



Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives

# RFP Response Form

## RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building

### PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Thomas Child Care Learning Academy

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille, Owner

Address: 10739 Frankstown Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.tcla-ph.com/>

Legal Status:  For-Profit Corp.  Nonprofit Corp.  Sole Proprietor  Partnership

Date Incorporated: 03/13/2017

Partners included in this Proposal: None.

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Allegheny County announcements on INSERT WEBSITE

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing?  Yes  No

### REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille	[REDACTED]	thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com
Contract Processing Contact	Heidi Simmons	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Adrian Dutrieuille Jr.	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Financial Officer	Allene Thomas	[REDACTED]	thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com

**RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building**

MPER Contact*	Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille	[REDACTED]	thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com
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\* MPER is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

**BOARD INFORMATION**

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

- Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille
- Allene Thomas
- Jameeta Lewis
- Dana Thomas
- Aneia Dutrieuille

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille

Board Chairperson Address: 10739 Frankstown Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com

**REFERENCES**

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.

Debbie Gallagher Early Head Start Director Dgallagher@cotraic.org [REDACTED]	Bernadette Bennermon Keystone Stars TA Coordinator(retired) [REDACTED] or Beb52@pitt.edu [REDACTED]	Sara Byner Trying Together Engagement Specialist [REDACTED]
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**PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$206,800

**CERTIFICATION**

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building**

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information, and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
- W-9
- Completed budget template

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 110 points. Your response to the following section should not exceed 12 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building**

### ***Organizational Experience (15 points possible)***

1. Describe your organizational experience providing OST programs or programming that works with children and families.

The mission of TCLA has always been to consistently strive to provide the highest level of service to our students and their families. TCLA and its owners have almost three decades of experience caring for children while their parents are hard at work across the city. Additionally, TCLA is certified by the Department of Human Services and adheres to all rules and regulations for safety and well-being. TCLA also has a Star 4 rating in Keystone STARS, a statewide quality initiative. This rating means TCLA programs consistently meet state education-specific performance standards for a quality learning environment, staff qualifications, family engagement, and continuous quality improvement planning. By nurturing growth and relationship development TCLA believes children can achieve their full potential and become creative, independent, responsible, fully functioning, and self-directed adolescents and adults. What truly sets TCLA apart is that we stand as an example organization for longevity, diversity, and quality within the childcare industry. TCLA will continue to stay true to its pillars of hard work, family-style care, play, and academic rigor to engage the children during OST afterschool and summer programming. We ensure that all students will have the opportunity and support to develop personal and meaningful bonds with other students as well as the surrounding communities.

2. Describe your organizational experience working in high-need communities, especially the community(ies) you are proposing to serve.

The history of TCLA is one of providing quality early care and education services to families and children within communities of need. Before moving to Penn hills in 2017 and renaming to Thomas Child Care Learning Academy, the founder Allene Thomas operated the organization as a group home. This group home, established in 1999, positively impacted many lives within the Wilkinsburg Community, even expanding its capacity in 2002. In August 2017, TCLA moved to its current location and began providing pre-k and educational services. Working with underserved communities and the at-risk population was built into the foundation of TCLA. While no longer operating as a group home, TCLA remains connected to its roots of providing a nurturing and supportive learning environment that lends itself to the community and builds positive relationships.

Under the current leadership and guidance of Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille, TCLA continues to provide a safe and positive learning place where children and families can come to receive quality care and services. The business has expanded beyond the Penn Hills community, and now TCLA serves families traveling from Wilkinsburg, Verona, Braddock, Monroeville, Turtle Creek, and Swissvale to take advantage of our quality services. Trust in the community, empowering learning, and providing nurture and care to youth are the continuous goals of TCLA. Striving towards these goals has allowed TCLA to grow into a trusted staple of the Wilkinsburg community and now the Penn Hills community.

