

PROCUREMENT NOTICE

State of Connecticut

Department of Children and Families

LEGAL NOTICE

The State of Connecticut, Department of Children and Families is seeking proposals for **Quality Parenting Centers**.

Current research shows that consistent and frequent visitation between parents and their children in out-of-home care can reduce trauma for children and is crucial to strengthening and maintaining family relationships. It is also important for parent-child attachments and can decrease the sense of abandonment that children often experience when they are removed from their home and placed in out-of-home care. Family visitation is linked to positive outcomes, including improved child well-being, less time in out-of-home care, and faster reunification (when safety is established and in the best interest of the child). The primary purpose of visitation is to maintain the parent-child attachment, reduce a child's sense of abandonment, preserve their sense of belonging as part of a family and community, and maintain cultural connections. Visitation facilitates permanency planning, promotes more timely reunification, and helps in the decision making process to establish an alternative permanency plan for a child in out of home care.

Through this procurement, the Department is seeking to transition six (6) to nine (9) existing DCF-contracted congregate care facilities to Quality Parenting Centers to serve the DCF-designated regions.

The Request for Proposals is available in electronic format on the CT CT Source Contracting Portal at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/CTSource>

on the Department's website at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF>

or from the Department's Official Contact:

Name: Stacie Albert
Address: 505 Hudson Street / Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860 999-2076
E-Mail: Stacie.Albert@ct.gov

A printed copy of the RFP can be obtained from the Official Contact upon request.

Deadline for submission of proposals is **May 31, 2021 at 3:00 PM**.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

■ A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name or Number.** RFP #210405001 / Quality Parenting Centers
2. **Summary.** The purpose of this request is to procure 6-9 sites from the Department's existing contracted congregate service array to serve as Quality Parenting Centers.
3. **Synopsis.** The Department envisions converting 6-9 existing DCF-contracted congregate program sites into Quality Parenting Center programs. Selected providers will be expected to enter into a contractual arrangement with DCF to provide services in accordance with the needs of the Department.
4. **Commodity Codes.** The services that the Department wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:
 - 93140000: Community and Social Services

■ B. ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

BFO	Best and Final Offer
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CT)
CT	Connecticut
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
DCF	Department of Children and Families
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FY	State Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30)
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (US)
LOI	Letter of Intent
NIMH	National Institute of Mental Health
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
QPC	Quality Parenting Center
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
SFIT	Short-Term Family Integrated Treatment Program
TGH	Therapeutic Group Home
U.S.	United States

- *contractor:* a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the Department as a result of this RFP
- *proposer:* a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Department in response to this RFP
- *prospective proposer:* a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the Department in response to this RFP, but has not yet done so
- *subcontractor:* an individual (other than an employee of the contractor) or business entity hired by a contractor to provide a specific health or human service as part of a POS contract with the Department as a result of this RFP

■ C. INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contact.** The Department has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of the Department. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other Department employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the Department about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: Stacie Albert
Address: 505 Hudson Street / Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860 999-2076
E-Mail: Stacie.Albert@ct.gov

Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.

2. **RFP Information.** The RFP, amendments to the RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

- Department's RFP Web Page
<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF>
- State Contracting Portal
<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/CTSource>

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement subscribe to receive e-mail alerts from the State Contracting Portal. Subscribers will receive a daily e-mail announcing procurements and addendums that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

Printed copies of all documents are also available from the Official Contact upon request.

3. **Contract Awards.** The award of any contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to the Department. The Department anticipates the following:

- Total Funding Available: \$9,000,000
- Number of Awards: 6-9
- Per Contract Funding: TBD
- Contract Term: 1-3 Years, at the discretion of the Department

4. **Eligibility.** Applications will only be accepted from current DCF-contracted providers of Therapeutic Group Homes (TGH) or Short-Term Family Integrated Treatment (S-FIT) programs that are in good standing with the State of Connecticut. Applicants may propose a site different from the current contracted site of their TGH or S-FIT with the clear understanding that the current contracted program will be de-funded if a QPC is awarded as a result of this procurement.

5. **Minimum Qualifications of Proposers.** To qualify for a contract award, a proposer must have the following minimum qualifications:

- The agency must possess a current, valid Connecticut Business License, and must provide proof of such with submission of the proposal;

- The agency must not appear on the United States General Services Administration Excluded Parties List or the State Debarred Contractors List; and
- Staff assigned to the program must be able to successfully pass DCF and State child and criminal background checks.

6. Procurement Schedule. See below. Dates after the due date for proposals ("Proposals Due") are target dates only (*). The Department may amend the schedule, as needed. Any change will be made by means of an amendment to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, the Department's RFP Web Page.

