

**State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

RETURN TO:  
DHHS - Procurement  
301 Centennial Mall South, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Phone: (402) 471-6082  
E-mail: [dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov)

SOLICITATION NUMBER	RELEASE DATE
<b>RFI Combined Services</b>	<b>May 9, 2018</b>
OPENING DATE AND TIME	PROCUREMENT CONTACT
<b>June 12, 2018 2:00 p.m. Central Time</b>	<b>Michelle Thompson</b>

This form is part of the specification package and must be signed in ink and returned, along with information documents, by the opening date and time specified.

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

**SCOPE OF SERVICE**

The State of Nebraska (State), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of gathering information for a service that includes Agency Supported Foster Care, Family Support, Supervised Visitation, and Parenting Time services.

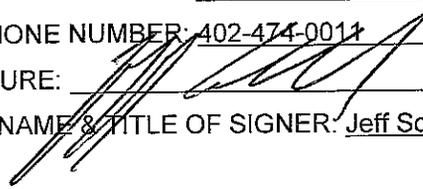
Written questions are due no later than May 17, 2018, and should be submitted via e-mail to [dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov).

Bidder should submit one (1) original of the entire RFI response. RFI responses should be submitted by the RFI due date and time to [dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov).

RFI responses should be received in Department of Health and Human Services by the date and time of RFI opening indicated above.

**BIDDER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING**

By signing this Request For Information form, the bidder guarantees compliance with the provisions stated in this Request for Information.

FIRM: Jenda Family Services, LLC  
COMPLETE ADDRESS: 815 K Street, Lincoln, Ne 68508  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: 402-474-0011 FAX NUMBER: 402-474-0012  
SIGNATURE:  DATE: June 12, 2018  
TYPED NAME & TITLE OF SIGNER: Jeff Schmidt, President

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**I. SCOPE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

The State of Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of gathering information for a service that includes Agency Supported Foster Care, Family Support, Supervised Visitation, and Parenting Time services.

**ALL INFORMATION PERTINENT TO THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET AT:** <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html>

**A. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

The State expects to adhere to the tentative procurement schedule shown below. It should be noted, however, that some dates are approximate and subject to change.

	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>
1	Release Request for Information	May 9, 2018
2	Last day to submit written questions	May 17, 2018
3	State responds to written questions through Request for Information "Addendum" and/or "Amendment" to be posted to the internet at: <a href="http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html">http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html</a>	May 29, 2018
4	RFI opening	June 12, 2018 2:00 PM Central Time
5	Conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations (if required)	To Be Determined

**II. RFI RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

**A. OFFICE AND CONTACT PERSON**

Responsibilities related to this Request for Information reside with the State Purchasing Bureau. The point of contact for the RFI is as follows:

Name: Michelle Thompson  
Agency: DHHS Procurement  
Address: 301 Centennial Mall South, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Telephone: 402-471-6082  
E-Mail: [dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov)

**B. GENERAL INFORMATION**

A subsequent Request for Proposal (RFP) may not be issued as a result of this RFI. There will not be a contract as a result of this RFI and the State is not liable for any cost incurred by vendors in replying to this RFI. If an RFP is issued, the information provided will assist the State of Nebraska in developing the Request for Proposal. This RFI does not obligate the State to reply to the RFI responses, to issue an RFP, or to include any RFI provisions or responses provided by vendors in any RFP.

**C. COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF**

From the date the Request for Information is issued and until RFI opening (as shown in the Schedule of Events), contact regarding this RFI between potential vendors and individuals employed by the State should be restricted to written communication with the staff designated above as the point of contact for this Request for Information.

The following exceptions to these restrictions are permitted:

1. Written communication with the person(s) designated as the point(s) of contact for this Request for Information;
2. contacts made pursuant to any pre-existing contracts or obligations; and
3. State-requested presentations, key personnel interviews, clarification sessions, or discussions.

Violations of these conditions may be considered sufficient cause to reject a vendor's response to the RFI. No individual member of the State, employee of the State, or member of the Interview Committee is empowered to make binding statements regarding this RFI. The State of Nebraska will issue any clarifications or opinions regarding this RFI in writing.

**D. WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Any explanation desired by a vendor regarding the meaning or interpretation of any Request for Information provision should be submitted in writing to the DHHS Procurement and clearly marked "RFI Number Combined Services; Combined Services Questions". It is preferred that questions be sent via e-mail to [dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.procurement@nebraska.gov).

It is recommended that Bidders submit questions sequentially numbered, include the RFI reference and page number using the following format.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>RFI Section Reference</u>	<u>RFI Page Number</u>	<u>Question</u>

Written answers will be provided through an addendum to be posted on the Internet at <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html> on or before the date shown in the Schedule of Events.

**E. ORAL INTERVIEWS/PRESENTATIONS AND/OR DEMONSTRATIONS**

The State reserves the right to conduct oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations if required at the sole invitation of the State.

Any cost incidental to the oral interviews/presentations and/or demonstrations shall be borne entirely by the vendor and will not be compensated by the State

**F. SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE**

The following describes the requirements related to the RFI submission, handling and review by the State.

To facilitate the response review process, one (1) original of the entire RFI response should be submitted. RFI responses should be submitted by the RFI due date and time.

**A separate sheet must be provided that clearly states which sections have been submitted as proprietary or have copyrighted materials.** RFI responses should reference the request for information number and be sent to the specified address. Please note that the address label should appear as specified on the face of each container. If a recipient phone number is required for delivery purposes, 402-471-6082 should be used. The Request for Information number must be included in all correspondence.

**G. PROPRIETARY INFORMATION**

Data contained in the response and all documentation provided therein, become the property of the State of Nebraska and the data become public information upon opening the response. If the vendor wishes to have any information withheld from the public, such information must fall within the definition of proprietary information contained within Nebraska's public record statutes. All proprietary information the vendor wishes the state to withhold must be submitted in a sealed package, which is separate from the remainder of the response. The separate package must be clearly marked PROPRIETARY on the outside of the package. Vendor may not mark their entire Request for Information as proprietary. Failure of the vendor to follow the instructions for submitting proprietary and copyrighted information may result in the information being viewed by other vendors and the public. Proprietary information is defined as trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in progress and unpublished, and other information which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve no public purpose (see Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-712.05(3)). In accordance with Attorney General Opinions 92068 and 97033, vendors submitting information as proprietary may be required to prove specific, named competitor(s) who would be advantaged by release of the information and the specific advantage the competitor(s) would receive. Although every effort will be made to withhold information that is properly submitted as proprietary and meets the State's definition of proprietary information, the State is under no obligation to maintain the confidentiality of proprietary information and accepts no liability for the release of such information.

### III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

The bidder should provide the following information in response to this Request for Information.

#### A. CURRENT AND FUTURE ENVIRONMENT

Currently, the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provides an array of services that includes Foster Care, Family Support, and Parenting Time/Supervised Visitation. These services are contracted with Providers throughout the State of Nebraska to provide placement and permanency for children, support and education for parents, as well as supervised visitation for families whose children have been removed from the parental home due to abuse and/or neglect.

DCFS is seeking to create a new single service for families that: provides safety for children in a home environment; supports biological families, and; when appropriate, offer a permanent family home to a child(ren) who need permanency.

This service should include capacity to provide stabilization to biological families and parent education curriculum to ensure child safety and prevent recurrence of maltreatment.

#### B. SCOPE OF WORK

Please provide comments or input on how DCFS can create a Foster Care service that provides both stabilization to biological families and education curriculum to ensure child safety and prevent recurrence of maltreatment.

#### Introduction

Jenda Family Services is responding to this RFI because of our strong interest in improved services to families and children. We fully expect the efforts of CFS to gather information from a variety of sources, including this RFI process, will result in a rich mix of ideas, approaches, and concepts. This proposal does not attempt to address all possible manners of response to the RFI, but is intended to present one possible approach, with suggestions and hopefully will be of assistance in this process.

The summary of Jenda's suggestions is to recognize the individual needs of biological parents and families and craft a plan, driven by the biological parent, that effectively addresses the needs of that family. Within that individualized approach, we do recognize broad categories of situational realities that must be addressed. Those include identification of possible treatment needs, the family dynamics of kinship placements, and the traumatic effect of removal to stranger care.

#### Outline of combined services

*Non-treatment reunification track.* Eligibility for this track will be determined by SDM assessment and any other evidence-based assessments identified by DHHS and/or the assigned provider. This track is intended for families whose children were removed as a result of safety concerns that can be effectively and timely addressed without treatment services (treatment services may still be referred but are not considered a primary barrier to effective parenting). Reasonable, specific, measurable goals directly related to the issues prompting removal are to be determined by the parent(s) with input and assistance from the foster parent, service provider, and case manager, within 72 hours of placement. Expectations of the parent(s) include daily, in-person parenting interaction with their child(ren), intensive education and training to address stated needs determined to be primary barrier(s) to effective safety and parenting, and development and implementation of a documented plan to achieve and/or maintain self-sufficiency and long-term, safe and effective parenting skills and practices.

Evidence-based, evidence-informed, or emerging programs/practices such as wrap-around services, Love and Logic, 1, 2, 3 Magic, or other, similar practices will be utilized as determined by the needs of the parent/family, along with direct, hands-on parent modeling, education, and support provided by foster parents, and non-treatment provider staff.

Services and supports to be provided include foster/kinship care, respite care, parent education, parent support, supervised, guided parenting time, monitored parenting time, parent modeling, assessment

and, when appropriate, referral for treatment services. Services and supports should be provided in the parents' home when possible and advisable, the foster home when possible and advisable, and in other locations when possible and advisable.

*Treatment reunification track.* Eligibility for this track will be determined by SDM assessment and any other evidence-based assessments identified by DHHS and/or the assigned provider. This track is intended for families faced with identifiable barriers to appropriate parenting that require treatment services, in addition to non-treatment services for effective and timely intervention.

In addition to the range of non-treatment interventions outlined in the non-treatment track, parents with a history or factual evidence indicating substance use and/or mental health issues as primary or secondary barriers to safe, effective parenting will be assessed by a dually-credentialed mental health professional who will provide, within 21 days of the onset of the assessment, recommended treatment options for the parent(s). Those treatment options will be made available to the parent(s) within 7 days of completion of the assessment.

