



TO: Jestin D. Johnson City Administrator

- **FROM:** Jennifer Cabán Accountability Officer, City Administrator's Office
- **SUBJECT:** Measure AA Oakland Children's Initiative 2-Year Evaluation Partner

DATE: April 2, 2024

City Administrator Approval

Date:

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:

Resolution:

- (1) Awarding A Professional Services Agreement To American Institutes For Research, In Partnership With RDA Consulting, In An Amount Not To Exceed \$1,400,000 Through June 30, 2025 To Provide The Initial Two-Year Performance Appraisal And External Evaluation Of The Oakland Children's Initiative And Its Implementation Partners; And
- (2) Authorizing The City Administrator To Extend The Agreement For An Additional Year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Resolution would award a professional services agreement to American Institutes Research, who will subcontract with RDA consulting, in an amount not to exceed \$1,400,000 to provide the performance appraisal and external evaluation of the Oakland Children's Initiative and its Implementation Partners. The evaluations are required by the Oakland Children's Initiative and will be funded from the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund of the Initiative.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The OCI (Measure AA), driven to the ballot by community advocacy, deepens the early investment in Oakland's children by expanding access to high quality preschool and supports them through college graduation by providing college access supports for students to obtain 4-year or 2-year college or technical degrees.

On December 14, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 89517 C.M.S., certifying the Implementation Partners for the OCI, who are First 5 Alameda County for the Early Education Fund and Oakland Promise for the Oakland Promise Fund.

Charter Section 1602 requires that the Accountability Officer be responsible for overseeing a rigorous and reliable external evaluation or evaluations of the Implementation Partners' performance, including the selection of external evaluation partners or the utilization of existing external evaluations as applicable, and presenting the results of such evaluations to the Citizens' Oversight Commission. Charter Section 1602 also requires that the Accountability Officer be responsible for monitoring the performance of the Implementation Partners through a formal performance appraisal, consistent with the metrics established in the five-year Guidelines and scope of services for the Implementation Partners' performance to the Citizens' Oversight Commission.

The charter establishes three funds: 1) the Oakland Early Education Fund, funded by 62% of the proceeds of the parcel tax, 2) the Oakland Promise Fund, funded by 31% of the proceeds of the parcel tax and 3) the Oversight, Accountability, and Evaluation Fund, funded by 7% of the proceeds of the parcel tax. Charter Section 1603, the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund shall be used to support the oversight and accountability costs of the Citizens' Oversight Commission, including but not limited to the costs of Commission and accountability staff, operations and meetings, financial management, audits, strategic and implementation planning, and communications and outreach. At least one-third (1/3) of the moneys deposited in the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund shall be appropriated for independent third-party evaluations.

Furthermore, Section 1603 to the extent that at the end of each two-year (2) budget period, any unspent and unencumbered or undesignated funds remain in the Oversight, Accountability, and Evaluation Fund, fifty percent (50%) of the funds remaining shall be transferred to the Early Education Fund and shall be available for appropriation to achieve the goals of the Early Education Fund, twenty-five percent (25%) shall be transferred to the Oakland Promise Fund and shall be available for appropriation to achieve the goals of the Oakland Promise Fund, and twenty-five percent (25%) shall remain in the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund as a reserve for the eligible uses. The FY22/23 budget for the Oversight Fund was \$2,617,258 and in FY23/24 is \$2,814,461 for a total of \$5,432,119; the set aside for third party evaluations is \$1,792,599.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The following analysis and policy alternative outlined in this section furthers the City's priorities of: Prevention & Healing; Good Jobs & Vibrant Economy; Clean, Healthy, & Sustainable Neighborhoods; Responsive, Trustworthy Government.

OCI, through the selected Implementation Partners, works to intentionally deepen its early investment in Oakland's children by expanding access to high quality preschool and supports them through college graduation by providing college access supports for students to obtain 4-year or 2-year college or technical degrees.

