

Louisiana



Department of
**Children &
Family Services**

Building a Stronger Louisiana

SOLICITATION

FOR

FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

PROPOSAL DUE DATE/TIME:

December 28, 2018

2:30 p.m., CENTRAL Standard Time

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Solicitation

Foster Caregiver Support Organization

1.0: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

This Solicitation is issued by the Department of Children and Family Services herein referred to as DCFS. The purpose of this solicitation is to obtain competitive proposals as allowed by Louisiana Revised Statute 15:1081et. Seq. and Louisiana Administrative Code Title 67, Part 5, §3503 from bona fide, qualified Proposers who are either an association or organization that is interested in developing and providing supportive services to foster caregivers. For the purpose of this solicitation, the term foster caregivers, refers to foster/adoptive parents and kin caregivers serving those children in the custody of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. In order to ensure that foster caregivers remain the best possible alternative for children needing out of home placement, these services should help support, empower and strengthen foster caregivers through educational trainings, publications, a website, social media, networking among foster caregivers, supportive services, legislative advocacy, working with DCFS, and developing or connecting with local and state foster caregiver organizations/associations/groups.

Foster caregivers provide care for children ages 0-21. Most often foster caregivers are certified by DCFS. In some situations, foster caregivers provide care without certification. Some foster caregivers move on to adopt when a child cannot safely be returned home. Each certified caregiver attends a pre-service training program that consists of 30 hours of learning activities. Recently, DCFS adopted a new pre-service training that focuses on high quality parenting as part of an effort to update and improve foster care services. As part of an effort to ensure foster care is reframed within the new Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) framework and that all services are aligned with QPI, a new solicitation has been developed to align the scope of services for the foster caregiver support contract with current DCFS practice. When parents are unable to care for their children, the foster caregiver must be able to provide the loving, committed, skilled care that the child needs, while working effectively with the biological parents and the system to achieve the best possible permanency option for children. The foster caregiver support organization will provide services to the families who have children placed in their homes. Some of these children are expected to be age 13 and above. The provider will be expected to support foster caregivers to meet the strengths and challenges of this age group. Some of the children may have a history of emotional, behavioral, adjustment issues, developmental disabilities, human trafficking, family disturbance, serious physical and medical conditions, and may be youth preparing for adulthood or those that identify as LGBTQ and the service provider will be expected to proactively offer supportive services to caregivers of these children as well. DCFS is seeking a proposer to serve the entire state.

DCFS seeks to contract with a provider who articulates a clear support philosophy that is strength-based, trauma informed, family-focused in caring for children of all ages and in alignment with QPI values and practices.

This Solicitation is issued by DCFS for the purposes of providing supportive services throughout the state to foster caregivers. DCFS will look favorably on providers who demonstrate the willingness and ability to contract with DCFS for supportive services to foster caregivers throughout the state and have the ability to demonstrate established community partnerships and creative ways to involve foster caregivers in each area of the state.

Successful Providers will demonstrate strong knowledge of, connection to, and partnership with local service and support providers including, but not limited to family-run organizations; youth support groups; faith-based organizations; community non-profits; business and other formal and informal supports.

Proposals submitted in response to this Solicitation must comply with all instructions and procedures contained herein.

1.1.1 Background

DCFS is working to keep children safe, helping individuals and families become self-sufficient, and providing safe refuge during disasters. Under the DCFS umbrella, the Child Welfare section is committed to working with families and communities to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the children served. DCFS provides placement services and daily care to children who are in the custody of the State of Louisiana because of abuse and/or neglect. Placement and care are provided through an array of services based on the unique care needs and best interests of each child. When children must be removed from their homes, they are most likely to be placed in relative or fictive-kin homes that will become certified foster caregivers or with non-relative certified foster caregivers. DCFS seeks to provide guidance and support to foster caregivers that are providing care for children in DCFS custody. DCFS provides for the public child welfare functions of the state, delivering services through a state administered system of nine (9) regional offices for sixty-four parishes.

DCFS Regions	Parishes
Alexandria	Rapides, Vernon, Avoyelles, Concordia, Grant, Winn, Catahoula, and LaSalle
Baton Rouge	East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, and Ascension
Covington	Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington

Greater New Orleans	Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemine and St. Bernard
Lafayette	Lafayette, St. Martin, St. Landry, St. Mary, Acadia, Vermillion, and Evangeline
Lake Charles	Calcasieu, Beauregard, Allen, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis
Monroe	Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll
Shreveport	Bienville, Claiborne, Jackson, Red River, Caddo, Desoto, Webster, Bossier, Sabine, and Natchitoches
Thibodaux	Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Charles, St. James, Assumption and St. John the Baptist

***Number of Children in Certified or Non-Certified**

Placements as of 9/24/2018 *Numbers of children in certified and non-certified relative/fictive kin placements are given for informational purposes.

