

WORKFORCESOLUTIONS **G R E A T E R D A L L A S**

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

TEXAS RISING STAR ASSESSOR SERVICES

ISSUE DATE: MARCH 9, 2021, 1:00 P.M., CDT

RESPONSE DEADLINE: APRIL 1, 2021, 5:00 P.M., CDT

Ross Towers, 500 N. Akard Street, Suite 3030, Dallas, Texas 75201, 214-290-1000, www.wfsdallas.com

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids are available upon request, for persons with disabilities. TTY:214-745-1054. Funding received by the TWC and through the Department of Health and Human Services. 100% of paid costs would be from Federal Funds. It is not anticipated that non-governmental funds will be involved.

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INTRODUCTION

The workforce development system in Dallas County is governed and managed by the Dallas County Local Workforce Development Board, Inc. d.b.a. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas (WFSDallas), acting on behalf of the county's citizens and employers. WFSDallas is a 501(c)(3), a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Texas. WFSDallas is led by a volunteer Board of twenty-five Directors as mandated by State and Federal law and appointed by the Dallas County Judge and the City of Dallas Mayor. Board Directors represent a partnership of private employers, organized labor, non-profit organizations, and public entities. WFSDallas administers and acts as fiscal agent for programs consolidated at the local level and is responsible and accountable for the management of all workforce development funds made available to the local workforce development area. Grants are received from the Texas Workforce Commission and may include state funds, and federal funds from the U. S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture. Please see the Board's website for additional information on the workforce programs and locations of the local workforce centers within Dallas County (www.wfsdallas.com).

PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

The purpose of this RFQ is to solicit for qualified professionals to provide assessor services to current Texas Rising Star (TRS) programs and to early learning programs who may be seeking TRS certification in the workforce board areas below. **Current approved assessors are required to submit qualifications under this Request for Qualifications.**

- Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas (WFSDallas) - Dallas County;
- Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County (WSTC) – Tarrant County; and
- Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) – Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, and Wise Counties.

Respondents to this RFQ must be willing to serve all 16 counties listed above.

WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT are responsible for the development and delivery of child care quality improvement within our respective counties.

WFSDallas provides subsidized child care services to over 11,000 children per day and has agreements with over 570 early learning programs (licensed child care centers, registered and licensed home care). Of the 570 early learning programs, 185 are Texas Rising Star (TRS) programs.

WSTC provides subsidized child care services to over 7,100 children per day and has agreements with over 540 early learning programs (licensed child care centers, registered and licensed home care). Of the 540 early learning programs, 210 are Texas Rising Star (TRS) programs.

WSNCT provides subsidized child care services to over 6,000 children per day and has agreements with over 550 early learning programs (licensed child care centers, registered and licensed home care). Of the 550 early learning programs, 116 are Texas Rising Star (TRS) programs.

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a Texas Workforce Commission accreditation program that is administered by each Board at the local level. The Texas Rising Star program is a voluntary process where an early learning program can choose to have an outside entity evaluate and certify their program. The evaluation will consist of a standard set of criteria that exceeds the minimum standards required by child care licensing and focus on 4 categories: director and staff qualifications and training; teacher-child interactions; program administration; and indoor/outdoor learning environment. Early learning programs who choose to become accredited as a Texas Rising Star are evaluated annually to ensure they continue to meet TRS standards. The TRS certification system offers three certification levels (2-star, 3-star and 4-star) to encourage programs to attain progressively higher certification requirements. Each star reflects a higher level of quality that has been achieved by the program. A Four Star program has met the highest quality standards for this certification. TRS certification is available for licensed child care center, licensed child care home, and registered child care home programs who meet the certification criteria. More information on the TRS program and criteria can be found at www.texasrisingstar.org.

