

Request for Proposals

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Application Release Date: Monday, March 16, 2026

Application Due Date & Time: Monday, March 30, 2026, 11:59PM ET

Anticipated Contract Term: 6 months

Anticipated Award: No more than \$250,000

Announcement Date: On or around April 20, 2026

Maximum Number of Contracts Awarded: 1

Questions: Questions regarding this application must be transmitted in writing to mayorsfundtoadvancenyc@mayorsfund.nyc.gov by 9:00 am on Monday March 23rd, 2026. Answers will be posted on www.nyc.gov/fund on or about Tuesday, March 24th, 2026

II. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

General Guidelines:

All Proposals must be submitted utilizing the following [link](#):

- Proposals received after the Proposal Due Date and Time are late and shall not be accepted.
- Please allow sufficient time to complete and submit Proposals, which includes entering information & uploading documents
- Providers are responsible for the timely electronic submission of proposals. It is strongly recommended that Providers complete and submit their Proposals at least 24 hours in advance of the Proposal Due Date and Time.

Required Documents (**incomplete applications will not be considered**):

- Application Cover Sheet
- Responses to Application Questions
- Budget: Project Budget and your organization's annual budget for the last 2 years
- Key Staff Resumes: Resumes and/or Description of Qualifications for Key Staff Positions
- Organizational Chart: Include the Program Organizational Chart, showing how the proposed services fit into your organization
- Copy of organization's malpractice insurance policy
- [Doing Business Data Form](#)
- Copy of your W-9
- 501 (c)(3) Letter of Determination (If Applicable)

Technical Requirements

- Formatting requirements:
 - 12pt font, 1-inch margins
 - Page numbers
 - Name of applying organization at the top of every document

III. PROGRAM BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The Mamdani Administration is committed to delivering universal child care to all New Yorkers, and has empowered the Mayor’s Office of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (MOCCECE) to advance this priority. The role of MOCCECE is to lead strategy and coordinate planning among city agencies; foster innovation in partnership with families, providers, experts, and the private sector; and promote effective communication, policy advocacy, and public engagement. MOCCECE serves as a central hub for citywide policy implementation and coordination across more than a dozen agencies, including New York City Public Schools, the Administration for Children’s Services, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Social Services, and other City agencies and offices, and fosters strategic partnerships with all levels of government, private entities, nonprofits, and foundations. MOCCECE works closely with families and providers to ensure their voices are represented in the design and implementation of City policy and programs.

As the City prepares to expand its early care and education program offerings for children from birth to five, it is critical that these programs are tailored to the diverse needs of New York City families.

To enable this, the City must better understand family preferences and values and must tailor its messaging and branding to align with these priorities. In recent years, the City has had many different programs that all go by different names (e.g., 3-K, Pre-K, EarlyLearn, Bright Starts, CCAP, Head Start, 2-K) and it is not necessarily clear to families what these different programs mean or how they fit together. City-funded early childhood services are offered through a mixed delivery system comprised of schools, thousands of contracted child care providers and affiliated partners, who do not consistently use and reference the same brands.

As the City works toward a fully universal child care system, it is critical that the City streamlines its branding and messaging to clarify the types of early care and education programming available to families in a manner that is easily identifiable and accessible, and with language and values that speak to family priorities. Effective family outreach and engagement will encourage more children and families to access and benefit from the City’s early childhood programs and services.

Program Partners

- MOCCECE
- New York City Public Schools
- Administration for Children’s Services

- Other key agencies and City Hall partners

IV. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

On behalf of MOCCECE, the Mayor's Fund is seeking a vendor to conduct research to inform the branding and messaging for the City's early care and education programs, make branding recommendations and create brand assets that align to the findings from the research, and develop a massive marketing campaign to bring families into the City's early childhood system.

At the foundation of this research must be family voice and values.

Grounding outreach and collateral in this research will help ensure that the families who need early education services most are hearing and seeing messages that move them to enroll.