- RFP Planning Start Date: **January 1, 2021**
- RFP Released: **April 5, 2021**
- RFP Conference: **9:00 AM / April 16, 2021**
- Deadline for Questions: **3:00 PM / April 27, 2021**
- Answers Released: **May 3, 2021**
- Letter of Intent Due: **3:00 PM / May 17, 2021**
- Proposals Due: **3:00 PM / May 31, 2021**
- (*) Proposer Selection: **May 31, 2021**
- (*) Start of Contract Negotiations: **June 5, 2021**
- (*) Start of Contract: **July 1, 2021**

7. Letter of Intent. A Letter of Intent (LOI) **is required** for this RFP. The LOI is non-binding and does not obligate the sender to submit a proposal. The LOI must be submitted to the Official Contact via e-mail by the deadline established in the Procurement Schedule. The subject line of the email must read, "**Quality Parenting Center**" RFP / Letter of Intent". The LOI must clearly identify the sender, including name, postal address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and DCF being applied for. It is the sender's responsibility to confirm the Department's receipt of the LOI. **If applying for multiple locations, 1 Letter of Intent may be submitted, but each specific location being applied for must be indicated.** The Department will not accept proposals from any applicant for Region for which a Letter of Intent was not submitted. Failure to submit the required LOI in accordance with the requirements set forth herein shall result in disqualification from further consideration.

8. Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or the Department's procurement process must be directed, in writing, to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally– neither in person nor over the telephone, except at the RFP Conference, during which questions will be accepted and answered verbally, recorded, and included with the final release of Questions and Answers. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the Department will not answer questions when the source is unknown (i.e., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFP or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the Department may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. The Department may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and duly noted as such. The agency will release the answers to questions on the date(s) established in the Procurement Schedule. The Department will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, on the Department's RFP Web Page.

9. RFP Conference. An RFP conference will be held to answer questions from prospective proposers. Attendance at the conference is **non-mandatory**, but highly recommended. Copies of the RFP will not be available at the RFP Conference. Prospective proposers are asked to bring a copy of the RFP to the conference. At the conference, attendees will be provided an opportunity to submit questions, which the Department's representatives may (or may not) answer at the conference. Any oral answers given at the conference by the Department's representatives are tentative and not binding on the Department. All

questions submitted will be answered in a written amendment to this RFP, which will serve as the Department's official response to questions asked at the conference. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and duly noted as such. The agency will release the amendment on the date established in the Procurement Schedule. The Department will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the Department's RFP Web Page.

- Date: **April 16, 2021**
- Time: **9:00 AM**
- Location: **Virtual: Prior to RFP Conference, a Microsoft Teams invite will be sent to each eligible provider.**

10. Proposal Due Date and Time. The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time:

- Due Date: **May 31, 2021**
- Time: **3:00 PM**

Faxed or e-mailed proposals, other than email submission of an electronic copy when submitted in conjunction with all other submission requirements, will not be evaluated. When hand-delivering proposals by courier or in person, allow extra time due to building security procedures. The Department will not accept a postmark date as the basis for meeting the submission due date and time. Proposals received after the due date and time may be accepted by the Department as a clerical function, but late proposals will not be evaluated. At the discretion of the Department, late proposals may be destroyed or retained for pick up by the submitters.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- one (1) signed electronic copy of the original proposal (unsigned proposals will not be evaluated)

The proposal must be emailed to the Official Agency Contact for this procurement. The subject line of the email must read: **Name of Provider / Quality Parenting Center RFP Electronic Proposal Submission / Region <<INSERT>>**. One attachment must be submitted inclusive of the entire proposal in Portable Document Format (PDF) or similar file format (Sections A-E and H of the Proposal Outline detailed in Section IV of this RFP) and one attachment inclusive of the Budget and Narrative in Excel or similar file format (Section G of the Proposal Outline detailed in Section IV of this RFP). The following naming convention shall be used:

- Proposal: **Name of Provider / QPC Proposal / Region <<INSERT>>**
- Budget: **Name of Provider / QPC Budget / Region <<INSERT>>**

11. Multiple Proposals. The submission of multiple proposals in response to this RFP is permitted. The Department is requiring the submission of one (1) proposal per site. If multiple proposals are submitted, a separate email submission of each is required.