Region	CERTIFIED NON-RELATIVE PLACEMENTS						Total
	Age 0-2	Age 3-5	Age 6-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	
GREATER_NEW_ORLEANS	49	29	20	15	10	13	136
BATON_ROUGE	41	22	27	16	12	15	133
COVINGTON	96	67	37	32	39	23	294
THIBODAUX	81	56	36	24	14	9	220
LAFAYETTE	93	59	46	37	29	18	282
LAKE_CHARLES	57	22	17	15	13	5	129
ALEXANDRIA	58	31	22	19	18	15	163
SHREVEPORT	80	53	37	22	29	17	238
MONROE	65	42	30	31	27	14	209
TOTAL	620	381	272	211	191	129	1804

*CERTIFIED RELATIVE/FICTIVE KIN PLACEMENTS							
Region	Age 0-2	Age 3-5	Age 6-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	Total
GREATER_NEW_ORLEANS	12	12	3	3	1	2	33
BATON_ROUGE	4	9	2	5	1	5	26
COVINGTON	57	36	24	25	11	7	160
THIBODAUX	22	16	17	7	8	6	76
LAFAYETTE	27	21	12	10	10	3	83
LAKE_CHARLES	12	8	13	6	4	2	45
ALEXANDRIA	13	15	15	10	9	2	64
SHREVEPORT	15	17	8	7	7	1	55
MONROE	19	16	12	12	3	1	63
TOTAL	181	150	106	85	54	29	605

*NON-CERT RELATIVE/FICTIVE KIN PLACEMENTS							
Region	Age 0-2	Age 3-5	Age 6-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	Total
GREATER_NEW_ORLEANS	11	9	1	2	3	0	26
BATON_ROUGE	19	8	5	6	10	6	54
COVINGTON	73	52	26	34	31	31	257
THIBODAUX	40	30	24	19	19	11	143
LAFAYETTE	20	15	19	7	11	9	81
LAKE_CHARLES	30	26	9	9	10	6	90
ALEXANDRIA	41	37	17	18	11	7	131
SHREVEPORT	38	28	24	24	12	5	131
MONROE	32	18	18	14	8	8	98
TOTAL	304	223	153	133	115	83	1011

1.1.2 Goals and Objectives

The outcome of this Solicitation will be the selection of an award recipient(s) to accomplish specified services contained in the proposal. Respondents must submit proposals for providing supportive services to foster caregivers statewide.

The overarching goals of this solicitation are:

- Provide foster caregivers throughout the state support to care for children and youth served by DCFS through relationship-based services that are child-centered and family-focused;
- Decrease foster home closures due to lack of support and increase foster caregiver satisfaction;

- Increase the number of foster caregivers providing quality parenting;
- Increase placements of children and youth placed with foster/kinship caregivers;
- Improve placement stability of children and youth;
- Work collaboratively with DCFS in efforts to promote timely permanency for children and youth in custody

Proposals must include detailed information on how the state organization will support foster caregivers in the 9 regions including, but not limited to, supporting and further developing the continued function of regional foster parent organizations, associations, or groups; developing additional support organizations where needed to ensure foster caregivers in all 9 regions have access to a local support organization; increasing foster caregiver participation in the statewide organization and regional/local groups; methods and frequency of communicating with foster caregivers, methods for marketing to and engaging foster caregivers; and types and methods of support provided to foster caregivers.

Proposals are open to various options in providing support, including but not limited to, use of technology, face-to-face, media, or any other means that provides a viable support network.

Proposals must explain the Provider’s expertise and/or history in working with and providing support to foster caregivers and how the provider is qualified to meet the identified needs of the families. The proposal shall describe, in detail, specialized training given to staff to prepare them to provide these services.

Proposals must include a detailed budget outlining estimated costs of proposal.

All proposals should address each service requested in the Scope of Services and should address each deliverable required in the Deliverables section to be considered.

1.2 Scope of Services

Foster Caregiver Support Organizations: State and Regional

- Provide for a statewide organization that supports foster caregivers through relationship-based services that are child-centered and family-focused; allow free participation by foster caregivers; ensure participation by regional foster parent groups
- Ensure the formation, and/or retention of local foster and adoptive parent associations and/or support organizations (ensuring there is at least one or multiple groups in every region that are accessible to all areas of that region, and available to all foster caregivers within the individual regions);
 - Opportunities for support across the state should be available through multiple avenues

