

Request for Proposal

Supporting the Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force

Commonwealth Corporation Foundation

Background

Massachusetts is striving to lead the nation in early education and child care access, affordability, equity, and quality.

Governor Healey signed Executive Order No. 625 in January 16th of 2024, Establishing An Inter-Agency Task Force on Ensuring Affordable, High Quality Child Care, which seeks to: unleash the potential of every child while improving the stability of the system for providers, enhance pay and benefits for a workforce overwhelmingly comprised of women and many people of color, and strengthen access and reliability for businesses whose employees count on child care to go to work every day.

The Executive Order established the Task Force, co-chaired by the Secretaries of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Economic Development, to advise the Healey-Driscoll Administration on the development of a whole-of-government approach to increasing access to affordable, high-quality early education and care.

In order to support the work of the Task Force, Commonwealth Corporation Foundation is seeking a qualified vendor to carry out key deliverables to support this effort. Commonwealth Corporation Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports Commonwealth Corporation, and invests in innovative partnerships with industry, education, and workforce organizations to help employers and workers thrive in Massachusetts' dynamic economy.

In partnership and consultation with the Task Force co-chairs, Commonwealth Corporation Foundation will set the scope and direct the work of the selected vendor. Day-to-day management of the work of the vendor will be provided by Commonwealth Corporation Foundation in partnership with Executive Office of Education (EOE) Undersecretary & Chief Operating Officer and in coordination with the key leadership provided by the Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development (EOLWD), the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), and the Department of Early Education & Care (EEC) Commissioner. Contracting and payment under the terms of any agreement with a selected vendor will be led by Commonwealth Corporation Foundation.

The project is estimated to begin in May 2024 and the first phase of the project is expected to run through December 2024. Depending on available funding, the status of the work completed, and any additional needs identified in partnership with the Task Force, there may be an opportunity to extend the engagement. This initial phase of the project plan will consist of the following four steps: (1) information gathering and community engagement through public listening sessions, (2) preparation of an interim report to be shared with Commonwealth Corporation Foundation and Task Force Leadership, (3) policy solution

development and additional community engagement, and (4) preparation of final report likewise to be share with Commonwealth Corporation Foundation and Task Force leadership.

The selected vendor will provide project management, facilitation, and report drafting support to advance these five priority areas set forth in the Executive Order:

1. Surveying practices of other states in reducing costs, increasing capacity, and improving quality of child care providers, identifying best practices, and making recommendations for how such practices could be adopted in Massachusetts;
2. Assessing how better coordination among state agencies and their partners could support families in accessing child care that meets their needs, including through technology improvements;
3. Identifying resources for building capacity and increasing affordability in the child care system (through both center-based and family child care), including from the federal government, the philanthropic community, and employers, which may include exploring incentives for employers to assist employees with child care;
4. Identifying strategies to recruit, train, upskill, and retain members of the child care workforce, including by expanding apprenticeship initiatives, higher education programs, related training opportunities, and potential new initiatives;
5. Reviewing existing assets to identify potential locations to establish center-based child care, which shall include consulting with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance and other partners identified throughout the course of this project regarding their work identifying surplus and underutilized land for housing pursuant to Executive Order No. 623.

The Task Force has established five (5) working groups to drive the work across each of these priority areas.

Scope of support

Commonwealth Corporation Foundation is seeking a consultant to assist with project management, facilitation, and report drafting (including recommendations) in order to advance the work of the Task Force.

Deliverables

As directed by Commonwealth Corporation Foundation, in collaboration with the Task Force co-chairs and EOE Undersecretary & Chief Operating Officer, the selected vendor will complete the following deliverables:

1. **Tracking:** Establish a system to track all activities necessary to accomplish the objectives of the Task Force over the course of the first phase of this initiative
2. **Meeting support:** Assist in scheduling and facilitating Task Force and stakeholder meetings and help create meeting materials in advance of the meetings (agendas, presentation slides, and pre-read material). The selected vendor will be expected to prepare for, facilitate, and provide follow up for at minimum the following meetings, as directed by the Commonwealth Corporation Foundation in partnership with the Task Force:
 - Weekly meeting with the EOE Undersecretary & Chief Operating Officer and other staff
 - Monthly Task Force meetings
 - Working Group meetings
 - At least five (5) stakeholder engagement sessions in different regions of the state and/or hosted virtually

The vendor will also take and maintain meeting notes and prepare summaries of information arising in the meetings and stakeholder sessions

3. **Communications:** In consultation with Commonwealth Corporation Foundation, draft and coordinate communications with Task Force members, working group members, and communications staff to keep the Administration's [Task Force website](#) updated with key developments, including details about stakeholder listening sessions
4. **Research:** Conduct supplemental research into policies being implemented in other states and internationally related to early education and child care to identify best practices and strategies
5. **Interim report:** Following the stakeholder engagement sessions and initial Task Force meetings, the project management team will draft then finalize, by August 31, 2024, an Interim Report that will:
 - a. Capture the research on practices in other states and countries, including identification of recommended best practices
 - b. Summarize the current strategies being employed by the Commonwealth to tackle each of the 5 identified priority objectives, and

- c. Detail the information and ideas collected through the stakeholder engagement sessions
- d. Any additional reporting requirements that may be required by grantmakers or other funders.