12. Declaration of Confidential Information. Proposers are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting from them. If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL. In Section C of the proposal submission, the proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation and rationale sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation and rationale must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information

were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

13. Conflict of Interest-Disclosure Statement. Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. The Department will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

■ D. PROPOSAL FORMAT

- 1. Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV– Proposal Outline. Proposals that fail to follow the required outline will be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
- 2. Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. Proposers must complete and use the Cover Sheet form provided by the Department in Section IV.I – Forms.
- 3. Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline. (See Section IV.)
- 4. Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in Section IV are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification.
- 5. Style Requirements.** Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:
 - Print Style: 2-sided
 - Page Limit: 20 Single-Sided (10 sheets of Paper, printed Double-Side) for Section IV.F (Main Proposal)
 - Font Size: 12
 - Font Type: Times New Roman
 - Margins: Normal
 - Line Spacing: 1.5
- 6. Pagination.** The proposer’s name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, including the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.

■ E. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

- 1. Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of the Department to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts, the Department will conform with its written procedures for POS procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State’s Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85).

- 2. Screening Committee.** The Department will designate a Screening Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Screening Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Screening Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.
- 3. Minimum Submission Requirements.** All proposals must comply with the requirements specified in this RFP. To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (3) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (4) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Department will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.
- 4. Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Screening Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The criteria are weighted according to their relative importance. The weights are disclosed below.

 - Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care (15 points)
 - Service Requirements (31 points)
 - Staffing (6 points)
 - Work Plan (15 points)
 - Family & Community Partnerships (5 points)
 - Data and Technology (5 points)
 - Financial Profile (3 points)
 - Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points)
- 5. Proposer Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Screening Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the Department head. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the Department head. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Department. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Pursuant to Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Order No. 3, any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Department's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process.
- 6. Debriefing.** Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the Department, unsuccessful proposers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the ten (10) days. If unsuccessful proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with the Department to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. The Department will schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. The Department will not change, alter, or modify the outcome of the evaluation or selection process as a result of any debriefing meeting.
- 7. Appeal Process.** Proposers may appeal any aspect the Department's competitive procurement, including the evaluation and proposer selection process. Any such appeal must be submitted to the Department head. A proposer may file an appeal at any time after the proposal due date, but not later than thirty (30) days after an agency notifies unsuccessful proposers about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the thirty (30) days. The filing of an appeal shall not be deemed sufficient reason

for the Department to delay, suspend, cancel, or terminate the procurement process or execution of a contract. More detailed information about filing an appeal may be obtained from the Official Contact.

- 8. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to the Department's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General.

II. MANDATORY PROVISIONS

■ A. POS STANDARD CONTRACT, PARTS I AND II

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State's "standard contract" for POS:

Part I of the standard contract is maintained by the Department and will include the scope of services, contract performance, quality assurance, reports, terms of payment, budget, and other program-specific provisions of any resulting POS contract. A sample of Part I is available from the Department's Official Contact upon request.

Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the POS contract. Part II is available on OPM's website at: http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/standard_contract

Note:

Included in Part II of the standard contract is the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice (pursuant to C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2)) advising executive branch State contractors and prospective State contractors of the ban on campaign contributions and solicitations. If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Department and the resulting contract has an anticipated value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts has an anticipated value of \$100,000 or more, the proposer must inform the proposer's principals of the contents of the SEEC notice.

Part I of the standard contract may be amended by means of a written instrument signed by the Department, the selected proposer (contractor), and, if required, the Attorney General's Office. Part II of the standard contract may be amended only in consultation with, and with the approval of, the Office of Policy and Management and the Attorney General's Office.

■ B. ASSURANCES

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly gives the following assurances:

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. The Department may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.
- 4. Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments

or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the Department may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.

5. **Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the Department for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

■ **C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

1. **Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.
2. **Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor the Department shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
3. **Exclusion of Taxes.** The Department is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
4. **Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
5. **Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the Department may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the Department, and at the proposer's expense.
6. **Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by the Department. The Department may ask a proposer to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by the Department. At its sole discretion, the Department may limit the number of proposers invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per proposer.
7. **Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by the Department, a proposer must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. The Department may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a proposer to evaluate further the proposer's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, the Department may also check or contact any reference provided by the proposer.
8. **RFP Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or the Department or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and the Department and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Department and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

■ D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

- 1. Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by the Department.
- 2. Amending or Canceling RFP.** The Department reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if the Department deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.
- 3. No Acceptable Proposals.** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, the Department may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.
- 4. Award and Rejection of Proposals.** The Department reserves the right to award in part, to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the proposal limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFP. The Department may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The Department reserves the right to reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time.
- 5. Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.
- 6. Contract Negotiation.** The Department reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. The Department further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the Department may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. The Department may set parameters on any BFOs received.
- 7. Clerical Errors in Award.** The Department reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
- 8. Key Personnel.** When the Department is the sole funder of a purchased service, the Department reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The Department also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The Department further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the Department.

■ E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1. Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b).

Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.

