



Request For Proposals

K-2 Afterschool Program Design Services
Steps to Success, Inc. • P.O. Box 470421, Brookline, MA 02447

PROPOSALS DUE BY: January 20, 2025

Our Mission

The mission of Steps to Success is to promote equity for students from low-income families in Brookline by expanding their horizons, building upon their skills, and supporting their educational journey to maximize their life choices.

About Steps to Success

So much of what there is to learn about Steps to Success (Steps) starts with our student-centered mission. It's why we lead with it—on our website, in conversations with community partners and donors, to the families we serve (and, yes, even in the Request for Proposals we write.) That's how strongly we believe in it.

Since 2001, Steps has served more than 5,000 low-income students from Brookline, providing them with the support they need to thrive throughout their educational journey and beyond. With services and resources like afterschool programs, vacation programs and camp access, career readiness through paid internships and workshops, and college success through advising, mentoring, and financial aid access, Steps students and their families gain access to the tools they need to “level the playing field.” We know that supporting a student wholly involves multiple points of contact and connection with them and their families, so we partner with local organizations that offer housing and other financial resources. Steps also provides family education, English language classes, and other direct services to close the opportunity gap.

The vast majority of the youth Steps serves live in Brookline public housing. Most are students of color and will be first-generation college students. The truth is that our vital programming helps students overcome obstacles that exist through unjust societal systems and policies. Steps helps students navigate these systemic barriers, helping to close the opportunity gap that exists between low-income students and their higher-income peers.

We have built deep, trusted relationships with students and their families for more than 20 years—and we love seeing Steps alumni go on to accomplish big, impactful things in this world. Our research-driven, student-centered approach makes a significant difference in the lives of young people.

Project Overview

Steps is dedicated to ensuring that all Brookline children have access to quality afterschool programming, regardless of their background or household income. We are seeking a qualified consultant to design an afterschool program tailored to the needs of students in kindergarten through second grade (K-2). While there are after-school program options for early elementary school students in town, many are beyond the financial reach of the families we serve and not designed explicitly to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of the population we serve. **Our goal, then, is to create a K-2 program that fosters whole-child growth for our students, with a particular emphasis on equitable and inclusive classroom practices.**

Currently, our afterschool programming serves Steps students in 3rd through 8th grade. This programming involves both the Steps, Inc.-funded afterschool program and the in-school support of the Public Schools of Brookline [PSB] through district-funded advisors. Although at this time, our K-2 programming would be planned and executed without the in-school support of PSB, we do have long-term hope for the inclusion of PSB advisors.

We know that the earlier our support of students and their families begins, the better able we will be to support them in their pursuit of post-secondary success. **As such, we look to design and implement K-2 programming that will:**

Expand horizons, through programming that builds a strong foundation and connections to a community for students and their families that help them better withstand academic and social challenges.

Build skills, through programming that provides greater opportunity to close learning gaps and build interest and strengths.

Support our students' educational journeys, as the relationships created through early learning experiences foster appreciation for learning and academic success.

Project Goals

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from experienced consultants who can design an engaging, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate afterschool program for early elementary learners. The program should align with our organization's mission to promote educational equity, prepare students for academic and personal success, and cater to the diverse needs of students from under-resourced families.

Steps' current afterschool programming for grades 3-5 serves roughly 40-45 students per year, and our goal would be to serve a similar number of students in grades K-2. Currently, the 3rd-5th grade program has an operating budget of approximately \$80,000/year, inclusive of staffing, materials, and food costs, and our goal is to mirror these costs in the implementation of the new K-2 program.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will be responsible for 3 key components of work:

1. Needs Assessment:

- Reviewing the previous K-2 consulting work
- Conducting a current assessment of the current afterschool needs for Steps students in grades K-2, including a review of existing resources (including the work of prior consultants and focus groups), and the challenges and opportunities within the Brookline community.

2. Program Design:

- Developing a comprehensive K-2 afterschool program that includes academic support, enrichment activities, and social-emotional learning components.
- Ensuring the program is culturally responsive, accessible, and inclusive of all students, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.
- Incorporating strategies to engage families and caregivers in the program.

3. Implementation Plan:

- Creating a detailed plan for program implementation, including a timeline, required resources, and staffing needs.
- Drafting a comprehensive budget in alignment with the recommended program.
- Developing metrics for evaluating the success of the program and making adjustments as needed.

Based on Steps' evaluation of the proposed program design, implementation plan, and the background of the consultant, the consultant may also be contracted to provide professional development support to staff.

4. Professional Development:

- Providing training and resources for afterschool staff to effectively deliver the program.
- Offering ongoing support and guidance during the initial stages of implementation.

Qualifications

The ideal consultant will have:

- A solid understanding of the Brookline/Boston area
- A background in early childhood education and after-school programming
- Experience working with diverse student populations and a commitment to educational equity and inclusive classroom practices
- A track record of designing and implementing successful programs for young children
- Excellent communication and project management skills

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following:

1. **Cover Letter:**
 - A brief introduction to the consultant or consulting firm, including relevant experience and qualifications.
2. **Proposed Approach:**
 - A description of the methodology and approach you will take to complete the project, including how you will ensure the program meets the needs of our students.
3. **Work Plan and Timeline:**
 - A work plan with key milestones, deliverables, and a timeline for the project.
 - An overview of the channels of communication planned to be used to keep Steps abreast of the project's progress toward completion.
4. **Budget:**
 - A comprehensive budget proposal for the scope of work, including a breakdown of costs.
 - i. This budget should be expressly broken down by each of the 4 aforementioned sections of the scope of work.
5. **References:**
 - Contact information for at least three references from similar projects.
6. **Sample Work:**
 - Examples of previous work relevant to this project.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the project and the needs of the target population.
- Experience and qualifications.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach.
- Alignment with the Steps' mission and values.
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposal.

Submission Guidelines

- Only bidders who can meet all five metrics in the evaluation criteria section should submit a proposal.
- Proposals must be sent in by January 20, 2025. We ask that bidders who are interested in submitting a proposal should inform Nia Jacobs, Executive Director, at njacobs@stepstosuccessbrookline.org no later than January 10, 2025.
- Please include samples, where applicable, and professional references with your proposal.
- A proposed schedule must be included and clearly expressed.

Target Deliverable Schedule

Final Project Due: April 2025

Steps would like to officially launch a pilot of its K-2 programming in the fall of 2025. A spring conclusion of this project will allow the time necessary to secure program locations, key partners, required licensure, etc.

Budget Considerations

Total budget not to exceed \$20,000, including travel costs, fees, and any other expenditures related to the scope of work. Steps is committed to the success of this new programming and willing to invest in the work needed to ensure it is as successful as possible. That said, as a non-profit organization, every dollar counts. We value the hard work of our partners and so also ask that bidders provide a detailed cost breakdown.

Contact Information

For questions regarding this RFP, contact Nia Jacobs, Executive Director, at njacobs@stepstosuccessbrookline.org or (617) 713-5310. Thank you!