The City requires a compelling, unified brand that encompasses all publicly-funded early care and education programs for children under five. Programs that already have strong-brand recognition, such as 3-K and Pre-K, may keep their sub-brands, but all branding should ultimately align under a single identity. That identity will be shaped by input from focus groups and other research, both qualitative and quantitative, along with engagement from child care providers and educators.

The selected vendor will be responsible for:

- Conducting a minimum of 8-10 focus groups with a diverse mix of families across geographies, ethnic and cultural groups, and socioeconomic status. Focus group composition and content should be informed by the vendor's engagement with MOCCECE and other agency partners. The vendor should be equipped to conduct focus groups in multiple languages, including at least English and Spanish
- Conducting a minimum of 5-7 focus groups with a diverse mix of early childhood providers and educators. Focus group composition and content should be informed by the vendor's engagement with MOCCECE and other agency partners. The vendor should be equipped to conduct focus groups in multiple languages, including at least English and Spanish
- Interviewing 10-12 additional key stakeholders, including MOCCECE and City agency leaders, other policymakers, key advocates, and other external partners
- Synthesizing findings from these focus groups and interviews
- Analyzing and incorporating findings from other market research, including but not limited to those conducted by MOCCECE, City agencies, and their partners
- Identifying additional market research needs for the City and its partners to complete to inform branding messaging
- Conducting a brand audit by cataloguing and assessing all existing early care and education branding and messaging
- Developing multiple proposals for future-state branding and messaging
- Message-testing proposals with key stakeholders, including City agency staff, families, and providers

- Developing final messaging and branding guidelines that incorporate key feedback
- Developing brand assets

The Mayor’s Fund will contract with the awarded vendor, with the MOCCECE as the initiative manager. The vendor will report to MOCCECE, though multiple City agencies will have input into the project.

V. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

Once selected, the awarded vendor will be responsible for completing and reporting the following deliverables over an approximately 5-month period. Vendor should plan for work to begin between May 15 and June 1, or as soon as contracting is complete following an approximately April 6 award confirmation. Work must be completed in fall 2026 to be utilized in marketing campaigns for the 2027-28 school year.

Once selected, vendor will be responsible for developing a workplan and timeline that includes conducting market research over the summer and ensures finalized branding and messaging guidelines are delivered to MOCCECE by the mid-to-end of October.

VI. APPLICATION EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated against the criteria set out below. The process does not assign points to individual questions, but instead awards a maximum score for each evaluation criterion.

Criteria 1	Experience family-based branding research and engagement	30 points
Criteria 2	Proven track record for developing successful branding and messaging campaigns	30 points
Criteria 3	Experience partnering with and knowledge about New York City government	15 points
Criteria 4	Cultural and linguistic competence to conduct culturally-relevant family-focused research	15 points
Criteria 5	Demonstrated project management skills	10 points
	TOTAL	100

VII. APPLICATION MATERIALS & QUESTIONS

- 1) Please describe your experience and approach to facilitating family-based branding engagement strategies.
 - a. Provide examples of similar, relevant past projects.
 - b. Provide examples of how you approach qualitative research.
- 2) Please describe the methods you employ with a client to develop a cohesive brand research process.

- 3) Please detail ways you plan to engage with families and other stakeholders and describe how these touchpoints will be culturally and linguistically responsive to those participating.
- 4) Please describe your experience developing branding and messaging for a public initiative. Include examples in your submission.
- 5) Please describe your familiarity with New York City government, New York City's publicly-funded early childhood programs, and early care and education generally.
- 6) Please describe the team that will complete this project.
 - a. If you intend to use a subcontractor for any piece of this work, please delineate how responsibilities will be split across parties.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

Award of the contract will be made to the sole vendor whose application best meets the criteria outlined above.

The Mayor's Fund will consider proposals that include a primary vendor and a subcontracted vendor. If your proposal includes a subcontractor, please delineate in the application questions which responsibilities will be completed by each vendor.