2. **Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to insure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.
3. **Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Proposals for State contracts with a value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, excluding leases and licensing agreements of any value, shall include a consulting agreement affidavit attesting to whether any consulting agreement has been entered into in connection with the proposal. As used herein "consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information or (C) any other similar activity related to such contract. Consulting agreement does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of C.G.S. Chapter 10 as of the date such affidavit is submitted in accordance with the provisions of C.G.S. § 4a-81. The Consulting Agreement Affidavit (OPM Ethics Form 5) is available on OPM's website at http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/ethics_forms IMPORTANT NOTE: A proposer must complete and submit OPM Ethics Form 5 to the Department with the proposal.
4. **Gift and Campaign Contributions, C.G.S. §§ 4-250 and 4-252(c); Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Orders No. 1, Para. 8 and No. 7C, Para. 10; C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2).** If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with an anticipated value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, the proposer must fully disclose any gifts or lawful contributions made to campaigns of candidates for statewide public office or the General Assembly. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The gift and campaign contributions certification (OPM Ethics Form 1) is available on OPM's website at http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/ethics_forms IMPORTANT NOTE: The successful proposer must complete and submit OPM Ethics Form 1 to the Department prior to contract execution.
5. **Nondiscrimination Certification , C.G.S. §§ 4a-60(a)(1) and 4a-60a(a)(1).** If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide the Department with *written representation* or *documentation* that certifies the proposer complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. A nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The nondiscrimination certification forms are available on OPM's website at http://www.ct.gov/opm/fin/nondiscrim_forms IMPORTANT NOTE: The successful proposer must complete and submit the appropriate nondiscrimination certification form to the awarding Department prior to contract execution.

III. PROGRAM INFORMATION

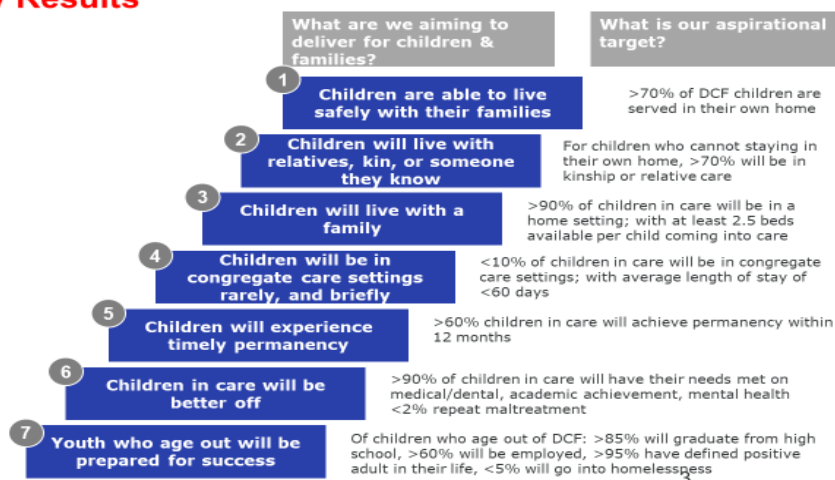
A. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department's mission is: *"Partnering with communities and empowering families to raise resilient children who thrive."* The Department seeks to sharpen the safety lens through primary prevention across the child welfare system through 5 strategic goals:

- Keep children and youth safe, with focus on the most vulnerable populations
- Engage the workforce through an organizational culture of mutual support
- Connect systems and processes to achieve timely permanency
- Contribute to child and family wellbeing by enhancing assessments and interventions
- Eliminate racial and ethnic disparate outcomes within the Department

The mission and vision are grounded in a core set of beliefs that encompass the Department's vision for how to provide services to Connecticut's children and families. This philosophy and approach is reflected in the following graphic, inclusive of the Department's aspirational goals:

7 Key Results



The Department is aligning all of its efforts to these core set of 7 Key Performance Indicators to ensure that the best outcomes are reached for all children. These key indicators drive the Department's strategic goals for how to best meet the needs and serve Connecticut's children and families. The Department believes that children do best when living safely at home with their family of origin. When living at home with a parent is not reasonably safe, the best alternative is to live with relatives, kin, or someone who they know who can provide a safe and nurturing home. If no family member can provide a suitably safe home that meets the child's needs, the child should receive care and services in an appropriate foster home or a setting that is able to meet their needs, while concurrently working towards a timely permanency outcome. Foster care should only be used as a short-term intervention. The Department believes that when foster care is necessary, while in foster care, regular and ongoing contact with parents and siblings should be maintained. Congregate care, such as group homes and residential treatment centers, should not be used for most children. If absolutely required, children who need to be in congregate care settings should be placed there for as brief a time as possible and these settings should be designed to address specific treatment needs rather than serve as long term placement options. For older youth, treatment in congregate care is expected to be used in a targeted manner with extensive family involvement built into the treatment process. All youth are to exit the Department's care with legal and/or relational permanency.