SERVICES SOLICITED IN THIS RFQ

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) provides a uniform method for the procurement of these services. It contains the necessary background, requirements, instructions, and information corresponding to this RFQ. Services solicited in this RFQ for Texas Rising Star Assessor Services are to ensure that current TRS programs have met State requirements to remain at the current TRS level or to attain a higher level of TRS certification, and that non TRS programs have met State requirements to attain a TRS certification in WFSDallas, WSTC and/or the WSNCT Counties. The Texas Rising Star Assessor will be responsible for performing effective assessments for the current Texas Rising Star programs and potential programs interested in the Texas Rising Star program within all 16 counties. The Assessor will be responsible for coordinating and implementing TRS assessment related activities, including:

- Conducting scheduled and un-announced TRS program assessments (or re-certifications) within the required timeframe(s);
- Conducting observations in support of completing a TRS program assessment process provided in Texas Rising Star Early Learning Program Certification Guidelines <https://texasrisingstar.org/about-trs/trs-guidelines/>;
- Submitting written detailed reports summarizing findings and justification for assessment scores;
- Coordinating TRS schedules and maintaining contact with each Board's contact person regarding work load and required expectations of the Assessor;
- Completing the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification course and obtaining a Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification;
- Completing and passing quarterly reliability checks in compliance with the Texas Rising Star Assessor Certification; and
- Attending all regional and state TRS-related meetings and trainings.

Eligible respondents may include a qualified individual. Respondents cannot apply as an organization and/or an entity representing a group of individuals. All respondents must meet the following qualifications presented for Texas Rising Star (TRS) Assessor:

Minimum Education

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science;
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with at least 18 credit hours in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with at least 12 credit hours in child development; or
- Associate's degree in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with two years of experience as a director in an early childhood program, with preference given for required experience with a program that is accredited or TRS certified.

Minimum Work Experience

- One year of full-time early childhood classroom experience in a child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, or prekindergarten through third grade school program.

Demonstrated Knowledge

- Best practices in early childhood education
- Understanding of early childhood evaluations, observations, and assessments for both teachers and children
- TRS, ITERS, ECERS-R, FCERS, TBRS, CLASS, or other assessment tools

Other Preferred Knowledge

- Understanding of TRS Certification Guidelines and the minimum standards of Texas child care licensing
- Bilingual (English and Spanish speaker)
- Ability to relate to individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Microsoft Word and Excel, Internet, and comfortable using e-mail and entering data on a PC tablet
- Detail oriented with strong oral and written communication skills

- Basic administrative skills, including recordkeeping and use of a computer for data management and professional communication
- Have an active TECPDS Workforce Registry account

Required Continuing Education and Professional Development, and Background Check

Participation in required annual professional development and continuing education consistent with TRS training requirements for a center director must be obtained on an annual basis. Additionally, the respondents must meet the background check consistent with 40 TAC 745.

Objectives for **Texas Rising Star Certification** are:

- To improve the quality of child care offered by providing high quality child care options;
- To ensure that children are offered care that promotes their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development; and
- To promote early physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children who are the state's future workforce.

Eligible Programs

- A. Any early learning program that has a current agreement with a Board's child care contractor to serve subsidized children and that meets either of the following criteria may apply for Texas Rising Star (TRS) Program certification:
- Has the appropriate permanent license or registration from, and is in good standing with, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); or
 - Has at least 12 months of licensing history with Child Care Regulation (CCR); or
 - Is regulated by the military, or
 - Is alternatively accredited by an organization approved by DHHS as stipulated in Chapter 42, Subchapter E, of the Human Resource Code.

Any program that is on Adverse Action or Corrective Action with DHHS due to non-compliance with the Child Care Regulation Minimum Standards is not eligible to apply for TRS Program certification.

