



Introduction

The Richland County First Steps Partnership Board is requesting proposals for minor rehabilitation of two child care sites in Columbia, South Carolina for fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, with possible renewal for 2027.

A pre-proposal conference will be held at noon on January 9th, at the Richland County First Steps office located at 1800 St Julian Place, Suite 406, Columbia SC. Representatives of Richland County First Steps will meet with prospective proposers to review the RFP and answer questions. Please bring a copy of the RFP with you as no additional copies will be available at the proposer's conference.

Questions concerning this request for proposal should be directed to:

Elizabeth Kabalka
Richland County First Steps
Executive Director
1800 St. Julian Place, Suite 406
Columbia, SC 29204
ekabalka@richlandfirststeps.org

SCOPE OF WORK/SPECIFICATIONS

A. Background

Richland County First Steps to School Readiness is an early childhood initiative that leverages public and private resources to improve the readiness of young children to succeed in school and life.

Organization

Richland County First Steps is a state-funded nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure all children are healthy and ready to succeed by the start of school. Richland County First Steps has a governing board and employs staff as determined by its governing board. Richland County is one of the 46 Local Partnerships that are located in each county of the state.

B. Scope

This project will provide rehabilitation and safety improvements to two existing childcare facilities from qualified and licensed contractors for **two (2) Public Facility Improvement Projects** funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. These projects are intended to benefit low- to moderate-income residents and support community infrastructure improvements within the County. Work includes:

Virginia Wingard UMC – Early Head Start Center

- Replacement of thirty-five (35) non-functioning windows
- Installation of a security gate separating the child development center from an upstairs soup kitchen for the unhoused
- Replacement of primary entry door with upgraded security
- Addition of cameras to expand existing security system

Ridgewood MBC – Early Head Start Center

- Replacement of six (6) existing fixed windows with operable hopper windows in childcare classrooms
- Installation of a durable aluminum walkway cover to create a dedicated outdoor gross-motor learning area for infants and toddlers
- Installation of safety lock mechanism on existing fencing around facility

The project does not involve new construction or change of land use.

Funding Source

These projects are federally funded through HUD's CDBG Program and are therefore subject to all applicable federal regulations, including but not limited to:

- Davis-Bacon and Related Acts
- Section 3 requirements
- Federal labor standards
- Equal Employment Opportunity provisions
- Procurement standards

Bid Submission Requirements

Interested contractors must submit a complete bid package that includes:

- Proof of business license and bonding capacity

- Certificate of insurance
- Relevant experience with federally funded construction projects
- Cost proposal and itemized scope of work
- Acknowledgement of all federal compliance requirements
- Any required forms included in the bid packet

Payment

Payments will be made to the successful offeror on a monthly basis based on invoices to the Richland County First steps that document time worked per the contract and the requirements set forth by the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Other Information:

1. Legislative Goals

Per statute Section 59-152-30, the goals for South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness are to:

- *“Provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;*
- *increase comprehensive services so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;*
- *promote high-quality preschool programs that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;*
- *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 succeed; and*
- *mobilize communities to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.”*

Time Requirements

Proposal Calendar

Request for proposal issued	DATE: 12/15/25
Pre-proposal conference	DATE: 1/09/26
Due date for proposals	DATE: 1/16/26
Selected firm notified	DATE: 1/28/26

INFORMATION FOR OFFERORS TO SUBMIT

A. Company Qualifications, Capabilities and Experience:

- Provide an overview of your organization including:
 - Number of years in business

- Number of employees
 - Other lines of related business
- The successful offeror must identify issues of concern as early as possible, please provide examples of your experience in this regard.
 - Discuss your ability to support Richland County First Steps on all the previously mentioned tasks.

B. Personnel Assigned (Experience and Education)

Provide the following information:

- Names of key staff who will be assigned to any contract resulting from this solicitation.
- Name of the lead project manager to which all project staff will report.

C. Overall Price

What is the total proposed cost to provide the services outlined?

D. Approach and Methodology of Accomplishing Work

Offerors shall describe their approach and methodology to the work described in the “Scope Of Work” section. This part of the proposals should be organized in the order specified in this RFP.

E. Additional Data

Provide additional information considered essential to your proposal.

F. Mandatory Criteria

Compliance with S.C. State Ethics Act.

Offerors are required to comply with applicable provisions of the South Carolina State Ethics Act.

Subcontractors.

The offeror must fully disclose any proposed subcontracting of any of the required services.

Requirements to which all offerors must agree.

- a) All Offerors must state in their Proposal that they agree to the following:
- b) That any contract resulting from this RFP will be subject to South Carolina law.
- c) The State will not agree to any type of binding arbitration.
- d) Richland County First Steps are not permitted under South Carolina law to indemnify, defend, or pay attorneys’ fees on behalf of any party with which the State of South Carolina contracts.
- e) Offeror does not discriminate in employment of persons upon the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or physical handicap.
- f) Offeror certifies that it will provide a drug-free workplace during the term of this contract in accordance with the South Carolina Drug-Free Workplace Act, SC Code 44-107-10 et seq., and that Offeror will comply with the Act as applicable.

Firms interested in responding to this RFP should submit a proposal electronically (in PDF format) to ekabalka@richlandfirststeps.org no later than 5:00 PM on January 16th. Late proposals will be rejected as not meet the mandatory RFP requirements. Proposals must strictly comply with the format and content stated in this RFP.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals should demonstrate the technical qualification, competence, and capacity of the firm seeking to undertake the services required in this RFP. Bids will be evaluated in accordance with Richland County procurement policies and federal CDBG regulations. Evaluators will determine the winning proposal based on the qualifications of the proposer, the approach, and methodology of accomplishing the work, and the cost. Proposals that do not include the minimum requested information, including affirmation of mandatory criteria, will automatically be rejected as not being responsive.

Richland County First Steps reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from the proposed firms during the evaluation process where it serves Richland County First Steps best interest. Technical corrections or omissions may be allowed at the discretion of Richland County First Steps.

Richland County First Steps reserves the right to reject any proposals submitted.

Richland County First Steps reserves the right to negotiate with the highest-rated proposer on final contract terms.

The following factors will be considered during our evaluation.

Technical Factors

1. Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly stating the successor's understanding of the work to be performed. Evaluators will consider:
 - Appropriateness and adequacy of proposed procedures.
 - Necessity of procedures.
 - Appropriateness of assigned staff.
2. Technical experience.
3. Qualifications of staff.
4. Prior experience.

Cost Factor

Proposed costs are a consideration but are not the dominant factor. Cost will be given more importance when all other evaluation criteria are relatively equal. Proposals believed to be unreasonably low will be rejected.

Contractual Arrangements

Billings and Payment

Richland County First Steps will issue a contract to the successful proposer stating the maximum fee to be paid. Richland County First Steps is the responsible party and will pay engagement fees. Services that may increase the fee above the maximum must have prior written approval of RCFS.

Rights to Cancel

The proposal must include a statement that the RCFS or the successful proposer can cancel this agreement without cause by written notice. The notice must specify the part of the contract (or all) terminated and

when the termination becomes effective with reasonable notice of termination.