The Department of Children and Families was instituted by the Connecticut General Assembly as the Department of Children and Youth Services in May, 1969. In 1974, child welfare services were transferred to the Department, with children's mental health services and a unified school district for children in the Department's care and custody added one year later and substance abuse services for children and youth 13 years after that (in 1988). The Department's name (Children and Families) was officially changed through legislation in 1993, to reflect the

Department's still-evolving mission of providing child-centered, family focused, community-based programs and services throughout Connecticut.

In 1987, the Department instituted a regional management model, strengthening community-based services through grants and child-centered social work practice. Fourteen Area Offices, comprising six Regions began managing grants and contracted services within assigned geographical locations, thus cementing the Department's partnerships with local, area community service providers. Since that time, the Department's contracted service milieu has grown to encompass approximately 80 contracted service types overseen by 100 community service agencies providing 350 individual programs to Connecticut's children and their families.

■ B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Department's Philosophy

The following represents the Department's guiding principles and values relative to parent/child contact:

- Visitation is a right of children and parents. When placement is necessary to ensure child safety, it is essential to swiftly create ongoing opportunities for children to see their parent(s) and for parent's to have meaningful interactions and contact with their children;
- Parent/child contact needs to be as frequent as possible- the younger the child, the more frequent the contact must be in order to establish/maintain relationships;
- Ideally visitation should take place in the least-restrictive, most homelike settings appropriate to meet the child's needs for safety. In doing so, this helps mitigate the trauma of removal and sense of loss experienced by parents and children while separated;
- Visitation should never be used as a reward or punishment. Visitation should never be used as a threat or form of discipline for the child or to control or punish the parent(s) for their behavior/actions or lack of progress in their case plan;
- Family members and caregivers should be actively involved in developing visitation plans. This increases the probability that they will be successful and considers the unique needs of the family, resources and concerns; and
- Visitation plans must change over time and be dependent on safety/risk and support the child's permanency plan. Frequency and duration, level of supervision and monitoring, and location of visits should be modified as necessary based upon the assessment of safety, risk and progress with case plan objectives.

The Department's goals for this service are as follows:

- To strengthen and preserve relationships and critical connections between children placed in out-of-home care with their parents, siblings, parents and other family members;
- To provide trauma informed care and services to reduce child's sense of abandonment and loss as a result of their removal from home and continued separation;
- To enhance parenting capacity and improve child and family functioning; and
- To assist in achieving permanency for children through timely reunification and/or development of an alternative permanency plan.

Recognizing the critical role caregivers play in achieving permanency for children in care, the Department is implementing the Quality Parenting Initiative. The Youth Law Center (YLC) developed the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) in 2008 as a unique model for strengthening foster care and improving permanency and wellbeing for children placed in out-of-home care by refocusing policy and practice to focus on the quality of relationships. QPI's aim is to ensure that all children placed in out-of-home care, whether with a relative, fictive kin, or licensed family, receive high-quality parenting that meets their emotional, developmental, cognitive, and social needs. The goal is to create a community of parents and licensed caregivers who embrace the whole child, are a support to birth families and who work to transform the foster care system. They, along with community, foster effective birth parent and caregiver relationships. QPI improves the quality of care given to children in care by using child development research, branding and marketing principles, and adult learning strategies to recruit and retain caregivers. It operates on five core principles:

1. Excellent parenting is the most important service the department can provide to children in care and that children need families, not beds;
2. Child development and trauma research indicates that children need constant, consistent, effective parenting to grow and reach their full potential;

3. Each community must define excellent parenting for itself;
4. Policy and practice must be changed to align with that definition; and
5. Participants in the system are in the best position to recommend and implement that change.

Services offered through the Quality Parenting Centers will support and promote these critical relationships.

It is anticipated that the QPC's awarded as a result of this RFP will cumulatively perform 48,000 supervised visits annually.

■ C. MAIN PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

1. Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care (15 points)

The Department of Children & Families is committed to ensuring that its service providers deliver effective, equitable, understandable, trauma informed and respectful quality care. The services delivered must be responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, experiences of racism and/or other forms of oppression, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs. Applicants must demonstrate throughout all their responses, that the children and families receiving services in their program are approached, engaged and cared for in a culturally and linguistically competent manner, including but not limited to: Cultural identity, racial and/or ethnic, religious/spiritual ascription, gender, physical capability, cognitive level, sexual orientation, and linguistic needs. Within a broad construct of culture, service provision must also be tailored to age, diagnosis, developmental level, geographical, economical, and educational needs. Please ensure that proposals detail the following:

(a) Culturally Diverse Communities:

1. Provide any data your agency has that demonstrates your knowledge of the dynamics and diversity within the community you are proposing to serve. Include supporting data about the race, ethnicity, culture and languages of the communities you are seeking to serve as Appendix 4 to the proposal.
2. Demonstrate your organization's experiences in serving diverse communities.
3. Describe any anticipated challenges your organization may encounter in the community you are proposing to serve and your organization's experience in meeting and overcoming similar challenges in other service communities (please use specific examples).