As directed by the Commonwealth Corporation Foundation, confidential drafts of the Interim Report will be shared with the Task Force for feedback, review, and approval before the Interim Report is finalized and shared with the Governor. Task Force meetings in the fall will then be devoted to identifying and developing new policy solutions to supplement the existing strategies. The selected vendor will also facilitate additional opportunities to gather stakeholder feedback on the developing proposals.

6. **Final report:** The fall meetings and stakeholder engagement will culminate in the consultant's preparation of a Final Report, which will build on the Interim Report and feature recommendations, including best practices, potential pilot programs, and proposed investments. Drafts of the Final Report will be shared with the Task Force members for feedback, review, and approval before it is shared with the Governor. Any recommendations that require funding to implement must be finalized in November in order to be considered as part of the development of the Governor's FY26 budget.

Timeline and budget

The first phase of this engagement is designed to correspond with the calendar year, with an anticipated start date as early as May 1, 2024, and is expected to conclude on December 31, 2024.

The estimated budget for the first phase of this project is \$400-500,000.

Selection criteria

Through this Request for Quotes, Commonwealth Corporation Foundation is seeking proposals from vendors with project management experience, preferably including knowledge of and experience in the early education and childcare and the Massachusetts workforce landscape, as well as experience working with Massachusetts state agencies and across secretariats.

Submission details

Deadline for submission: **5:00 PM on Friday, May 10, 2024**

Interested applicants should submit a proposal that includes:

- ✓ Resumes of staff that will be assigned to work on this project
- ✓ At least one reference of organizations for which you have provided consulting services similar to those being requested in this RFP
- ✓ A narrative of ten pages or less that responds to the following questions:

- **Project Management Experience: A description of your experience in providing project management to organizations or initiatives similar to the Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force**
 - a. Please describe your approach to project management, and how you would apply your approach to this initiative.
 - b. Please provide a specific example of an organization or initiative that you partnered with to provide project management services. Please describe how you have project managed several different workstreams to achieve a set of deliverables.
- **Early Education, Workforce, and Intergovernmental Experience: A description of your experience working on topics related to the sector and with state agencies**
 - a. Please describe your experience or expertise with the early education or child care landscape
 - b. Please briefly describe your experience with and knowledge of the Massachusetts workforce landscape, including how your experience aligns with the Administration's recently announced [workforce agenda](#)
 - c. Please describe your experience or expertise with state agencies and intergovernmental projects
- **Hours, Rates & Timeline**
 - a. Please provide us with an estimate of the hours that you anticipate to spend on this project
 - b. Please provide us with information about your hourly rates OR a proposed deliverable-based payment schedule
 - c. Please confirm that staff is available to work on the project between approximately May 2024 through December 2024
- **Security & Confidentiality**
 - a. The Selected Vendor shall comply fully with all Commonwealth Corporation Foundation security procedures, including confidentiality and information technology policies.
 - b. As this engagement contemplates a close working relationship between the Task Force and the selected vendor, the Selected Vendor may be required to comply with all Commonwealth security and confidentiality procedures and protocols.
 - c. Please confirm that you will be able to comply with, at minimum, all Commonwealth of Massachusetts security and technology standards, available at: www.mass.gov/doc/is000-enterprise-information-security-policy/download.

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility:** In partnership with the Task Force, Commonwealth Corporation Foundation values facilitating the fullest possible participation in this effort and seeks to conduct an inclusive procurement that offers full access and equity of opportunity for businesses as diverse as the people of the Commonwealth. Small, diverse, and veteran-and minority- owned businesses are encouraged to submit bids.

Submission Instructions:

- Deadline for Submission:** No later than 5:00 p.m. on **5/10/2024**
- Acceptable forms of delivery:** E-mail
- Send complete proposal to:** amallon@commcorpfoundation.org

Please direct any questions to: Alanna Mallon by email at amallon@commcorpfoundation.org

RFP Proposed Timeline

Date	Activity
April 23, 2024	RFP released
May 10, 2024	Deadline for submission of responses to the RFP
May 13, 2024	Selection of vendor
May 20, 2024	Vendor begins to implement scope of work
December 31, 2024	End of initial contract

In deciding which proposal should be approved, the Committee will consider the thoroughness and completeness of the response, the vendor’s experience, references, and any other relevant factors.

Commonwealth Corporation Foundation reserves the right to contact applicants for clarification or negotiation, to extend or revise any deadline, and to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the best interest of the Foundation.

Any contract award made pursuant to this RFP shall be subject to the following order of precedence: (1) the Commonwealth Corporation Foundation Standard Terms and Conditions; (2) the Statement of Work negotiated by the Parties ; (3) this Request for Quotes; and (4) other negotiated terms and conditions expressly agreed to in writing between the Parties, as may be periodically amended. Commonwealth Corporation Foundation reserves the right to negotiate any contract terms with the selected vendor.