OCI is one of the first cities in the State of California to leverage local funding and blaze a path towards ensuring expanded quality access to early childhood education and providing comprehensive college access supports for Oakland children and youth by prioritizing our

highest need families. The ordinance prescribes the initial parameters for the investment of these public funds via 5-year guidelines. They also provide the framework to inform the evolution of these guidelines across the length of the initiative. In accordance with the City Charter requirements for OCI, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with RDA Consulting (RDA) were selected as the evaluation firms to develop and implement the initial 2-year appraisal and external evaluation which shall focus on identifying how the Initiative can show collective impact, overall delivery of services in relation to each of the Implementation Partners; this includes strategies, sub-strategies, and activities to increase access and enhance quality early care and education and college access supports. In this evaluation, it will be important to consider the impact of the initiative on broader community/population well-being as compared to how the evaluation will document program design and deployment.

The evaluation will align and account for the Results Based Accountability (RBA) Measures which are reported by the Implementation Partners on an annual basis. The RBA provides metrics that identify measures of how much, how well, and what will be better off as a result of investments of the OCI. These measures provide the platform for the identification of important quantitative and/or qualitative data that will be collected by each Implementation Partner to measure real-time progress of implementation.

The selected evaluation firm will be responsible for conducting a holistic impact evaluation which will accomplish the following:

- A. Aid the City of Oakland to identify the impact of its investments and overall implementation,
- B. Offer insights and suggestions that will inform the next iteration of five-year Guidelines to better meet real-time community needs and will uplift areas of improvement to align the work, and/or
- C. Enhance existing practices and RBA metrics.

This evaluation will <u>not</u> include an assessment of day-to-day programmatic components of the Implementation Partners. The evaluation is expected to inform the City of Oakland, the Children's Initiative Oversight Commission, and its multiple stakeholders of the collective impact of OCI funded strategies and inform decision-makers about how to deepen collective impact in future years. Furthermore, the OCI identifies five primary principles for this evaluation that are explained in greater detail below (see Appendix A). The evaluation design and execution will:

- 1. Organize around a whole child, whole family, and whole community framework
- 2. Examine how existing and new funding sources are being leveraged
- 3. Employ a mixed methods approach to data collection
- 4. Analyze system stability and sustainability
- 5. Consider the cost of care, affordability for family and meeting family need

AIR in partnership with RDA Consulting will work closely with the Accountability Officer and designated stakeholders to plan, conduct, and carry out the evaluation. This will include agreed upon research questions, data collection methods and procedures, production of any formative, summative, and/or impact evaluation reports, as well as presentation of those reports and

findings to the Children's Initiative Oversight Commission and, as needed, other key stakeholders.

ASSESSMENT & REVIEW PROCESS Request for Proposals (RFP)

<u>RFQ 271313</u> seeking the Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI) External Evaluation Partner, as required by legislation, was released on November 17, 2023. After review of all applicants and panel interviews, American Institutes of Research in partnership with RDA Consulting were selected in accordance to the guidelines set forth in the ordinance and RFQ 271313. The firms brought strong qualifications and capacity to develop a rigorous and reliable external evaluation(s) of OCI and Implementation Partners' performance.

The Department of Workforce and Employment Standards (DWES) after careful review and consideration provided an availability analysis for RFQ 271313, Local and Small Local Business Enterprise Program's requirement is set to 0% for this project and proposals submitted by firms were eligible for review.

Selection Criteria

The selection for the evaluation firm focused on the following: relevant experience, qualifications, organizational capacity, and their proposed approach.

Minimum Qualifications and Prior Experience

The selected contractor needs to demonstrate:

- Prior success in conducting evaluations with similar features to that of the OCI and what is described in this request for proposals;
- Demonstrated proficiency in one or more of the whole child, whole family, and whole community frameworks including its application in an evaluation design;
- Demonstrated capability to examine multiple funding sources across sectors and how they are assessed relative to impact of an initiative;
- Demonstrated capacity and capability to analyze system stability and sustainability as described in the principles below (see Principles section below);
- Understands and is familiar with the fundamentals of the local and/or statewide education landscape (i.e. ECE, college access, etc.) and rudiments of meaningful family, community and partner engagement; and
- Equity Centered demonstrated knowledge of the local community, holistic understanding of the forces impacting economically vulnerable groups, etc.