### ***Program Design (70 points possible)***

3. Provide an overall description of your proposed Program and how it meets DCI's goals, including:

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- Describe how you are opening new quality OST slots (certified child care or community based) in a community that lacks them. Please include the proposed number of new slots.
- Describe how you will provide a consistent Program schedule that meets the needs of families in your selected community, including the hours and days of operation.
- Describe how you will provide children with a safe space to spend time and the physical location you intend to use.
- Describe how you will create opportunities for children to engage in enriching activities and what participants will gain from engaging in your program.
- Describe how your Program serves historically underrepresented populations.

Currently, TCLA has only one location in Penn Hills to service all potential families across the area. One location limits our ability to serve more families. To overcome this limitation, we are attempting to purchase a second location at 3520 and 3524 Laketon Rd, Pgh PA 15221. This second location will increase our capacity from 35 to 60 students for the afterschool and summer learning programs.

TCLA will continue offering high-quality learning opportunities to more families with our second site. The second site will replicate all the policies and procedures that have made TCLA a trusted staple for education in the Penn Hill community. We will maintain our same hours, meaning TCLA's afterschool program will operate for 180 days during each school year, Monday- Friday from 3:30-5:30 pm. The afterschool program will follow school district closings for holidays and inclement weather. TCLA's summer camp will begin in mid-June and run until mid-August in the summer. Summer Camp hours are from 8:30-4:30 pm and will run for 40 days in the summer. Keeping the second site as close in structure as possible to our current location will ensure that parents know what to expect and to trust that they will receive the same standard of care for their children.

As we open this second location, TCLA recognizes that it must continue to uphold a safety standard for the students to learn adequately. As a part of the renovation in the second space, TCLA will be replacing floorings, neutralizing and updating any lead paint within the building (building inspections have not yielded lead readings), updating kitchens and kitchenettes, and providing any necessary improvement to the current fire safety sprinkler system. Furthermore, we will continue to ensure the safety standards of our recent locations are replicated in the second site. This includes meticulously maintaining proper standards of Child-to-staff ratios during all programs. Using the guidelines set by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, we strive to ensure that our students are supervised at all times. This maintains a safe learning environment for students and gives parents ease of mind when considering the safety of their children. We will also work with the fire and emergency medical team to develop appropriate evacuation plans in case of an emergency.

TCLA will continue providing a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. Adhering to a learning through play philosophy, we utilize hands-on learning and exploration techniques to facilitate apprehension. Furthermore, our flexible learning routines allow children to advance at their own pace. Overall, TCLA believes children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging while engaging in education. In addition to our educational standard, TCLA also ensures students remain active and have fun through play. We conduct 60 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood

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once a day for all children to foster healthy physical activity. TCLA believes having a healthy body is equally crucial to maintaining a healthy mind.

To foster pride and connection among our students to their communities, TCLA facilitates community outings and field trips. In addition to the daily opportunities to see the community during the daily walks, we organize periodic guided tours through our neighborhood's historically significant areas. This includes parks, playgrounds, and historical buildings. Safety remains paramount during all activities and outings. Children are accounted for at all times. We strive to include the community in the learning process. We encourage our community members to be a part of the learning experience for our students, and we hope that through these opportunities, we can learn from the community as well. TCLA strives to continue its fit in the community. Thus, we will always remain open to community comments and suggestions. After receiving these comments and suggestions, we will do our best to implement them in a manner appropriate for the achievement of our students. Ultimately, our program will serve these underrepresented communities by allowing them to be active participants in their children's success instead of solely dictating what success looks like and how to achieve it.

TCLA strives to continue its history of providing educational services to those with limited access. We will continue to serve underrepresented areas by placing our sites in those communities. TCLA offers our families top-of-the-line educational services at an affordable price. Our families no longer have to settle for unavailable afterschool and summer programming options because they are out of reach of their neighborhoods. TCLA brings to these communities more opportunities for learning and fun.

4. How will your program ensure children of all abilities are served, including English language learners and children with IEPs?

We believe in the uniqueness of each child and support their participation in all activities. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their capabilities and needs. This includes accommodations for students needing ELL assistance. TCLA programs are designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. TCLA also uses Creative Curriculum to improve the quality of our services. As a part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress periodically. Through these evaluations we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom and deliver the best individualized instruction for each child.

TCLA is committed to working with children, families, and related service providers to assist the children that qualify for Special Education and related services. We ask parents to provide a copy of the child's IEP to staff upon enrollment into the program. Staff members will work with parents to determine how we can best assist the child with meeting the goals written into their IEP. We also agree to meet with individuals involved in helping each child with their IEP goals. With the parent's permission, TCLA will allow specialized individuals to visit the child as necessary or requested at the center as long as it does not interfere with the normal operations. TCLA will also perform any necessary functions agreed upon with the parent to achieve the goals included within their IEP.

5. How will you prevent suspensions and expulsions of children from your Program and ensure enrolled children maintain Program access?

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TCLA takes preventative measures to avoid the need for expulsion or suspension of any child and utilizes a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) to manage behaviors. Students showing behavioral issues will have personalized plans made with the TCLA director. These plans will have sticker charts geared towards incentivized improved behavior. All behavior incidents will be logged through Brightwheel, so parents receive live updates and strategies that TCLA staff tried to calm behaviors. Parents will be called in for meetings to help design sticker charts and choose incentives for their children. TCLA believes the family is an active participant in helping the afterschool program manage behavior. TCLA uses its relationship with Pre-K Counts and Head Start local funding to bring in psychologists and behavioral specialists.

Exclusionary measures will be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances of a severe safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. To this end, we also enlist the services and recommendations of qualified professionals, such as an early childhood mental health consultant. Only after exhausting all other means and not until unanimously determined by the family and program leaders that another program would be a more appropriate setting will the child be expelled.

6. Describe the community(ies) in which you intend to locate your OST Program. Why did you select those community(ies)? How will you tailor your Program to respond to the unique needs of the community(ies) you are serving?

TCLA prides itself on its community connections. We are currently located in a historically under-resourced area of Penn Hills, and we plan to continue developing sites in predominately Black and Brown communities. We are purposely choosing these communities because they are in desperate need of more resources, and the children of these communities deserve top-of-the-line education options. Despite being under-resourced, these communities still have pride and a desire to show Allegheny County and the world how bright and shining they can be. Understanding this, TCLA strives to be a positive addition to the community and not an organization that drains the community of its resources. We strive to provide the students with culturally inclusive learning materials that center them as the main characters because we want students to see themselves in learning opportunities. TCLA also collaborates with the community members at the beginning, periodically throughout, and at the end of each program to ensure we are meeting community standards and expectations. As mentioned earlier, we encourage our community members to be a part of the learning experience for our students, and we hope that through these opportunities, we can learn from the community as well.

7. Describe why you think families will want to enroll their children in your Program.

TCLA programming offers something more than simple babysitting facilities. Our programming provides opportunities for various skills, including socialization, arts and crafts, fun exercise workouts, reading, and arithmetic. Additionally, we offer a culture of diversity that encourages openness to different perspectives and the ability to work and play with others. We believe multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. TCLA is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment free of discrimination. We believe our students and families will want to continue participating in our OST programs because the students will feel seen and heard. Students will

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learn from books and materials that display people who look like them and their communities as the protagonists and stories' settings. Students and families will want to enroll in our programs because they will finally be included in the narrative.

8. Describe how you will market the Program and how you will create or strength formal paths to equitable enrollment.

Our marketing initiative aims to increase our client size through establishing alliances and partnerships with several community organizations. These partnerships are the foundation for creating awareness, generating interest, and providing referrals to our services. We also plan to get our name out by co-sponsoring events with community groups and distributing TCLA brochures and flyers. In addition, we have signed-up with online directories – Angie's list – Yellow Pages and placed ads in community publications and bulletins.

TCLA also hopes to continue partnering with local elementary schools in the area. TCLA markets its out-of-school programming through the local Penn Hills School District. Brochures and flyers are passed out to parents at school open houses. TCLA also markets through radio and social media advertisements. The placement of TCLA's sign-on Frankstown road also yields itself to calls and inquiries from families who pass by.

9. Describe how you will staff your Program and the strategies you will use to recruit, hire and retain racially diverse staff, staff with relevant lived experience, and staff that reflect the population served.

The staffing plan of TCLA has always revolved around quality. When new positions open, we advertise from within first to support opportunities for mobility. We then use recruiting sites such as Monster, Indeed, and LinkedIn. We also utilize job fairs and partnerships with Trying Together and the URA to find qualified staff. Opportunities for part-time students from within the local teaching certification programs are also available and utilized. By doing so, we ensure that our quality is above industry standards with our education requirements. New staff will have three rounds of interviews that include a field site interview where they would be observed for a day as a teacher.

10. How will any identified challenges be addressed, including low program enrollment or attendance, transportation challenges, or other issues impacting program access?

TCLA currently has a waiting list of over 75 children. Low attendance has not been an issue for the organization as quality educational services is in high demand. However, should attendance ever drop, TCLA can first pull from its waitlist, then begin to partner with local churches, communities, restaurants, and shops to recruit and engage more youth

Currently, TCLA does not provide private transportation to its students, but we remain open to suggestions and beneficial partnerships with any and all certified transportation services. Currently, due to the proximity of our location to our served neighborhoods, most students of the TCLA's afterschool and summer camp programs are transported by their parents. TCLA is working closely with schools to arrange a method of bus transportation from school to our location. TCLA is expanding to an additional location in 2023; it is a goal for TCLA to provide transportation to out-of-school participants for both of its sites by 2023.

### ***Quality and KPIs (10 points possible)***



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11. If you are a certified child care OST program, provide your STAR level designation and describe your progress towards raising or maintaining this level. If you are an uncertified program, please provide a description of how your program efforts will align as an APOST Quality Campaign member or other nationally recognized quality improvement tool.

TCLA is also rated a Star 4 in Keystone STARS, a statewide quality initiative. This rating means TCLA programs consistently meet state education-specific performance standards for a quality learning environment, staff qualifications, family engagement, and continuous quality improvement planning.

To maintain this rating, TCLA adheres strictly to teacher-to-student ratios in all learning settings and requires all employees to meet training requirements. All teachers and aides must obtain the proper credentials through training courses, professional development, and a minimum CDA for continued employment at TCLA. TCLA will pay the expenses for the courses when initially offered. After one year of employment is completed, all staff is eligible to participate in the TEACH program to help with the costs of college-level courses to assist in paying for a degree program. Non-instructional staff will also be required to complete Professional development on developmentally appropriate practices, diversity, age-appropriate standards, and appropriate child-adult interactions.

12. Outline the KPIs you would like to use to measure the success of your Program.

**Goal 1:** Maintain high enrollment for TCLA out-of-school programming

**Key Performance Indicator 1:** Successful enrollment of 60 students across two sites. This includes 60 students for afterschool programming and 60 students for summer learning programming. Our current site will host 35 students, while our new site will host an additional 25.

**Goal 2:** Improvement in academic achievement via TCLA's out-of-school programming.

**Key Performance Indicator 2:** using initial and periodic assessments of students, increase reading and math skills to at or above grade standards. Particular emphasis is to be placed on the summer learning OTS programming to prevent summer drops due to decreased school time.

**Goal 3:** Increase community relations to include more community stakeholders and members in learning opportunities.

**Key Performance Indicator 3:** Staff will engage community members to fill time slots for weekly and possible daily group readings for youth participants. Additionally, staff will bolster parent and community participation in chaperoning opportunities.

### ***Financial Management, Budget and Timeline (15 points possible)***

13. Using the budget template available on our website, provide a detailed one-year, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Program. The budget template file attachment will not count toward page limits.

- Please provide the number of children you plan to serve both during the summer and during the school year.
- Please include any other funding sources that would contribute to the Program, including fees to families.

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14. In the space below, provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in your proposed line-item budget. Please also describe plans to sustain new Program slots beyond year one.

After School Explanation:

Directors	\$30.00/ Hour (2 Hours)	\$10,800 (Over 180 Days)*
Counselors	\$20.00/ Hour (2 Hours)	\$7,200 (Over 180 Days)*
Rent & Utilities	\$3,500/ Month (10 Months)	\$35,000
Supplies	School Year	\$7,000
iPad & Protective Coverings	20	\$10,569
Snacks	\$2.86/ Student (60 Students)	\$30,888 (Over 180 Days)
Incentive Prizes	School Year	\$4,500
Brightwheel Subscription	10 Months	\$6,400
*Per hired personnel		

TCLA suggested that the DHS take 18 summer camp slots of our 35 slots in the attached proposal.

