

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

RELATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES (RSS)

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM  
PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDERS**

**(Public/Stakeholders' Conference)**



Public/Stakeholders' Conference on:  
September 3, 2015

**Relative Support Services (RSS)  
Public Stakeholders' Conference  
September 3, 2015**

**Questions & Answers**

**PROGRAM**

1. How will the services under the proposed Request for Proposal (RFP); Request for Information (RFI); and Request for Statement of Qualification (RFSQ) relate to the changed design of all services proposed under AB 403, positing the complete restricting of the entire child welfare and out of home services?

**Answer:** The Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSI) language will focus on the current Relative/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFM) Caregiver requirements per Title 22. As implementation design of the Resource Family Approval/Assessment (RFA) process per AB 403 proceeds, the County will continue development of services to meet Relative/NREFM Caregiver needs.

2. Would the proposed RFP/RFI/RFSQ specify in advance how many children/families are assigned to each awarded provider, and would it specify what the rates paid for services to each child/family? And, in fact, would the rates be structured as Cost Reimbursement or Fee for services?

**Answer:** Yes, the RFSI will provide projections of the number of child placements needed in a contract service area. The County will detail the contract services and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be requested to propose a payment methodology (cost reimbursement/fee for services) that coincides with their service delivery model. The payment methodology will be finalized after review/consideration of CBO input.

3. Instead of contracting Kinship Support Services, why haven't you looked into expanding the Kinship Programs into every Supervisorial District, by way of keeping everything in-house by staffing resources centers including bilingual Spanish speaking CSW?

If you do this, a must would be a social worker in these non-profit agencies office to keep the door open to DCFS offices and all Relative Caregivers in your system, so, and put KEPS back in colleges Relative Caregivers in DCFS 18 offices give the 250 K to each DCFS.

**Answer:** The County has explored several methodologies to provide Kinship Support Services including those in other governmental jurisdictions and is committed to enhance services through collaboration with CBOs. Integrating the services of CBOs will not/does not preclude working closely with DCFS and with input from Relative/NREFM Caregivers. In 2015, the County reintroduced the KEPS program. However, Relative/NREFM Caregiver participation was too low to sustain the program.

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**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM  
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Public/Stakeholders' Conference on:  
September 10, 2015

**Relative Support Services (RSS)  
Public Stakeholders' Conference  
September 10, 2015**

**Questions & Answers**

1. If the proposed program will be structured as a “fee-for-services” program, will DCFS consider the fact that there are Start-up costs when the program does not have all the assigned clients yet, such as the costs of training staff, office and utilities, during the introductory period? Even if the Start-up costs are not assigned to this project (furniture, remodeling, staff time), would DCFS consider including at least one month of full “fee-for-service” payment to all agencies, to provide funding for the startup time?

**Answer:** The County has not determined the contract service payment methodology. CBOs responding to the RFSI will have the opportunity to express the payment methodology the bests aligns with their service delivery model. Also, the County has not determined if Start-up funds and/or Payment Advances will be available for these contracts.

2. Are emergency funds for urgent needs (food, transportation, urgent needs vouchers) to be provided by the agencies, or by DCFS directly? If the first option is chosen, what will be the time-frame for reimbursement for these costs incurred by the agencies, and what will be the documentation required for these funds?

**Answer:** Emergency supplies as well as procured items/services for Relative/NREFM Caregiver compliance to Title 22 requirements are to be provided by the contracted CBO with reimbursement by the County within 60 days following the invoice to the County. Invoices will require itemization of supplies provided and receipt for purchased items/services where appropriate.

3. Some of the required services appear to require legal advice or services being provided. If the agencies need to hire attorneys to service clients referred to them, would the reimbursement rates take into account the cost of legal services?

**Answer:** Because contracted CBOs are expected to build and maintain a CBO network of support services for Relative/NREFM Caregivers, the County anticipates that legal assistance services will be coordinated and Relative/NREFM Caregiver referrals will be made to providers of legal services.