Additional Elements Considered in Selection see Appendix A.

RFQ Selection Panel

Three panelists participated in the selection of the evaluator. These panelists were selected based on their grounded expertise, connection to community, availability, and interest in participating in the RFQ process. Panelists were professionals with direct experience with equity frameworks and deep knowledge in the field of education.

The scoring rubric utilized by panelists to score applicants can be found in Appendix B.

About Selected Agencies

The agencies under consideration provided comprehensive proposals showcasing their capacity and readiness to serve as the Evaluation Partner for the Initiative. Content below provides further background on each agency:

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

AIR is a leading nonprofit research and technical assistance (TA) institution working to solve some of the most urgent challenges in the United States and around the world. For more than 75 years, our content experts have followed the evidence to find and apply solutions that work. Their mission is to generate and use rigorous evidence that contributes to a better, more equitable world. Through rigorous research and application in the field, we help people understand which programs and policies work and translate that evidence into action. Policymakers, leaders, and practitioners at the highest levels and on the front lines use the evidence we generate to make important decisions. Much of their evaluation work focuses on community-wide or system-wide initiatives and interventions that support children and families during different developmental stages. AIR is experienced in measuring the effects of these complex interventions and work closely with the organizations that implement them to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of these initiatives.

In research and evaluation, their deliverables range from state-of-the-art research design, analysis, and reporting to small- and large-scale studies and surveys and cutting-edge data analytics tools and techniques. Drawing on their staff of more than 1,600 individuals, they certainly bring together interdisciplinary teams to provide comprehensive, tailored services to every client engagement. AIR's nationally recognized diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy, which includes cultural competence training for all AIR staff, sets their capabilities apart, as does their expertise in helping clients and partner communities address inequitable opportunities and outcomes.

RDA Consulting

RDA Consulting is an employee-owned, majority-woman-managed California Social Purpose Corporation working toward a just and equitable society by addressing barriers to individual, organizational, and community well-being. As a full-service consultancy located in Oakland, California, RDA delivers services to clients and communities across vital intersecting health and human service sectors, including child and family welfare, public and behavioral health, education, workforce development, adult and juvenile justice, transportation, homelessness and housing, and violence prevention and public safety. RDA employs more than 30 diverse and talented staff members who are systematically assigned across projects to leverage their experience, content knowledge, and technical skills to provide first-class service to their clients and to produce significant systems-level change. Across their work, RDA prioritizes community engagement as a means of elevating the voices of those most impacted by public systems.

RDA brings deep familiarity with the local context in which this work will occur and with local stakeholders. RDA uses a participatory approach to building collective impact by creating a common language and a culture of cooperation. RDA has an extensive record of establishing a shared vision with multisystem stakeholders who are often siloed and bring unique needs and priorities. RDA works diligently to remove barriers to community stakeholder participation by using culturally responsive, accessible, and linguistically appropriate methods to engage hard-to-reach populations.

Alternative #1	The City Council may reject the final selection for the Oakland Children's Initiative 2-Year Evaluation Partners.
Pro	Rejection results in an additional second round of request for proposals and may widen the pool of candidates
Con	Rejection of the recommendation results in being out of compliance with the City Charter for conducting a performance appraisal every two years of the Initiative and an external evaluation. Existing funds explicitly set aside for third-party evaluation will be redistributed for FY22-23 and FY23-24; as noted in Section 1603 to the extent that at the end of each two-year (2) budget period, any unspent and unencumbered or undesignated funds remain in the Oversight, Accountability, and Evaluation Fund, fifty percent (50%) of the funds remaining shall be transferred to the Early Education Fund and shall be available for appropriation to achieve the goals of the Early Education Fund, twenty-five percent (25%) shall be transferred to the Oakland Promise Fund and shall be available for appropriation to achieve the goals of the Oakland Promise Fund, and twenty-five percent (25%) shall remain in the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund as a reserve for the eligible uses.
Reason for Not Recommending this Alternative	Loss of funding availability for these purposes, will impact the follow required two-year external evaluation. Will miss outlined timing required in the City Charter.

Policy Alternative

FISCAL IMPACT

Funding for this agreement is available in existing appropriation in the Measure AA – Oversight Fund (2261), Citywide Activities Org (90591) and City Administrator: Administration Org (02111), Administrative Project (1000007). There is no fiscal impact to the City General Fund as the funding is already set aside for these purposes.

Charter Section 1603, the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund shall be used to support the oversight and accountability costs of the Citizens' Oversight Commission, including but not limited to the costs of Commission and accountability staff, operations and meetings, financial management, audits, strategic and implementation planning, and communications and

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Life Enrichment Committee April 23, 2024 outreach. At least one-third (1/3) of the moneys deposited in the Oversight, Accountability and Evaluation Fund shall be appropriated for independent third-party evaluations. **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

An Evaluation Ad Hoc workgroup was created by the Accountability Officer with five (5) program and evaluation staff members of First 5 Alameda County and Oakland Promise and three (3) Commissioners. This group supported the development of RFQ 271313's primary principles outlined in Appendix A.

The RFQ was released on November 17, 2023, with a deadline of December 22, 2023. Legal notices were published in accordance with City requirements on November 17, 2023.

All RFQ related materials, including the RFP, addenda, and meeting times were posted on the City's website. One (1) voluntary pre-proposal meeting was held on November 28, 2023. respectively. Collectively, a total of seventeen (17) attendees representing eight (8) organizations participated in the pre-proposal meeting. Five (5) national organizations submitted comprehensive proposals for RFQ 271313 by the designated deadline.

An RFQ selection panel was established to advise, score, and recommend an Evaluation Partner from the applicant pool. The Director of Race & Equity provided a racial equity presentation to the Commission prior to interviews which provided grounding for interviews and debriefs.

COORDINATION

The development and issuance of the Agenda Report was developed by the Accountability Officer with support from the City Administrator's Office, City Attorney, and Budget Office.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP (If Applicable)

Not Applicable

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The OCI funding will provide employment opportunities to an Oakland based firm. Several Oakland families will be incentivized for participating in the evaluation which will likely include focus groups and/or surveys. The evaluation itself will provide much needed information on how to iterate the Five-Year Guidelines (which is required) to improve and iterate investments to Oakland's children, youth and families. Through an economic impact analysis, the evaluation will also provide insights on how to best leverage and match additional local, state, federal, and private philanthropic funds, bringing additional resources into Oakland. In addition, participants in the programs funded by the Children's Initiative may experience increased economic opportunity through expanded availability and affordability of early childhood programs, increased awareness, and access to scholarships to support postsecondary studies, completion of post-secondary education, and financial coaching. *Environmental*: There are no immediate environmental opportunities associated with this action.

Race & Equity: The Oakland Children's Initiative prioritizes funding for services that reach children, youth, and families who are furthest away from access. Investments and partnerships will work to support children, youth, and families in greatest need with basic health, education, enrichment, and employment services through a variety of means. The overwhelming majority of program participants are projected to be African American, Latinx, and Asian, based on preliminary data. Programs are intended to serve children, youth, and families that may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in enriching, academically supportive, and socially engaging programming free of charge. OCI is required to undergo a rigorous evaluation process that will allow the City to assess whether services have been equitably distributed and that program outcomes reduce racial disparities in areas including kindergarten readiness, access to high quality early childhood education, college readiness, and completion of post-secondary education.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) (If Applicable)

Not Applicable

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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- (2) Authorizing The City Administrator To Extend The Agreement For An Additional Year.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Jennifer Cabán, Oakland Children's Initiative Accountability Officer, at 510-238-6840.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Cabán Children's Initiative Accountability Officer, City Administrators Office

Attachments (#):

- 1. <u>RFQ #271313</u> Request for Proposals The Oakland Children's Initiative 2-Year External Evaluation
- 2. Appendix A Evaluation Principles
- 3. Appendix B Scoring Template

APPENDIX A

For Further Consideration by Potential Candidates

Evaluation Principles

Principles

Building upon the scope of services are principles which currently inform the work of the Initiative. It was important for the Initiative and panel that the selected evaluator understands and is able to demonstrate how their organization has and will leverage these frameworks in the course of executing the evaluation. A common thread from the RBA metrics through the evaluation is the *holistic support for children, youth, and families.* It will be important to consider the impact of the initiative on broader community well-being as compared to how the evaluation will document program design and deployment. These elements are different but have compliments to one another.

