



Lake County Forest Preserves

General Offices
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DATE: August 31, 2026

TO: Gina Roberts, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Alyssa Firkus
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a Resolution awarding Contract for the Development of an Educational Program Strategic Plan to Partners In Capacity, LLC in the Contract Price of \$75,000.00.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED: Leadership, Organizational Sustainability, Communication, Education, and Outreach

FINANCIAL DATA: Funding for this contract comes from a \$75,000.00 grant award provided by the Preservation Foundation of the Lake County Forest Preserves. The account to be charged for this contract is 14104000-709000.

BACKGROUND: In January 2026, the District engaged Partners in Capacity to develop and implement a process to develop new 5-year strategic plan objectives through 2023. These objectives were approved by the Board of Commissioners at their August 2026 meeting. During the process of developing the objectives, the need emerged for the Education Department to develop its own Educational Program Strategic Plan. This plan will ensure that educational programs continue to support the District's mission, expand opportunities to meet evolving community needs, and maximize community impact. It will also provide a framework for analyzing how the Department's operational time, staffing, and financial resources are invested, identifying priority audiences, and focusing efforts on programs and services that deliver the greatest value. By establishing clear priorities and measurable goals, the Educational Program Strategic Plan will help the Department create innovative, sustainable, and responsive educational experiences for current and future audiences.

BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Purchasing Manager, Manager of Board Operations and Corporate Counsel

STATE OF ILLINOIS)

) SS

COUNTY OF LAKE)

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT

REGULAR SEPTEMBER MEETING

SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

MADAM PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Your **FINANCE COMMITTEE** presents herewith “A Resolution Awarding a Contract for Development of an Educational Program Strategic Plan to Partners In Capacity, LLC,” and requests its approval.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Date: _____ ☐ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: _____ Nays: _____

☐ Voice Vote Majority Ayes: Nays: _____

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**A RESOLUTION AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AN
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN
TO PARTNERS IN CAPACITY, LLC**

WHEREAS, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the "District") desires to retain a firm to develop an Educational Program Strategic Plan for the Education Department (the "Services"); and

WHEREAS, the Director of Education and the Purchasing Manager have determined that the Services requires personal confidence; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Education has solicited a proposal for the Services from Partners in Capacity, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the District's staff, the Purchasing Manager, the Director of Education, and the Finance Committee have reviewed the proposal submitted by Partners in Capacity, LLC and recommend that the Board of Commissioners (i) find that the proposal submitted by Partners in Capacity, LLC is the proposal that is most advantageous to the District and (ii) approve a Contract for the Services to Partners in Capacity, LLC in the amount of \$75,000.00 (the "Contract Price") in substantially the form attached hereto (the "Contract"); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners hereby finds the proposal for the Services submitted by Partners in Capacity, LLC is the proposal that is most advantageous to the District;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois, **THAT**:

Section 1: Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated as a part of this Resolution by this reference.

Section 2: Award of Contract. The Contract for the Services in the Contract Price, in substantially the form attached hereto, is hereby awarded to Partners in Capacity, LLC.

Section 3: Execution of Contract. The Executive Director of the District is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Contract for the Work in the amount of the Contract Price.

Section 4: Payments. The Treasurer shall make payments under the Contract only pursuant to and in accordance with the Contract terms.

Section 5: Effective Date. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2026

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2026

Jessica Vealitzek, President
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

Julie Gragnani, Secretary
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. _____



PARTNERS
IN CAPACITY

**PARTNERS IN CAPACITY LLC
CONSULTING SERVICES CONTRACT**

This agreement made this 9th day of September, 2026 is between Partners In Capacity, LLC with its offices located at 604 Shadow Creek, Woodstock, GA and at 653 Hill St, Highland Park, IL, a Limited Liability Company duly formed in the state of Illinois, hereinafter referred to as "Partners In Capacity or PIC" and the Lake County Forest Preserve with its principal offices located at 1899 West Winchester Road Libertyville, Illinois, IL hereinafter referred to as "Client".

1. Relationship and Scope

Partners In Capacity will work with the Client staff to complete an **Educational Program Strategic Plan**. The Scope of Work includes five phases of work: Current State Analysis, Research, Design, Feedback and Finalization.

Key Deliverables:

- Project Plan and meeting schedule
- Analysis of current Education models and programming, workforce needs, and current stakeholders.
- Assessment of community and partner needs through interviews, peer reviews and focus groups
- Examples of other educational models to be considered
- Design of future education models and approaches including partnership recommendations
- Validation of Design approach with key partners through focus groups
- Finalization of approach incorporating internal and external feedback
- Education SMART Goals and Action plans for implementation

It is anticipated that the **Educational Program Strategic Plan project** will start in September 2026 and be completed in October 2027. If the project is extended beyond November 30th, 2027, by the Client or the Client's schedule, additional consulting fees may be incurred.

2. Contract Price and Invoicing

Client shall pay the Partners In Capacity on a project basis for the work outlined in the above section.

