Fax: 704-603-3379

Sealed Proposals subject to the conditions made a part hereof will be received until **5:00 p.m., June 15, 2026** for furnishing services described herein.

SEND ALL PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO **Smart Start Rowan to the attention of Amy Brown** AT THE ADDRESS AS SHOWN ABOVE.

Interested parties must submit **an original and two (2) copies of the proposal**, along with electronic copies of the Smart Start Rowan full activity proposal format, budget, and budget narrative.

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to **Amy Brown** at [abrown@smartstartrowan.org](mailto:abrown@smartstartrowan.org).

**NOTE: The Smart Start Rowan Full Activity Description Format for the Reach Out & Read activity will be available upon request following the RFP being released.**

**It is the Contractor's responsibility to assure that all information has been reviewed. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.**

All information relating to this Request for Proposals can also be found on our website:  
<http://www.rowan-smartstart.org/>

## INTRODUCTION

**Smart Start Rowan** (hereinafter referred to as the “Local Partnership”) is soliciting proposals to establish contracts through competitive negotiations. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to acquire the services of a qualified contractor (hereinafter referred to as the “Contractor”) for the following services:

### **Services to support early literacy and the health and development of young children:**

**Reach Out and Read** coordinates an evidence-based literacy program providing books to young children at well child visits.

**Contractors may submit proposals for the Reach Out & Read activity only. All Smart Start Rowan activities address the needs of children ages 0-5 years.**

## BACKGROUND

The Local Partnership offers programs for parents and children, prenatal through age five, that support the health and education of children, strengthen parenting skills of families, improve the quality of child care, and build awareness of how services for young children are vital to the future development and prosperity of Rowan County. The one-year contract will begin **July 1, 2026** and end **June 30, 2027** and is dependent upon satisfactory service delivery and availability of funds designated.

The Contractor must submit an annual budget ending June 30<sup>th</sup> for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The Contractor must have demonstrated competency in performing services defined in the Introduction of this RFP. Specifically, the Contractor must demonstrate a successful history of providing similar services. Potential contractors who have never contracted with Smart Start Rowan should describe all project experience in North Carolina or other states with similar program operations. Contractor should provide the name, address, and telephone number for a reference for each project in the last five years.

The Contractor must provide details of any pertinent judgment, criminal conviction, investigation or litigation pending against the Contractor or any of its officers, directors, employees, agents or subcontractors of which the vendor has knowledge, or a statement that there is none. The Local Partnership reserves the right to reject a proposal based on this information, reasons related to funding limitations and/or prior performance concerns, or other reasons as deemed appropriate by the Local Partnership.

## THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process by which a prospective Contractor will be selected to provide services.

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued to prospective Contractors.
2. Proposals in **one original; 2 copies; and an electronic copy** of the Smart Start Rowan Activity Description Format, Budget and Budget Narrative will be received from prospective Contractors. The original and 2 copies will be submitted in a sealed envelope or package. Each original shall be signed and dated by an official authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the agency. Unsigned and incomplete proposals will not be considered.
3. Prospective Contractors may submit proposals for the Reach Out & Read activity only.
4. **All proposals must be received by the Local Partnership no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP.**
5. At their option, the Local Partnership's evaluators may request oral presentations or discussion with any or all prospective Contractors for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal. However, prospective Contractors are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification; therefore, all proposals should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the prospective Contractor.
6. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that may include the need for the program, program content and evaluation, completeness, content, experience with similar projects, ability of the Contractor and its staff, cost, and financial stability of the prospective Contractor, past history of administering similar programs. Award of a contract to one prospective Contractor does not mean that the other proposals lacked merit, but that, all factors considered, the selected proposal was deemed most advantageous to the Local Partnership.
7. **If selected**, the Local Partnership will contact the selected Contractor to obtain information and documentation required for preparation of the contract to include the following:
  - a. Name; title; telephone and fax numbers; email address and mailing address, including street address and zip code, of the contract administrator.
  - b. Name; title; telephone and fax numbers; email address and mailing address, including street address and zip code, of the person(s) authorized to sign financial status reports.
  - c. Copy of Conflict of Interest policy if applicable.
  - d. Proof of insurance that may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1) Workers' compensation;
- 2) General business liability;
- 3) Fidelity bonding (e.g., employee crime or dishonesty);
- 4) Professional liability;
- 5) Automobile (owned, hired or non-owned).

Providing and maintaining adequate insurance coverage is a material obligation of the Contractor and is of the essence of the contract. The Local Partnership will not contract with any prospective Contractor that is unable to furnish proof of required insurance coverage.

e. Completed Internal Revenue Service (IRS) *Form W-9*.

or

f. If a nonprofit entity, a copy of the Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)3 determination letter received from the IRS.

8. The Local Partnership will not contract with any prospective Contractor that fails to provide **all** required information and documentation. After all required information and documentation has been submitted, the Local Partnership will prepare the contract, notify the selected Contractor and request that the Contract be signed. **A template of the Contract that the selected Contractor will be required to sign is available upon request.**
9. The Contract must be executed prior to the start of work and incurring any expenses.
10. Prospective Contractors will be notified as soon as possible by the Local Partnership, whether proposals are accepted or rejected.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

**The response to this RFP shall consist of the following sections:**

Cover Letter

Proposal using the SSR Full Activity Description Format which will include

Brief Activity Description

Background and Experience (if applicable)

Project Staffing and Organization

Logic Model

Awareness and Collaboration Agreement

Audited Financial Statements (one copy only) from non-governmental agencies

Cost Proposal for 1 year, using the Smart Start Budget and Budget Narrative format with accompanying Personnel Costs Worksheet for any personnel included in the budget.

## **1. Cover Letter**

Each proposal must include a cover letter, signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the prospective Contractor. If said individual is not the Director, President, Chief Executive Officer, etc., submit evidence showing the individual's authority to bind the prospective Contractor.

## **2. Proposal**

The prospective Contractor must submit a Proposal for the Reach Out & Read activity. The Smart Start Rowan Full Activity Description format must be used, which includes the prospective Contractor's approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Needs and Activities Work Section of this RFP, a description of each task and deliverable, and the schedule for accomplishing this. **This format is available by sending an email request to Amy Brown at [abrown@smartstartrowan.org](mailto:abrown@smartstartrowan.org), beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. The format is activity specific. Please include the Reach Out & Read activity name by your organization in the email request. The Full Activity Description Format will include:**

### **Brief Activity Description**

This section shall include a brief narrative describing the activity components and need. The description must include the key elements included in the Logic Model provided in the Request for Proposal.

### **Background and Experience\***

Background information on the organization should give details of experience with similar projects. A list of references (including contact persons, addresses, email address, when available and telephone numbers) for whom similar work that has been performed shall be included.

Submit verification of the prospective Contractor's Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) or Social Security Number, 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 prospective Contractor's legal name; or, Social Security Card.

*\*Organizations currently under contract with Smart Start Rowan are not required to submit Background and Experience information.*

### **Activity Staffing and Organization**

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

The prospective Contractor shall provide information as to the qualifications and experience of all executive, managerial, and professional personnel to be assigned to this project, including experience with similar projects and the responsibilities to be assigned to each person. Include a management/manpower summary that clearly specifies the number, type and time commitment of individual personnel who will be assigned to this project.

### **Logic Model**

A Logic Model using the Smart Start Logic Model format must be provided. The Logic Model will identify needs, specify a target or focus population for the activity, provide a list of strategies or activity components complete with outputs (counts of services to be provided) and outcomes (quantifiable measurements of success). Assistance with Logic Model development is available upon request.

### **Awareness and Collaboration Agreement**

An Awareness and Collaboration agreement, provided by Smart Start Rowan on each activity's Full Activity Description Format, must be completed and signed by the prospective Contractor. This agreement specifies the expectations regarding recognition of Smart Start Rowan's funding and support during the term of the contract.

### **3. Audited Financial Statements\*\***

This section shall include the prospective Contractor's most recent audited financial statements. If audited financial statements are not available, similar evidence of financial stability must be provided. **Only one copy of the financial statement is required.**

*\*\*Audited financial statements are required only for organizations/individuals with no prior history as a Smart Start Rowan service provider. Governmental organizations are exempt from this requirement.*

### **4. Cost Proposal**

Prospective contractors must submit an annual cost proposal for **fiscal year 2026-2027, for the Reach Out & Read activity.** The Cost Proposal must include a Budget and Budget Narrative. The Smart Start Format for the Budget and Budget narrative must be used. **This format is available upon request.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

1. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS.** All proposals are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. The prospective Contractor specifically agrees to the conditions set forth by signature on the proposal.
2. **ORAL EXPLANATIONS.** The Local Partnership shall not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive bidding process or after award.
3. **REFERENCE TO OTHER DATA.** Only information which is received in response to this RFP will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted shall not be evaluated.
4. **COST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION.** Any costs incurred by prospective Contractors in preparing or submitting offers are the prospective Contractor's sole responsibility; the Local Partnership shall not reimburse any prospective Contractor for any costs incurred prior to award.
5. **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 prospective Contractors shall become the property of the Local Partnership when received.
6. **OFFEROR'S REPRESENTATIVE.** Each prospective Contractor 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.
7. **SUBCONTRACTING.** In the event the prospective Contractor desires to subcontract any part of the contracted services, the proposal must clearly indicate what work it plans to subcontract and to whom and must provide all required information for each subcontractor. Only the subcontractors specified in the proposal shall be considered approved upon award of the Contract.
8. **PROPRIETARY INFORMATION.** Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the prospective Contractor does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation or contract administration will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by N.C.G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: each page shall be identified in bold face at the top and bottom as "Confidential." Any section of the proposal that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in bold face on the top of the title page of that section. Cost information may not be deemed confidential. In spite of what is labeled as confidential, the determination as to whether or not it is shall be as governed by North Carolina law.