- Develop and implement a marketing campaign to encourage participation of foster caregivers in their local support organizations and assist local support organizations in working to increase participation of foster caregivers in their areas.
- Provide leadership, technical assistance and resources to develop local associations/support organizations;
- Provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/support organizations to increase their ability to support local foster caregivers and increase participation of foster caregivers in local foster parent associations/organizations;
- Provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/support organizations to offer monthly skill-building support meetings and work to ensure childcare is available for the meetings;
- Provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/support organizations to offer quarterly social activities for foster caregivers and the children in their care.
- Hold regular meetings to review functions of the organization, allow foster caregiver input, and develop on-going best practices;
 - Provide for DCFS liaison to be part of the organizational meetings.
- Periodically review national research and data to learn current best practices regarding foster parenting and foster caregiver support; demonstrate knowledge of best practices by incorporating those practices in service delivery and by sharing information with foster caregivers and DCFS.
- Work closely with DCFS in determining best practices in supporting foster caregivers and ensure local organizations are working closely with regional DCFS to support local foster caregivers.
- Develop/increase community partnerships and provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/groups to do the same;
- Work closely with LA Fosters to identify and advise caregivers of available community resources statewide and in the regions; implement a plan to consistently update foster caregivers of resources available through LA fosters
- Work with the Kinship Navigator Program, the primary support program for kinship placements, as related to overarching goals in supporting foster caregivers throughout the state.

Recruitment:

- Develop and implement foster parent recruitment strategies targeted at increasing the number of foster caregivers engaged in and demonstrating quality parenting and willing to provide the types of homes needed to meet the needs of children in DCFS custody, and provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/groups to do the same;
- Collaborate with State Office Home Development to strategize targeted recruitment efforts and provide leadership and assistance to local foster parent associations/groups to work collaboratively with their regional Home Development units in strategizing for targeted recruitment.

Training & Educational Opportunities:

- Organize, sponsor and participate in training for foster caregivers;
 - When sponsoring training, work with DCFS to ensure training meets criteria for foster caregiver training credits.
 - Work to ensure childcare is available during training for foster caregivers when needed.
- Work with the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy (LCWTA) and DCFS to identify training needs for foster caregivers and promote training offered by LCWTA;
- Participate in foster caregiver pre-service training by providing foster parent co-trainers, as needed;
- Participate in foster caregiver in-service training, as needed;
- Participate in the planning of the Together We Can Conference (TWC) and encourage and ensure foster caregiver involvement in presentations;
- Participate in the TWC Conference and ensure presence of organization and foster caregiver participation;
- Pay registration and reimburse travel expenses, in accordance with State Travel Policy PPM-49, to foster caregivers, including “Foster Parents of the Year” to attend TWC;

One-On-One Support:

- Provide an individual support program that will encourage and emotionally support foster caregivers, enhance caregiver parenting skills, improve communication skills, and promote team work and understanding among foster caregivers, biological families, community partners and DCFS staff;

- Support program should:
 1. Contact newly certified foster caregivers within 15 days of certification to offer support, determine any current needs, and provide information on available support services.
 2. Contact new foster caregivers within 15 days of a child being placed to offer support, assist in navigating the child welfare system and assist in finding resources to meet any of the child's special needs.
 3. Provide a foster caregiver peer mentoring program that will:
 - a. define qualifications and screening protocol for peer mentors
 - b. outline and implement recruitment methods for peer mentors
 - c. provide specialized training for peer mentors including but not limited to: expectations of mentors, understanding boundaries and confidentiality, shared parenting expectations, understanding roles in the child welfare system, overview of DCFS foster care policy, overview of QPI, overview of TBRI
 - d. connect new foster caregivers with experienced foster caregivers that will provide encouragement and emotional support
 - e. provide ongoing assistance in navigating the child welfare system
 - f. provide guidance in understanding trauma and helping children heal from trauma
 - g. provide guidance in supporting birth family relationships
 - h. serve in a supportive role by accompanying foster caregivers to meetings related to the child, when appropriate
- Develop a method for receiving calls from Kidline and responding immediately to the foster caregiver when the calls are relative to the foster caregiver;
- Provide a method for foster caregivers to contact the program at any time for guidance and support.

Communication:

- Work with DCFS to develop and implement a communication delivery system that will:
 - Disseminate information from DCFS that will reach all foster caregivers;
 - Ensure all foster caregivers are notified of support opportunities available in their local areas;
- Maintain a foster caregiver website, monthly newsletter, and social media platform;
 - Work with DCFS to ensure the messages within these communications are consistent with DCFS values and messaging;
- Document and log communication with community partners and DCFS.