- a) The **Educational Program Strategic Plan** cost will be \$75,000, invoiced in 13 monthly installments of \$5,770 beginning in September 2026 with the final invoice in September 2027.
- b) Additional work beyond the current scope of the project must be approved in writing via email by Client and will be billable either by a separate project estimate approved by the Client or on a billable hour basis.
 - a. If additional interviews beyond the initial scope of work (35 interviews) are requested, each interview will be \$300.
 - b. If additional focus groups are requested beyond the initial scope of work (14), each in-person focus group is \$3000 and virtual groups are \$2500 per group.
 - c. Any work on an hourly basis will be approved in advance by the Client. The hourly rate for Laurel Tustison and Jennifer Olson is \$200 per hour.
- c) Client shall pay Partners In Capacity within 30 business days of the invoice date.

3. Independent Contractor Status

- a) Partners In Capacity represents that it is not an employee of Client and it is not entitled to any fringe benefits or employment rights from Client. Consultant alone shall be responsible for any of its own fringe benefits including, but not limited to, vacation, sick leave and holidays, health liability insurance, and for paying any payroll-related taxes or contributions required by law.
- b) Partners In Capacity represents that it has the necessary expertise to do the consulting work outlined and that, therefore, they do not need to be trained or supervised by Client or its representatives.

4. Representations

- a) Partners In Capacity represents and warrants that it has the expertise to provide service hereunder required for completion of the project without supervision and in accordance with the standards of good professional practice. The Client will not be responsible for determining the manner and means in which to carry out the tasks hereunder.
- b) Partners In Capacity shall only perform mutually agreed upon services and shall submit work in good faith. It does not provide guarantees or warranties of any of the work provided to the Client.
- c) Partners In Capacity further represents and warrants that it is under no restriction, contractually or otherwise, to any present or former broker, client, employer, associate, partnership, corporation, business entity, or person which would prevent or restrict them in any manner whatsoever from performing under this agreement.

5. Term and Termination

- a) The term of this Agreement shall continue as of the date first written and is anticipated to continue through August 2026. It may be extended on a month-to-month basis or on a project basis in writing as outlined in Sections 1 and 2.
- b) This Agreement may be terminated by either party subject to 14 days written notice.
- c) Partners In Capacity may terminate if Client fails or refuses to pay invoices rendered by Partners In Capacity provided that such invoices are due and payable under the terms of this Agreement and further providing Partners In Capacity has given written notice to Client of failure to pay and Client does not remedy same within a reasonable period of time.

6. Ownership

- a) Except as otherwise noted, Partners In Capacity will own all technical notes, programs, specifications, working documentation, and other information, tangible and intangible property, and interim work products prepared in connection with performance of this Agreement or required to be delivered and/or purchased and/or created under this Agreement. All final documents or documents presented to the Board of Commissioners or other Public bodies will be considered co-owners with PIC and Client able to use the final product documents.
- b) This paragraph shall survive termination of the Agreement.

7. Confidential Information

- a) The parties agree that the following constitutes confidential information or trade secrets and agrees not to disclose to anyone during the term of this Agreement or thereafter:
 - i) Non-public information acquired during the performance of this contract,
 - ii) The finances, business affairs, and circumstances of the parties; and
 - iii) Any confidential information and data relating to the work project hereunder and its operation.
- b) This paragraph shall survive termination of the Agreement.

9. Severability

If any of the provisions of this Agreement shall be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, such invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability shall not render the entire Agreement invalid and shall be construed as if not containing the invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision(s), and the rights and obligations of each party shall be construed and enforced accordingly.

10. Insurance Coverage:

A. Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability with limits not less than:

1. Worker's Compensation: Statutory
2. Employer's Liability:
 - a) *\$1,000,000 injury-per-occurrence*
 - b) *\$500,000 disease-per-employee*
 - c) *\$500,000 disease-policy limit*

Such insurance shall evidence that coverage applies in the State of Illinois.

B. Comprehensive Motor Vehicle Liability with limits for vehicles owned, non-owned or rented, not less than:

1. Bodily Injury:
 - a) *\$ 500,000 - per person*
 - b) *\$1,000,000 - per occurrence*
2. Property Damage:
 - a) *\$ 500,000 - per occurrence*
 - b) *\$ 1,000,000 - aggregate*

All employees shall be included as insured's.

C. Comprehensive General Liability with coverage written on an "occurrence" basis and with limits no less than:

1. General Aggregate: \$2,000,000.00
2. Bodily Injury: \$2,000,000.00 per person
\$2,000,000.00 per occurrence
3. Property Damage: \$2,000,000.00 per person
\$2,000,000.00 aggregate

Coverages shall include:

- Broad Form Property Damage Endorsement
- Blanket Contractual Liability (must expressly cover the indemnity provisions of the Contract)

D. Umbrella Policy. The required coverages may be in any combination of primary, excess and umbrella policies. Any excess or umbrella policy must provide excess coverage of underlying insurance on a following-form basis such that when any loss covered by the primary policy exceeds the limits under the primary policy, the excess or umbrella policy becomes effective to cover such loss.

- E. Owner as Additional Insured. Owner shall be named as an Additional Insured on all policies except for:
- Worker's Compensation Policy
 - Professional Liability Policy

11. Governing Law

The validity, interpretation, and performance of this Agreement shall be controlled by and construed under the laws of the State of Illinois, as if performed wholly within the state and without giving effect to the principles of conflicts of laws. The parties hereby consent to the exclusive jurisdiction of the State and specifically to the 19th Judicial Court of Illinois, Lake County, Illinois.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

Partners In Capacity, LLC	Lake County Forest Preserve
BY Laurel Tustison TITLE: President	BY TITLE:
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE 	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE