

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

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

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

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.

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.

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: Nebraska Alliance of Family & Child Service Providers
 COMPLETE ADDRESS: P.O. Box 22104 Lincoln, NE 68542
 TELEPHONE NUMBER: 402-215-7817 FAX NUMBER:
 SIGNATURE:  DATE: 6/12/18
 TYPED NAME & TITLE OF SIGNER: Mike Betzold - President

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:	Nebraska Alliance of Family & Child Service Providers
Vendor Address:	P.O. Box 22104 Lincoln, NE 68542
Contact Person & Title:	Mike Betzold - President
E-mail Address:	Mike.Betzold@KSLCSNE.com
Telephone Number (Office):	402-476-0104
Telephone Number (Cellular):	402-215-7817
Fax Number:	_____

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:	Same as above
Vendor Address:	
Contact Person & Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone Number (Office):	
Telephone Number (Cellular):	
Fax Number:	

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.

All families face challenges at one time or another. Life isn't always easy, and choices made can impact families and children in the short term or over a much longer period. That being the case, not every family is equipped to address life's challenges successfully on their own. Drug abuse. Domestic Violence. Extreme Poverty. Successful Employment. Lack of Education. These issues impact families differently.

Family service providers in partnership with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other entities serve some of Nebraska's most vulnerable children and families who struggle to maintain homes that are safe and stable. In those instances when it is no longer safe for a child to be in his/her home, it becomes necessary for the state to intervene with in-home services or to remove that child and place him/her in foster care.

Research shows that children succeed and thrive best when they grow up in homes with at least one biological parent. Therefore, it is the goal of the family service provider and the state to help the family make the necessary changes so the family can stay intact. In order for reunification to occur, when children have been placed in foster care, the family service provider and the state have an increased obligation to help the family succeed with minimal disruptions and services that are family centered and tailored to the individual needs of the family involved. When reunification is not possible, the family service provider and the state should collaborate on the placement of a child – one that is permanent with an environment that is loving, supportive and nurturing.

Below are characteristics and criteria of a foster care service that focuses on parents, children, and child safety.

- A child's needs – and wants – need to be listened to, valued, validated, respected and, when appropriate, acted on. Their safety and wellbeing is of most importance and should be taken into consideration with every decision that is made.
- Children in every corner of the state are valued equally in terms of the resources, financial and otherwise, to which they have access. There is a finite amount of child welfare dollars available every biennium. The state needs to recognize that if more of those dollars are allocated to a specific area of the state, there are automatically fewer dollars available for other areas.
- A child's safety trumps a parent's want/need to spend time with the child.
- Case Managers representing the state, and employees representing agency providers, need to have manageable case-loads to give children and families the

time and attention they deserve in order to hopefully reunify them and/or ensure the children are being cared for and provided opportunities to be successful adults. They also need access to outstanding and ongoing training to give them the tools needed to assist families in multiple challenging situations.

- A child in foster care often has multiple people involved in his/her life. Unlike children who aren't in foster care, a foster care child has case workers, social workers, family support workers, attorneys, GA's and others involved in their life daily. In order to ensure consistency in a child's life, these individuals need to be compensated fairly and competitively for the work they do in order to limit turnover and disruptions to the child.
- To ensure children are receiving high quality services, the state holds family service providers accountable to high standards that are measureable and rewards providers who are able to meet or exceed those standards with meaningful incentives.
- Children can benefit from best practices when the state embraces transparency and makes data, metrics and outcomes for every service region available to all providers, stakeholders and the public.
- Each person, in a position of leadership at DHHS in DCFS, spends a minimum of 24 hours a year 'in the field' shadowing a CFS worker or an employee of a service provider in order to have a first-hand account and understanding of the situations their clients (family service providers and children) find themselves navigating.
- Each stakeholder in the foster care system, including the state, family service providers, foster parents, biological parents, child(ren) etc. is valued by the other stakeholders and work in partnership together. Foster parents, whenever possible, should work with bio-parents as a support system during placement and after reunification.
- Family service providers recognize they are recipients of taxpayer funds and work hard every day to be good stewards of those dollars.
- Family service providers need to be compensated fairly, and an annual cost of living adjustment needs to be included in any rate structure. A small incremental annual adjustment enables contractors to continue to provide quality service. It also encourages providers to invest in programs, services, training and infrastructure for children and families resulting in greater service capacity. It becomes difficult for providers (and the families and children they serve) to go five years, ten years, or more with no rate increase. Since budgets are created in politically charged environments, it is difficult for the state to make significant adjustments after long periods of time with no rate adjustment.

- Acknowledgement by DHHS with a rate structure that fairly compensates for services in the rural areas, where services are limited to children and families, is required.
- The state does not provide services that compete with services provided by family service providers.
- Like other Nebraskans, family service providers want to prevent situations that necessitate foster care services being utilized. Family service providers take steps and have conversations with families and DHHS daily to try and limit the number of children who are in foster care. However, the state needs to realize that a child welfare system that focuses on prevention of adverse outcomes is very different than a system that focuses on addressing and fixing adverse outcomes.

It's possible to create a foster care system that is parent and child focused and we look forward to partnering with DHHS to make this a reality.

Nebraska Alliance of Family and Child Service Providers

Better Living Counseling Services
Counseling and Enrichment Center
Compass
Good Life Counseling and Support
Jenda Family Services
Pathfinder Support Services