



# Request for Qualifications (RFQ): Strategic Communications, Awareness, and Community Engagement Support for Early Learning Initiatives in Bexar County

Release Date: May 22, 2026

Proposal Due Date: June 19, 2026

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## Overview

### About Early Matters San Antonio

Early Matters San Antonio is a collective impact initiative committed to ensuring every child in our region has access to high-quality early childhood education and care. Through partnerships across education, business, philanthropy, and government, the Early Matters collective drives policy change, promotes workforce investment, and expands access to high-quality programs that support children from birth through age five.

**Our bold promise:** All children in San Antonio have strong early learning and development, creating a powerful future for themselves, their families, and the community.

### About the Family Engagement Workgroup

The Family Engagement Workgroup is one of Early Matters San Antonio's core collaborative bodies focused on strengthening how families access information, resources, and support for early learning and development. This workgroup brings together community partners, service providers, and system leaders to advance strategies that empower families as their child's first and most important teacher.

The group is currently focused on increasing family and community awareness of early learning, brain development, and the importance of quality care, while also ensuring families are equipped with practical, strengths-based tools to support learning at home and navigate early learning opportunities across the community.

This RFQ supports multiple initiatives connected to the Early Matters Impact Plan and broader efforts to strengthen family access to high-quality early learning opportunities across Bexar County.



## Project Context

Families across Bexar County often encounter fragmented systems, inconsistent information, and barriers when navigating early learning opportunities and childcare options. At the same time, providers and community partners benefit from coordinated communications efforts that strengthen awareness, participation, and long-term engagement across early childhood initiatives.

Through the collective impact model, Early Matters San Antonio and its partners are advancing initiatives designed to improve family access to information, strengthen awareness of early learning opportunities, and increase participation across the early childhood ecosystem.

To support these efforts, Early Matters San Antonio seeks qualified firms or organizations to provide communications, awareness, and engagement support across two distinct but complementary project tracks:

**Project Track A:** Early Learning Awareness and Engagement Campaign

**Project Track B:** Childcare Search Tool Awareness, Adoption, and Provider Engagement Campaign

Respondents may submit qualifications for:

- Project Track A only
- Project Track B only
- or both project tracks

## Project Track A: Early Learning Awareness and Engagement Campaign

### Background

Bexar County is home to a strong network of early learning programs, services, and community-based efforts supporting young children and their families. Building on this foundation, opportunities exist to further align messaging, increase visibility, and reinforce consistent, family-friendly information across the community.

A coordinated approach can help ensure families encounter clear, engaging, and actionable early learning messages through multiple touchpoints, including trusted community relationships and everyday interactions.



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To address these opportunities, Early Matters San Antonio and its partners are launching a coordinated, community-wide early learning campaign designed to increase awareness, encourage positive early learning behaviors, and provide families with practical tools to support their child’s development.

To guide this work, Early Matters and its partners have selected the Too Small to Fail “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” initiative, a national effort focused on promoting early brain and language development. The campaign encourages parents and caregivers to engage in simple, everyday interactions—talking, reading, and singing—to support their child’s development from birth.

Too Small to Fail provides a robust set of tested messaging, creative assets, and family-facing resources that can be adapted for local implementation. Early Matters is a member of the Talking is Teaching Community Campaign and has access to a comprehensive resource catalog to support this effort.

The goal is to create a coordinated campaign that increases awareness while also providing families with accessible, ready-to-use tools that support early learning in everyday moments.

Early Matters San Antonio is also participating in the Stanford RAPID Community Voices initiative, which will support future family engagement measurement and indicator development efforts connected to this work. While respondents are not expected to define or own long-term population-level outcomes, proposals should include thoughtful approaches to measuring campaign reach, engagement, awareness, and other leading indicators that may help inform broader community learning and evaluation efforts over time.

This campaign will primarily leverage existing Too Small to Fail assets, with select materials lightly adapted to reflect the context of San Antonio and the communities being reached. Materials will be distributed through existing [Early Matters partners](#) and trusted community messengers.

Early Matters is also exploring targeted strategies to reach families in communities identified through [Early Development Instrument](#) (EDI) data, kindergarten readiness trends, and other indicators of vulnerability and opportunity across San Antonio. Previous efforts have successfully utilized geotargeting and community-based outreach to reach families where they are, and similar approaches may be incorporated into this campaign.