Partnership with DCFS:

- Be well informed of DCFS policy, Foster Parent Bill of Rights, Foster Parent Handbook, Pre-service training curriculum, Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), and Quality Parenting (QPI).
- Work with DCFS to develop conflict resolution procedures for foster caregivers.
- Work with DCFS to develop methods of increasing placement stability of children in foster care placed with foster caregivers; enhance parenting skills of foster caregivers; increase family engagement; increase foster caregiver retention; decrease foster home closure for negative reasons determined by DCFS; and increase the number of newly certified foster parents willing to provide Quality Parenting and who are committed to meeting the placement needs of children and youth in DCFS custody.
- Work with DCFS to develop protocol for information-sharing including data needed to determine outcomes.
- Work with DCFS to identify and develop outcome measures and methodology, such as survey results, data points on retention, reasons for closures of foster homes, recruitment, etc. to track progress and gauge overall success of the program.
- Submit a bi-annual report tracking progress and success based on outcome measures and methodology used to gauge success of program.

1.2.2 Deliverables:

Foster Caregiver Support Organizations: State and Regional

- A. Within one month of contract start date, in partnership with DCFS identified liaison, develop and obtain approval from DCFS to distribute a survey to all accessible, certified foster caregivers to establish a baseline of foster caregiver needs regarding services that might be provided by a foster caregiver support organization; include any likes or dislikes of past methods of foster caregiver support and any data regarding new outcome expectations; analyze and submit results to DCFS within 30 days of survey distribution.
- B. Within two months of contract start date, develop a marketing campaign to encourage participation of foster caregivers in their local support organizations and obtain assistance with campaign implementation from DCFS.

- C. Bi-annually, in partnership with DCFS identified liaison, develop and obtain approval to distribute a survey to determine current functioning of foster caregiver support organizations, overall satisfaction, new needs, likes and dislikes, and any data regarding new outcome expectations.
- D. Submit quarterly reports (January – March, April – June, July – September, October – December) to the identified DCFS Foster Parent Liaison describing services provided during the three (3) month period to develop and/or support local foster caregiver associations/support organizations in all 9 regions including:
 - 1. number of statewide meetings held and recruitment methods used to develop new support organizations or increase participation in established support organizations
 - 2. number of local foster parent organizations supported and types of support provided
 - 3. number of foster parents serve statewide and types of services provided
 - 4. number of new local organizations established
 - 5. number of monthly support meetings held per region
 - 6. national best practices identified for foster parenting and supporting foster caregivers; method of implementation of best practices in service delivery and method of sharing best practices with foster caregivers and DCFS
 - 7. submission of quarterly agenda, minutes and sign-in sheets from all regularly held state organization meetings along with how foster caregivers were notified and how they were allowed to provide input
 - 8. method(s) and number of community partnerships developed

Recruitment:

- A. Submit quarterly the number and method of foster caregiver recruitment strategies implemented statewide and through support of local foster parent organizations/groups, targeted at increasing the number of local foster families engaged in and demonstrating QPI and willing to accept children matching the Department's current needs.

Training & Educational Opportunities

- A. Submit curriculum of all sponsored training to DCFS for prior approval.
- B. Submit quarterly the number, type, location and number of participants of in-service trainings sponsored by the organization and include how foster caregivers were notified of the trainings.
- C. Submit quarterly details regarding efforts in working with the LCWTA to identify training needs of foster caregivers and methods of promoting LCWTA training.
- D. Submit annually the details of participating in the TWC conference including methods used to encourage foster caregiver attendance, number of attendees, details required to reimburse foster caregiver attendees and details regarding presence at and methods of participation by the state organization.

One-On-One Support:

- A. Within one month of contract start date submit to the DCFS identified liaison a framework of an individual foster caregiver support program including method of contacting new foster caregivers within 15 days of certification to determine support needs and contacting new foster caregivers within 15 days of placement to determine support needs and any support services needs for the child.
- B. Within two months of contract date submit to the DCFS identified liaison an outline of the foster caregiver peer support program including qualifications, recruitment plan, training outline and roles and responsibilities of the peer mentor.
- C. Within one month of contract start date, submit to DCFS identified liaison the method for receiving calls from Kidline and responding to the foster caregiver and the method for foster caregivers to contact the program at any time for guidance and support.
- D. Maintain monthly communication logs with foster caregivers and submit quarterly reports to the DCFS identified liaison for the individual support and peer mentor programs, including types and details of peer support provided to foster caregivers, number and type of calls received from Kidline, types of calls received for support and guidance and participation in foster caregiver meetings.

Communication:

- A. Within two months of contract start date, submit to DCFS identified liaison a communication plan that can disseminate information from DCFS that will reach all foster caregivers and ensure all foster caregivers are notified of support opportunities available in their local areas.
- B. Submit quarterly updates regarding information shared, use of website monthly newsletter, and social media, including efforts to promote the use of these tools and to keep them updated regularly.