1. Organize Around a Whole Child, Whole Family, and Whole Community Framework

<u>Why</u>

Leveraging the available frameworks across the education, early education, behavioral health, and social service sectors will help to build a more comprehensive evidence base that creates the context for measuring the impact of the OCI. This will support an evaluation that incorporates the context of broader community conditions that contribute and/or hinder the success in addressing disparities for children, youth, and families in the Oakland community. *What*

OCI is but one of multiple investments that public and community-based agencies in the City of Oakland are making to improve the lives of its community members, particularly children, youth and families. Explicitly the OCI intends to direct funds to support an equitable allocation of resources that support equitable opportunity and access for OCI target populations. As such, OCI will use a frame of whole child, youth, and families to consider its impact in concert with its partners, e.g. Implementation Partners, Implementation Partner subcontractors, and local adjacent efforts such as RiseEast, etc. Some of the research-based frameworks that may be used includes:

- Social Determinants of Health¹
- Whole Child Framework²
- Ecological Model of Human Development³

Each of these frameworks draws from different social science disciplines yet achieve a tremendous amount of compliment in their documentation and organization of what science says about supporting child well-being. These disciplines include: health (including public, primary, mental/behavioral), early learning and care, Transitional Kindergarten - 12 education,

¹ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Accessed July 2023. <u>Social Determinants of Health.</u> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Schools. Accessed July 2023. <u>Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child</u>. CDC. Washington, DC.

³ Antony, E. M. (2022). Framing Childhood Resilience Through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory: A Discussion Paper. Cambridge Educational Research e-Journal, 9, 244-257. <u>https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.90564</u>

and psychology. In the case of each of these frameworks it is not plausible for the OCI evaluation to document the impact the OCI has in each of these areas. However, ensuring that the evaluator builds an approach that uses methods, data collection instruments, analysis, and reporting templates that present the results through these frameworks is anticipated.

2. Examine How Funding Sources Are Being Leveraged

Why

This principle sets out the parameter to identify how various funding sources can be better aligned to quality service implementation that combine all sources (federal, state, local, non-governmental) as well as types of resources (time, collaboration, supplies and materials, facilities, etc.) The OCI is a single local funding stream that is contributing vital resources to at least two different social sector ecosystems: early learning and care and Transitional Kindergarten - 12 education. These ecosystems have other existing funding streams that are supporting programs, services, and activities in their context. Understanding the full range of resources available to Oakland communities in addition to OCI provides an important lens to understand what needs are able to be met with combinations of public resources.

<u>What</u>

This evaluation aims to provide information on the ability of the OCI to directly contribute to the holistic support for children, youth, and families in Oakland. As such, understanding and documenting how OCI resources are being leveraged towards this end in <u>combination</u> with other resources directed at the same or complimentary purpose is important. This will include how OCI is complemented by other investments to advance shared outcomes for youth, children, and families in Oakland. This would include understanding coordination with other local, state, federal, and philanthropic monies.

This initial analysis could then be scaffolded to look at how and where resources are flowing within the City of Oakland to support intended activities in which multiple funding streams are used to concentrate resource efforts. Here are some of the ways in which that analysis might look by segment:

- *Geographic*: Present resource contributions by zip code, neighborhood
- Demographic: Race, ethnicity, income
- Child / Student Type: Present resource contributions by age, grade, provider type
- **Need:** Present resource contributions by child/student with a disability or special need, English Language Learner (ELL), foster youth, unhoused, highly mobile, etc.
- **Family Unit:** Present resource contributions by support for both the child/student as well as the parent/guardian (see the Cost of Care, Affordability for Family, and Family need principle below)