Through the collective impact model, priorities and strategies reflected in this RFQ have been shaped through ongoing collaboration with community partners who represent and serve families across Bexar County. These partners bring direct insight from their work with families and communities and play an active role in guiding decisions and validating approaches.



## Scope of Work

Early Matters San Antonio seeks proposals from qualified firms or organizations to support the development and execution of a countywide early learning awareness and engagement campaign aligned with the Too Small to Fail “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” initiative.

The selected firm will provide strategic guidance, creative development, and implementation support across three areas: (1) campaign strategy and media execution, (2) resource development and adaptation, and (3) distribution planning and alignment. Proposals should reflect a coordinated approach that integrates both components to maximize reach, engagement, and impact.

Please refer to the Appendix for links to Too Small to Fail campaign materials, messaging, and existing resources.

## 1. Campaign Strategy and Media Execution

The selected firm will provide a comprehensive campaign strategy and media execution plan designed to create a “surround sound” of early learning messaging across Bexar County.

### **This work will include:**

- Developing an overall campaign strategy, including messaging approach, audience segmentation, and recommended communication channels
- Creating a media plan that includes recommended media mix, phasing, and investment approach
- Leveraging existing English and Spanish Too Small to Fail campaign messaging as the foundation for digital and media content, while providing bilingual (Spanish and English) support for social media posts, captions, and other campaign content, as appropriate
- Adapting and deploying existing Too Small to Fail campaign assets across media channels, including light local adaptation to reflect the context and communities of San Antonio, in alignment with brand guidelines and licensing terms
- Developing and managing a campaign microsite or landing page to support campaign goals and calls to action, as appropriate
- Executing digital and/or paid media campaigns (e.g., social media, digital advertising, geotargeting, or other channels), including setup, management, and performance tracking
- Developing targeted outreach strategies to reach families in priority areas, including the use of geotargeting and audience targeting approaches that align with community events, high-traffic locations, and other key opportunities for engagement
- Developing a measurement and reporting approach, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and regular performance updates



- Managing and optimizing campaign performance over time

## 2. Resource Development and Adaptation

The selected firm will provide the design, adaptation, and production of family-facing materials that reinforce campaign messaging and provide practical tools for early learning.

This work will include leveraging the Too Small to Fail “Talking is Teaching” Resources Catalog, as well as developing locally relevant materials as needed.

Early Matters will provide access to Too Small to Fail resources, campaign messaging, and brand guidelines to inform this work.

### **This work will include:**

- Developing an approach for utilizing and adapting existing Too Small to Fail resources for local implementation
- Lightly adapting materials to align with San Antonio communities and audiences, as appropriate
- Applying these adaptations to materials intended for use in the home (e.g., take-home items that support everyday interactions between caregivers and children, including but not limited to magnets, simple games or interactive activities, postcards, bookmarks, mini booklets, or similar formats).
- Applying these adaptations to materials intended for community-based and place-based settings
- Leveraging existing English and Spanish Too Small to Fail materials as the primary foundation, while providing bilingual (Spanish and English) support for adapted materials and select place-based or home-use resources, as appropriate
- Ensuring materials are consistent with Too Small to Fail brand guidelines and licensing terms
- Recommending material formats, quantities, and production approaches based on intended reach and use
- Ensuring materials are accessible, engaging, and easy for families to use in everyday interactions at home

## 3. Distribution Planning and Alignment

The selected firm will support and coordinate the distribution of family-facing materials through community-based and partner-supported strategies. The selected firm will also be responsible for executing place-based strategies across Bexar County. This includes coordinating timing, messaging, and deployment of materials with broader campaign efforts, including digital, media, and place-based strategies. Early Matters and its partners will continue to serve as trusted community connectors and



collaborators throughout implementation efforts. Respondents may propose in-house or subcontracted support for place-based outreach and implementation strategies.

This work will include:

- Coordinating strategies to align media efforts with Early Matters and partner-based distribution of family-facing materials
- Identifying opportunities to integrate materials into existing partner touchpoints and community-based settings
- Providing guidance on timing, sequencing, and coordination between media and material distribution
- Coordinating approaches for distributing materials intended for use in the home
- Coordinating and/or implementing physical placement of materials and family engagement supports in community environments where families regularly engage
- Supporting implementation of place-based outreach strategies across community settings and high-frequency family environments
- Considering scalability for future phases of the campaign

For any adapted materials, the selected firm will be responsible for preparing and submitting materials for approval through the Too Small to Fail review process. This includes coordinating submission through the appropriate platform and monitoring approval status in collaboration with the Early Matters San Antonio team. Typical approval timelines range from approximately 3–5 business days.