4. Will there be consideration for shifting re-alignment Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, & Treatment (EPSDT) dollars for FY 16-17 to approved RHASS providers to meet the mental health needs of the children in relative homes?

**Answer:** Cannot answer at this time.

5. Will the department expect each Community Based Organization (CBO) to draft a business and finance proposal for the RFSI – similar to the Safe Children Strong Families RFP?

**Answer:** Yes, the RFSI will include but not be limited to requesting that the CBO provide their contract services model and corresponding payment methodology. CBOs should not model their response to other contract solicitations but instead address the requested information.

6. I understand that this RFSI will likely be released sometime in November/December of 2015. Do you anticipate that this RFSI will only be made available to non-profit 501-C-3 entities or will for-profit agencies also be eligible for the bidding process?

**Answer:** This is not a placement contract. There does not seem to be anything that precludes a for-profit entity to apply, but the for-profit margin will need to be identified.

7. Who is assessing the caregiver(s): ability to parent; mental health observations, willingness to comply with case plan, child care plan, etc.?

**Answer:** Case Management decisions are the responsibility of the DCFS CSW. Observations by the contractor staff regarding possible child safety issues are the responsibility of all mandated reporters including contractor staff.

8. Will there be a new system put in place by DCFS so agencies have access to the Emergency Response (ER) CSW to relay concerns and or have feedback reassessments?

**Answer:** Yes. Communication protocols will be established between the DCFS CSW and contractor staff to ensure essential feedback.

9. Can contractors complete the clearances?

**Answer:** No. Contractors are not responsible for the Relative/NREFM Caregiver background/criminal clearances.

10. Will this expedite the process?

**Answer:** Yes, because Contractors have greater flexibility when utilizing services/supply vendors to bring Relative/NREFM Caregiver homes into compliance with Title 22 requirements, the overall assessment process is shortened.

11. What will the referral processes look like?

**Answer:** This will be addressed in the RFSI.

12. Statement/Question(s) it was stated that there are 18 DCFS Regional Offices. She wanted to know how many 501 agencies will be needed to cover these offices as there are more relative caregivers in Los Angeles County than in (other parts) of the nation. An attendee stated there are 12,000 assessments a year.

**Answer:** The Board Motion commits to at least five contracts. Because of the population distribution of Relative/NREFM Caregivers throughout LA County, some SPA's may have multiple contractors. Also, the County will want to consider the Statements of Interest received from qualified CBOs.

13. Statement/Question(s): Instead of contracting out, have you looked into expanding Kinship Services? Maybe some more Spanish Workers at Kinship.

**Answer:** Many program designs were explored. We have learned it is very expensive for the County to provide kinship services. Efficiency is gained by working with community agencies. We are looking at CBOs to better balance between County services and available community services.

14. Statement/Question(s): Would the CCL (Community Care Licensing) approval be needed for agencies for licensing?

**Answer:** No

15. Statement/Question(s): Will these assessments be outside the County?

**Answer:** No. Decisions have been finalized regarding contracting the Out-of-County Relative/NREFM Caregiver home site assessments.

16. Statement/Question(s): Is this process on-going? Would funding be for a single rate for home assessment plus an on-going rate for Kinship services? Is this just a matter of agency linking caregivers to services or do we need to make it happen? Visitation-do we provide it?

**Answer:** See Answers to September 10, 2015 Q&A, Questions #1 & #5.

17. Statement/Question(s): As agencies are trying to figure out what you want, it seems that there is an assessment section plus a case management section. Because funding is different (for both).

**Answer (DD):** This is an opportunity for the Department to look into different models. Case Management is the responsibility of DCFS and is not being contracted.

18. Statement/Question(s): In the letter, it says that to perform by SPA. Is it SPA or Supervisorial District?

**Answer:** The contracts will be SPA based. Some SPAs may have multiple contracts.

19. Statement/Question(s): Under the model, will there be a discussion to allow Dept. of Mental Health dollars to also be assessed. (EPSDT dollars).

**Answer (DD):** Not able to address now.

20. Statement/Question(s): Communication needs to be provided. Will the caregiver be assessed not just their physical building (residence), but also assessed for concerns with the caregiver.

**Answer:** See Answer for Question 7, and Question 8.

21. Statement/Question(s): Regarding assessments of caregiver, are we assessing that person as we would assess a foster parent?

**Answer (DD):** We are not contracting for psychosocial assessments at this point.

22. Statement/Question(s): I am concerned as looks like a fast turnaround as coming in November. What type of funding was there before? Now that you are saying all these things, there may not be enough money.

**Answer:** These have been County services. The County has committed that each contract be a minimum of \$250,000 per year, per contract.

23. Statement/Question(s): What happens to kids that are Kin-Gapped, informal cases. What about the Kinship caregivers? Will we (contractors) all be introduced to each other? In San Bernardino, know that they did this (contract out) and they (San Bernardino) staff don't even know themselves who they are contracted out to.

**Answer (DD):** We will have a communication system for all of our providers. Other details we will explore.

24. Statement/Question(s): Possibility of collaborating between CBO's?

**Answer:** Yes. The County is open to formal and informal collaborations between CBOs to meet Relative/NREFM Caregiver needs.

25. Statement/Question(s): Will childcare be a separate program?

**Answer:** The Social worker will be the lead on that (referrals).

26. Statement: I see this as a good service for families.

**Answer: Not a question.**

27. Statement/Question(s): Training. How will you train these vendors? Will there be an orientation component?

**Answer (DD):** Yes. We have existing ASFA/Kinship staff and would pull from their expertise.

28. Statement/Question(s): Will the appeals advisement be in the orientation? Criminal waivers? How will it be included?

**Answer (DD):** DCFS is still responsible for making sure there is an appeal process. There is a State Hearing Section and the appeal process would be discussed in the contractor training.

29. Statement/Question(s): What is the Kinship Division going to look like?

**Answer (DD):** Yet to be determined.

30. Statement/Question(s): Have you envisioned for providers that have family finding tools to also be looked into?

**Answer (DD):** No. We are not looking into that.

31. Statement/Question(s): What point as a provider would you be done?

**Answer:** When permanency for the child is achieved?

33. Statement/Question(s): We all know that there are other assessments, MAT, Wraparound, etc. Is this really a good thing?

**Answer (DD):** Department is working towards CFT's where families also have a choice.

34. Statement/Question(s): Have you considered having all caseworkers (with relative placements) in one unit?

**Answer (DD):** No. Moving cases affects families and sometimes workers have relationships with families. We have no way to project it (caseloads). We need to support families, not purify to test projects.

35. Statement/Question(s): What do you envision as a period for [contract] performance?

**Answer:** We will seek 3 year contracts: one year contracts with two, one-year contract extensions. Contract amendments may be needed as the Resource Family Approval/Assessment process is implemented

36. Statement/Question(s): Need clarification regarding linkages.

**Answer (DD):** That would be established with communication of worker.

37. Statement/Question(s): Who would tell caregivers job of CSW?

**Answer (DD):** We will make sure it is all clarified.

38. Statement/Question(s): Talked about agency going out with ER worker in past meeting. Can't we go out later?

**Answer:** Contract staff performing the Relative/NREFM Caregiver orientation and home inspection must conduct the first visit within the first five (5) calendar days, holidays excepted. The completed process that includes documentation of Relative/NREFM Caregiver home compliance or non-compliance to Title 22 requirements must be completed within 15 calendar days, holidays excepted.

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**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM  
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Public/Stakeholders' Conference on:  
November 3, 2015

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**Questions & Answers**

**PROGRAM**

1. Will the County expect CBO's to purchase furniture and provide basic needs from their own budgets upfront and then be reimbursed?

**Answer: See Answer for September 10, 2015 Q&A, Question #2**

2. Will the 5 days consider weekends?

**Answer: See Answer for September 10, 2015 Q&A, Question #38**

3. What will funding model be?

**Answer: See Answer for September 3, 2015 Q&A, Question #2**

4. You mentioned there may be start up funding, how will that be accessed?

**Answer: See Answer for September 10, 2015 Q&A, Question #1**

5. There is an interest in providing services out of County (Riverside and San Bernardino) both for ASFA and perhaps KSS, please address if there will be an option.

**Answer: See Answer for September 10, 2015 Q&A, Question #15**

The County would expect contracted CBO's located in Los Angeles County to provide Kinship Support Services sought by nearby Out-of-County Relative/NREFM Caregivers

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Public/Stakeholders' Conference on:  
December 21, 2015

**Relative Support Services (RSS)  
Public Stakeholders' Conference  
December 21, 2015**

**Questions & Answers**

***Please note that at this December 21, 2015 Public Stakeholders' Conference, the County alerted the participants that the Relative Support Services (RSS) Demonstration Project has evolved into two contract services: 1)Relative Support Services – Kinship support services to Relative Caregivers by Community Based Organizations (CBO) throughout all Service Planning Areas (SPAs); 2)Relative Home Assessment Services (RHAS) – Home assessments and Pre-/Approval training for Relative Caregivers by CBOs in all SPAs.***

***The RHAS contract will not be based on the County's current Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) Program for Relative Caregivers but will instead be based on the standards of the forthcoming State of California Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program. The RHAS contracts are intended to assist the County in the foster care approval process for Relative/Non-Related Extended Family Member Caregivers (Relatives). In the RHAS contracts, the assessment activities from the RFA Program include, but are not limited to, the Home Environment Assessment and the Pre-Approval Training. These assessment services, together with Relatives orientation/review of caregiver/minor's rights, procurement of supplies/services for Corrective Action Plan (CAP)/ Documented Alternative Plan (DAP) for RFA standards, a kinship support services assessment and documentation/communication with Children Social Workers (CSWs) services will assist the County to more effectively evaluate Relatives for child placement.***

***Relative Caregiver Kinship Support Services under the Relative Support Services (RSS) contract remain the same.***

***Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the California Department of Social Services website for additional Resource Families Approval Program details.***

1. When this solicitation is released will it be open for bid to for- profit mental health organizations already contracted with LA County DMH & DCFS?

**Answer:** See Answer to September 10, 2015 Q&A, Question #6.

2. The PRIDE curriculum is more than 12 hours of training, will it be our (agency) discretion to decide what component of the curriculum will be used for training, or will County insert its preference?

**Answer:** This will be addressed in the RFSI.

3. The RFA timeline is still in progress, will County be able to launch the RSS, or is the county beholding to the RFA timeline?

**Answer:** This will be addressed in the RFSI.

4. What will be the tool used to measure and or conduct the psycho/social assessments?

**Answer:** The psychosocial assessments will be completed by DCFS staff.

5. Funding, what is the amount for CBOs?

**Answer:** This will be addressed in the RFSI.

6. Who will be the CBOs receiving the contracts?

**Answer:** The CBOs have not been selected.

7. Does each SPA receive the same amount of contracts or will some SPAs obtain more contracts based on the needs of the SPA and or the population the SPA serves?

**Answer:** This will be addressed in the RFSI.

8. CBO's rep. indicated that the home assessment is being contracted out, why not the psycho/social assessment? Due to each component goes together.

**Answer:** Please see the answer to Question #4.

9. Who will make the final approval regarding the home approval and RFA families?

**Answer:** DCFS will make the final approval of RFA families.

10. What services to RHAS families do the CBOs need to provide?

**Answer:** The services to be provided under the Relative Support Services (RSS) contract and the Relative Home Assessment Services (RHAS) contract will be detailed in the RFSI.

11. What is the time frame for completion of the home assessment and approval of caregivers?

**Answer:** CDSS guidelines specify that RFA families be approved within 90 days.