



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Community Needs Assessment Consultant

1. Agency Background

I-CARE, Inc. is a private nonprofit Community Action Agency serving Iredell, Alexander, Catawba, and Lincoln Counties, North Carolina. Funding includes CSBG, Head Start/Early Head Start, Weatherization, LIHEAP, Urgent Repair, and HOME. Funding supports initiatives around early education, energy efficiency, home repairs, home ownership, workforce development, and economic mobility initiatives.

2. Purpose

I-CARE seeks proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment that satisfies Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 CFR §1302.11. One integrated report is required.

3. Scope of Work

- Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data.
- Conduct county-specific analyses for Iredell, Catawba, and Alexander counties.
- Conduct surveys of Board, Policy Council, staff, families/customers, community partners, employers, and other key stakeholders.
- Facilitate focus groups and key informant interviews.
- Complete community asset mapping and service gap analysis.
- Prioritize community needs and provide evidence-based recommendations.

4. HSPPS Requirements (45 CFR §1302.11)

- Demographic characteristics and trends.
- Eligible children birth through age five.
- Children with disabilities and available services.
- Child care and early education resources.
- Health, dental, nutrition and behavioral health resources.
- Family needs including employment, housing, transportation, child care, financial capability and digital access.
- Community strengths, resources, service gaps and barriers.
- Recruitment area analysis, funded enrollment analysis and service delivery options.
- Homelessness trends and community partnerships.

5. Required Data Sources

The consultant shall utilize the most current, reliable, and authoritative data available. Data sources should include appropriate federal, state, local, agency, and community sources as needed to complete the assessment. Sources may include, but are not limited to, U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey data, federal and North Carolina agency data, local government and public health data, education and workforce information, housing and economic indicators, I-CARE program data, and community stakeholder input.

The final report shall include a Data Sources Appendix identifying each major data element, its source, the reporting year or period, methodology (where applicable), and any known limitations.

6. Deliverables

- Executive Summary
- Integrated Final Community Needs Assessment
- County Profiles
- Methodology
- Quantitative and Qualitative Findings
- Community Asset and Service Gap Analysis
- Priority Needs Matrix
- Recommendations
- Data Appendices
- Survey Instruments and Focus Group Summaries
- GIS maps and infographics
- Editable Word, Excel, PowerPoint and PDF files
- Presentation to the I-CARE Board of Directors (60–90 minutes)
- Presentation to Senior Leadership (90–120 minutes)

7. Consultant Qualifications

Describe any special capabilities, techniques, or resources that distinguish your firm from other proposers.

Demonstrated experience with Community Action Agencies, CSBG, ROMA, Head Start community assessments, public engagement, and poverty research.

8. Proposal Requirements

- Firm profile and qualifications
- Project methodology
- Work plan and timeline
- Key personnel to work on the project
- Relevant experience
- Three references
- Fixed-fee cost proposal
- Describe the level of assistance expected from I-CARE staff throughout the project

9. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations
Qualifications and Experience	Experience with Community Action, CSBG, Head Start, HSPPS, and community assessments
Technical Approach	Understanding of the project, methodology, stakeholder engagement, data analysis, and deliverables
Project Team	Qualifications and availability of key personnel
References and Past Performance	Quality of previous work and client satisfaction
Cost	Overall value and reasonableness of the proposed fee

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria above. I-CARE reserves the right to request clarifications, conduct interviews, negotiate with one or more proposers, and award a contract to the proposer whose proposal is determined to provide the best overall value to the agency. Cost will be strongly considered but will not be the sole determining factor.

10. Confidentiality and Data Ownership

All data collected and work products developed under this contract shall become the property of I-CARE, Inc. The consultant shall maintain the confidentiality of all information and shall not disclose or reuse project data without written authorization.

11. Proposal Forms and Certifications

- Proposal Cover Sheet
- Cost Proposal Worksheet
- Conflict of Interest Certification
- Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension
- Non-Collusion Certification

12. Project Schedule

The Community Needs Assessment is expected to begin upon contract execution and be completed by November 30, 2026.

13. Timeline and Payment

Proposals shall include a detailed project schedule. Payment shall be rendered upon completion.

14. Federal Contract Requirements

The resulting agreement shall incorporate applicable federal requirements, including relevant provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and Appendix II, as applicable to professional services contracts.

15. Submission Instructions

- No incomplete or late bid proposal will be considered for award.
- The proposal packet must be submitted by **4pm on July 31, 2026** via email to: bryan.duncan@icare-inc.org. Reference "Community Assessment Bid" in the subject line of the email.
- Bid proposal must contain a title page providing Bidder's name, business address, phone number, fax number, name of contact person, email address, date of submission, and Bidder's signature.

16. Responses to Questions

All questions regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP) must be submitted in writing no later than 4:00pm, Friday July 17, 2026 to: bryan.duncan@icare-inc.org. Responses to questions that clarify, interpret, or modify this RFP will be issued in writing to all known prospective proposers by Wednesday, July 22, 2026. All written responses issued by I-CARE shall become part of this RFP and shall be binding upon all proposers. Oral statements, interpretations, or representations by I-CARE staff shall not be binding and shall not be relied upon by proposers.

17. Addenda

I-CARE reserves the right to amend, modify, clarify, or withdraw this RFP at any time prior to the proposal submission deadline. Any changes to this RFP shall be made only through a written addendum issued by I-CARE. Each addendum shall become part of the RFP and shall be binding upon all proposers. It is the responsibility of each proposer to ensure that all issued addenda have been received and acknowledged prior to submitting a proposal. No oral statements or informal communications shall modify the requirements of this RFP.

18. Reservation of Rights

I-CARE, Inc. reserves the right, at its sole discretion and in its best interest, to:

- Reject any or all proposals received in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP);
- Waive minor informalities, irregularities, or technical deficiencies in any proposal when such action is determined to be in the best interest of the agency and does not prejudice the rights of other proposers;
- Request additional information, clarifications, or supporting documentation from any proposer to assist in the evaluation of proposals;
- Negotiate with one or more proposers regarding the scope of services, pricing, schedule, contract terms, or other matters prior to contract award;
- Accept all or any portion of a proposal;
- Conduct interviews or request oral presentations from one or more proposers, if deemed necessary;
- Verify references, qualifications, financial stability, and prior performance of any proposer;
- Cancel, postpone, withdraw, amend, or reissue this RFP, in whole or in part, at any time prior to the execution of a contract, if such action is determined to be in the best interest of I-CARE; and

- Award a contract to the proposer whose proposal is determined to provide the best overall value to I-CARE, considering qualifications, experience, methodology, responsiveness, and cost. The contract will not necessarily be awarded to the proposer submitting the lowest-priced proposal.

The issuance of this RFP does not obligate I-CARE to award a contract or to reimburse any proposer for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of a proposal or in participating in the procurement process.

RFP SCHEDULE:

RFP Release: June 30, 2026

Deadline for questions: July 17, 2026 by 4:00 PM

Responses to questions: July 22, 2026

RFP submission date: July 31, 2026 by 4:00 PM

Award Date: August 14, 2026

Contract Start Date: immediately upon award

Contract Completion Date: November 30, 2026