## Budget

Early Matters San Antonio anticipates investing in this campaign and is seeking proposals that reflect a thoughtful and cost-effective approach to achieving the goals outlined in this RFQ.

**Budget & Pricing Structure** Early Matters San Antonio is seeking Price Discovery through this RFQ to establish an appropriate project budget. Proposals should reflect a Not-to-Exceed (NTE) pricing model based on hourly market rates.

- **Inclusive of Materials and Outreach Assets:** Proposals may include physical printing and materials.
- **Payment for Actuals:** The selected vendor will bill only for **actual hours worked**. If the project requirements are met below the proposed ceiling, Early Matters is not obligated to pay the remaining balance.

Proposals should include a **detailed budget and cost breakdown** aligned with the proposed scope of work. Budgets should clearly outline costs across major components of the project, which may include:



- Campaign strategy and planning
- Creative development and content production
- Media planning and/or media placement
- Material design
- Campaign management and reporting

Vendors are encouraged to include **recommended budget scenarios or tiers, if applicable**, that outline different levels of investment and the corresponding anticipated reach, engagement, and impact.

All costs should be clearly itemized and justified within the proposal.

## Project Track B: Childcare Search Tool Awareness, Adoption, and Provider Engagement Campaign

### Background

Families often face challenges navigating fragmented childcare systems and identifying programs that meet their needs, preferences, eligibility requirements, schedules, and locations.

To support improved navigation and access, a regional childcare search tool is currently being developed through a procurement process led by Pre-K 4 SA and aligned with the Early Matters Impact Plan. The tool is anticipated to reach a launch-ready phase in August 2026.

The childcare search tool is intended to provide families with an accessible, mobile-responsive, and user-friendly platform for identifying childcare options aligned with their needs. Anticipated features include location-based search, filtering by age served, program type, eligibility, quality indicators, language supports, provider profiles, and additional family navigation features designed to simplify the childcare search process.

This initiative aligns closely with the goals of the Early Matters Family Engagement Workgroup and broader community efforts to strengthen family access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

Early Matters San Antonio lead partners include Pre-K 4 SA, Workforce Solutions Alamo, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, and Texas A&M Institute for School and Community Partnerships. Collectively, networks connected to these lead partners represent a substantial portion of licensed childcare providers across the greater San Antonio region. However, many providers remain outside these existing engagement networks.



As the childcare search tool development process nears completion, Early Matters and its partners are now entering the next phase of work: developing and implementing coordinated communications, awareness, and engagement strategies that both:

1. Promote awareness and use of the tool among families and caregivers, and
2. Encourage broad provider participation and engagement across the childcare ecosystem.

This effort is anticipated to evolve into a multi-year communications and engagement initiative designed to support sustained community awareness, provider participation, and long-term adoption of the childcare search tool.

The branding identity, naming, and core visual assets for the childcare search tool are currently under development through the broader search tool initiative. A landing website and branding toolkit are also anticipated as part of the launch effort. The selected respondent will be expected to align campaign materials and communications strategies with these assets as they become available.

## Scope of Work

Early Matters San Antonio seeks proposals from qualified firms or organizations to support the development and execution of a coordinated awareness, adoption, and engagement campaign aligned with the launch and long-term growth of the childcare search tool initiative.

The selected respondent will provide strategic guidance, communications support, campaign development, and implementation recommendations across two primary areas:

1. Family and community awareness efforts, and
2. Provider engagement and participation efforts.

For the first year of implementation, campaign efforts are expected to focus on both increasing awareness and use of the tool among families and caregivers and supporting strong provider participation across the childcare ecosystem. Early Matters and its partners will play a significant role in engaging providers already connected to existing partner networks, while the selected respondent will support broader awareness and outreach efforts, particularly among providers not currently connected through those networks.

## 1. Family and Community Awareness Campaign

(Approximately 60% of Year One Efforts)



The selected respondent will support the development and execution of a coordinated public awareness campaign designed to increase awareness, trust, and use of the childcare search tool among families and caregivers across Bexar County.

