

**NOTICE OF INTENDED DECISION
TO ENTER INTO A SINGLE SOURCE CONTRACT
(PUR 7778)**

This Notice of Intended Decision to Enter into a Single Source Contract is posted in accordance with Rule 60A-1.045, Florida Administrative Code, and section 287.057(3), Florida Statutes.

AGENCY: Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

TITLE: Staffing Platform/Tandem

Short description of the commodity or service desired: Tandem is a child care workforce platform that helps child care facilities stay open, fully staffed, and focused on delivering high-quality care. They build and maintain pools of vetted, state-compliant substitutes who can be booked on-demand for both planned and last-minute staffing needs. Through Tandem's platform, centers reduce classroom closures, avoid ratio violations, and alleviate the administrative burden that contributes to director burnout. This investment will support a countywide substitute staffing pool, which will be accessible to all contracted SR and VPK providers across Polk county, removing financial barriers to access and ensuring staffing support is available when programs need it. This includes providing coverage when early childhood educators attend professional development as part of the Coalition's ongoing professional development program.

CONTACT

Name: Cheryl Kelly

Address: 115 S. Missouri Avenue, Suite 501; Lakeland, FL 33815

Telephone: 863-577-2450

Email: cherylkelly@elcpolk.org

Internal tracking number, if any: ELCPOLK-FY2026-03

DMS Single Source number, if applicable:

Date posted: 7/21/26 Time posted: 8 am

Commodity or Contractual Service (commodity or United Nation Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC), manufacturer, model, and description, as appropriate):

This purchase will include a one-year contract which will provide on-demand, vetted, state-compliant substitutes essential to early care networks that require consistent staffing support to maintain operations and meet state licensing requirements. It will also support staffing coverage when early childhood educators attend professional development as part of the Coalition's ongoing professional development program.

Requestor (division, bureau, office, individual, as appropriate):
Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

Performance and/or Design Requirements (intended use, function or application, compatibility, requirements; reference to policy, rule, statute or other act of the Legislature, as appropriate):

The Tandem platform builds, vets, and maintains a pool of state-compliant substitute teachers who can be requested on demand by child care sites. This comprehensive suite is designed for use by licensed providers and across early learning coalitions and multi-site early care networks that require consistent staffing support to maintain operations and meet state licensing requirements.

Intended Single Source:

Tandem

Price:

Up to \$300,000

Justification for Single Source Purchase (what is necessary and unique about the commodity, contractual service, or source; steps taken to confirm unavailability of competition, as appropriate):

There are no alternative vendors offering an equivalent combination of: a vetted, maintained substitute pool, full early-childhood compliance automation, on-demand staffing technology, and integrated workforce-readiness content designed specifically for early learning providers. The Tandem Substitute Workforce and Staffing Infrastructure Suite also includes Workforce Best Practices sessions for providers, professional development courses, and performance tracking for long-term sustainability.

Approved By (names & titles, as appropriate, e.g., requestor, requestor management, information systems, budget, purchasing):

Lori Shea, Board Vice-Chair/Interim Chair, Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

Dr. Marc Hutek, CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in Section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, or failure to file a bond or other security within the time allowed for filing a bond, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under Chapter 120, Florida Statutes. Protests may be filed with the agency by:

Mail:

Early Learning Coalition of Polk County

Attention: Cheryl Kelly

115 S. Missouri Avenue, Suite 501

Lakeland, FL 33815

Email: CherylKelly@elcpolk.org

Fax: 863-733-9081