Summer Camp Explanation:

Directors	\$30.00/ Hour (8 Hours)	\$9,600 (Over 40 Days)*
Counselors	\$20.00/ Hour (8 Hours)	\$6,400 (Over 40 Days)*
Rent & Utilities	\$3,500/ Month (2 Months)	\$7,000
Supplies	Summer Term	\$4,000
iPad & Protective Coverings	15	\$7,927
Lunch	\$10.00/ Student (60 Students)	\$24,000 (Over 40 Days)
Incentive Prizes	Summer Term	\$3,000
Brightwheel Subscription	2 Months	\$2,608
*Per hired personnel		

Additionally, TCLA takes three field trips. 2 Trips to the water park and one trip to the zoo.

Transportation	\$1,500/ Round trip (3x)	\$4,500
Bagged Lunches	\$10.00/ Student (60 Students) (3x)	\$1,800
Tickets	Zoo	\$450

Additional Cost

Closing Costs on Building	25% closing costs (\$499,200)	\$124,800
Building Renovations		\$82,000

16. Describe the funding model of your proposed OST Program (i.e., do you have a mixed model of private pay, subsidy and free spots, only free spots?).

35 total afterschool (end-of-day)

30 ELRC Slots	30 Potential DHS Slots
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35 total Summer Camp Students

30 ELRC Slots	30 Potential DHS Slots
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## DCI OST Capacity Building RFP Budget Proposal Template

**Organization Name** Thomas Childcare Learning Center  
**Contact Name (Full)** Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille  
**Business Address** 10739 Frankstown Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15235  
**Business Phone** (412) 609-5225  
**Business Email** [thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com](mailto:thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com)

Item Category		
I. Personnel	Cost	Notes
TCLA After-School Director	\$10,800	30.00 an hour for 2 hours a day for 180 days of the program
TCLA After-school Counselor	\$7,200	20.00 an hour for 2 hours a day for 180 days of the program
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TCLA After-school Counselor	\$7,200	20.00 an hour for 2 hours a day for 180 days of the program
TCLA Summer Camp Director	\$9,600	30.00 an hour for 8 hours a day for 40 days of the program
TCLA Summer Camp Counselor	\$6,400	20.00 an hour for 8 hours a day for 40 days of the program
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<b>Total Personnel Costs</b>	<b>\$88,400.00</b>	
II. Materials and Supplies	Cost	Notes
School Supplies	\$7,000	Throughout the school year, WCS orders school supplies such as headphones, pencils, papers, art supplies, and books for the kids to read
20 ipads with apple care	\$10,569	20 iPads with apple care and protective gear will be purchased for small group tutoring time
snack	\$30,888	Snack is \$2.86 per student for 60 students for 180 days.
Incentives for Positive behavior	\$4,500	Incentives for positive behavior are little trinkets to award students for attendance and consistent behavior throughout the year
Digital Check in and out technology	\$6,400	Brightwheel check-in and out system for parents is prorated at \$6,400 for the whole year
Lunch for summer camp	\$24,000	\$10.00 per student for 60 students for 40 days
<b>Total Material Costs</b>	<b>\$83,357.00</b>	
III. Facilities and Operations	Cost	Notes
Rent & Utilities at TCLA	\$35,000	\$3,500 a month for rent & utilities for 10 months
Closing Costs on Building	\$124,800	The purchase of this building requires 25% closing costs of the building that costs \$499,200
3 field trips	\$6,000	
<b>Total Facilities Costs</b>	<b>\$165,800.00</b>	
IV. Contracts and Services	Cost	Notes
Building Renovations	\$82,000	Complete remodel of the floors, painting, new windows, and new lock systems
<b>Total Services Costs</b>	<b>\$82,000.00</b>	
<b>Total Proposed Budget</b>	<b>\$419,557.00</b>	