



Solicitation Information
5 Oct 06

RFQ # 7002467

TITLE: Family Independence Program Specialized Work Services – Focus on Individuals with Disabilities and Individuals with Limited or No English Proficiency

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 28 Nov 06 @ 2:00 PM (Eastern Standard Time)

<p>PRE-BID/ PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: Yes Date: 23 Oct 06 Time: 2:30 PM Mandatory : No Location: Department of Administration / Division of Purchases (Bid Room), One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI</p>
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Questions concerning this solicitation may also be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at questions@purchasing.state.ri.us no later than **20 Oct 06 at 12:00 Noon (ET)** .Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFQ # on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

<p>Bid Surety: No Performance Bond: No</p>

Jerome D. Moynihan, C.P.M., CPPO
Administrator of Purchasing Systems

Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at www.purchasing.ri.gov

NOTE TO VENDORS:

Offers received without the entire completed three-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

PART A

Section I Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to provide specialized work services (transitional and supportive in nature) for those with language and/or disability-related barriers to employment, as described in Part A herein, and the evaluation of resulting programs, as described in Part B herein, and in accordance with the terms of this Request and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which is available on the Internet at www.purchasing.ri.gov

This is a Request for Proposals, not an Invitation for Bid: responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price; there will be no public opening and reading of responses received by the Office of Purchases pursuant to this Request, other than to name those offerors who have submitted proposals.

Instructions and Notifications to Offerors

- Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully, and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal
- Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of the procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.
- All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.
- Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
- All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
- Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of the opening for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. The "Official" time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.
- In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). Foreign corporations may bid but must procure a Certificate of Authority prior to contract award. *This is a requirement only of the selected vendor.*
- Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without

exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.

- It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request will be made to a prime contractor, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered, but subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.
- Interested parties should check the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as information regarding this solicitation may be released as an addendum.

Section II Background and Purpose

On August 2, 1996, Rhode Island enacted the Family Independence Act (FIA) which created the Family Independence Program (FIP), administered by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS). On August 22, 1996, the Federal Government enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act, containing the section entitled Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Under the Deficit Reduction Act which was signed into law by the President on February 8, 2006, the TANF program was reauthorized. TANF Interim Regulations went into effect July 1, 2006. Under these Interim Regulations, TANF defines new and more restrictive requirements for state's administration of welfare programs. The Family Independence Act is Rhode Island's welfare reform law. FIA has also undergone a number of changes in 2006 which have affected its program regulations. However, a prime purpose of both FIA and TANF is the promotion of employment as a means to achieve family economic self-sufficiency. Final instructions on how TANF Interim Regulations must be implemented have not been issued as of the date of this RFP. If it becomes necessary to modify any part of the RFP prior to awarding and contract(s), the State reserves the right to issue new instructions at that time. The following represents a description of the program components needed to serve FIP Parents.

Under the Family Independence Act, a parent, after reaching 18 years of age, may receive cash assistance for no more than 60 months, whether or not the months are consecutive, unless special circumstances exist. While there are a number of significant requirements for parents under FIA, major work requirements include:

- Parents must engage in a work activity for 20 or 30 hours (depending upon age of youngest child) after 24 months of cash receipt for single parents, or

- Parents in two- parent households must engage in a work activity of at least 35 hours per week, by one of the parents, within 7 days of completing their FIP plans.

In Rhode Island, FIP recipients have the option of educational and occupational training for employment during the first 24 months of receipt of cash assistance. But after 24 months, most training options are precluded, although on-the-job training (OJT) is allowed (see Section III – Definitions). The only other exceptions to the prohibition on education or training is when (1) the activity predated the 24th month, but it cannot continue past the 36th month, and (2) when parents have met a minimum of 20 hours of work and choose to add 10 or more hours of education or training to increase their earning power.

The Department has services in place for training for those FIP parents who are eligible for and interested in specific occupational training prior to entering the job market. DHS also has a cooperative agreement for Rapid Job Entry Services with the Department of Labor and Training, is a partner in the One Stop Career Center System (netWORKri), and has its own Employment and Retention Services Unit (RIte Works) that helps FIP parents find and retain suitable employment.

The Federal TANF law allows states to use TANF funds to create employment opportunities, conduct placement and retention services, and provide income subsidies or hiring incentives for employers. At this time, the DHS seeks specialized employment and retention services for two subsets of FIP parents with employment barriers: those who do not speak English or have limited English language proficiency and those who have disabilities, or a combination thereof.

By definition, FIP parents served in these programs have two or more barriers to employment. In general, FIP parents will be referred for service who are likely to have had relatively little prior work history or success in the workplace. They are also likely to have experienced life stressors that may, at times, interfere with work focus and commitment. Barriers to employment are often multiple and include factors such as lack of family health issues, substance abuse, mental, physical, or learning disability in the parent or in someone for whom the parent is caretaker, transportation, unstable housing, no high school diploma or GED, limited English

proficiency, low literacy in the parent's native language, and/or these individuals may face difficulties in finding a job due to criminal record.

Providers under this program will be expected to support individuals with particular employment challenges to utilize other appropriate services to address those barriers, such as substance abuse treatment programs. The level of support expected includes helping the parents to understand the necessity to utilize those other services and helping them to access them and negotiate any barriers to enrollment. Case notes must demonstrate the level of provider support, as well as parent responsiveness to provider support efforts. This level of support – to connect parents with necessary and appropriate other providers – is expected even if there is ultimately a determination that the parent cannot work at all, for reasons associated with disability, in the foreseeable future. The provider's responsibility is to help FIP parents work to the degree they can, and, in the event they cannot work, to apply for Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI) or Disability Insurance (SSDI) and to supply any documentation the provider may have accrued in support of an SSI or SSDI application.

Providers under this program will also be expected to be competent in serving parents with criminal backgrounds. Providers must be knowledgeable about industries that do and do not routinely screen candidates for criminal backgrounds, as well as knowledgeable about expungement procedures, bonding services, legal resources, and placement considerations such as how to handle questions about extended absence from the workforce and criminal records. Contact with probation officers is advisable, as these officers may have knowledge about companies that hire ex-offenders and have specific plans in place with the individual that must be followed.

Individuals referred by DHS Social Caseworkers may be either pre- or post-24 months on their FIP time clocks. These service models are designed for parents who require intensive services to succeed in the labor market. However, it is anticipated that the majority of individuals referred will have expended 24 or more months on their clocks and be required to engage in work activity under both FIA and TANF regulations. For this reason, DHS emphasizes the utility of On-the-Job Training and Work Supplementation as means to develop or enhance occupational skills for post-24 month FIP parents.

Notwithstanding provider efforts to support parents intensively and individually to achieve employment success, not every FIP parent will invest him/herself in the program. Observation and documentation of parent job readiness, job search, and on-the-job behaviors is critical to support both the provider's decision to terminate services and to support the Department's decision to sanction the parent, or not, for non-compliance with the employment plan. While this program requires the provider to assist the parent into an unpaid work experience, transitional job, or supportive employment within 30 days, this program also requires the provider to use judgment in deciding when to terminate the parent from provider services. Termination must follow DHS guidelines and include communication to the social caseworker of a recommended course of action based upon knowledge the provider has gained. Providers must address parent disinterest, disengagement, or non-compliance in the course of service, but as soon as non-compliance with program rules becomes a pattern or there is overt parent refusal to comply, the provider must inform the parent of his/her termination and must return the FIP 103 with appropriate evidence and recommendation to the social caseworker.

Section III Definitions of Services to be Provided Under this Program

Unsubsidized Employment means full- or part-time employment in the public or private sector that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program. The determination of whether or not employment is subsidized depends on whether the employer, rather than the recipient, receives a subsidy. However, receipt of tax credits associated with hiring economically disadvantaged individuals does not equate to a subsidy.

Subsidized employment (private or public sector) means employment for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient. The provider may act as the employer of record during a trial period of employment. Regardless of the approach, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applies.

Work Experience

Work Experience is an unpaid work activity, performed in return for public assistance, that provides opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge and work

habits necessary to obtain unsubsidized employment. These qualities include punctuality, reliability, positive interactions with peers and supervisors, and eagerness to learn new skills. Work experience is transitional in nature and is followed by supportive (unsubsidized) employment.

While recipients are not reimbursed, the FLSA applies, and therefore, actual hours of unpaid work experience per month cannot exceed the family FIP payment divided by Rhode Island's minimum wage. The net result may mean that some parents have less than 20 hours/week available for work experience yet are required, under FIP and TANF rules, to engage in activities 20-30 hours per week, depending upon the age of the youngest child. In those instances, the parent must be engaged in other necessary, work-related activities. All required hours in whatever combination of activities must be monitored daily and documented by the provider weekly. Work experience may continue until the basic skills and attitudes are acquired and may average 3 months duration.

Providers who propose to offer unpaid work experience must demonstrate that they have not less than five (5) employment sites available at program start-up wherein FIP parents may be placed and which, ideally, may be available for future placements. The employer letters must identify the job titles and primary job duties associated with those temporary unpaid work experiences.

On-the-job training involves a written agreement with an employer that stipulates the employer hires the employee at the standard wage rate for a skilled or semi-skilled position, trains the employee in specified skills, and in return, is reimbursed for 50% of the employee's wages for the negotiated training period. OJT is available either through netWORKri for eligible customers under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or through the Office of Rehabilitation Services of DHS for eligible customers with disabilities under Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) of WIA. TANF parents may be eligible under either program.

Work Supplementation is a DHS program for FIP parents that involves a written agreement with an employer that stipulates the employer hires the employee at the standard wage rate, trains the employee in the job requirements, and in return, is reimbursed \$2.50/hr. for the number of hours the employee works for a negotiated period. For both OJT and Work Supplementation, the

explicit expectation is that the employee is a permanent hire. Most FIP parents would be eligible for Work Supplementation.

Support Services means any and all services required by individuals to be successful in employment. Not all services must be delivered by the provider, but service needs must be identified by the provider and coordinated unless another organization explicitly has the responsibility for service coordination (excludes DHS in its roles as payer in accord with an approved employment plan). For example, an individual with a history of obtaining but not retaining employment may require assistance in identifying the pattern, the reason(s) for the pattern, and in identifying what behavioral or other changes would enhance retention. Depending upon the reason for the pattern, interventions in such a situation could vary widely from identifying the service needs of a child to enable that child's retention in school, day care, or after school programming, to resolution of misdemeanor charges against the parent. Another example would be helping the parent whose wages produced case closure under FIP to transition to "low income" childcare seamlessly. The service is available through DHS but the parent must be made aware of the service, encouraged to access it and to follow up to assure no disruption in his/her work schedule.

Supportive Employment

Supportive Employment is a form of unsubsidized employment whereby a service provider maintains regular and on-going contact with both the FIP parent and the employer in order to provide supports needed to achieve employment success, such as job coaching, encouragement, and problem resolution. The FIP parent is hired directly by the worksite employer with the commitment of on-going support by the provider.

Support services can also be provided on or off the job site. In some instances, especially if multiple parents are placed with one employer, an on-site job coach would simultaneously function as supervisor/trainer on behalf of the employer and counselor/mentor for the employee. In other instances, all supportive services might be delivered off-site while the employer assumes full responsibility for training in job duties and on-going supervision.

Regardless of the particular arrangements made with the FIP parent or employer, the provider will be responsible for close monitoring of the employment situation and for securing evidence of both the placement and retention benchmarks. Individuals may change worksites, if the original position is not a good match, but the provider remains responsible to assist with locating another supportive work environment. Almost without exception, there must be communication, to the maximum extent possible, between employer and provider that ensures an accurate assessment of parent progress, such that intervention by the provider in potential problem areas can occur before a job is lost, regardless of whether the potential separation is initiated by the parent or the employer.

Because these placements are anticipated to be permanent jobs where parents are on the employer's payroll from the start, employer incentives such as Work Supplementation and OJT can be utilized right away, in accord with DHS policy and procedures. In using such incentives as Work Supplementation, employers must assure that FIP parents do not displace regular employees of the company or organization.

Transitional Jobs

Transitional Jobs is a form of subsidized employment characterized by a transitional period of employment (during which the parents' wages and FICA are paid by the providers) that is followed by supportive (unsubsidized) employment.

In the Transitional Jobs model, it is anticipated that after the orientation period, the FIP parent is "hired" by the provider itself and immediately placed into a job in the provider's own organization or in the community, such job being transitional and subsidized by design. During these paid work experiences, or subsidized placements, in a variety of public or private companies or agencies, the goal is for the FIP parent to learn how to be, and practice being, a valued employee. They should acquire all of the basic qualities that employers expect, such as punctuality, reliability, courtesy, and responsiveness to supervision. Acquisition of these critical qualities and any job-specific knowledge or skills must be measured by the employer. The connection between the provider and the employer in Transitional Jobs must be close, to ensure an accurate assessment of parent performance.

In Transitional Jobs, as in unpaid work experience positions, employer incentives such as Work Supplementation and OJT are not available. Rather, the worksite employer receives the benefit of temporary staff, at no cost to the employer, usually for 3-6 months. The provider, however, must assure that the parents do not displace regular employees of the agencies or companies. The transitional worksite employers could hire the FIP parents as permanent or unsubsidized employees, at any time, but it is not an expectation of the transitional employer at the time of placement.

If the FIP parent does not remain with the transitional employer, the provider must transition the FIP parent from the paid work experience placement to unsubsidized employment elsewhere, with no down-time between jobs, and continue to provide any needed supports to assure successful long-term employment. Work Supplementation or OJT may be available at that transition point as incentives to the employers that hire parents onto their payrolls in permanent positions. The length of the transitional work experience is generally limited to 3 months but could be up to 6 months with strong rationale. In this model, signed worksite agreements with the host agency or company are required, inclusive of work performance reviews, and the length of placement should be flexible to accommodate parent and host agency or company needs.

Placement means a job in either Work Experience or Supportive Employment that was started and held at least 15 workdays by a FIP parent, regardless of who makes the initial connection with the employer.

Section IV Scope of Work, Budget and Timeline

Scope of Work

The goal of programs funded through this solicitation is **retention** in satisfactory unsubsidized employment for FIP parents. To achieve that, the needs of both employees and employers must be met, and therefore, the scope of work is broad while the particular combination of interventions is individualized. It is an appropriate fit between worker, job duties, employer, and work environment, together with appropriate supports to FIP parents and their children, that assures retention. To achieve success, a combination of continuous assessment, job readiness

services, job skills development, job placement, service coordination, and intensive case management, before, during, and after, on and off the job, is required.

Required Elements:

- 1) Service providers must undertake critical activities simultaneously:
 - a) address parent employment barriers, in cooperation and coordination with DHS representatives and with other agencies or providers with whom the parents are involved, or could be involved, and
 - b) do so in the context of work.
- 2) Providers are expected to place FIP parents into subsidized or unsubsidized employment or work experience within 30 days of referral.
- 3) Providers must demonstrate a service delivery method that ensures daily supervision or contact with referred parents unless the parents are on a job site (where daily supervision or contact is provided by the employer).
- 4) Providers must assure and provide documentation for the hours of FIP parent engagement per week, such as signed (by the individual and by the provider) time sheets, as when the parent is with the provider in the first 30 days after referral and when the parent is in an unpaid work experience. Pay stubs substitute for time sheets when the parent is in subsidized or unsubsidized employment.
- 5) Providers are expected to transition FIP parents from unpaid work experience or paid Transitional Jobs into unsubsidized jobs with no downtime between those jobs.
- 6) Providers must describe how they will provide statewide coverage, such as by demonstrating intent to meet with parents in their geographic areas, particularly if transportation is a significant barrier (currently, maximum reimbursement by DHS to parents is \$3/day).
- 7) Providers who propose to focus on people with disabilities must have a Masters level clinically trained individual among their core program staff who, in turn, has access to licensed diagnostic and treatment professionals in order that needed services may be delivered in a timely way. Furthermore, services should be coordinated with the Office of Rehabilitation Services to enable their rapid determination of FIP parent eligibility and, for those eligible, employment plan completion and service initiation.

- 8) Providers must maintain contact with employers in which FIP parents are placed in Transitional Jobs or unpaid work experience positions and must obtain an accurate portrayal of parent performance from all work sites, including Supportive Employment supervisory staff.
- 9) Providers must provide services in locations and at times that meet the needs of working families and therefore, must be prepared to provide some services during non-standard work hours.
- 10) Providers must make home visits, as needed, to engage referred individuals and/or provide DHS with a summary of multiple contact attempts and observations to identify the apparent reason for non-engagement.
- 11) Providers must design their programs to result in unsubsidized Supportive Employment outcomes for FIP parents but must also provide either or both (although not for the same individual) unsubsidized work experience or Transitional Jobs for those parents who require such service, in addition to Supportive Employment. This means that, for any one individual who does not go directly into a Supportive Employment job, his/her preceding experience may be either a Transitional Job or an unpaid work experience, but not both. Because Transitional Jobs are, essentially, paid work experiences, they are likely to hold more appeal to FIP parents than unpaid work experiences.
- 12) Providers must extend retention services for a minimum of six (6) months beyond the Supportive Employment start date and support FIP parents, in terms of frequency, intensity, and flexibility of service and contact, to the degree needed by individual parents to assure their retention.
- 13) Providers must develop individualized employment and support plans with FIP parents that are based upon assessment information from DHS, as well as assessments conducted by the provider at enrollment, during the pre-placement orientation, and on the job. These plans must be revisited, and revised, as needed, while the participant is active.
- 14) Providers may require parents to attend up to two weeks of full-time (for that individual), paid or unpaid, orientation to assess parent readiness, interests, strengths and potential obstacles to success on the job, to impart needed information such as employer and provider expectations and how “Work Pays”, as well as to conduct job readiness and job search activities. During that orientation period, parents should understand the cost/benefit of working, including DHS work incentives such as subsidized Child Care, transitional medical

coverage, the Child Tax Credit, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Parents should also be introduced to Employer Incentives such as Work Supplementation, On-the-Job Training, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), and the Welfare to Work Tax Credit (WWTC).

- 15) Every proposal must describe provider capacity to serve FIP parents who are non-English proficient and those with disabilities, even if the project design is focused on one or the other subset of FIP parents. There are individuals among those with disabilities who are not English proficient, and there are individuals among those who are not English proficient who have disabilities. Additionally, all providers must comply with all non-discrimination laws. All providers must be accessible and must note prior experience with serving customers with disabilities and /or language barriers, but all providers need not acquire all types of expertise in sufficient depth to serve all the people all the time. Therefore, all providers must describe their proposed method(s) of ensuring that needed services are delivered to individuals who have these barriers. Methods may include, but not be limited to, hiring consultants or new staff with particular expertise, subcontracting to another agency for the expertise the provider lacks, or sharing service provision with an agency that has the expertise needed, unless the provider's focus is on people with disabilities, in which case, item 7 still applies.
- 16) Program designs should target twenty (20) hours per week for Transitional Jobs, 20-30 hours per week for unpaid work experience, as many hours as possible per week for Supportive Employment, and to individualize the work schedule when a documented disabling impairment otherwise limits the number of work hours per week. For individual training and support plans that include less than (30) hours/week of Supportive Employment, justification would be expected.
- 17) Providers must assure that all relevant employment information must be reported to DHS immediately but not later than 5 days after the job start (applies to all models).
- 18) Providers will receive referrals directly from DHS social caseworkers and must work collaboratively with DHS representatives to address child care, medical or transportation concerns that do arise, even if the applicant's proposal includes an initial solution to anticipated employment barriers (i.e., applicant arranges van transportation to/from a job site). The provider must also work collaboratively with other service agencies to resolve employment barriers, as necessary in delivery intensive supportive services.

- 19) The provider also must agree to follow DHS protocol for giving DHS representative(s) feedback on FIP parent enrollment, compliance, attendance and performance. That is, minimum requirements include the immediate completion and return of the referral form (DHS form FIP 102) upon parent enrollment (or failure to enroll), completion of the Request for Authorization to IFS, the completion and submission of DHS form FIP 103 on the second day of attendance and monthly thereafter, or more often when there is a change in activity, such as termination, an employment start, or a significant change to programming, attendance, or hours, and the completion of Parent Progress Reports no less often than monthly, completed by either the employer or the provider, depending upon the model, such reports forming the basis and the evidentiary back-up for FIP 103 summary comments. These minimum requirements should be supplemented by telephone and/or e-mail updates with social caseworkers in order to resolve barriers expeditiously (personal identifiers such as social security numbers cannot be included in e-mail exchanges unless the provider has encrypted software). In the case of unpaid work experience, on-going FIP 103 forms must be completed every other week.
- 20) Providers must, upon receiving a referral from a DHS social caseworker, promptly contact a representative of DHS' Individual and Family Support (IFS) division to secure an Authorization Code to serve the individual. Providers must also supply IFS with copies of FIP 102s and FIP 103s.
- 21) Regardless of program design, all providers must abide by labor laws. Providers must also share with the parents, the expectations of providers and the employers relative to personnel policies, attendance, permissible vacation, holiday, and sick leave. Providers must also clearly articulate with participants the rules regarding cause for termination from the program. In communicating the rules regarding attendance, there shall be no unexcused absences. Any "no-show, no-call" situation must be resolved within 24 hours or result in a "refer back" via FIP 103 to the DHS social caseworker. Aside from holidays, weekends, and company- or agency-wide shutdowns, excused absences shall never exceed 10 per year with no more than 2 in any given month.
- 22) Every proposal must be accompanied by at least five (5) substantive letters of agreement/partnership from employers whose work sites are proposed to be utilized in the first year for unpaid work experience, Transitional Jobs, or Supportive Employment.

- 23) Every proposal must describe how the applicant intends to achieve an average wage among its FIP parents of \$8.00/hour or more at 6 months retention at the unsubsidized jobs. Even for proposals under the Transitional Jobs model, where minimum wage is allowable for the duration of the 20 hours per week, the goal remains retention in a good (unsubsidized) job at a good wage that is consistent with labor market trends.
- 24) Proposers should describe prior experience with the use of incentives or rewards of value to parents to enable the parents' initial and continued successes. Proposers should budget for such incentives and describe how they plan to implement them.
- 25) Proposers must demonstrate that they know how to utilize training incentives (OJT, Work Supplementation) and tax credits (WOTC, WWTC, RI New Employment Tax Credit, ADA Access Credits) as marketing tools.
- 26) Proposers must describe how they will utilize existing workforce development resources (e.g. netWORKri, local Workforce Investment Boards) and/or business associations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Society for Human Resource Management) to supplement their programs.
- 27) Providers must agree to the following program management activities, at minimum:
 - a) Quarterly meetings with IFS to share strategies, successes, and lessons learned;
 - b) Submission to IFS of Requests for Authorization, FIP 102s and 103s;
 - c) Quarterly program reports, per DHS format;
 - d) Federal fiscal year/annual reports (first one for 9 months only), per DHS format;
 - e) Submission of bills, per DHS format;
 - f) Monitoring/site visits and access to program records,
 - g) Resolution of differences in perspective between provider and DHS representative(s) will be through the DHS Regional Chiefs or Managers and/or the IFS Contract Manager, depending on the nature of the problem; and
 - h) Every proposal must describe its staffing and management structure, project administration and evaluation, and assure that it has a grievance procedure for customers (employers and parents).

Budget and Timeline

Up to \$2,100,000 is planned to cover the cost of this initiative as described under this Request for Proposal for 21 months, 1/01/07 to 9/30/08, assuming availability of TANF and state funds. The sum cannot be exceeded, and DHS may choose not to award all dollars and will limit the number of awards to not more than three.

Primarily performance-based contracts will be awarded for this 21-month period. Providers will be awarded an individualized up-front sum to initiate service, such sum to take into consideration anticipated levels of intensive case management. Thereafter, payments will be made based upon achievements and special factors as indicated below.

Payment Type	Amount
Upfront service initiation	To be negotiated
Placement of parents in Transitional Jobs of 20 hours per week x RI minimum wage (billable monthly)	Cost reimbursement for hourly parent wages + 50% service fee per parent
Placement in unpaid Work Experience (payable only after 15 work days of retention)	\$ 300 per parent per month
Placement in unsubsidized Supportive Employment (payable only after 15 work days of retention)	\$1000 per parent for first placement; \$500 for second placement of same parent, if needed
3 months retention in SE	\$2000 per parent
6 months retention in SE	\$2000 per parent
6 months retention in unsubsidized employment for FIP parents with felony records or multiple misdemeanors	\$500 per parent above and beyond the reimbursement benchmarks cited above
SSI or SSDI award (for determinations on applications to SSA that were made post-referral of parent to provider)	\$500 per parent above and beyond the reimbursement benchmarks cited above

Section V Pre-Proposal Questions & Proposal Submission

See page 1 of this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download any additional information, if posted. If technical assistance is needed, call the Purchases Helpline at (401) 222-2142 ext. 134.

Responses (an original plus 8 copies of the technical response and an original plus 2 copies of the cost proposal) should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked “RFQ # 7002467 “Family Independence Program” to:

:

RI Dept. of Administration
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor
One Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5855

Note: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time may not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not presented in the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and may not be considered. **Proposals faxed, or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered.** The official time clock is located in the reception area of the Division of Purchases. Proposals must include the following:

- 1) A completed and signed three-page R.I.V.I.P. generated bidder certification cover form (downloadable from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at <http://www.purchasing.ri.gov>),
- 2) A sealed, separate Cost Proposal reflecting the hourly rate, or other fee structure, proposed for this scope of services, including completion of the Cost Proposal Summary form, enclosed; and
- 3) A Technical Proposal, citing vendor qualifications, experience, etc., as described herein,
- 4) A W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number Certification (downloadable from the Division of Purchases website at www.purchasing.ri.gov)

5) In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, Respondents are requested to provide their proposal in electronic format (CDRom or Diskette). Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested.

Proposals must also include the following, and be typed, in English, not exceeding 17 pages (not including appendices):

Executive Summary – 1page

The Executive Summary is intended to highlight the contents of the proposal and to provide State evaluators with a broad understanding of the offeror's approach and ability.

Offeror's Organization and Staffing – maximum 4 pages

This section shall include identification of all state and/or subcontractors proposed as members of the project team, and the duties, responsibilities, and concentration of effort which apply to each (as well as resumes, curricula vitae, or statements of prior experience and qualification for proposed program staff).

Work plan/Approach Proposed – maximum 8 pages

This section shall clearly describe program design(s) and the steps to be taken in delivery of supportive and/or transitional employment services. It should also include a timeline for projected achievement of critical interim goals and describe the process the offeror intends to use to monitor its own progress against its internal goals and gauge customer satisfaction. It should include all other elements earlier stated in this RFP as required information, e.g. geographic coverage.

Previous Experience and Background – maximum 4 pages, devoted primarily to first bullet

This section shall include the following information:

- A quantified description of similar projects undertaken and/or similar customers served, including a brief description of the projects that demonstrate offeror's knowledge and experience in job development for customers with barriers to employment, in providing case management and supportive services designed to ensure retention, and in managing relationships with employers,

- A description of the business background of the offeror (and all subcontractors or consortium members proposed), including a description of their financial position, and
- The offeror's status as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), certified by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, and/or a subcontracting plan which addresses the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the MBE Administrator, at (401) 222-6253.

Section VI Evaluation and Selection

The State will commission a Technical Review Sub-Committee that will evaluate and score all proposals, using the following criteria:

- 50 points - Capability, capacity, and qualifications of offeror (e.g. documented, quantified history of successful performance in similar services, explicit letters of agreement with multiple employers, qualified project staff and extent of management time on project)
- 40 points - Quality of Work Plan and Timeline (design is realistic, methods to meet DHS requirements are clear, and provider can achieve planned results on time)
- 10 points - Suitability of cost proposal (detailed, appropriate to program model(s), is based on a reasoned projection of referred parents, type(s) and rates of placement, and rates of retention)

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the State reserves the right not to award this contract, or to award this contract on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to award in its best interest.

Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further.

The State may, at its sole option, elect to require presentation(s) by offerors clearly in consideration for award.

The Technical Review Sub-Committee will present written findings, including the results of all evaluations, to the State's Architect/Engineer and Consultant Services Selection Committee, which will recommend finalists to the Director of the Department of Administration, who will make the final selection for this requirement.

Non-Discrimination Notice

All Rhode Island Department of Human Services contracts require a provider's assurance that no person should be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in its programs and activities on the grounds of race, color, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Providers awarded contracts must also agree to comply with the Governor's Executive Order prohibiting sexual harassment. For further information about this policy, contact: the DHS Community Liaison Officer at (401) 462-2130 or TDD (401) 462-6239.

PART B

Section I Introduction

Part A is incorporated by reference herein. The Department seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the design(s) and implementation of programs arising from this solicitation for FIP Specialized Work Services and to derive there from, in light of best practices nationwide, suggestions for continuous improvement in such programming.

Section II Scope of Work, Budget and Timeline

Scope of Work

The evaluation design must include quantitative, qualitative and descriptive elements and answer the following items, at minimum:

1. Volume of FIP parents referred by DHS social caseworkers to provider(s), by provider and in aggregate, and the extent to which engagement, placement, and retention occurred, and the degree to which key program requirements, such as the expectation of placement within 30 days, were met, by provider and in aggregate.
2. Types of jobs in which FIP parents were initially placed in unpaid work experience, Transitional Jobs, and in Supportive Employment positions, how they compare with the jobs in which parents were retained, and the range and average of wages, by provider and in aggregate.
3. Random sample demographic profile of FIP parents, by provider and in aggregate, and an analysis of any differences among those who achieve retention benchmarks and those who do not, including any noted differences based on geographic factors, and a comparison of the demographic profile of parents through this program and a demographic profile of the full FIP caseload.
4. FIP parent perspectives on their experiences.
5. Social Caseworker initial understanding of the program(s) and later perspective on their experiences.
6. Differences in provider program designs, staffing, management, and implementation techniques
7. Provider perspectives on their challenges and performance.
8. DHS management perspectives on challenges and performance.
9. Narrative summary of key policy or implementation issues, including any mid-program adjustments.

In addition to addressing the above items and questions, the evaluator must conduct on-site interviews or reviews with program providers, attend one or more of the joint provider-IFS meetings, and present to DHS a mid-evaluation summary. Department staff will generally **not** be available to assist in the collection of data, conduct research, or assist in arranging any FIP parent meetings or interviews. The Department will arrange for periodic evaluation team meetings, Social Caseworker interviews, access to In-Rhodes (DHS' management information system), access to data relevant to this program that accrues to IFS (such as performance benchmark evidence and billing), and provide limited total FIP caseload data for comparison purposes.

Budget and Timeline

A total of \$30,000-50,000 is available under this Request for Proposal for 24 months, 1/01/07 to 12/31/08, assuming availability of TANF and state funds. DHS may choose not to make an award or not to award all available dollars.

The evaluator must attend quarterly evaluation team meetings and provide mid-evaluation and final reports no later than December 31, 2007 and December 31, 2008.

The Schedule of RFP Submission, and Sections V and VI of PART A are applicable in their entirety to this PART B except (a) where reference is made to “supportive and/or transitional employment services” the pertinent substitute of “evaluation services” should be made, and (b) under “Previous Experience”, the proposer should describe the most relevant prior experience in evaluating employment programs and provide evidence of that customer’s satisfaction with the evaluation, and (c) the suitability of the cost proposal will be based upon the extent to which costs are clearly explained and to the volume of work proposed.