



**State of Rhode Island
Department of Administration / Division of Purchases
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**Solicitation Information
June 19, 2020**

ADDENDUM #3

RFP # 7606778

TITLE: Support Groups for Kinship Caregivers

Bid Closing Date & Time: **July 1, 2020 @ 1:00 PM Eastern Time (ET)**

Notice to Vendors

Attached are vendor questions with State responses. No further questions will be answered.

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Interdepartmental Project Manager**

Interested parties should monitor this website, on a regular basis, for any additional information that may be posted.

Vendor Questions with State Responses for RFP #7606778 – Support Groups for Kinship Caregivers

Question 1: Can the Division please clarify the submission process for this solicitation? Is it correct that the bid must be submitted on or before July 1, 2020 at 1pm EST, either by mail or in person at the Division of Purchases building and that individuals submitting their bid are allowed into the building, so long as they are wearing a cloth face covering and are screened before entry? OR are applicants/general public not permitted into the building and must therefore submit their bid some other way?

Answer: Yes, that is correct that that the bid must be submitted on or before July 1, 2020 at 1pm EST, either by mail or in person at the Division of Purchases building and that individuals submitting their bid are allowed into the building, so long as they are wearing a cloth face covering and are screened before entry.

Question 2: Can you please clarify the purpose and expectations of the ZOOM meeting scheduled for July 1, 2020 at 1pm EST? Is this meeting part of the bid submission or does it serve some other purpose? If a bid is submitted by an agency that does not attend the ZOOM meeting, it is considered non-responsive?

Answer: The zoom is the public bid opening live streamed. Vendor technical bid proposals shall be opened, and vendor names will be read aloud at the date and time listed.

Question 3: It appears that proposals due are July 1, but the bidder's conference is on July 1 and questions are due by July 12th. Can you clarify please the following?

- Date proposals are due
- Date of bidder's conference
- Date questions are due

Answer: It is not a bidder's conference. It is the public bid opening live streamed. Vendor bid proposals shall be opened and vendor names will be read aloud at the date and time listed. Questions are due 6/12. Proposals are due 7/1.

Question 4: Please confirm the total available dollars under this RFP. Is 48 meetings annually times the \$700 in person rate or \$470 virtual rate the total money available? Meaning, at most, \$33,600 is available?

Answer: Generally, yes. The intent is for four monthly groups to be available for kinship providers. However, if a vendor proposes a different number of support groups as part of a more intensive model, this will be considered. Additionally, if an increased number of families engage, a vendor may propose an increased number of support groups to accommodate the need for increased capacity.

Question 5: Will meeting space for providing childcare need to be licensed or approved?

Answer: No, this would be a babysitting service and does not qualify as a licensed childcare center under Rhode Island state law. Foster parents who utilize the babysitting service are making the prudent parenting choice to do so.

Question 6: What is the approximate number of kinship homes that would be eligible to participate?

Answer: At any given time, there are 650-700 kinship foster providers, with ~70% being relative kinship and ~30% being fictive kinship caregivers. All kinship foster families, licensed or pending licensure, would be eligible to participate. The Department would also be open to including informal kinship families (not involved with DCYF), as well as adoptive/guardianship kinship families, if capacity allowed.

Question 7: What is the number of fictive foster homes that would be eligible to participate?

Answer: See answer to question 6 above.

Question 8: Will DCYF staff play a direct role in participating in the groups?

Answer: No, the successful vendor will lead the support groups. If at any point a successful vendor requests DCYF presence at a particular support group to discuss a particular topic, the Department would absolutely participate.

Question 9: The 2 addend attached to the solicitation appear to link back to the RFP. They are not new addenda. Is this correct?

Answer: Correct. This was reflecting the update to clarify that there was not a pre-bidder's conference. No content changes were made to the RFP with this addendum.

Question 10: Is the \$700 or \$470 rate meant to cover all administrative and reporting requirements of the program?

Answer: Yes, there are hours built into that rate to cover the logistical planning and coordination of the groups. Reporting is a one-page form to be submitted monthly after the group(s) have been completed. The Department would also have successful vendor(s) participate in a review meeting on a monthly or quarterly basis, as well as a larger reflection report upon the end of the contract.

Question 11: What type of reporting is required, and may this reporting be completed by a peer leader?

Answer: Reporting is a one-page form to be submitted monthly after the group(s) have been completed. Yes, a peer leader may submit this form, if the peer leader has the required information related to all offered groups for the month.

Question 12: The scheduled Zoom meeting appears to be on the same day that the RFP is due (July 1). Is it possible to have the RFP due on a date after the Zoom meeting?

Answer: The zoom is the public bid opening live streamed. Vendor bid proposals shall be opened and vendor names will be read aloud at the date and time listed.

Question 13: Will it be anticipated under this RFP that Resource Families will be assigned to the designated agencies by referral process?