(b) Culturally Diverse Families: Detail the strategies that your organization has utilized to successfully establish rapport and trust with families related to experiences of racism and other forms of oppression and how this influences and guides client engagement and treatment planning. Describe your agency's policies, practices, and data collection mechanisms. (Supporting data may be included as Appendix 5. For existing or previous Department-contracted providers, this would include PIE data, or similarly reported data that demonstrates the effectiveness of your organization's strategies.)

(c) Culturally Responsive and Diverse Organization:

1. Describe your agency's organizational structure and the level of diversity among the agency's managers, executives and Board of Directors. Please include a Workforce Analysis as Appendix 6.
2. Utilizing your Workforce Analysis, please provide a narrative assessment of how your agency's staffing composition is reflective of the population in the community(ies) you are proposing to serve.
3. If your agency has developed and implemented a CLAS Plan (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services), please describe what follow-up has occurred within your agency to further the Plan's implementation. Provide a copy of your agency's CLAS Plan as Appendix 6.

2. Service Requirements (31 points)

Proposals should address each of the following areas. The use of sub-contractors is not permitted for these services.

(a) Target Population: Proposals must address how the applicant will accommodate the volume and type of referrals received from the Department. QPCs should be designed for families with children, ages birth to 12, who were removed from home due to protective service concerns. Sibling groups in which one or more children are over the age of 12 may still be served through this program. These children may have been victims of abuse, neglect and/or sexual abuse and may have been exposed to substance use, intimate partner violence, mental health issues, or other disabling conditions of the

parent. Parents referred may have limited parenting skills, cognitive limitations, poor coping skills and/or limited life skills. The children referred to the program will primarily be placed with relatives/kin or core foster homes. Due to the abuse/neglect these children endured while living at home, these traumatic experiences are often exacerbated by the removal and separation from their family and/or community, particularly for younger children, age 0-5. As such, many of the children who will be referred to the QPC may exhibit behavioral health issues and experience difficulty attaching to their caregivers.

DCF will be the sole referral source for the program. Families can be referred at any point following the child's removal from home if close supervision, intervention, and monitoring is required to ensure child safety and well-being. All permanency goals will be accepted into the program, including Reunification, Transfer of Guardianship or Adoption. For permanency goals other than reunification, the emphasis of Family Time would be on the importance of the continuity of relationships for the child.

- (b) Capacity & Length of Service: Proposals must describe how many visits will be performed by the QPC being proposed, within the budget being proposed. It is anticipated that supervised visits will be conducted on average, twice per week for a period of six (6) months per family, dependent on the needs of the family and child, with the ability to extend, at the discretion of the Department, although the frequency of visitation will be dependent on the family's Visitation Plan.
- (c) Referral Process: Proposals must describe how the applicant will adhere to the following referral guidelines, including meeting the timelines for assignment and intake:
 - 1. Referrals will be received from the DCF Area Office Gatekeeper. A standardized Referral Form will be utilized, accompanied by a Release of Information. Within 2 calendar days of receipt of the referral, the provider will assign the case to a Family Time Specialist who will contact the referring Social Worker to gather additional information about the family and child.
 - 2. Within 3 calendar days of the referral, the Family Time Specialist will schedule and facilitate an initial meeting with the biological parents, child, caregiver(s) and DCF. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the program, share information, discuss the issues precipitating child removal, current family circumstances, the strengths and needs of the family, and develop or refine the DCF Visitation Plan.
 - 3. Within 5 calendar days of receipt of the referral, the provider will schedule the first visit between the biological parents and the child.
- (d) Site Requirements: Proposals must describe the following:
 - 1. The extent to which the site or applicant agency possesses national accreditation (COA, CARF, etc.).
 - 2. The location of the site, including its accessibility to public transportation.
 - 3. The the TGH or S-FIT program that will be de-funded if awarded this contract, if different than the proposed site of the QPC program.
 - 4. The extent to which the proposed site is or will be compliant with all zoning regulations for the operation of the QPC. Zoning compliance is not necessary at time of proposal submission, but proposals must describe the applicant's plan for ensuring such compliance by the projected start date for services. If zoning is already secured at time of proposal submission, proof of such must be included with the proposal as Appendix 7. Proposals indicating full siting or zoning compliance at time of proposal submission will be awarded additional points during the scoring process for this RFP.
 - 5. The extent to which the proposed site is ADA-compliant.
 - 6. The physical layout of the site to ensure the accommodation of at least 4-5 visitations occurring at any given time. Proposals should include pictures of the proposed location (interior and exterior) as Appendix 8.
 - The Department expects that each site will have at least 2 bathrooms accessible for children/families during family time.
 - The Department expects that families will have access to a kitchen, waiting area, space to allow for privacy, and play/recreational area. It is important the site provides a home-like setting and normal experiences for child/family.