**This work may include:**

- Developing an overall communications and campaign strategy, including audience segmentation, messaging approach, launch strategy, and phased implementation recommendations
- Developing media plans and communications recommendations designed to support broad community awareness and sustained engagement
- Leveraging branding materials, messaging guidance, and visual assets developed through the childcare search tool initiative, while providing bilingual (English and Spanish) support for family-facing communications and campaign materials, as appropriate
- Recommending and executing digital communications strategies, including social media, digital advertising, geotargeting, and other targeted outreach approaches
- Developing strategies to reach families in priority communities and high-opportunity engagement locations across Bexar County
- Supporting recommendations for physical and community-based awareness efforts, which may include outdoor advertising, transit advertising, print collateral, or other public-facing campaign elements
- Recommending community engagement opportunities, sponsorship concepts, or family-facing activation strategies, where appropriate
- Developing measurement and reporting approaches, including key performance indicators (KPIs), performance tracking, and campaign optimization recommendations
- Supporting media planning and/or media buying coordination, as applicable

Early Matters San Antonio is open to recommendations related to family-facing events, activations, sponsorship opportunities, or community presence strategies as part of a broader campaign approach. However, respondents should assume organizational capacity for these efforts may be limited and should scale recommendations accordingly.

## 2. Provider Engagement and Participation Campaign

(Approximately 40% of Year One Efforts)

The selected respondent will support communications and outreach efforts designed to encourage provider awareness, participation, and engagement with the childcare search tool initiative, with a particular focus on providers not currently connected through existing partner networks.



## This work may include:

- Developing bilingual provider-facing communications and outreach strategies, as appropriate
- Supporting targeted social media and digital outreach efforts directed toward childcare providers
- Identifying provider groups, associations, conferences, sponsorship opportunities, and engagement channels relevant to outreach efforts
- Recommending outreach strategies for providers outside existing Early Matters partner networks
- Developing provider-facing collateral and outreach materials, including flyers, mailings, email campaigns, and digital communications
- Supporting communications strategies connected to provider onboarding efforts and participation campaigns
- Recommending opportunities to increase provider awareness and understanding of the childcare search tool initiative and its value to providers

The selected respondent will not be responsible for conducting provider onboarding trainings or managing provider data entry into the platform but may assist in promoting those trainings.

However, respondents will be expected to collaborate with the childcare search tool development team to understand anticipated onboarding workflows, provider-facing communication needs, platform functionality, and user experience considerations that may impact communications and engagement strategies.

## Budget

Early Matters San Antonio anticipates investing in this campaign and is seeking proposals that reflect a thoughtful, scalable, and cost-effective approach to supporting long-term awareness, provider participation, and community adoption of the childcare search tool initiative.

**Budget & Pricing Structure** Early Matters San Antonio is seeking Price Discovery through this RFQ to establish an appropriate project budget. Proposals should reflect a Not-to-Exceed (NTE) pricing model based on hourly market rates.

- **Inclusive of Materials and Outreach Assets:** Proposals may include physical printing, outreach collateral, promotional materials, mailings, community engagement assets, and other implementation materials, where applicable.
- **Payment for Actuals:** The selected vendor will bill only for **actual hours worked**. If the project requirements are met below the proposed ceiling, Early Matters is not obligated to pay the remaining balance.



Proposals should include a **detailed budget and cost breakdown** aligned with the proposed scope of work. Budgets should clearly outline costs across major components of the project, which may include:

- Campaign strategy and planning
- Creative development and content production
- Media planning and/or media placement
- Digital advertising
- Outreach collateral and materials
- Provider engagement communications
- Community engagement recommendations
- Campaign management and reporting

Vendors are encouraged to include **recommended budget scenarios or tiers, if applicable**, that outline different levels of investment and the corresponding anticipated reach, engagement, and impact.

All costs should be clearly itemized and justified within the proposal.

## Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be no more than 7 pages per project track (minimum 12pt font) and must include the components outlined below. Respondents applying for both Project Track A and Project Track B may submit up to 14 total pages, provided the response for each track is clearly distinguished. Respondents applying for both project tracks should clearly distinguish scope, timelines, budgets, and proposed approaches for each initiative.

