



## **INTENT TO SOLE SOURCE**

**Posting Date: May 13, 2024**

In accordance with Sole Source Section 1560 in the District's procurement code, Lexington County School District One intends to award, without competition, a contract to The Graduation Alliance to provide a program to support at risk students grades 9-12.

The total estimated dollar amount of the program is \$150,000.00.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

The Graduation Alliance is the only contractor that offers a partnership that provides wraparound services and ease of online access to accelerate the courses of study within a unique waiver from seat team from the South Carolina Department of Education. The contractor provides acquisition of course credits at an accelerated pace of study to help students stay on track to graduate.

**ALL RESPONSES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY: May 28, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m.**

If you are aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of the contract, you may be entitled to protest, but only as provided in Section 11-35-4210. To protest an award, you must (i) submit notice of your intent to protest within five (5) business days of the date this notice is posted, and (ii) submit your actual protest within fifteen days of the date this notice is posted. Days are calculated as provided in Section 11-35-310(13). Both protests and notices of intent to protest must be in writing and must be received by the Procurement Officer within the time provided. The grounds of the protest and the relief requested must be set forth with enough particularity to give notice of the issues to be decided. Any protest or notice of intent to protest must be addressed to:

**Elizabeth Marsh, Director of Procurement**  
**Lexington County School District One**  
**100 Tarrar Springs Road**  
**Lexington, SC 29072**  
**emarsh@lexington1.net**

*Elizabeth Marsh*



October 31, 2023

**Unique Features: Specify the unique features or characteristics of the goods or services that are requested:**

Graduation Alliance has been supporting disengaged students who can't or won't attend district offerings through its dropout recovery program for more than 15 years, establishing its team as re-engagement experts. Not only does the organization locate disengaged students and bring them back to school, but it also provides an alternative pathway to graduation built on flexibility, accountability, and support. The dropout recovery program locates, re-engages, supports, and graduates students who otherwise would not have graduated from high school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Graduation Alliance leveraged its team of re-engagement experts to tackle the missing student crisis that came about from sudden school modality changes. As challenges brought on by the pandemic, such as chronic absenteeism, persist years after the initial shock of nationwide school closures, Graduation Alliance attendance recovery program continues to provide mentoring support to K-12 students for academic and life challenges around the country.

Independent evaluation of Graduation Alliance's dropout recovery and attendance recovery programs show that they significantly outperform similar programs. For example, Graduation Alliance's dropout recovery program outperformed the national benchmark for dropout recovery programs established by the Impact Genome Project on both efficacy and cost per outcome, providing 27% more outcomes for 33% less cost. Similarly, the attendance recovery program achieved impact at a significantly lower cost compared to other programs working on the same outcome, based on the sector-wide cost-per-outcome benchmark from the Impact Genome Project.

Graduation Alliance's dropout and attendance recovery services are a unique blend that has been developed to support at-risk and disengaged learners. In addition,



Graduation Alliance provides school districts with a scalable solution that allows for rapid deployment to meet the demands of Fulton County Schools.

Graduation Alliance's online high school and the unique services supporting students who can't or won't participate in other district offerings are tailored to the needs of at-risk students. These services are customized to meet the needs of Fulton County Schools as well. Finally, Graduation Alliance allows customers low minimum list sizes relative to other vendors – yet another uniqueness in this space.

**Special Needs: Briefly explain why the unique specifications restrict the requisition to one manufacturer or provider:**

Fulton County School's dedication to student engagement and success aligns closely with the current proposal to work with Graduation Alliance to re-engage chronically absent, at-risk, and totally disengaged learners through (1) outreach, intake, and processing eligibility; (2) pace, progress, social, and emotional support; and (3) alternative graduation pathway option for high school students who can't or won't return to other district offerings. No other vendors offer this combination of offerings or capabilities to support students that include outreach, mentoring, and high school diploma services and support. In addition, Graduation Alliance is uniquely positioned to scale service to support the immediate and variable needs of Fulton County Schools.

**Other Sources: State the reason or reasons why competing products are not satisfactory, e.g., a justification for the proprietary (sole source) acquisition**

The unique nature of these services is such that any modifications may reduce the quality of the program — and the number of recovered students as well as overall re-engagement outcomes that are expected as a result of this partnership. Each individual service component is uniquely designed to help support at-risk and disengaged students – and structured in such a way that no other products or services allow for a similar outcome.



## What differentiates Graduation Alliance from other companies:

The following list of differentiators highlights the unique approach offered by Graduation Alliance. This specific combination of support and engagement is unique within this industry.

- **Active Outreach** – Graduation Alliance has over 15 years of experience locating disengaged students and bringing them back into the fold of their educational community. Graduation Alliance uses a multi-channel outreach strategy that includes direct mail, email, phone, SMS, and social media communications not only to students and their primary parent/guardian but also to their emergency contacts and wider community.
- **Wraparound Human Supports** – Understanding many factors that lead students to disengage are nonacademic, Graduation Alliance uses a multi-tiered system of human supports to help students navigate academic *and* life challenges. Attendance recovery students are mentored one-on-one and receive support with any barriers preventing them from being their best at school. Dropout recovery students are wrapped in 360 degrees of support, including state-certified teachers who facilitate Graduation Alliance’s asynchronous online curriculum, Academic Coaches who monitor pacing and progress, Local Advocates who assist with navigating life challenges, 24/7 virtual tutoring services to provide homework help any time of day or night, and an IT support team to help with technology and student portal questions.
- **Outbound Calls** — Most companies run call centers and handle large volumes of *inbound* calls — these also are typically tech support lines like help desk support. Similarly, other companies manage inbound calls tied to admissions and enrollment, but not outbound calls for student support.
- **Sole Source or Only Qualified RFP Respondent in 13 States** – Our attendance recovery program has been selected as a sole-source provider or proven to be the only qualified RFP respondent for attendance recovery in 13 states and counting. To date, we’ve supported more than 135,000 K-12 students and their families through personalized mentoring and located more than 16,300 disengaged students.



- Cost-Neutral Dropout Recovery Program – Graduation Alliance’s dropout recovery program is cost-neutral and aligned to state funding. Recovering dropped-out students reclaims state funding for the district, and Graduation Alliance only receives a portion of that funding, resulting in a cost-neutral or cost-positive program.

In summary, the combination of dropout recovery for high-school-aged students and attendance recovery for K-12 students — and the application of each approach in relation to student success and learner excellence — is what makes Graduation Alliance unique.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Harp", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Greg Harp**  
Chief Development Officer  
Graduation Alliance