



Chatham County, NC

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Title:	Vote on a request to approve competitive bid exemption and sole source for Chatham County Partnership for Children in the amount of \$100,000 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the early childhood landscape in Chatham County and develop an action plan with recommendations for improving early childhood care, development, and learning throughout the relevant Chatham County systems.		

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Vote on a request to approve competitive bid exemption and sole source for Chatham County Partnership for Children in the amount of \$100,000 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the early childhood landscape in Chatham County and develop an action plan with recommendations for improving early childhood care, development, and learning throughout the relevant Chatham County systems.

Introduction/Background: Widely recognized is the fact that childcare and early learning services and the environment of early childhood development have been, and remain, negatively impacted resulting from the global pandemic. In keeping with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) eligibility standards, efforts to improve childcare and early learning service, broadly and within disparately impacted communities, is an enumerated objective and eligible use of ARPA funding.

Informed by community input, staff review, and Chatham County Board of Commissioners goals and priorities with respect to the use of ARPA funds allocated to the county, conducting a comprehensive study of the early childhood landscape and needs in Chatham County is a prioritized project within the county's adopted ARPA plan.

Taking direction by the Board of Commissioners, through the adoption of the county's ARPA plan, staff seeks to advance this project by engaging a qualified subject matter expert organization to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the early childhood landscape in Chatham County and develop an action plan with recommendations for improving early childhood care, development, and learning throughout the relevant systems present in Chatham County (the Project).

In its review, staff has found, and contends, there is only one subject matter expert organization that can reasonably and responsibly perform to the expectations of this project. Owing to its historic, community, and institutional knowledge and engagement; past demonstrated experience; specialized accesses to the wide-ranging service providers, resources, and clients; and the unique nature of the

services being sought; Chatham County Partnership is exclusively qualified and capable of executing the stated project.

Discussion/Analysis: Incorporated in 1994, Chatham County Partnership for Children (Partnership) is Chatham County's Smart Start administrative agency and is the home of Child Care Resource & Referral, NC Pre-K, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and Raising a Reader. Partnership's local, state, and national resources and partners is comprehensive and longstanding. These include, but are not limited to:

LOCAL PARTNERS

- Chatham County Schools <<http://www.chatham.k12.nc.us/>>
- Chatham Reads <<http://www.chathameducationfoundation.org/chatham-reads>>
- Chatham County Public Health Department <<http://www.chathamnc.org/Index.aspx?page=124>>
- Families and Communities Rising, Inc. / KidSCOpe <<http://chtop.org/Programs/KidSCOpe.html>>
- Central Carolina Community College
- Chatham Transit Network <<http://www.chathamtransit.org/>>
- Chatham County Sheriffs Office <<http://www.chathamnc.org/sheriff>>
- Chatham County Department of Social Services <<http://www.chathamnc.org/Index.aspx?page=130>>
- Communities in Schools of Chatham County <<https://cischatham.org/>>
- Hispanic Liaison <<http://www.evhnc.org/>>
- Chatham County Literacy Council <<http://chathamliteracy.org/>>
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension <<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/>>
- Chatham Education Foundation
- United Way of Chatham County <<http://unitedwayofchathamcounty.org/>>
- Chatham County Chamber of Commerce

STATEWIDE PARTNERS

- North Carolina Partnership for Children <<http://www.ncsmartstart.org/>> (NC Smart Start)
- Division of Child Development and Early Education <<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/home.asp>> (DCDEE)
- North Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral Council <<http://childcarerrnc.org/>>
- North Carolina DHHS Special Nutrition Services Division
- NC Pre-K <http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/mb_ncprek.asp> indergarten, a section of DCDEE
- Telamon Head Start <<http://www.telamon.org/north-carolina-head-start.aspx>>
- NC Child (Advocacy) <<http://www.ncchild.org/action>>
- NC Early Childhood Foundation
- Child Care Resources, Inc.
- Child Care Services Association
- Toxic Free NC <<http://www.toxicfreenc.org/>>
- Duke Center for Child and Family Policy

NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Raising a Reader <<http://www.raisingareader.org/>>
- Child Care Aware <<http://childcareaware.org/>>
- Dolly Parton Foundation

OTHER RESOURCES

- Born Learning <<http://bornlearning.org/>>
- Center on the Developing Child <<http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/>>
- Child Trauma Academy <<http://childtrauma.org/>>

- National Center for Children Exposed to Violence <<http://www.nccev.org/>> (NCCEV)
- The Heckman Equation James Heckman <<http://www.heckmanequation.org/>>
- Child Trauma Academy <<http://www.childtrauma.org/>>
- Child Witness to Violence Project <<http://www.childwitnessstoviolence.org/>>
- Circle of Security <<http://www.circleofsecurity.org/>>
- The Fred Rogers Company <<http://www.fci.org/>>
- Incredible Years Parenting Education Program <<http://www.incredibleyears.com/>>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network <<http://www.nctsn.org/>>
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child <<http://www.developingchild.net/>>
- Zero to Three <<http://www.zerotothree.org/>>

Partnership has unique access to key constituents, stakeholders, and partners in the early childhood education sector across Chatham County by virtue of its work as the county's Smart Start agency, Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, and Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsoring Organization, along with other program services. Key constituents for this project include parents/caregivers using or seeking early care and education for their children and childcare providers of quality early care and education services; both are the primary direct recipients of services provided by Partnership. Partnership's work relies on relationship-based strategies of collaboration and has developed longstanding supportive relationships across multiple sectors of these constituents. Child Care providers and their regulatory agencies continually depend on the Partnership for the training and resources required to maintain licensure and meet quality early childhood education expectations. The collaborative approach of Partnership for Children has also established connections through shared work and goal setting with human service agencies and nonprofits across Chatham; see list above of these key partners.

Along with its extensive experience and longstanding engagement within the early childhood community, its partnerships and resources, and its specific expertise in the field relevant to the Project; Partnership has experience expressly germane to the Project, as Partnership completed a similar Chatham County study in 2008. This, in addition to the foregoing, lends strongly to the notion of Partnership being the exclusive entity to provide the services for this Project sought by the county.

In the context of this Project, what propels Partnership from the "notion" of exclusivity to being a valid sole source is the necessity for Partnership to be the leading agent in the Project. If any other organization were considered to perform the work called for by the Project, that organization, by nature of the subject matter and the community being studied, would be compelled to contract with Partnership to engage with and complete the Project fully and responsibly. In other words, any other organization hired for the Project would subsequently hire Partnership to be the leading agent to complete the Project; thus, establishing an unnecessary "middleman," adding limited value to the process.

Accordingly, for the purposes of advancing the Project, deeming Partnership a sole source vendor is being requested - excluding the procurement of Partnership's services for the Project from the competitive bid requirement in keeping with county purchasing policy and NC G.S. 143-129(e)(6).

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: Providing high-quality education and community options for all ages and incomes that positively impact on indicators such as graduation rates and income level is a stated objective of the Comprehensive Plan. The subject project is intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the county's early childhood environment, and to offer recommendations for improving this environment to advance this objective.

How does this relate to ARPA: This project is specifically identified in the ARPA plan adopted by the Board of Commissioners and is an eligible ARPA expense according to federal guidelines.

Budgetary Impact: The project will have no operating budget impact, as this project is proposed to be funded through ARPA Enabled funds, which are apart from the county's annual operating revenue. Conceivably, recommendations arising from this project, if implemented, could have an impact on the county's annual operating budget.

Recommendation: Approve competitive bid exemption and sole source for Chatham County Partnership for Children in the amount of \$100,000 to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the early childhood landscape in Chatham County and develop an action plan with recommendations for improving early childhood care, development, and learning throughout the relevant Chatham County systems