Partnership with DCFS:

- A. Within one month of contract start date, in conjunction with DCFS, identify, develop and implement information and data sharing plan needed to determine outcomes.
- B. Within two months of contract start date, submit to DCFS identified liaison conflict resolution plan for foster caregivers.
- C. Submit quarterly documentation of numbers and types of conflict resolutions.
- D. Submit quarterly number and type of methods developed and implemented to: increase placement stability, enhance parenting skills of foster caregivers; increase family engagement; increase foster caregiver retention; decrease foster home closure for negative reasons determined by DCFS; and increase the number of newly certified foster parents willing to provide Quality Parenting and who are committed to meeting the placement needs of children and youth in DCFS custody.

E. Submit quarterly progress reports in meeting identified outcome measures.

Inquiries concerning this Solicitation shall be submitted in writing to DCFS, Attention: Elizabeth Green at DCFS, 627 N. 4th Street, Rm. 3-302, Baton Rouge, La, 70802 hand delivered or mailed postmarked by November 13, 2018, or in a written document submitted via email to: Elizabeth.Green.DCFS@LA.GOV by November 13, 2018. Official responses to all questions submitted by potential Proposers will be posted on the DCFS website at www.dcf.state.la.gov by November 30, 2018. The State reserves the right to modify the Solicitation should a change be identified that is in the best interest of the State.

2.3 Schedule of Events

Event	Date
Deadline for receipt of written inquiries	November 13, 2018
Issue responses to written inquiries	November 30, 2018
Deadline for receipt of proposals	December 28, 2018
Announce award of contractor selection	January 28, 2019
Agreement execution	March, 12, 2019

3.0 PROPOSAL INFORMATION

3.1 Minimum Qualifications of Proposer

Eligible entities must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- A. Legally authorized to conduct business within the State of Louisiana;
- B. Possess a high degree of professional skill in the areas of service described in this Solicitation;
- C. Meet the terms and conditions of the Solicitation.
- D. Demonstrate the ability to manage Department funds in accordance with Federal and State regulations and guidelines.
- E. Demonstrate experience in working with and supporting foster caregivers.
- F. Demonstrate the ability to reach and interact with foster caregivers statewide.
- G. Have experience developing, maintaining, and maximizing community partnerships.
- H. Have experience in fund raising.

3.2 Determination of Responsibility

Determination of the Proposer's responsibility relating to this Solicitation shall be made according to the standards set forth in Louisiana Administrative Code 34V:2536. The State must find that the selected Proposer:

- A. Has adequate financial resources for performance, or has the ability to obtain such resources as required during performance;

- B. Has the necessary experience, organization, technical qualifications, skills, and facilities, or has the ability to obtain them;
- C. Is able to comply with the proposed or required time of delivery or performance schedule;
- D. Has a satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance;
- E. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations.
- F. Proposers should ensure that proposals contain sufficient and detailed information for the State to make its' determination by presenting acceptable evidence of the above to perform the contracted services.

3.2.1 Right to Prohibit Award

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 39:2192, in awarding contracts after August 15, 2010, any public entity is authorized to reject a proposal or bid from, or not award the contract to, a business in which any individual with an ownership interest of five percent or more, has been convicted of, or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any state felony or equivalent federal felony crime committed in the solicitation or execution of a contract or bid awarded under the laws governing public contracts under the provisions of Chapter 10 of Title 38 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, professional, personal, consulting, and social services procurement under the provisions of Chapter 16 of this Title, or the Louisiana Procurement Code under the provisions of Chapter 17 of this Title.

3.2.2 Solicitation Addenda

The State reserves the right to change the schedule of events or revise any part of the Solicitation by issuing an addendum to the Solicitation at any time. Addenda, if any will be posted at DCFS website at www.dcf.state.la.gov. It is the responsibility of the proposer to check the website for addenda to the Solicitation, if any.

3.3 Waiver of Administrative Informalities

The State reserves the right, at its' sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in any proposal.

3.4 Proposal Rejection/Cancellation

Issuance of this Solicitation in no way constitutes a commitment by the State to award a contract. The State reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all proposals submitted and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in the State's best interest.

3.5 Withdrawal of Proposal

A Proposer may withdraw a proposal that has been submitted at any time up to the date and time the proposal is due. To accomplish this, a written request signed by the authorized representative of the Proposer must be submitted to the Solicitation Coordinator, Elizabeth Green.

3.6 Subcontracting Information

The State shall have a single prime contractor as the result of any contract negotiation, and that prime contractor shall be responsible for all deliverables specified in the solicitation and proposal. This general requirement notwithstanding, proposers may enter into subcontractor arrangements, however, should acknowledge in their proposals total responsibility for the entire contract.

If the proposer intends to subcontract for portions of the work, the proposer should identify any subcontractor relationships and include specific designations of the tasks to be performed by the subcontractor. Information required of the proposer under the terms of this solicitation shall also be required for each subcontractor. The prime contractor shall be the single point of contact for all subcontract work.

Unless provided for in the contract with the State, the prime contractor shall not contract with any other party for any of the services herein contracted without the express prior written approval of the State.

3.7 Ownership of Proposal

All materials submitted in response to this request shall become the property of the State. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right.

3.8 Proprietary Information

Only information that is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data may be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any material within a proposal identified as such must be clearly marked in the proposal and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Act, R.S. 44:1 et seq. and Uniformed Trade Secrets ACT R.S. 51:1431 and applicable rules and regulations. Any proposal marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

3.9 Cost of Preparing Proposals

The State shall not be liable for any costs incurred by Proposers prior to issuance of or entering into a contract. Costs associated with developing the proposal and any other expenses incurred

by the Proposer in responding to this Solicitation are entirely the responsibility of the Proposer and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the State.

3.10 Errors and Omissions in Proposal

The State will not be liable for any errors in proposals. The State reserves the right to make corrections or amendments due to errors identified in proposals by State or the Proposer. The State, at its option, has the right to request clarification or additional information from the Proposers.

3.11 Contract Award and Execution

The State reserves the right to enter into a contract without further discussion of the proposal submitted based on the initial offers received.

The State reserves the right to enter into discussions with Proposers in an effort to select the most advantageous proposal for the State. The cost information is included in Section 5.5.

Any contract entered into under this solicitation makes no guarantee of specific sums of monthly or annual payments or referrals.

The State reserves the right to contract for all or a partial list of services offered in the proposal.

The State will notify the successful Proposer and proceed to negotiate terms for final contract. Unsuccessful Proposers will be notified in writing accordingly.

The Solicitation and proposal of the selected Proposer shall become part of any contract initiated by the State.

The selected Proposer shall be expected to enter into a contract. In no event shall a Proposer submit its own standard contract terms and conditions as a response to this Solicitation.

Negotiations may begin with the announcement of the selected Proposer(s). If the contract negotiation period exceeds seven (7) days or if the selected Proposer fails to sign the final contract within seven business days of delivery, the State may elect to cancel the award and award the contract to the next-highest-ranked Proposer.

The award of a contract is subject to the approval of the Secretary of DCFS.

3.12 Code of Ethics

Proposers are responsible for determining that there will be no conflict or violation of the Ethics Code if their company is awarded the contract. The Louisiana Board of Ethics is the only entity which can officially rule on ethics issues.

4.0 RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 Proposal Submission

Proposers who are interested in providing services requested under this Solicitation must submit a proposal containing the information specified in this section. The Proposer must submit in hard copy six (6) copies (one (1) original and five (5) copies) to the Solicitation Coordinator, Elizabeth Green, on or before 2:30 p.m., Central Standard Time on the date specified in the Schedule of Events. Fax or e-mail submissions are not acceptable. Proposers mailing their proposals should allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt of their proposal by the time specified. The proposal package must be delivered at the Proposer's expense to:

Mail/Hand/Courier Delivery
Attention: Elizabeth Green
Department of Children and Family Services
627 N. 4th Street, Rm. 3-302
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone (225) 342-4013

The one (1) original proposal should contain a completed Proposal Cover Sheet that clearly identifies the legal, incorporated name of the entity or organization making the proposal. The name of the Proposer shall be followed by the complete address (physical and mailing, if different) and correct contact numbers and facsimile numbers, if available. The cover sheet shall be signed by the responsible authority of the Proposer. The Proposer shall include proof that the individual who signs the proposal has the authority to obligate the organization/agency which could include a certified copy of a board resolution granting such authority. The Proposer shall number each page of the proposal, with numbers printed on the bottom center of each page. Further, the proposal shall be bound on the left-hand margin side of the proposal. One (1) copy of the proposal with original signatures will be retained for incorporation in any contract resulting from this Solicitation.

The face of the package, whether mailed or hand delivered, should contain the following information: "Proposal-Confidential-Open by Addressee Only."

It is solely the responsibility of each Proposer to ensure that their proposal is delivered at the specified place and prior to the deadline for submission. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

4.2 Proposal Format

Proposal submitted for consideration should follow the format and order of presentation in this solicitation.

4.3 Cover Letter

A cover letter should be submitted on the Proposer's official business letterhead explaining the intent of the Proposer.

4.4 Technical Proposal

Proposals should be submitted as specified in Section 5, and should include enough information to satisfy evaluators that the Proposer has the appropriate experience and qualifications to perform the scope of services as described herein. Proposers should respond to all requested areas.

4.5 Certification Statement

The Proposer must sign and submit the Certification Statement shown in Attachment I

5.0 PROPOSAL CONTENT

5.1 Executive Summary

This section should serve to introduce the scope of the proposal. It should include administrative information including, at a minimum, Proposer contact name and phone number, and the stipulation that the proposal is valid for a time period of at least ninety (90) days from the date of submission. This section should also include a summary of the Proposer's qualifications and ability to meet the department's overall requirements in the timeframes defined in the Solicitation.

5.2 Provider Profile and Experience

The Proposer should specify how long it has been in the business of providing services similar to those requested in this Solicitation and under what company name. The Proposer should list all names it has used when conducting business. The Proposer should explain their expertise or history in the provision of such services.

The Proposer should provide an organizational profile including board of directors, number of employees, and form of business (e.g. individual, sole proprietor, corporation, non-profit corporation, Limited Liability Company). In addition, if applicable, the Board Resolution Form should be completed and submitted with Proposals.

The Proposer should provide a minimum of three (3) letters of reference regarding their performance with similar services. In addition, the Proposer should provide a list, if any, of all current and past contracts with DCFS and other state agencies including colleges/universities within the previous three (3) year period and show that this has been satisfactory and that the legal entity or organization(s) has never been debarred, declared ineligible from bidding on contracts, or been party to a law suit arising from service delivery or billing. These references may be contacted to verify the Proposer's ability to perform the contract. DCFS reserves the right to use any information or additional references deemed necessary to establish the ability of the Proposer to perform the conditions of the contract. Negative references may be grounds for proposal disqualification.

5.3 Proposed Project Staff

Eligible individuals are those that have experience working with foster care providers and have demonstrated that they can provide core services, such as, support and educational programs, advocacy, fund raising, and outreach.

The Proposer must submit a resume or job description detailing the level of education, experience, training, skills, etc. of staff. The Proposer should indicate that it will have sufficient staff, either paid or volunteer, and that of those staff who have been or are currently foster caregivers, they are in good standings with the department. The proposal should include some volunteer or paid staff that are foster caregivers who currently have children placed in their home and are knowledgeable of the current foster care process. Staff should have training in Trust- Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and QPI. If sufficient staff are not currently available, the Proposer must describe how staff, meeting the requirements, will be obtained and the timeline for obtaining needed staff. The Proposer will indicate the number of anticipated staff for each position title.

Proposers must describe its' staff development program regarding orientation, on-going staff evaluation, and training that will be implemented throughout the contract period to ensure delivery of effective services that adhere to DCFS required performance standards.

5.4 Approach and Methodology

Proposers must provide a detailed description of the work plan and the methods to be used that will convincingly demonstrate to DCFS what the Proposer intends to do, the timeframes necessary to accomplish the work, and how the work will be accomplished. Proposer should outline how the program will achieve expected outcomes.

Proposers should demonstrate how their approach and methodology does align with and support QPI and other current practices of DCFS, is trauma informed, reaches foster caregivers in all areas of the state, and is inclusive to all foster caregivers.

5.5 Cost Information

DCFS is seeking proposals which combine efficacy of program with cost containment measures in addition to those that include funding from other resources for the program.

Providers must have start-up funds to enable the organization to remain in operation for at least sixty (60) days until initial reimbursements from DCFS are received. Payment reimbursements are provided monthly once invoices are received. Providers will not receive actual payment until the month subsequent to service delivery.

6.0 EVALUATION AND SELECTION

6.1 Evaluation Team

The evaluation of proposals will be accomplished by a Proposal Review Committee, to be designated by DCFS. The committee will review both quantity and quality of each proposal and designate a score of each proposal which will reflect the determination of the proposal most advantageous to DCFS; taking into consideration evaluation factors set forth in the Solicitation.

6.2 Administrative and Mandatory Screening

All proposals will be initially screened to determine compliance with administrative and mandatory requirements as specified in the Solicitation. Proposals that are not in compliance will be rejected from further consideration.

6.3 Clarification of Proposals

The State reserves the right to seek clarification of any proposal for the purpose of identifying and eliminating minor irregularities or informalities.

6.4 Evaluation and Review

Proposals that pass the preliminary screening and mandatory requirements review will be evaluated based on information provided in the proposal.

All responsive proposals will be evaluated against stated criteria. However, this does not preclude DCFS from any discussions/negotiations or requests for a best and final offer that it may deem necessary to assist in determining the Proposer. The Proposal Review Committee will evaluate each proposal according to the selection criteria outlined below. The Committee will meet as a whole to discuss each proposal and score. After discussion, members may change their original score upward or downward. The final scores for each member for each criterion

will be averaged, and then totaled for each proposal. The proposal with the highest score will be recommended for selection.

The Proposal Review Committee will compile the scores and prepare a summary report on the committee’s decision, based on the responses and responsible Proposer(s) with the highest score(s), which will be presented to the Secretary of DCFS for approval and selection recommendation.