Answer: Kinship families will have the choice on what group(s) to join/attend. All successful vendors will be given the contact information for all kinship families in order to engage families. The Department will also engage in a communication plan for families and internal staff related to these groups.

Question 14: Will it be anticipated that kinship families utilizing support groups through this RFP process have a client record which includes an intake paperwork, assessment and treatment plan?

Answer: No. The DCYF case records will not be made available to successful vendors, and successful vendors will not be expected to create intake paperwork or treatment plans or conduct formal assessments of a kinship family.

Question 15: Is it the goal of DCYF for agencies awarded this RFP will recruit kinship families to attend support groups?

Answer: Yes, in partnership with the Department, successful vendors will be expected to engage kinship families to participate in the support groups. The Department will also assist in this effort by communicating directly with kin families to inform them of the availability of the support groups, highlighting this during kinship caregiver training, and sharing the information with internal staff and community partners through the existing Kinship Advisory Council. All successful vendors will be given the contact information for all kinship families in order to engage families.

Question 16: Please define babysitting, including any required training, certifications, or other requirements of persons fulfilling this role.

Answer: A babysitter is not required to obtain special training or educational certification. State level background checks will be required, and will be completed, at no cost to the vendor or applicant, by the Department. A successful babysitter will have experience caring for children with a range of behaviors. It is the expectation that successful vendors will use their experience and judgement to hire babysitters with an appropriate skill set in order to support the kinship caregiver's ability to make a prudent parenting decision.

Question 17: Besides "statewide," are there specific areas being sought for the hosting of groups?

Answer: Please see "Exhibit 1 – Location of Kinship Caregivers" to see a city/town breakdown of kinship caregivers for review.

Question 18: Aside from data available through Kids Count RI, is there any other available data as to the cities and town where kinship homes are currently located and any other demographic information?

Answer: Please see answer for question 17 above. Additionally, ~70% are relative kinship and ~30% are fictive kinship caregivers. An estimated 30% of kinship caregivers identify their preferred language as Spanish.

Question 19: Do bidders need to provide 10-12 support groups in each of the four regions (40-48 total for the year), or could we propose to provide them less frequently or in fewer regions?

Answer: It is our belief that effective support groups must run frequently enough to begin building relationships. While monthly is a desired cadence, with potentially taking breaks for the holidays or in the summer months, a vendor is welcome to submit a bid for a different number of groups, or only for a specific region/target kinship population.

Question 20: The RFP did not include financial support for costs involved to hire Interpreters for various family support groups (Spanish speaking families, individuals who are hearing impaired/deaf, etc.). This is a necessary component for organizing support groups. Can additional funds be identified and provided by DCYF for these potential costs?

Answer: The Department would seek bids that would meet the cultural competency needs of families. The Department would expect that support groups would be delivered in a family's preferred language. Additional funds for interpretation are not available, but the Department would be willing to partner on translation of written materials.

Question 21: Can the 4 support groups also be comprised to include families who are non-kin?

Answer: While the intent of this RFP is to build a wider network of supports for kinship families, and often kinship families feel more comfortable with other kinship families, there are certain target groups of kinship caregivers (particularly fictive kinship caregivers) who may benefit from a blended group with other non-kinship providers, so, yes, this would be allowed.

Question 22: Can we build upon existing support groups if they currently include some kin families and are expanded to include a majority of kinship families?

Answer: Yes.

Question 23: How will costs be paid for conducting BCI's on caregivers?

Answer: State level background checks will be required, and will be completed, at no cost to the vendor or applicant, by the Department.

Question 24: Can DCYF take on this responsibility and costs involved?

Answer: See answer to question 23 above.

Question 25: The RFP does NOT include any financial support for overall management costs; fiscal responsibilities for administering the grant and paying facilitators, and other bills; possible training and professional development costs for project staff, child care staff or facilitators; insurance costs for sites/locations of support groups and space for child care; monitoring and evaluation; data collection on families and children and various outcomes measures of support. Can additional funds be identified and provided by DCYF for these potential costs?

Answer: No, there are not additional funds available. The intent of providing seven hours of funding for logistical work, in addition to other funding for the facilitation of meetings, is to allow a successful vendor to invest those time and funds in the most effective way to prepare and plan for successful support groups.

Question 26: The allocation of \$15.00 an hour for childcare costs is not sufficient, especially given the intensity of needs of some children for qualified and experienced workers for children who have specific health care/medical needs, therapeutic needs, or behavioral challenges. Can this hourly rate be increased to \$20.00 an hour given this point?

Answer: No, there is not additional funding for this increase. Successful vendors will be paid a flat rate for each support group and can choose if to redistribute additional funds to babysitters. To note, foster parents will be onsite when babysitting is provided and will be expected to handle any issue that requires additional support that cannot be addressed in the babysitting setting. Additionally, it should be noted that a support group may run for one hour in some cases, depending in family engagement, which could allow for a higher hourly rate with existing funding.