Absent legitimate questions regarding the competency of a biological parent, development of reasonable, specific, measurable goals directly related to the issues prompting removal must be a priority. These goals will be determined by the parent(s) with input and assistance from the foster parent, service provider, and case manager, within 72 hours of placement. Expectations of the parent(s) include daily, in-person parenting interaction with their child(ren), intensive education and training to address stated needs determined to be primary barrier(s) to effective safety and parenting, and development and implementation of a documented plan to achieve and/or maintain self-sufficiency and long-term, safe and effective parenting skills and practices.

Evidence-based, evidence informed, or promising or emerging practices such as wrap-around services, Love and Logic, 1, 2, 3 Magic, or other, similar practices will be utilized as determined by the needs of the parent/family, along with direct, hands-on parent modeling, education, and support provided by foster parents, and non-treatment provider staff.

Services and supports to be provided include foster/kinship care, respite care, parent education, parent support, supervised, guided parenting time, monitored parenting time, parent modeling, assessment and, when appropriate, referral for treatment services. Services and supports should be provided in the parents' home when possible and advisable, the foster home when possible and advisable, and in other locations when possible and advisable.

*Stranger care compared with kinship placements.* Child removal from parents is a traumatic experience regardless of placement. Kinship placement can ameliorate part of that trauma, but carries its own set of realities that must be effectively addressed in a combined services model. The first question is whether the combined services model has a place in kinship placements. Jenda believes it does, but may require larger involvement by provider professionals due to the absence of specialized training and education provided to licensed foster placements.

The trauma of stranger care can also be ameliorated to an extent by the early, positive involvement of biological parents in the care of their children. Trained, experienced foster parents providing education, modeling and support to biological parents is the basis for this model, and, by definition, requires clear, positive, supportive messaging to biological parents to reinforce/enforce the biological parents' role as the primary parent of their child(ren). Maintenance of that parent/child relationship must be the primary goal, along with skill development and any required behavior change.

## **Challenges**

Challenges to this approach are primarily monetary and cultural. The monetary challenge is the cost to acquire, train, and implement many evidence-based, informed, or promising or emerging practices can be significant. Whether any Nebraska provider will have the financial ability to do so without assistance will likely depend on the requirements for those models from DHHS. This cost issue will need to be resolved through flexibility from DHHS in allowing providers to select cost-effective models, financial assistance from DHHS to allow providers to acquire and implement more robust models, and development of a rate structure that recognizes the additional cost to providers to acquire, implement, and maintain fidelity to established models.

The cultural challenge is the inevitable resistance to change, and acceptance of the process and time required to implement fundamental system change. In addition, the training and skill level of foster parents will require change. This combined services model will be focused first and primarily on reunification of families, requiring safety and support for children in addition to skill development and treatment progress for biological parents. When the permanency goal must, unfortunately, move to adoption or guardianship, the focus of the fostering family must change as well. This will require providers to transition children from fostering situations focused heavily on parental improvement, to fostering situations focused entirely on a life-long family commitment to the child(ren). The skill sets and focus of these different fostering situations are sufficiently different that providers will likely be required to maintain different fostering roles, with different support and training needs.

Nebraska's current foster care system has been in place for many years. Separation of foster care from biological families is the norm, resulting from rational and irrational fears from both foster and biological parents, misguided, unrealistic, and/or adequate expectations, competition for children, and lack of preparedness by both foster and biological parents. Children and families in care today present highly complex issues involving trauma, generational poverty, substance abuse, and mental health disorders in addition to any underlying parental education, training, and modeling needs. The current model of foster care training is insufficient to adequately prepare traditional foster homes for these complex issues without additional assistance or education. Developing an adequately trained foster care system will take time and require additional supports from trained professionals.

# Form A

## Vendor Contact Sheet

### Request for Information Number Combined Services

Form A should be completed and submitted with each response to this solicitation document. This is intended to provide the State with information on the vendor's name and address, and the specific persons who are responsible for preparation of the vendor's response.

Preparation of Response Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	Jenda Family Services, LLC
Vendor Address:	815 K Street, Lincoln, Ne 68508
Contact Person & Title:	Jeff Schmidt, President
E-mail Address:	jeffschmidt@jendafamilyservices.com
Telephone Number (Office):	402-474-0011
Telephone Number (Cellular):	402-416-3428
Fax Number:	402-474-0012

Each vendor shall also designate a specific contact person who will be responsible for responding to the State if any clarifications of the vendor's response should become necessary. This will also be the person who the State contacts to set up a presentation/demonstration, if required.

Communication with the State Contact Information	
Vendor Name:	Jenda Family Services, LLC
Vendor Address:	815 K Street, Lincoln, Ne 68508
Contact Person & Title:	Jeff Schmidt, President
E-mail Address:	jeffschmidt@jendafamilyservices.com
Telephone Number (Office):	402-474-0011
Telephone Number (Cellular):	402-416-3428
Fax Number:	402-474-0012