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Director

**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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April 6, 2015

Dear Prospective Proposer and Interested Parties:

**RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS RECEIVED AT THE PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDERS'
CONFERENCE FOR RELATIVE HOME ASSESSMENT SERVICES**

Attached are the responses to public questions received on March 19, 2015, at the Public/Stakeholders' Conference for Relative Home Assessment Services.

The comments and questions received at the aforementioned event ranged from how these service needs could best be addressed within the confines of the Department's organizational structure; how this process would be implemented by an outside agency; timeframes to complete an assessment; reimbursement; appeals; confidentiality; and the referral process. The Department will consider these comments and questions during the final development of the Statement of Work and Sample Contract to be included in the upcoming solicitation document. However, the Department reserves the right to make the final decision.

All prospective proposers and interested parties will have an opportunity to ask additional questions during the Written Questions and Answer period and at the Proposers' Conference for the upcoming solicitation.

Please continue to monitor the Department's website <http://lacdcfs.org/contracts/index.html> for future postings related to this project.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the County of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

Leticia Torres-Ibarra, Division Manager
Contracts Administration Division

LTI:KAF
JAR:mn

Attachment

**Relative Home Assessment Services (RHAS)
Public Stakeholders' Conference
March 19, 2015
Attendees' Comments**

1. Case in streamlining process: consider job requirements; Bachelor's Degree, Clinician providing optional with multi-education level.
2. Robust Chaplaincy program to ride along with ER worker; case worker liked that they were there, people more relaxed; "Everyone on their "A" game" People were relieved.
3. Create a volunteer system; shelf life for volunteers like a loaf of bread. Allies are important.
4. County needs to reach out & secure/create relationships with allies, as opposed to vendors.
5. Relative caregiver meets with relative caregivers to ask what they need.
6. Need the opportunity to give feedback.
7. Assessment tool: Have CSW come with the tool where and when assessment is done.
8. Be supportive to relatives, provide information; must go hand in hand with support.
9. Support groups, mentors, help with registering kids for school.
10. Expanding scope of RFP for other.
11. Training for 501(c) training in Regional Offices.
12. Kinship caregiver support – P.I.P. should have partnership.
13. Relatives need additional support, long-term supports.
14. Additional intensive support for caregivers is needed.
15. Kinship unit at each DCFS office is needed.
16. CSWs with only relative caregiver homes. They can share information & maintain climate between DCFS & Kinship families.
17. \$18,000 in placement: \$9,000 in relative caregiver, a lot of money goes to administration – money can go to additional direct services.
18. Do not want a 3rd level of services; the more layers you have the more frustration it is for the relatives.

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19. Confidentiality is a problem.
20. Be upfront with relatives; reference 25-year-old offenses.
21. Department needs an ally that can bring things to table to help department e.g., Faith-based committee has opportunity to enhance services, Torrance Office is already doing this ride along help, rapport is established "spirit of excellence", ASFA needs to be enhanced/improved, not contracted out.
22. Decentralize ASFA back into regional offices; put relative caregivers in DCFS offices.
23. Going to overwhelm; listen to us; we do not get to talk in court, keep everything in-house.
24. Didn't know DCFS – another layer of frustration – need for caregiver support.
25. CCL used to do assignment; now DCFS is doing their own, and allow state licensing foster parents.
26. Resource Family Assessment Tool: State is moving towards one tool in 2019 approximately.
27. Reimbursed for services: Rate & Manner not yet determined; cost for reimbursement or fee for services?
28. Assessment requirements: Degree? Experience?
29. Please consider expanding "supportive Services" that include crisis intervention, support groups, psycho-educational workshops, parent advocates mentors, etc... These families & children are on survival mode at triennial placement – the last thing they need is CAP/ they need genuine handholding.
30. I would suggest that the Department consider other possibilities before private agencies ability to work with relative caregivers, i.e., like the past completing SAFE Home studies for those relatives that eventually adopt their relative.
31. The County should really take advantage of the expertise of private agencies.
32. If assigned CSW is final say as to placement recommendation anyway, and will probably be the one bearing the liability if any problems re-train them and put more staff in place to deal with these assessments, or keep current ASFA staff status quo – and get more specialized ASFA staff. Layers create trauma and confusion.
33. A kind of training and support for families all together.

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34. Would the Department consider agency initial contact to be within 24-48 hours vs at time of placement? This would allow for child & caregiver to have a moment to accept situation prior to agency involvement.
35. Suggestion: Start identifying RCG as a "resource" family. Include in the contract "language" already being used in the CC reform. RCGs are part of the continuum of care service delivery.
36. ASFA and ROCK had a very successful pilot project in SPA 1. Traveling separately; ASFA worker and Kinship Advocate (KA) met at Kinship Caregiver home. KA agency had loan project, worked with faith based to meet immediate needs i.e., beds, car seats etc. resources. KA helped with "mini Kinship Orientation and referred to Community College and local Kinship organizations for formal Kinship Orientation. Reduced follow up ASFA visits unless there was DAP or CAP. *Having a trained Kinship Advocate is themselves a Kinship Caregiver soothed and supported Kinship.
37. Re: having a PIP like program with Kinship. I have worked with the PIP program, my daughter was a PIP – they have so many restrictions as they are DCFS – I feel a PIP like program utilizing private Kinship organization with Kinship Advocates/Navigators would be more effective.
38. Please consider expanding "supportive services" that include crises intervention, support groups, psycho educational workshops, parent advocates, mentors etc. These family's children are on survival mode at the initial placement – the last thing they need is CAP, they need genuine hand holding.
39. I would suggest that the department consider other possibilities for private agencies ability to work with relative caregiver i.e., like in the past completely SAFE Home studies for those relatives that eventually adopt their relatives. The County should really take full advantage of the expertise of private agencies.
40. An agency stated that they did a small pilot where they placed a ROCK staff as an advocate during placement. If a bed needed, or whatever was needed, they helped bring it to relatives so that their homes could be approved. Ms. Hymen stated that she had other questions as to ____.
41. The Department should decentralize ASFA to Regional Offices in the caregiver's immediate jurisdictions. They should also use relative caregivers in DCFS offices to help with new relative caregivers. "Keep everything in-house. Confidentiality is safe." Make regional offices accountable and use faith-based systems.
42. Why put another layer of frustration in this whole process." Regarding smoke detectors, DCFS should be able to do that. "If there is a problem, hire more people".

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43. An agency stated that something needs to be done to help relative caregivers. She stated that her agency can do Title 22's. She further stated that the bigger issue is supportive services to ensure the well being of a child in a home. Her suggestion was for an assessment tool to be done to assess services needed. She stated that this needs to be considered in writing of RFP. Later in meeting this lady clarified adding that it should be more than a home assessment, but more of a psycho-social study.
44. An agency stated that she wanted to agree with her colleague and that relatives placement needs must be addressed. There is the home inspection, but you need to first deal with the trauma of relatives. What about support groups, mentors etc., these are things we can do. We need more basics. There are many restrictions and should be contracted with a Kinship group.
45. An agency stated that as agencies, they have many services. They believed that the scope of RFP should be expanded for connections and links of services for caregivers.
46. An agency stated that the Department already has the frameworks to reduce trauma and continuum of care. "Things are complex when we have too many hands in the pot. This is a traumatizing experience already. It also lends itself to augment confusion."
47. An agency stated that not only are children in trauma, but caregivers are in trauma.

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PROGRAM

1. Is the Department looking for more of a “re-bound effect”? This is where they would just do the assessments then pool out or are they looking for more like to help out with other placements?
Response: The County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is seeking to contract with multiple providers for the inspection of Relative Caregiver homes to comply with California Code Regulation (CCR), Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5 Article 3 standards, and for caregiver orientation including, but not limited to: Relative Caregiver Rights, Child Rights, and available support services through DCFS and community agencies. Contracted providers may also acquire goods and services, with DCFS approval, to facilitate a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or Developed Alternative Plan (DAP) to bring the Relative Caregiver’s home into compliance with CCR Title 22 requirements.
2. Since relative caregivers make up the largest population of out of home placements, should there be a Kinship unit at each DCFS office?
Response: DCFS is currently evaluating how to best support relative caregivers. This topic is beyond the scope of this contract. Thank you for the recommendation.
3. The Department has Parents in Partnership; Why not have Kinship in Partnership representatives?
Response: Please see the Answer for Question 2.
4. Do courts and Judges know of the plan to issue an RFP for these services?
Response: Yes, The plan to issue an RFP has been shared with the Judges and the Board of Supervisors.
5. Why a chaplain was not involved in DCFS with placements just how the fire and police use them? When faith based is involved, “everyone is on their A-game”. To do that, the County needs to create an effective volunteer system. At the end of the day, the Department will always be the law enforcement for children. “Is that what you really need, a vendor or an ally?”
Response: Thank you. DCFS will consider the recommendation.
6. An agency asked if the ultimate approval is what the county would look at? As homes may not be approved.
Response: The ultimate approval will be completed by the DCFS social work staff, as the staff will need to review the criminal histories, prior DCFS involvement in

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referrals and cases, as well as other information that may not be available to the contractor/vendor.

7. Is the reason for this because of the upcoming RFA (Residential Family Assessments)?
Response: No, contracting out the assessments is not in relation to the upcoming Resource Family Assessments (RFA). The expected implementation date of RFA's is in 2017-2019.
8. Has the Department come up with reimbursement for services?
Response: DCFS has not finalized the contracted services reimbursement methodology. Both Cost Reimbursement and Fee-for-Service models are being considered.
9. Will contracted agency or DCFS be the ones for the relative appeal process if homes denied?
Response: DCFS and/or County Counsel will be the official County representative for the State Fair Hearing process. However, the contractor/vendor may be required to provide information for the pre-hearing and Statement of Position, or act as a witness in the actual hearing.
10. How does it affect goods and services requests?
Response: Contractors will have the responsibility to acquire goods and services, approved by DCFS, as part of a CAP for a Relative Caregiver's home to meet CCR Title 22 requirements. Costs for these goods and services will be reimbursed through DCFS.
11. Will this affect the community colleges and community agencies doing Kinship Orientations?
Response: No, this contract will not affect the Kinship orientations provided by the community colleges and community agencies.
12. How would agency's show that they qualify?
Response: The Request for Proposal (RFP) will describe the minimum requirements, qualifications, and required documentation needed for complete proposals.
13. Will relative home assessments also be for adoptive home study?
Response: No. Please see the Answer for question 1.
14. Home Study timeframe to be approved?
Response: The completion timeframe for an initial Relative Caregiver home assessment by a contracted provider agency will be no later than about 15 days

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from the time of referral; shorter if the contracted provider agency does not need to acquire goods and services to assist the caregiver to meet a CAP and/or DAP. Combined with the Relative Caregiver home assessment input from the contracted provider agency, the DCFS CSW, who has appropriate criminal background and/or child abuse records and other relevant family information, would ideally approve the child(ren) placement with the Relative Caregiver within 30 days of the referral.

15. Has DCFS checked with the Union about outsourcing?
Response: Yes, the Union has been consulted and was invited to the stakeholder meeting.
16. The new agency will have to train staff and will not be able to complete inspections in a timely manner – Where will the children go in the meantime?
Response: DCFS will work with the contracted agencies to train their staff prior to their staff providing services. Contracted agencies must complete inspections timely so that children may remain with the Relative Caregiver.
17. Social Worker will still have to approve the home – why outsource?
Response: Contracting these Relative Caregiver Home Assessment services will provide the opportunity for faster placement approval times, more efficient delivery of emergency goods and services for Relative Caregiver home compliance with CCR title 22 requirements, more flexibility in staff reassignment to other critical operations and overall cost reduction.
18. What does Union say about this process?
Response: Please see the Answer for Question 15.
19. Why not create an immediate contract for on-spot goods?
Response: See the Answer for Question 10.
20. Why not have emergency on-site funds for relatives to purchase things to get by until payment comes through?
Response: A readily accessible budget for Relative Caregiver basic emergency needs is currently under consideration.
21. Has the Department considered expanding RFP to include more than the assessment to long-term support?
Response: Yes, this is currently under consideration. However, at this time, the scope of this contract is described in the Answer for Question 1.
22. Will community based organizations receive a stipend for providing services to the families? Such as mental health services, anger management, parenting classes,

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domestic violence classes, sexual awareness classes along with substance abuse classes.

Response: These services will not be a part of this contract.

23. Has department considered a bridging of foster care and Kinship families being trained and supported together?

Response: DCFS recognizes the needs of Kinship families and understands the differences in how the child (ren) is placed. DCFS is not committed at this time to bridging the training for foster care and Kinship caregivers.