Complementing the two former analyses, the suggested resource analysis shared below may also provide valuable insights into how OCI is combined with other funds to enhance quality and/or provide access to communities. This analysis would involve documenting more than merely the funding amounts but encompass other types of resources including: staff time for direct learning and student support (mentorship, behavioral skill building, therapy, etc.), organized time for collaboration and partnership across organizations, non-labor such as supplies and materials, facilities, etc. This analysis may be combined with previous cited data presentations to understand how certain communities (by zip code or neighborhood) are experiencing and potentially benefiting from increased investment.

3. Employ a Mixed Methods Approach to Data Collection

<u>Why</u>

Employing meaningfully combines both quantitative and qualitative methods throughout the evaluation. The quantitative data would build upon the RBA measures as a starting place that then builds to complement the qualitative measures. These qualitative measures will centralize the voice and experience of communities helping to avoid deficit-based perspective and embracing a participatory approach.

<u>What</u>

Blending Methods to Create a Holistic Narrative

A mixed methods approach will use qualitative and quantitative data that complement and inform one another. It will be important not to assume that there is access to all the quantitative data initially and/or that it will effectively communicate the story about the impact of the OCI. In particular this would signal that the RBA metrics alone will not be sufficient and that further data collection either secondarily and/or primarily will be required as a condition to capture meaningful quantitative data for the evaluation. Through this approach it will invite the use of qualitative data collection that might include, but is not limited to: narrative and stories that elucidate some of the trends and changes coming through the quantitative data, offer more nuanced explanation for patterns observed through RBA metrics, and deeper dive into the circumstances of the target population to inform future supports.

Community Voice as Central to Data Collection & Synthesis

At the heart of the OCI, a participatory approach would reap many benefits. Community involvement, particularly of those most impacted, in the design can ensure that the evaluation is of value to the community, provides a platform for a strengths-based approach, encourages the uptake of recommendations, etc. Consideration must be taken that balances both their involvement in the process with the time that they may actually have available. It will be important to create clear parameters on the requests being made of community members, some of key questions to consider are:

- Will those most impacted be included in the design of the evaluation?
- What are the details of that process?
- How will they be involved?
- How they will be compensated for their time could provide greater clarity?

4. Analyze System Stability and Sustainability

<u>Why</u>

This encompasses both the programs, services, and support directly subsidized by the OCI as well as direct funding to build the infrastructure and capacity of complementary efforts to support children, youth, and families in the Oakland community. Important in this analysis will be defining the ecosystem.

<u>What</u>

April 23, 2024

OCI is currently measuring the change in the number of children served by the Implementation Partner's subcontractors and not changes in capacity (defined in multiple facets). Another consideration is showing a path toward sustainability of the capacity that can be built over the long-term. Consistent with this principle is also incorporating shifts and changes in the landscape that could enable conditional changes. For example, identifying ways in which to measure how systems are coordinating with one another may be a vitally important barometer to understand the sum of capacity across service delivery.

In this principle, capacity would still be an important element but can go further into how that capacity aligns with family's needs, whether families can pay to maintain that level of capacity, and whether providers can continue to supply the capacity. These items depend on how well OCI subsidizes operational costs/supports the right parts of ECE and how ECE integrates with other systems to help build out that safety net. The same can be said in the realm of college access, acceptance, retention, and degree attainment.

5. Cost of Care, Affordability for Family, and Meeting Family Need

<u>Why</u>

Taking advantage of information derived through previously stated principles, this principle enables a view into how children, youth, and families are experiencing directly the increased public tax contribution and its translation to economic, financial and service support.

What

The evaluation should be considerate of the entirety of the ecosystem the OCI intends to impact – both providers and recipients of support. To that end, the affordability and quality access of care for families in the 0-18 year old continuum is an important factor. This will also include satisfaction measurements not only around impacts to money but also navigability and the more precious resource, time:

- How does the system meet the needs/preferences of families?
- What are the opportunities to do better?
- Are there pathways to bridge the cradle to career work?