- (e) **Hours of Operation:** The QPC will be expected to provide supervised family time 7 days per week. The hours must be flexible to accommodate schedules of the parent, child, and caregiver, but minimally, it is expected that the QPC be open and operational as follows:

Hours of Operation	
Monday-Friday	12:00PM-8:00PM
Saturday-Sunday	9:00AM-5:00PM

Proposals must describe how the hours of operation will be structured to allow for this flexibility, as well as how the provider will accomplish the number of visits required for each site.

- (f) **Transportation:** Proposals must describe how transportation will be provided for all families in need of such directly by the Contractor. The Department will not arrange for or pay outside of this contract for transportation of children or biological parents to/from the QPC. Biological parents may access public transportation when available.
- (g) **Service Delivery Components:** Quality Parenting Centers will be utilized to ensure the child's physical and emotional safety during contact with his/her family while attempting to strengthen the parent/child relationship, reduce trauma, promote attachment and enhance parental protective actions and capacities.

The intensity or level of supervision is based on individual case circumstances. The table below provides a description of the intensity or level of supervision needed to ensure child safety and minimize risk from least (unsupervised) to most intensive (high intensity) level. The Quality Parenting Centers would focus on serving those families who fall under the **moderate or high intensity level** of supervision.

	Unsupervised	Low intensity	Moderate Intensity	High Intensity
Level of Supervision	Parent(s) can be alone with child. Day/overnight contact leading up to reunification.	Monitor can be present for portion of visit. Parent(s) can have some alone time with child. Monitor could observe at the beginning and end of visit.	Monitor is close enough to observe, but not required to hear everything being said. Parent(s) can take child to bathroom or play on the playground with monitor being some distance away, but close enough to be able to intervene if necessary.	Child may not be alone with parent(s). Close presence at all times. Monitor will intervene if necessary to ensure child safety. No personal phone use for staff.
Safety	No safety factor.	Low level of concern for safety. Need for parent education, coaching and skill building.	Moderate level of concern for safety. Need for parenting education, coaching and skill building. Safety factor has not been successfully mitigated, but there is no immediate threat of harm.	Highly structured visit needed. High level of concern for child's safety – emotionally & physically.
Location	Team determines location.	Community-based or home-like setting. Offers normative experience and opportunity to develop/practice skills & improve parent/child interactions.	Community or home-like setting that offers opportunities for skill development, enhance relationships, as well as manage safety concerns.	Promotes a highly structured visit.
Monitor's Role* *The number of monitors needed for each visit is dependent on the number of children involved, age of child and special needs, including medical, developmental, and behavioral concerns. Transportation needs and the number of participants	No monitor involved.	Primarily to aid the parent(s) in problem-solving if issues arise. May offer education, coaching, skill-building and support to achieve goals. Monitor may drop in during the visit to ensure the visit is going well and that neither parent(s)/child have concerns.	Observe interactions; ensure child safety; and offer parent education, coaching and skill building. Parent(s) and monitor understand conditions required to maintain safety, minimize risk and conditions requiring intervention.	Listen and closely observe all interactions between parent/child and intervene, if needed. Parental coaching is offered. Primary concern is child safety.

and their presenting behaviors should also be considered. Consider need for coverage during breaks.				
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Services must be offered through a continuum based on safety concerns, presenting risk, progress with case plan objectives/goals, parental protective factors and capacities, child vulnerability, and the individualized needs of the family. This continuum is designed to preserve and enhance family connections, ultimately providing for the safety and well-being of children. As parents are learning and demonstrating new skills, parents are engaged in services and benefiting from service interventions, parent/child contact may be increased both in frequency and duration pending approval by DCF and updating the family's Visitation Plan.

QPC Staff who are monitoring the visits should be aware of the circumstances that led to the child's removal, as well as other useful information about the child and family that may impact child safety or present risk. QPC staff may need to intervene to redirect, establish safety, coach/model and/or establish boundaries during family time.