24. What and how will the selection process look like to choose an FFA agency to provide initial assessment of relative caregivers?

Response: The RFP is not limited to FFA agencies. See Answer for Question 12.

25. Pilot project SPA 1: Lancaster/Palmdale AV; Advocate: caregiver & ASFA Collaboration, meet immediate need like beds (1) How DCFS Service request (2) How will it work (3) Kinship care?

Response: Please see the Answer for Question 10.

26. Will the contractor be reimbursed for services provided if the home is not approved by the County?

Response: Yes. Please see the Answer for question 8.

27. Is there any plan for the agencies to assess the relative caregivers understanding of trauma, abuse, etc. and provide training, if needed?

Response: This training is not part of this contract.

28. Does process affect college and/or Community Kinship organizations?

Response: Please see the Answer for Question 11.

29. Kinship Orientation – Will agency refer Kin to Kin orientation at Community Colleges?

Response: Yes, the caregivers will continue to be referred to the orientation at the Community Colleges. A general overall orientation will be provided during the home assessment.

30. How does it affect DCFS Goods and Services requests?

Response: Please see the Answer for Question 10.

31. How does agency and DCFS work together for grievance/appeal process?

Response: Please see the Answer for Question 9.

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32. Will placement Kin lists still be provided to Community Colleges?
Response: This will not be a part of this contract.
33. Is the assessment done in the home (home inspection) or assess the family's needs (psychosocial)?
Response: The Relative Caregiver Home Assessment contracted provider services will be comprised of the home inspection, orientation, as needed CAP/DAP are conducted in the Caregiver's home. The family's psychosocial assessment is not part of the contracted provider services.
34. Is the department considering using some of the foster parent requirements (Safe) as a base to develop a comprehensive assessment for caregivers?
Response: The relative caregiver and non-related caregivers will be assessed based on Title 22 regulations.
35. Is the assessment only of home conditions and clearances or would it include financial, emotional, mental and other psychosocial needs?
Response: See Answer for Question 35. Criminal background and/or child abuse clearances are the responsibility of the DCFS CSW and not part of these contracted provider services.
36. Will contract include referrals outside of LA County or will referrals include surrounding counties?
Response: Yes. Contracted providers for Service Planning Areas (SPAs) that border adjacent Counties may be responsible for conducting Relative Home Assessment Services in those Counties. The RFP will delineate the provider coverage areas.
37. Who will be responsible for conducting agency Training?
Response: DCFS will conduct and/or facilitate agency Training.
38. Adoptive home study past services under RFP?
Response: Please see the Answer for Question 13.
39. Why not staff the ASFA Division with the appropriate number of staff to complete the home assessments – instead of outsourcing?
Response: This is a DCFS operational matter and beyond the scope of this Stakeholder Meeting. The Meeting is intended to provide information regarding the forthcoming release of an RFP. Also, see the Answer for Question 17.

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40. Why not decentralize ASFA back into the Regional offices and make them accountable for completing the Home Assessments in their immediate jurisdiction with Relative Caregivers in each Regional office?

Response: Please see the Answer for Question 39.

41. How would 501(c) 3 agency be accountable for the budget?

Response: DCFS contracted providers, including 501 (c) 3 agencies, must operate and maintain accounting standards in compliance with the Los Angeles Auditor-Controller Handbook.

42. Who will train the 501 (c) 3 to do this home visit?

Response: DCFS will conduct and/or facilitate the required training.

CONTRACTS

1. How does the agency contract or where do we go about to link with DCFS to provide these initial assessment services?

Response: DCFS posts its open bids and solicitations on the DCFS website at <http://lacdcfs.org/contracts/index.html>. Vendors are required to register with the County of Los Angeles prior to responding to and submitting a solicitation to any Los Angeles County Department or Agency. Vendors can register online on the Los Angeles County Vendor Registration website at <http://camisvr.co.la.ca.us/webven>

2. Will community based organizations be able to attend the Board of Supervisor meetings when or before the RFP is put out?

Response: The regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are open to the public and are held every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. in the Board's Hearing Room located at 500 West Temple Street, Room 381B, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in Los Angeles. On Tuesdays following a Monday holiday, the meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. For more information, please visit the Board of Supervisors website at <http://bos.co.la.ca.us>