



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# RFP Response Form

## RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs

### PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Thomas Child Care Learning Academy

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

Address: [REDACTED]

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
MPER Contact*	Valisa Thomas-Dutrieuille	[REDACTED]	thomaslearningacademy@gmail.com

**RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

\* 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 (412) 292-9131	Bernadette Bennermon Keystone Stars TA Coordinator(retired) [REDACTED] or Beb52@pitt.edu [REDACTED]	Sara Byner Trying Together Engagement Specialist [REDACTED]
---	--	--

**PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$116,280.00

**CERTIFICATION**

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

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 125 points. Your response to the following section should not exceed 7 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

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

1. Describe your organizational experience providing OST Programming or programming that works with youth 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 (40 points possible)***

3. Provide an overall description of your proposed OST Programming:

## RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs

- Describe how you will provide youth with a physically and emotionally safe space to spend time and how you will ensure that they and their parents/caregivers feel safe. Provide a brief description of current or proposed safety policies and procedures. Describe the physical location you intend to use.
- Describe how you will provide opportunities for youth to engage in enriching activities and how the activities align with the Programmatic Content expectations outlined in Section to of the RFP. Provide an example of a week's schedule of activities.
- Describe how you will provide participants with opportunities to make positive connections with peers, adults and their community. Provide a brief description of your organization's code of conduct for staff, staff training expectations, and policies and procedures.
- Describe the community(ies) in which you intend to locate your OST Programming. Why did you select those community(ies)? How will you tailor your Programming to respond to the unique needs of the community(ies) you are serving?

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. Therefore, we will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs. 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. These evaluations are also communicated to families throughout the school year. 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 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.

In order to maintain these fun learning environments, TCLA places student safety at the forefront of all programming. We are careful to maintain proper standards of Child-to-staff ratios during all activities. 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 also make sure to work with local emergency agencies to develop evacuation and safety plans for cases of emergency. Finally, regarding safety, we make certain all parents receive a personal copy of TCLA's Family handbook. This handbook lists all safety procedures and information distribution protocols.

The employees of TCLA are held to high employment standards to set an example for the students. All employees are given an employee handbook that provides and detailed list of all policies in procedures. Employees must sign and acknowledge their receipt and understanding of

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

the handbook before employment. After which, employees are held in strict compliance. The handbook provides detailed explanations of policies regarding appropriate dress code, student interaction, proper touch and attention gathering techniques as well as employees' rights. TCLA also requires all employees to meet training requirements. All teachers and aides are required to 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.

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 these outings, and children are accounted for at all times. Each family must sign a permission statement for participation in walking trips before children can participate. Parents are also encouraged to attend our community field trips. Also, to promote community, TCLA offers family times and activities. Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback. Parents have the opportunity to lead group reading sessions, chaperone field trips, and be an overall positive presence for the children during the day. We require completed background checks for all parents wishing to accompany their children during our trips and participate in school activities. This has not been a hurdle for our parents and community members thus far.

TCLA prides itself on its connection to the community. We are located in a historically under-resourced area. Despite this obstacle, Penn Hill still produces many of the county's great minds and productive members of society. Understanding this, TCLA strives to be a positive addition to the community and not an organization that drains the community of its resources. Our service community is made up of primarily Black and Brown families. For this reason, we strive to provide the students with culturally inclusive learning materials centering 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 the programs 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. 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.

### ***Youth and Parent Experience (10 points)***

4. Why do you think youth will want to participate in your OST Programming? Provide specific methods you will use to ensure that they remain engaged and interested in your Programming.

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

TCLA 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, violence, and bullying. We believe our students will want to continue participating in our OST programs because they will feel seen and heard. They will learn from books and materials that display people who look like them and communities that look like theirs as the protagonist and settings for stories. Students will want to continue TCLA programming because they will feel included and wanted, unlike what they may feel during a typical school day.

5. Describe your approach to communicating with parents/caregivers. Provide specific methods you will use to ensure that parents/caregivers feel comfortable with your OST Programming and confident that their child is safe and well cared for.

TCLA Communicates with parents through a service called Brightwheel. Brightwheel is accessible on a computer or phone app and allows TCLA staff to communicate with parents. Brightwheel also allows TCLA to share photos, newsletters, activities, and programs at the center. In addition, live updates about student progress and activities are posted. Parents use the app to communicate, pick up absences, and share any questions they may have. The app is also used for parent feedback on new schedules and activity ideas.

### ***Operations (20 points)***

6. Describe how you will market your Programming and open referral pathways. Provide a description of how you will build and sustain relationships with schools.

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.

7. Describe how you will staff your Programming 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

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

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.

8. Provide the hours and days you expect your OST program to operate during the school year and summer.

TCLA's afterschool program operates for 180 days during each school year, Monday–Friday from 3:30–5:30 pm. The afterschool program follows school district closings for holidays and inclement weather. TCLA's summer camp begins in mid-June and runs until mid-August in the summer. Camp hours are from 8:30–4:30 pm. Camp runs for 40 days in the summer.

9. Describe your plan for storing and providing healthy snacks and meals during the school year and summer.

For the afterschool OST Program, TCLA will provide one healthy snack for students upon their arrival through the program's doors. The provided snack falls within All USDA and Dept. of Education nutritional food choice guidelines. All snacks requiring refrigeration will be kept in building refrigeration units until they are served to students.

For the summer out-of-school time program, TCLA will continue its compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal guidelines for healthy children. We follow the guidelines and keep salads, sandwiches, etc., in the refrigerator until needed and hold these items below 41°. We hold hot food pans in a thermostatically controlled hot box or oven, keeping all hot foods at least 135°F or higher. We keep all perishable food refrigerated. We conduct these measures in agreement with federal regulations to avoid bacteria that can grow rapidly in the "temperature danger zone" between 41° and 135° F. We also use a meat thermometer to double-check all proper temperatures for each type of protein group.

### ***Implementation Challenges (20 points possible)***

10. If your Program experiences low attendance, how will you engage more youth?

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.

11. If a youth in your Program experiences behavioral or mental health issues, what will you do?

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.

## **RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs**

TCLA utilizes a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) to support behavior management. Students showing signs of 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 in order 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 has served hundreds of students with mental health issues; the center uses its relationship with Pre-K Counts and Head Start local funding to bring in psychologists, behavioral specialists, and speech therapists to work with children with mental delays.

12. If the results of the bi-annual parent survey indicate that parents are not satisfied with the experience of their children in your Program, what will you do?

Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we discuss strengths, likes and dislikes, and learning styles. TCLA works with the parents to set goals for growth and development. Additional conferences will be held anytime at parents' request to discuss the child's progress. These conferences serve as TCLA's bi-annual surveys as parents provide honest live feedback. TCLA's staff use the feedback to shift its programming, approach, and activities to maximize the learning and experience of children in our OST programming.

13. If a parent of a child in your Program expresses a transportation issue, what will you do?

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.

### ***Financial Management and Budget (20 points)***

14. 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 Programming. Please include any other funding sources that would contribute to OST Programming, including fees to families. The budget template file attachment will not count toward page limits. Please note:

- Indicate the number of children you expect to serve, with DHS funding, during the school year at a \$27 rate and during the summer at a \$40 rate. Please also share the total number of children you expect to attend after school and during the summer (include other seats that will be paid for through other funding streams).
- If you intend to administer programming at multiple sites, please provide the number of youth you plan to serve by site both during the summer and during the school year.
- Include any other funding sources that would contribute to OST Programming, including fees to families.

## RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs

15. In the space below, provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in your proposed line-item budget.

In the attached proposal, TCLA suggested that the DHS take 18 afterschool slots of our 35 slots.

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	10 Months	\$28,000
Supplies	School Year	\$7,000
iPad & Protective Coverings	20	\$10,569
Snacks	\$2.86/ Student (35 Students)	\$18,000 (Over 180 Days)
Incentive Prizes	School Year	\$3,000
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	2 Months	\$5,600
Supplies	Summer Term	\$2,000
iPad & Protective Coverings	15	\$7,927
Lunch	\$10.00/ Student (35 Students)	\$14,000 (Over 40 Days)
Incentive Prizes	Summer Term	\$1,5000
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 (35 Students) (3x)	\$1,050
Tickets	Zoo	\$450

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)

17 ELRC Slots	18 Potential DHS Slots
---------------	------------------------

35 total Summer Camp Students

17 ELRC Slots	18 Potential DHS Slots
---------------	------------------------