- Cover Sheet
  - Respondents must indicate whether they are applying for:
    - Project Track A only
    - Project Track B only
    - or both project tracks
  - Include your organization's name, address, website, primary point of contact, and contact information.
- Table of Contents
- Campaign Approach
  - Provide a clear and concise description of your proposed approach to this project, including how your organization would support the development and execution of the campaign, including:
  - If applying for Project Track A:
    - Campaign strategy and earned and paid media approach



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- Approach to utilizing and adapting Too Small to Fail resources
- Approach to developing locally relevant materials
- Grassroots outreach and community partner engagement
- Considerations for reaching priority communities and aligning with community-based distribution, particularly within San Antonio and Bexar County
- Measurement and ROI
- If applying for Project Track B:
  - Family and community awareness campaign approach
  - Provider engagement and participation outreach approach
  - Campaign strategy, media planning, and audience targeting recommendations
  - Approaches for reaching providers outside existing partner networks
  - Recommendations for community engagement, outreach collateral, or awareness-building strategies
  - Considerations for supporting long-term awareness, adoption, and use of the childcare search tool across Bexar County
  - Measurement and ROI
- Project Timeline / Schedule of Work
  - Provide a proposed timeline for the project, including key phases, milestones, and sequencing of activities.
- Budget and Cost Breakdown
  - Provide a rate sheet for services and a good, better, best tiered approach for the scope of work.
- Experience and Qualifications
  - Describe your organization's relevant experience, including examples of similar projects (e.g., public awareness campaigns, behavior change campaigns, childcare provider engagement efforts, community-based outreach, digital tool adoption campaigns, or early childhood-related work), with an emphasis on work conducted in or relevant to the San Antonio or Bexar County area. Highlight any experience working with local communities, partners, or culturally responsive approaches. Work samples should be included as an appendix to the proposal and will not count towards the maximum number of pages.
- References
  - Provide at least two professional references who can speak to your organization's ability to successfully complete similar work.

## Timeline

- RFP released: May 22, 2026
- Questions due: June 5, 2026 (Contact: Kate Cazares; [Kate.Cazares@EarlyMattersSA.org](mailto:Kate.Cazares@EarlyMattersSA.org))

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- Proposals due: June 19, 2026, by 5 pm CT

## Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following:

- Demonstrated experience and relevant qualifications, including experience in or strong familiarity with the San Antonio/Bexar County context
- Scope of Work/Timeline Approach and Feasibility
- Costs/Pricing
- References

Positive consideration may be given to respondents applying for and demonstrating the capacity to successfully support both project tracks.

## Selection Process

The selection process will be conducted by a steering committee composed of Family Engagement Workgroup participants and Early Matters San Antonio staff who do not have any conflicts of interest. This committee will review all submitted proposals using the criteria outlined above and will make the final selection based on alignment with project goals, feasibility, and potential impact.

## Submission Instructions

Submit proposals as a single PDF to: [Kate.Cazares@EarlyMattersSA.org](mailto:Kate.Cazares@EarlyMattersSA.org)

Subject line: RFQ Submission – Strategic Communications, Awareness, and Community Engagement Support for Early Learning Initiatives in Bexar County

At the top of the email body, respondents should indicate whether they are applying for:

- Project Track A only
- Project Track B only
- or both project tracks.

Due to the potential size of proposal files and attachments, respondents are encouraged to follow up if they do not receive confirmation that their submission was successfully received.



## Appendix A

The following resources are provided to give additional context and guidance for the development of proposals. Vendors are encouraged to review these materials and incorporate them into their proposed approach, as appropriate.

- **Early Matters San Antonio Website**  
<https://earlymatterssa.org/>
- **Too Small to Fail Overview**  
<https://www.clintonfoundation.org/programs/education-health-equity/too-small-fail#resources/>
- **Talking is Teaching – Resources for Community Partners**  
<https://talkingisteaching.org/community-partners/>
- **Talking is Teaching – Resource Catalog for Community Campaigns**  
<https://talkingisteaching.org/community-partners/resource-library/?filtered-list-3-posts-per-page=24>
- **Talking is Teaching – Lessons from the First Decade**  
Vendors are encouraged to review this resource to better understand the research, messaging, and evaluation approaches that inform the Talking is Teaching campaign.  
<https://www.clintonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Too-Small-to-Fail-Lessons-from-First-Decade-Report.pdf>
- **Too Small to Fail – Licensing Terms**  
<https://talkingisteaching.org/licensing-terms/>