Question 27: Do the 4 support groups have to represent specific regions of the State or does the grant applicant have flexibility to choose geographic locations for the 4 groups?

Answer: A bidder does have flexibility to propose a targeted group of kinship caregivers to support for region or another factor.

Question 28: What types of data will be requested on the demographics of kin families for data tracking purposes or reporting to DCYF?

Answer: The Department will seek the following metrics related to participants: # adults and children of enrolled, # adults and children of engaged, preferred language, race/ethnicity, relative/fictive kinship/other, city/town. The monthly report will also ask about the details and delivery of groups (location, facilitators, times, etc.) More anecdotally, the monthly report will ask about aggregate, non-identifiable, themes, issues, questions, or ideas heard in the support group, including needs of children.

Question 29: Is there a scheduled bidders conference? It would have been better if the bidders conference was held BEFORE questions had to be submitted to the Department.

Answer: No. The zoom is the public bid opening live streamed. Vendor bid proposals shall be opened and vendor names will be read aloud at the date and time listed.

Question 30: The RFP only allowed \$30.00 per group for funding for materials costs to purchase educational or learning materials to utilize in the care giver groups involving children. This seems a little low. Can additional funds \$50.00 per group be identified and provided by DCYF for these activity costs?

Answer: These funds are meant to provide additional supplies that may be used over multiple sessions (i.e. games, crayons, craft kits, glue, packs of paper, etc.). Additionally, there are many low, or no cost, activities. Public spaces that are viable options for locations for groups, such as libraries, often have materials for children. The Department will partner with successful vendor(s) in this area.

Question 31: Support groups are only ONE component of an array of supports that are necessary for an effective and qualitative system of supports for kinship and other foster families. The RFP only addresses financial reimbursement for actual costs only relating to the specific time of the group itself and not funding for any additional needs... such as ongoing mentoring and troubleshooting of the individual needs of families that come up after meetings, clothing and food needs for children, training for families on various areas including CPR, behavioral challenges, educational needs of children with special needs, etc. Can additional funds be identified and provided by DCYF for these potential costs?

Answer: The Department agrees that there are an array of supports that could benefit kinship providers. The Department has engaged in the development of many of these program areas. This RFP speaks to the singular component of support groups. Other areas such as mentoring, case management, material needs, etc. are not contemplated as part of this RFP.

Question 32: On p.8 of the RFP it states... “The Successful Vendor(s) must facilitate four (4) monthly support groups targeted to kinship caregiver families.” But on p 9 it says...” The Successful Vendor(s) will provide the following deliverables for this project; facilitate ten(10) to twelve (12) monthly support groups per region per year (up to forty-eight (48) groups), monitor and track the successful delivery of these groups, and submission of monthly reports are required. These two statements seem to be different. How many support groups are required to be facilitated monthly by the applicant?

Answer: This should be clarified to read that support groups should be offered monthly, with the intent of 48 support groups per year offered, with regional or target populations considerations. Multiple awards may be awarded to meet this potential need. The Department will accept bids that provide alternate proposals for number of sessions and regional distribution.

Exhibit 1- Location of Kinship Caregivers

City/Town/Village	% of Kinship Families
Providence	18.31%
Pawtucket	9.88%
Warwick	8.19%
Cranston	7.11%
Woonsocket	6.27%
West Warwick	4.70%
Coventry	4.34%
North Providence	3.61%
East Providence	3.25%
Johnston	3.25%
Central Falls	2.53%
North Kingstown	2.17%
Cumberland	2.05%
Newport	2.05%
Bristol	1.69%
Westerly	1.69%
Warren	1.33%
Middletown	1.08%
Portsmouth	0.96%
Riverside	0.84%
Rumford	0.84%
Bradford	0.72%
Narragansett	0.72%
Tiverton	0.72%
Charlestown	0.60%
Chepachet	0.60%
East Greenwich	0.60%
Exeter	0.60%
Foster	0.60%
North Smithfield	0.60%
Pascoag	0.60%
Smithfield	0.60%
Greenville	0.48%
Harrisville	0.48%
Hope Valley	0.48%
West Greenwich	0.48%
Albion	0.36%
Hope	0.36%
Lincoln	0.36%
North Scituate	0.36%
Saunderstown	0.36%
Wakefield	0.36%

West Kingston	0.36%
Ashaway	0.24%
Barrington	0.24%
Glendale	0.24%
Scituate	0.24%
South Kingstown	0.24%
Carolina	0.12%
Glocester	0.12%
Hopkinton	0.12%
Little Compton	0.12%
Manville	0.12%
Mapleville	0.12%
Plainfield	0.12%
Richmond	0.12%
Wood River Junction	0.12%
Wyoming	0.12%