The Evaluation Team will evaluate and score the proposals using the criteria and scoring as follows:	
Criteria	Maximum Score
Executive Summary/Provider Profile and Experience	15
Address each service in the Scope of Services	10
Staff	10
Approach and Methodology	30
Cost	15
Maximizes community partnerships	10
Includes funding from other resources	10
Total Score	100

6.5 Announcement of Contractor

DCFS will notify the successful Proposer(s) and proceed to negotiate terms for final contract. Unsuccessful Proposers will be notified in writing accordingly. The award of a contract is subject to the approval of the Secretary of DCFS.

The proposals received (except for that information appropriately designated as confidential in accordance with R.S. 44.1 et seq.), along with a list of criteria used along with the weight assigned each criteria; scores of each proposal considered along with overall scores of each proposal considered, and a narrative justifying selection shall be made available, upon request, to all interested parties after the “Notice of Intent to Award” letter has been issued.

7.0 SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Corporation Requirements

If the contractor is a corporation not incorporated under the laws of the State of Louisiana, the contractor shall have obtained a certificate of authority pursuant to Revised Statute 12:301-302 from the Secretary of State of Louisiana.

If the contractor is a for-profit corporation whose stock is not publicly traded, the contractor shall ensure that a disclosure of ownership form has been properly filed with the Secretary of State of Louisiana.

7.2 Billing and Payment

Provider invoices are routed to the DCFS designated person for processing. Payments will be made on a monthly basis and reimbursed for services rendered the previous month.

DCFS shall make all checks payable to the order of the Provider in the amounts specified by the Contract. It is further agreed that the Provider accepts payment made under the terms of the Contract in full for services delivered. DCFS shall require that all contractors receive payments through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFTs). The EFT Direct Deposit form can be located at http://www.dss.state.la.us/assets/docs/searchable/OCS/fosterParenting/DD-1_AUTHORIZATION_F.pdf.

If the Provider fails to perform agreed upon services or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this Contract, DCFS will withhold reimbursement payments from the Provider until such time as the required services or compliance with the terms of the Contract are completed. Failure during the course of the fiscal year to comply with the identified Contract will constitute reason to renegotiate the rate or to cease utilization of the Proposer's program.

7.2.1 Overpayments

DCFS reserves the right to recoup the amount of overpayment made to the provider in error or because of inappropriate billing by the provider, either for services not rendered or rendered to an ineligible client. In accordance with TIPS procedures, overpayments will be recouped within sixty (60) calendar days in the entire amount overpaid unless the provider arranges with DCFS for the repayment to be paid in installments, which cannot exceed twelve (12) months.

7.3 Confidentiality

All information relating to the State's operation which are designated confidential and made available to the provider in order to carry out this contract, shall be protected by the Provider from unauthorized use and disclosure through the observance of the same procedural requirements as are applicable to the State. If the methods and procedures employed by the Provider for the protection of the provider's data and information are deemed by the State to be adequate for the protection of the State's confidential information, such methods and procedures may be used, with the written consent of the State, to carry out the intent of this paragraph. The Provider shall not be required under the provisions of the paragraph to keep confidential any data or information, which is or becomes publicly available, is already rightfully in the Providers' possession, is independently developed by the Provider outside the scope of the contract, or is rightfully obtained from third parties.

Under no circumstance shall the Provider discuss and/or release information to the media concerning this project without prior written approval of DCFS.

7.4 DCFS Attachments

ATTACHMENT I – CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

The undersigned hereby acknowledges she/he has read and understands all requirements and specifications of the Solicitation, including attachments.

OFFICIAL CONTACT: The State requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all documents and the method in which the documents are best delivered. The Proposer should identify the Contact name and fill in the information below: (Print Clearly)

Date: _____ Name: _____

A.	E-mail Address:	
B.	Facsimile Number with area code:	()
C.	US Mail Address:	

Proposer shall certify that the above information is true and shall grant permission to the State or Agencies to contact the above named person or otherwise verify the information provided.

By its submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer shall certify that:

1. The information contained in its response to this Solicitation is accurate;
2. Proposer shall comply with each of the mandatory requirements listed in the Solicitation and will meet or exceed the functional and technical requirements specified therein;
3. Proposer shall accept the procedures, evaluation criteria, mandatory contract terms and conditions, and all other administrative requirements set forth in this Solicitation.
4. Proposer's quote shall be valid for at least 90 calendar days from the date of proposal's signature below;
5. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have seven (7) business days from the date of delivery of final contract in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document.

Authorized Signature:			
Typed or Printed Name:			
Title:			
Company Name:			
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip
			:
SIGNATURE of Proposer's Authorized Representative			DATE