- B. Early learning programs who are regulated by the military may be certified as a TRS Program without going through the TRS Program assessment process and are initially enrolled as a Four-Star or fully certified program:
- C. Early learning programs who have attained one of the following national accreditations may be certified as a TRS program and will receive a modified Initial Assessment in order to be a fully certified program:
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
 - National Accreditation Commission for Early Child Care and Education Program (NAC)
 - Association of Christian School International (ACSI)
 - National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)
 - National AfterSchool Association (NAA)
 - Council on Accreditation (COA)
 - Cognia Quality Early Learning System (QELS)
 - Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

The complete Texas Rising Star Program Certification Guidelines are available at:

<https://texasrisingstar.org/about-trs/trs-guidelines/>

The payment structure for the Texas Rising Star Assessor Services will be as follows:

Facility Classrooms	Formal Assessment / Recertification	Monitoring Visit	Virtual Formal Assessment / Recertification	Virtual Monitoring Visit	Board Approved Meetings	TRS Assessor Certification
1-5 Classrooms	\$ 700.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 400.00		
6-10 Classrooms	\$ 900.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 500.00		
11-15 Classrooms	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 950.00	\$ 600.00		
16+ Classrooms	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 700.00		
					\$ 50.00	
						\$ 300.00

Insurance Requirements

At all times during the term of this service resulting from this procurement, the vendor shall pay for, and maintain, with approved insurance carriers, the minimum insurance requirements set forth below, and shall require all vendors and performing work for which the same liabilities may apply under this procurement to do likewise. WFSDallas, WSTC, and/or WSNTC reserves the right to waive or modify insurance requirements at its sole discretion.

- **Workers' Compensation:** Statutory limits and employer's liability of not less than \$100,000 for each accident.
- **Commercial General Liability:**
 - a. Minimum Required Limits:
 - \$1,000,000 per occurrence;
 - \$3,000,000 General Aggregate
 - b. Commercial General Liability policy shall include:
 - i. Coverage A: Bodily injury and property damage;
 - ii. Coverage B: Personal and Advertising Injury liability;
 - iii. Coverage C: Medical payments
 - iv. Products: Completed operations
 - v. Fire Legal Liability
 - c. Policy coverage must be on an "occurrence" basis using CGL forms as approved by the Texas State Board of Insurance
 - d. Attachment of Endorsement CG 20 10- additional insured
 - e. All other endorsements shall require prior approval by the Board area.
- **Comprehensive Automobile/Truck Liability:** Coverage shall be provided for all owned hired, and non-owned vehicles. Minimum Required Limit: \$1,000,000 combined single limit.
- **Professional liability:**
 - a. Minimum Required Limits:
 - \$1,000,000 Each Claim
 - \$1,000,000 Policy Aggregate

ADMINISTRATION OF THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is issued **at 1:00 p.m. CST, Tuesday, March 9, 2021** and available to download from the WFSDallas website at: <http://www.wfsdallas.com/doing-business>. If you are unable to download the RFQ, please contact: procurement@wfsdallas.com or (214) 290-1000.

The package contains all the necessary information and forms to respond to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). A response to this RFQ should include all items listed in **RESPONSE CHECKLIST AND ORDER OF SUBMISSION, page 9**, of the RFQ.

Proposals must be typed, 12-font, and submitted on materials in accordance with instructions in this RFQ. Proposals for services must be officially received by WFSDallas staff to: procurement@wfsdallas.com no later than 5:00 p.m., CDT on Thursday, **April 1, 2021**. **Any proposals or amendments received after the April 1, 2021 deadline will not be considered, but will be deemed late and non-responsive to this RFQ procurement process. Late proposals or amendments will be returned without review.**

All proposals received by the deadline will be presented for action (recommended or not recommended) at the WFSDallas Board of Directors' meeting in April 2021.

Dated Material: All proposals to the RFQ are due by 5:00 p.m., CDT on April 1, 2021. WFSDallas is not responsible for any technology issues. No faxed proposal will be accepted.

BIDDERS' CONFERENCE

There will be no Bidders' Conference. If you have any questions regarding this RFQ, you may pose them to the e-mail link at: procurement@wfsdallas.com by 12:00 p.m., CDT on Monday, March 15, 2021. The responses to questions will be posted on the WFSDallas website at: <http://www.wfsdallas.com/doing-business> by 5:00 p.m., CDT on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

SELECTION AWARDS

Selected Texas Rising Star Assessors will be placed on a vendors' list for availability of assessor services. Vendors will remain on the list until removed for lack of availability of funding, satisfactory performance in accordance with Texas Workforce Commission and Board's requirements or a new procurement is issued for services. Vendors will be assigned on an as need basis to provide assessor services for child care providers in each of the areas: WFSDallas, WSTC and/or WSNCT counties between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Dates, times and locations will be provided to selected respondents as assessment is determined for the participating providers.

Individuals selected as an Assessor will be required to undergo a background check prior to conducting any work in a child care facility (center or home) on behalf of WFSDallas, WSTC and/or WSNCT. Proof of a background check that has been completed no more than the prior six (6) months of an award will be accepted. Any associated expense related to the required background check will be the responsibility of the contracted Assessor.

SERVICES PERIOD

The anticipated service period for availability on a vendor's list is April 2021. Vendors will remain on the list until removed for lack of availability of funding, satisfactory performance in accordance with Texas Workforce Commission and Board's requirements or a new procurement is issued for services.

OPEN RECORDS

Proposals submitted in response to this RFQ are subject to the Texas Public Information Act, Government Code, Chapter 552.003, and may be disclosed to the public upon request. No documents relating to this procurement will be presented or otherwise made available to any other person, agency, or organization until after the funding award. Any confidential, privileged, or proprietary information contained within a proposal must be clearly identified by the proposer in the proposal itself (each applicable page labeled). The aforementioned information will be kept confidential by WFSDallas to the extent permitted by State law.

GOVERNING PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- A. The main purpose of this RFQ is to ensure uniform information in the solicitation of proposals and procurement of the Texas Rising Star Assessor Services. A response to this RFQ is not to be construed as a purchase agreement or contract, or as a commitment of any kind; nor does it commit the WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT to pay for costs incurred in the preparation of a response, or any other costs incurred prior to the execution of a formal contract, unless such costs are specifically authorized in writing by the WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT.
- B. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to cancel and/or reissue this RFQ in part or its entirety.
- C. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserve the right to correct any error(s) and/or make changes to this solicitation as it deems necessary.
- D. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of any and all contracts or agreements for placement on the vendors' list with respondents selected and any such terms negotiated as a result of this RFQ may be renegotiated and/or amended in order to successfully meet the needs of the Board's local plan and impose additional requirements and refinements in the terms and conditions, proposal for assessor services, performance measures, and funding amounts during the course of any agreement.

- E. All Board Directors, officers, and staff, or any agents of the Board are precluded from entertaining questions concerning the proposal or this procurement process outside the confines of the formal Questions and Answers process. Potential respondents, respondents and contractors are asked to respect these conditions by not making personal requests for assistance. No employee, member of a Board of Directors or other governing body, or representative of a respondent who submits a proposal under this RFQ may have any contact outside of the formal review process with any employee of WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT, or any member of the Board of Directors for purposes of discussing or lobbying on behalf of respondent's proposal. This contact includes written correspondence, telephone calls, personal meetings, e-mail messages, or other kinds of personal contact. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT will reject proposals of those respondents who violate this condition.
- F. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserves the right to contact any individual, agency employer, or grantees listed in a proposal, to contact others who may have experience and/or knowledge of the respondent's relevant performance and/or qualifications; and to request additional information from any and all respondents.
- G. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT or its designee will conduct a review of records, systems, procedures, etc. of any entity selected for funding. This may occur prior to, or subsequent to, the award of a contract or agreement. Misrepresentation of the respondent's ability to perform as stated in the proposal(s) may result in cancellation of any contract or agreement for services on the vendors' list that is awarded.
- H. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserves the right to withdraw or reduce the amount of an award or to cancel any contract or agreement resulting from this procurement if adequate funding is not received from the Texas Workforce Commission or other specific funding source.
- I. **Respondents shall not under penalty of law, offer or provide any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any** officer, member, employee, or agent of the Board, for the purpose of having an influencing effect toward their own proposal or any other proposal submitted hereunder.
- J. WFSDallas, WSTC and WSNCT reserve the right to deem a proposal non-responsive or disqualify any proposal that, in its sole determination, does not comply with or conform to the terms, conditions, and/or requirements of this RFQ.
- K. Selected vendor must comply with the Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 20, Chapter 809, SubChapter G, Texas Rising Star Program and any other subsequent guidance provided by the Texas Workforce Commission and applicable changes in reference to public subsidies provided to employers.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of vendor(s) shall be in accordance with the principles stated in the Board's plan and State plans, as well as other applicable laws, regulations and policy issuances from Federal, State, and Local entities.

- A. A consideration in selecting vendors or organizations to deliver services shall be the demonstrated performance of the vendor or organization in delivering comparable or related services. Performance in this or similar activities shall be considered when awarding points for past performance. Other performance with this Board will be considered in evaluation for proposals received in response to this RFQ.
- B. Funds provided under this RFQ shall not be used to duplicate facilities or services available in the area (with or without reimbursement) from the Federal, State or local sources, unless it is demonstrated that alternative services or facilities would be more effective or more likely to achieve the local workforce development area's performance goals.
- C. The proposal review process will include: evaluation, rating, and ranking of proposals by qualified staff using the general criteria specified in "**EVALUATION CRITERIA/POINT VALUE**" below. The proposal review process will also include review, approval to negotiate and selection for award of vendor services by the Board of Directors.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Responsive proposals submitted by the deadline are evaluated using the objective criteria below. WFSDallas assigns professional staff or qualified outside evaluators to read and evaluate each proposal. Parts of the scoring are scored independently by each reader; the final scores for those parts will be the average of the independent scores of all readers. All references are validated and scores included in the evaluation process. In selecting proposals for award of contract or agreement for vendor services, WFSDallas reserves the right to depart from the strict ranking by evaluation scores, whenever it deems such departure will better serve the best interests of WFSDallas, WSTC, WSNCT and its constituents.

EVALUATION CRITERIA/POINT VALUE

Responsive proposals submitted by the deadline will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Qualifications	50
The respondent must meet the qualifications specified in the "Services Solicited" section of this RFQ. Provide a resume, transcripts, and copies of certifications.	
Demonstrated Experience/References	50
Include specific experience demonstrating technical competence in providing evaluations/assessments of child care providers within the last 2 years. Relevant experience must include the dates of services, description and the organizations for which the services were provided, contact names and phone numbers, and contract amount. Also, provide three references including contact name, phone number and email address.	
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	100

PROPOSER INQUIRY AND APPEAL PROCESS

1. The Dallas County Local Workforce Development Board, Inc. dba Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is the responsible authority for handling complaints or protests regarding the procurement and proposal selection process. Please see the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts, Chapter 14, Procurement, and Appendix D, September 1, 2020. <https://twc.texas.gov/financial-manual-grants-contracts-chapter-14-procurement>

2. Respondents not selected by this process may appeal the decision by submitting, within 10 days of the Board notification of the procurement decision, a written request for debriefing to obtain information on the procurement process and how their proposal or offer was received and ranked. The Board shall acknowledge receipt of the Request for Debriefing in writing within 10 days of receipt, along with the date and time of the scheduled briefing. (NOTE: The Board extends the courtesy of offering a briefing to any respondent who is not selected for funding; the 10-day time frame must be adhered to only if a respondent is considering an appeal.) A copy of the complete appeal process will be provided upon request.

RESPONSE CHECKLIST AND ORDER OF SUBMISSION

The proposal must be submitted in order as Attachments:

- A. Proposal Cover Sheet
- B. Proposal for TRS Assessor Services
- C. Certification of Bidder
- D. Certification Regarding Debarment
- E. Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace
- F. Certification Regarding Lobbying
- G. Certification Regarding Conflict of Interest
- H. Texas Corporate Franchise Tax Certification

Submit the following item as Additional Attachment in the bidder's response.

- I. Non-Discrimination Statement/Policy (Please attach this information as Attachment I)