

Request for Proposal: Grant Writer for Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

August 29, 2022

Issued by: Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

Representative: Anne Lance, Executive Director, alance@teaching-tree.org, (970) 493-2628

Introduction

Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center is a nonprofit organization that provides affordable, quality early childhood care and education for low- and middle-income families in Larimer County. The organization has centers in Loveland and Fort Collins and serves 400 children a year.

Teaching Tree is accepting proposals to find a qualified Grant Writer, to work on contract, part-time, on an ongoing basis, to help Teaching Tree secure grant funds to support operations, programs, and capital needs.

Our goals for the Grant Writer are to work on contract (from his/her own work environment) to identify, define and develop grant funding sources to support the organization's childcare center operations, programs, and capital needs. The Grant Writer will work with the Executive Director and/or Resource Development Director to develop, write, and submit grant proposals to local, state, and private funding agencies. On very rare occasions, the Grant Writer may also prepare grant applications for federal funding.

In tandem with program administrators, the Grant Writer will also summarize outcomes data and report on the performance of program activities that are funded by federal, state, and private funding agencies.

This Request for Proposal is to find an experienced grant writer who will provide the best overall value and results for our organization.

Background

Teaching Tree was founded as United Day Care Center in 1970 to address the need in Fort Collins, Colo., for affordable, quality child care for our city's low- and middle-income families. We became aware of a similar need in Loveland and, in 1988, opened a second center there. In 2010, we changed our name to Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center, to better convey what we do: promote children's growth, development, and school readiness. In 2020, as Teaching Tree began its 50th year, we added 6 new classrooms to our Fort Collins center, more than doubling our licensed capacity from 101 to 215 children. Teaching Tree is Larimer County's largest provider of affordable, quality early childhood care and education. Our trained professionals work closely with families to promote children's social-emotional development and readiness for school, preparing them to succeed in school and, ultimately, in life. We maintain a Level 4 Colorado Shines rating, indicating exceptional quality in the areas of workforce qualifications and professional development; family partnerships; leadership, management and administration; learning environment; and child health.

Teaching Tree's mission is to provide affordable, quality early childhood care and educational programs in a culturally and economically diverse environment, ensuring a climate for individual growth, comfort, and security. Our philosophy is to provide a stimulating environment for preschool children and to help each child develop his or her own skills according to their individual capabilities. We believe that children learn and grow best in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust and when they are actively engaged in their environment. Therefore, we strive to provide a wide range of hands-on activities throughout the day that will contribute to all areas of their growth and development. Teachers are trained in and implement the evidence-based Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in

Infants and Young Children, The Creative Curriculum and its linked assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD.

We continually work toward achieving two foremost goals: (1) Children will achieve developmental milestones that will prepare them to enter kindergarten ready to learn. (2.) Families will receive affordable, quality child care that will allow them to work toward or maintain self-sufficiency.

Project Description

We are seeking a Grant Writer who will:

- Research and identify new government, corporate, foundation, and private funding prospects to match Teaching Tree's priorities;
- Generate high-quality proposals, narratives, applications, and supporting documents to new and existing funders;
- Generate revenues for Teaching Tree programs through timely submission of well-researched, well written and well-documented grant proposals;
- Maintain primary responsibility for grant schedule, tracking, and preparing grant reports;
- Work with appropriate personnel to research, develop, write and submit letters of inquiry, grant proposals, and grant reports;
- Coordinate and follow-up with Executive Director on the progress of submitted proposals and any issues that may arise with a particular grant;
- Create and regularly update a grant submission-, award-, and report plan and regularly apprise Executive Director of grant activity;
- Develop and maintain electronic files on pending grants, contracts, and reports;
- Remain up-to-date on current issues relative to grant proposals;
- Inform Executive Director and answer questions regarding allowability of proposed expenditures related to each grant;
- Occasionally provide other writing services as requested. Examples of other writing services are writing copy for annual appeal letters and collateral materials, a brief annual report, text for presentations, and a brief bi-annual newsletter.

The number of hours required will vary each month, depending on grants and reports that are due in a particular month. On average the Grant Writer will work 15-40 hours per month, with a heavier workload during winter months and a lighter one during summer months. The majority of grant requests will be to the same funders each year. For most requests, the Grant Writer will update already established general operating and program/project grant proposals and will obtain required budgets and attachments from the Executive Director. In general, grant requests will range in size from \$1,000 to \$150,000. In 2021, for example, Teaching Tree applied for 43 grants totaling \$523,326 and received 24 grants totaling \$488,148. As of 8/29/22, Teaching Tree had applied for 33 grants totaling \$623,558 and had received 20 grants totaling \$550,594; \$165,000 in requests are pending. The majority of grant activity occurs January through May, with January, April, and May tending to be the busiest months. Historically, grant activity from June through December is fairly light.

Since the COVID pandemic began, new grant opportunities have arisen to support childcare center operations and workforce stabilization and retention. It is not yet known how far into the future these COVID-related grant opportunities will continue.

We have a budget of \$25,000-\$30,000 for this contract position, but may be willing to spend more on the services of the right vendor. We would like to employ a contractor who has experience working with nonprofits, has a proven track record of success, and is a good fit with the culture of our organization.

Minimum Education, Skills and Abilities

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required, preferably in a field related to the grant writing position;
- Grant writing experience, preferably with a nonprofit and/or with experience in Early Childhood Education (ECE);
- Experience that demonstrates a proven track record of securing new funding opportunities; comprehensive knowledge of research, and the ability to distinguish and identify opportunities for Teaching Tree programs and activities;
- Excellent writing, verbal and organization skills;
- Excellent computer skills (Microsoft Office Word, PowerPoint and Excel);
- Motivated self-starter with the ability to work collaboratively and independently.

Preferred Education, Skills and Grant Management Experience

- 3 to 5 years of experience as a successful grant writer;
- Helping to develop a program budget for grants;
- Knowledge of grant application process, scoring criteria, and funding cycles;
- Project management and teamwork skills.

Proposal Guidelines

Your proposal should follow the format below:

- Executive summary
- Background information about your business
- Why we should choose you over other vendors
- Relevant experience that will help you deliver our project
- A list of similar projects you have done or are currently doing for other clients
- Your rate structure and a proposed Scope of Work
- References
- Your name and contact details
- Any terms or conditions for working with you.

Please submit your proposal in .pdf format to Anne Lance, alance@teaching-tree.org, by Sept. 15, 2022.

Selection Criteria

Teaching Tree's administrative team will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to the requirements outlined in this RFP
- Relevant past experience and performance
- Testimonials from current and/or past clients
- Quoted cost of the project

Teaching Tree reserves the right to award the contract to the vendor that represents the best value to the organization, as determined by the selection criteria listed above.

RFP and Project Timelines

Teaching Tree's timeline for the RFP and project is as follows:

- Request for proposal issuance: 8/29/22
- Deadline for proposal submission: 9/15/22
- Proposal Screening: 9/16/22 to 9/30/22
- Candidate Interviews: 10/1/22 to 10/14/22
- Notification of Contract Recipient: 10/28/22

- Signed Contract by: 11/1/22
- Start contract: Negotiable, but no later than 1/2/23*

* This is a contract position that may commence as early as in November or December 2022. Teaching Tree's current grant writer will retire on 2/1/23. She will be available to work with the new grant writer in Nov. and Dec. 2022 and Jan. 2023, to provide grant history background, grant files, Teaching Strategies GOLD outcomes, and other information pertinent to the job.

Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center is committed to equal employment opportunity and to compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws.