



## **Solicitation Information**

**February 17, 2020**

**RFI #7602787**

**TITLE:** Request for Information for Implementation of a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Monday, March 16, 2020 @ 11:00 AM (ET)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at [DOA.PURQUESTIONS10@PURCHASING.RI.GOV](mailto:DOA.PURQUESTIONS10@PURCHASING.RI.GOV) no later than February 26, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ET). Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word attachment*. Please reference the RFI #7602787 on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Division of Purchases' website as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

Dawn Vittorioso, Buyer II

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at [www.ridop.ri.gov](http://www.ridop.ri.gov)

**Note to Applicants:**

Responses received without a completed RIVIP Bidder Certification Cover Form attached may result in disqualification.

**THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION COVER FORM**

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Division of Information Technology and the Rhode Island Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), is soliciting informational responses from qualified firms to identify possible solutions for the replacement of RICHIST (Rhode Island Children's Information System), the state's Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. DCYF desires a system in which case workers have access to a modern child welfare case management system that takes full advantage of current and future technologies, child welfare practices, federal claiming, and analytics as they act to protect and promote the well-being of Rhode Islanders, in accordance with the terms of this Request for Information and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases' website at [www.ridop.ri.gov](http://www.ridop.ri.gov).

### Instructions and Notifications to Offerors:

1. Potential vendors are advised to review all sections of this RFI carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the response.
2. The State invites comments, suggestions and recommendations from potential vendors and other interested parties on any questions or issues raised in this RFI. Please note it is not a requirement to answer all questions.
3. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this RFI are solicited.
4. This is a Request for Information ("RFI"), and as such no award will be made as a result of this solicitation.
5. All costs associated with attending the pre-solicitation conference and/or developing or submitting responses to this RFI, or providing oral or written clarification of the content of a response shall be borne by vendors. The State assumes no responsibility for any costs.
6. Responses misdirected to other locations, or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the above stated date/time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and shall not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.
7. Vendors are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFI shall not be considered to be public records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island unless and until there is a contract award through a subsequent, related procurement.

8. Interested parties are instructed to monitor the Division of Purchases website on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released as addenda.

## SECTION 2: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

This RFI outlines the type of information being solicited and response structure requested from potential respondents.

### A. Background

The State is considering issuance of a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) from qualified vendors to identify possible solutions for the replacement of Rhode Island Children’s Information System (RICHIST), the state’s Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System. DCYF desires a system in which case workers have access to a modern child welfare case management system that takes full advantage of current and future technologies, child welfare practices, federal claiming, and analytics as they act to protect and promote the well-being of Rhode Islanders. DCYF is responsible for protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as providing an array of prevention, intervention, rehabilitative, behavioral health, juvenile justice and after-care services for RI children and their families. DCYF receives approximately 1,700 calls, investigates roughly 700-900 reports of potential abuse and neglect and has an average of 2,000 children placed in out of home care per month. DCYF is comprised of four regional offices with a staffing level of approximately 650 workers. In addition to a traditional child welfare service population, DCYF is also responsible for providing services to the state’s juvenile justice population and youth in need of behavioral health services. Staff utilize DCYF’s existing case management system, RICHIST, in support of the Agency’s mission:

*“The mission of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) is to partner with families and communities to raise safe and healthy children and youth in a caring environment.”*

RICHIST is a highly customized, client-server application written in PowerBuilder and utilizes a Sybase database. RICHIST was implemented in 1997 and is utilized by over 800 department staff and external users. Although maintained and enhanced over its 22-year lifetime, including a recent web enablement, RICHIST struggles to meet the current needs of the department. RICHIST is a legacy system which is expensive to maintain, does not allow for the introduction of new technologies, is not mobile user friendly, and is difficult to adapt to constant changes in regulations and requirements such as the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System’s (CCWIS) final rule. Critically, the lack of configurability of the system makes practice changes difficult to implement and track within DCYF. The Administration

on Children and Families (ACF) has replaced the Statewide and Tribal Automated Child Welfare Information System (S/TACWIS) regulation with the CCWIS regulation. The new regulation was effective August 1, 2016 and governs the way in which state and tribal title IV-E agencies, like DCYF, will claim federal funding for child welfare information systems that support the administration title IV-E and IV-B programs, under the Social Security Act. The CCWIS regulation also includes new requirements around design, data quality, data exchange standards, and aligns with current and emerging technologies.

In support of DCYF's mission and to meet the new regulatory requirements, DCYF is seeking to replace RICHIST with a modular system which divides complex functions into separate, manageable and independent components that:

- Utilizes open, documented interfaces;
- Provides the potential to deliver reliable software faster and at a lower cost to the department;
- Promotes flexible ease of maintenance by allowing one module to be changed without widespread system impact in anticipation of expected changes in the future;
- Mirrors business workflows by dividing complex problems and policies into singular, discrete processes each managed by a different module;
- Supports continuous improvement of child welfare practice;
- Supports federal claiming and can interface with the state's Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) - Medicaid claiming system;
- Allows for the use of data and analytics to observe trends and proactively monitor potential child welfare issues for in home and out of home placements, understand removal decisions, etc.
- Promotes Single-Source data, eliminating duplication of efforts;
- Meets all Federal CCWIS standards;

DCYF seeks to gather information from a variety of vendors to aid it in evaluating approaches to ensure continued high-quality automation support for its Child Welfare Program. Concise, conceptual responses, free of technical jargon, are sought which will inform DCYF leadership of the options available and examples of business models, staffing models, cost structures and implementation timeframes. The State seeks to gain a better understanding of the available approaches; therefore, responses are being solicited from a wide range of respondents in accordance with the objectives and parameters established in this document. Vendors may submit a response that includes one or more proposed solutions; however, responses should separately address all applicable information sought in this Request for Information.

## **PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES:**

The State's preliminary objectives for a RICHIST replacement include the following key provisions identified in the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) 45 CFR Part 95, 45 CFR Parts 1355 and 1356 (Dated August 11, 2015):

- Efficient, economical and effective administration of the title IV-B and IV-E plans including collecting data necessary for federal reporting, title IV-E eligibility determinations and expenditures, auditing, reviews and other monitoring activities.
- Promote data sharing with other agencies: The rule requires, if practicable, data exchanges with other health and human service agencies, education systems, and child welfare courts. Data exchanges will help coordinate services, eliminate redundancies, improve client outcomes, and improve data quality.
- Improve service delivery, billing and reimbursement processes through:
  - An interface for providers to submit billing for discrete unit-based services with varying units (day, week, month, etc.);
  - Ability to enter and check pre-authorizations in the system;
  - Ability to generate payments for both varying unit-based services (day, week, month, etc.);
  - Ability to interface with RI BRIDGES to pull in Medicaid eligibility information;
  - Ability to generate and submit Medicaid claims to MMIS for unit-based services (day, week, month, etc.);
  - Ability to receive remittance advice from MMIS;
  - Robust reporting on authorization, billing, payments and Medicaid claiming.
- Require quality data: The proposed solution must assist the state in meeting all applicable federal and state standards for data completeness, timeliness and accuracy. Data must be consistently and uniformly collected by the system;
- Allow agencies to build systems tailored to their needs: The rule focuses federal requirements for this optional system on quality data and exchanges between related information systems. The rule allows agencies to build systems tailored to their unique business needs rather than on functions defined by the federal government;
- Technical solution that will enable the department to rapidly respond to the constant changes introduced by State and federal legislative mandates and changes in child welfare best practices to facilitate faster and more responsive changes. The technical solution must meet or exceed the requirements of federal CCWIS regulations;

## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OBJECTIVES:**

- Evaluate vendor supplied information to conduct a comparative analysis of the possible solutions, to aid in determining the optimal approach to utilizing modularity in a system redesign.
- Identify possible automated solutions for improved management of essential child welfare activities.
- Utilize information collected to facilitate the evaluation of the feasibility and cost/benefit of a RICHIST replacement.
- Collect information to better understand opportunities for interoperability of the child welfare components with other state systems.
- Identify new technology, best practices and business initiatives to be considered in the RICHIST replacement planning process.
- Evaluate vendor supplied information to conduct a comparative analysis to improve reporting capability (e.g. AFCARS, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System).
- Identify possible automated solutions for improved data quality management and reporting.

## **RFI REQUESTED RESPONSE:**

DCYF is seeking a better understanding in the areas listed below, and requests responding vendors to provide a response to each of the following questions.

1. Briefly describe the Vendor's organization, client base, financial stability and history. Please keep generalized marketing material to a minimum.
2. The State is interested in a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the three most probable options: implementation of a Commercial Off-the Shelf (COTS) software product, transfer system from another jurisdiction, or custom development. Provide the Vendor's analysis/recommendations for one or all the proposed options to include strategies designed to compensate for technological drift while remaining flexible enough to respond to the unknown.
3. Every project has certain inherent risks. Describe the significant risk factors associated with all outlined solutions and how they should be mitigated.
4. Describe any experience/expertise specific to SACWIS/CCWIS and/or a Juvenile Justice System within the Vendor's organization. Please delineate how the services/products the Vendor is providing to other states would match the solutions Rhode Island is seeking. Please provide specific client examples where the proposed solution has provided added value through modernization, configurability, analytics, etc.

5. Provide the Vendor's experience with adherence to state standards, minimization of impact on state staff, minimization of impact on providers and recipients. Additionally, describe the Vendor's experience staffing a project of this size with the Vendor's personnel.
6. Describe the Vendor's recommended approach to converting data from RICHIST to its successor. In doing so, describe the basic strategy and the specific tasks required to execute the conversion.
7. Describe the Vendor's recommended approach to improving data quality and reporting.
8. Provide an overview of the Vendor's experience with Child Welfare federal reporting (e.g. Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)).
9. Describe the Vendor's experience in developing interoperability between state agencies (e.g. interfaces, shared modules) (preferably on similar or like systems).
10. Provide a description of the ongoing business or staffing models for maintaining each type of solution post deployment. Give specific information as to the numbers and types of resources required to maintain each type of solution. Provide an overview of the technology and service offerings that the Vendor currently provides. Provide a breakdown of the number of customers served currently by the Vendor's various product offerings.
11. Describe the platform that the Vendor's system operates on (database, code base, etc.). Describe any "wraparound" systems that the Vendor offers to augment the claims payment function such as front-end document imaging, OCR, claims re-bundling, credentialing, or Structured Decision Making (SDM). If any of these systems are third party systems, please note.
12. Include details of the recommended software solution options including database management system, licensed software for data retrieval and reporting, proposed approach to developing the custom-built software components, and, when appropriate, compatibility with other state systems software.
13. Describe any technology that the Vendor has used to address the challenges inherent in meeting the demands of an environment consisting of constant regulatory changes, with expanding requirements for data sharing. The State's specific interests include: web functionality; new technologies/architectures developed and implemented for child welfare or other related programs that resulted in program savings, greater staff efficiency, error reduction, and similar benefits; development strategies and technology that achieve a rapid turn-around time for incorporating regulatory changes.



14. The State considers this to be a complex project that may span an extended period of time and requires both capability and commitment from a vendor. The State is interested in gaining a better understanding of the vendor's approaches to managing a similar project. Because the State is familiar with standard system development methodologies, the preferred emphasis is on an explanation of the rationale for timeline decisions and insight into the Vendor's strategies and concerns for managing the timeline.
15. Provide suggestions and considerations for the State to evaluate as the State develops the cost model and associated evaluation criteria. Describe your company's pricing model; For example: Do you charge based on the number of modules, or the number of users, or the number of cases, etc.? Do you consider performance-based fees? Discuss the cost structures and benefits inherent in the Vendor's solution(s).
16. A lengthy or inefficient onboarding process to the new system that prevents case workers from effectively doing their jobs is a potential safety risk to Rhode Island's most vulnerable children. Explain the Vendor's process for training and supporting staff on the new system. Reference the size and scope of previous training provided by the Vendor. Touch on training for the initial deployment as well as for ongoing updates and maintenance. Describe the ongoing technical support for end users provided by the Vendor.
17. Rhode Island is interested in leveraging the benefits of human-centered design to creating a future system optimized for the needs of at-risk families and children, and the workers supporting them. Describe the human-centered design approach(es) the Vendor leverages to identify opportunities for new and/or improved features and processes. Ideally, provide at least one example of an improvement you implemented for a previous client that was surfaced/refined through human-centered design.
18. Include any additional comments or suggested alternatives, as deemed appropriate based on the Vendor's industry knowledge and expertise, that the Vendor feels would be beneficial to the State of Rhode Island.

Depending on the responses received to the RFI and how they align to the State's vision, the State may call upon a Vendor to come in for a live interview and demonstration to further understand the proposed software capabilities. The State, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to determine which vendors are selected for a live interview and demonstration. If a Vendor is selected for a live interview and demonstration, it will be held at the Division of Purchases, 1 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908. Any expenses incurred for the live interview and demonstration with the state will be at the Vendor's sole expense. Vendors who are not asked to come in for a live interview and demonstration are still able to respond to the upcoming RFP.

Some of the goals of the upcoming RFP will be to:

- Child Safety - Provide real-time data on children being served by the department, allowing for exchange of information across division, and eliminating gaps in information throughout the life of a case.
- Program Integrity - Improve the accuracy and timeliness of data to evaluate program performance and outcomes and improve tracking and auditing of the use of state and federal funds.
- Worker Efficiencies - Decrease manual data collection and reporting activities, lower the risk associated with application maintenance and business continuity by replacing an outdated legacy application with a modern technology solution.
- Federal Compliance - Enable the state to more effectively, efficiently, and economically meet federal reporting requirements and obtain CCWIS funding where appropriate.
- Configurability – Evaluate the ability of new offerings to facilitate standards and practice changes to improve child welfare within DCYF.
- Analytics – Understand system’s ability to monitor trends and spot areas of trouble that may lead to worse child outcomes.
- Modern technology - Utilize the latest industry standards with the ability to incrementally add services to support suture programs and business requirements.
- Human-Centered Design - Leverage user research and involve end users in the co-design of a system that works as effectively as possible for Rhode Island's families, employees, and partners

## **B. RFI Response**

The following outline is intended to standardize and structure responses for ease of analysis. *Do NOT include a cost proposal with the RFI response as cost shall not be considered with this RFI.*

- Response to the requirements outlined in Section 2.

## **SECTION 3: RESPONSE CONTENTS**

A. Responses shall include the following:

1. One completed and signed RIVIP Bidder Certification Cover Form (included in the original copy only) downloaded from the Division of Purchases website at [www.ridop.ri.gov](http://www.ridop.ri.gov). *Do not include any copies in the response.*

2. Response - describing the requirements and concept for this potential project, and all information described earlier in this solicitation. The response is limited to thirty (30) pages.
  - a. One (1) Electronic copy on a CD-R, marked “Response - Original”.
  - b. One (1) printed paper copy, marked “Response - Original” and signed.
  - c. Six (6) printed paper copies.

B. Formatting of proposal response contents shall be as follows:

1. Formatting of CD-Rs – Separate CD-Rs are required for the technical proposal. All CD-Rs submitted must be labeled with:
  - a. Vendor’s name
  - b. RFI #
  - c. RFI Title
  - d. If file sizes require more than one CD-R, multiple CD-Rs are acceptable. Each CD-R must include the above labeling and additional labeling of how many CD-Rs should be accounted for (e.g., 3 CD-Rs are submitted for a technical proposal and each CD-R should have additional label of ‘1 of 3’ on first CD-R, ‘2 of 3’ on second CD-R, ‘3 of 3’ on third CD-R).

Vendors are responsible for testing their CD-Rs before submission as the Division of Purchase’s inability to open or read a CD-R may be grounds for rejection of a Vendor’s proposal. All files must be readable and readily accessible on the CD-Rs submitted with no instructions to download files from any external resource(s). If a file is partial, corrupt or unreadable, the Division of Purchases may consider it “non-responsive”. USB drives or other forms of electronic media shall not be accepted. Please note that vendor CD-Rs shall not be returned.

2. Formatting of written documents and printed copies:
  - a. For clarity, the response shall be typed. These documents shall be single-spaced with 1” margins on white 8.5”x 11” paper using a font of 12 point Calibri or 12 point Times New Roman.
  - b. All pages on the response are to be sequentially numbered in the footer, starting with number 1 on the first page of the narrative (this does not include the cover page or table of contents) through to the end, including all forms and attachments. The Vendor’s name should appear on every page, including attachments. Each attachment should be referenced appropriately within the response section and the attachment title should reference the response section it is applicable to.
  - c. Printed copies are to be only bound with removable binder clips.

#### **SECTION 4: RESPONSE SUBMISSION**

Interested vendors must submit responses to provide information covered by this RFI on or before the date and time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Responses received after this date

and time, as registered by the official time clock in the reception area of the Division of Purchases, shall not be accepted.

Responses should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked RFI #7602787 “Request for Information for Implementation of a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System” to:

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

### **SECTION 5: DISCLAIMER**

This Request for Information is solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a request for proposal or an invitation to bid. All information received in response to the RFI and marked as “Proprietary” shall be deemed to be confidential but may still be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Rhode Island “Access to Public Records Act, R. I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-1, *et seq.* Responses to the RFI will not be returned.

**END**