There are times when it may be necessary to end a visit abruptly or cancel a visit based on the parental behavior or if the child is exhibiting significant behavioral issues and is unable to regulate following intervention by QPC staff. If a parent presents at the QPC under the influence of alcohol and/or substances, the visit will be terminated. The Contractor will notify the DCF Social Worker and child's caregiver immediately should this action be necessary.

It is common for children to have an adverse reaction prior to and following visits with their parents. This reaction is often demonstrated by exhibiting problematic or challenging behaviors such as: regression (being babyish, whining, demanding, or scared), numbing or denying of feelings, depression, nightmares, irritability, aggression, overactivity, and physical pains. It is incumbent upon the Contractor to educate both parents and caregivers around these issues and support the child.

The Contractor will provide developmentally age appropriate visitation activities that supports the basic need for a positive and mutually enjoyable relationship. Program activities should focus on activities that support the parent-child relationship and providing both parents with opportunities to learn and practice new skills. Proposal must describe the activities to be performed and should be designed to demonstrate parent's ability to respond to the physical and emotional needs of their children. These activities should incorporate routine tasks (and challenging ones) related to childcare, i.e. feeding and diapering babies, food preparation, play and supervision of meals/snacks for older children, and help with homework when appropriate etc.

Proposals must describe how each visit will be conducted incorporating the following service delivery components:

1. Engagement: The Contractor, in consultation with DCF, will engage and involve mother, father and non-custodial parent in scheduling family time with their children in accordance with the conditions established in the family's Visitation Plan.

The Contractor will prepare the family (children and parents) for successful Family Time and will help manage reactions to visits for all parties. The Contractor will provide feedback to parents around their interactions with their children.

The Contractor will promote ongoing communication with the child's caregiver that involves them in planning, visitation, and support to birth parents.

The Contractor will assure that visitation activities reflect an understanding of and ability to meet the developmental needs of children from birth up to age 12.

2. Visit Coaching Model: All Contracted Providers will be required to implement the Visit Coaching Model in their Family Time work. Visit Coaching, developed by Dr. Marty Beyer, is a promising practice for parent/child visitation. Visit Coaching is a relationship based, trauma-informed and empowering practice and is fundamentally different from traditional supervised visits. Instead of observing the family, the coach is actively involved in supporting them to demonstrate their best parenting skills, utilizing a strength-based approach.

The four principles of Visit Coaching are empowerment, empathy, responsiveness and active parenting. These principles are applied in such a way that family time coaches adjust their interventions to allow the parent to *take charge* of their family time.

- Empowerment: Family time coaching builds on the parent's strengths as well as the family's unique ways of showing love to their child. The parent is encouraged to celebrate their time together. The parent is supported to take charge of the family time and make it as "homelike" as possible.
- Empathy: Family time coaching supports the parent to see their child for all his or her uniqueness. The parent is asked to put themselves in their child's shoes. The parent's choice of lifestyle and its impact on the parent's ability to meet the child's needs are an ongoing topic of discussion during planning time between the coach and the parent.
- Responsiveness: Family time coaching assists parents in managing the conflict that may exist between meeting their own needs and the needs of their child. Separate time is given to the parent to discuss their needs with the coach so that the parent can concentrate on their child. Additionally, the parent is coached to understand their child's need for stimulation and expectations that correspond to their child's age.
- Active Parenting: Family time coaching assists the parent to learn how their child's behavior is influenced by the parent's words, actions, and behavior. Parents are coached to improve the fit between the child's temperament and behavior and the parents' style of discipline and limit setting. Parents are coached to not see their child's behavior as "bad". Parents are involved in the child's school activities and medical/dental appointments.

Visit Coaching includes the following:

- Reaching agreement with the parents about the child's needs to be met during visits, connected to the safety concerns and presenting risks that brought them into care;
- Preparing parents for their children's reactions and how to plan to give their child their full attention at each visit;
- Appreciating the parent's strengths in responding to their child and coaching them to improve their skills;
- Helping parents cope with their feelings in order to visit consistently; and
- Development of a Visitation Plan that is inclusive of the family and DCF. Key components of the visitation plan are the focus on meeting the child's needs, assisting parent(s) with their parental self-assessment, and immediate feedback from the Visitation Coach.

A range of coaching approaches/interventions is used based on the individual strengths and needs of the parents as follows:

- Use of Play
- Modeling
- Instruction
- Rehearsal

As part of the Visit Coaching, special considerations are given to visitation with young children, teenagers, teenagers with children, incarcerated parents, and children placed in Kinship care.

The following represents a brief summary of the primary components of Visit Coaching:

1. Pre-Meeting/During and Post Meeting

Pre-Meeting - Key Activities

- a) Engagement
- b) Relationship Building
- c) Identification of needs and strengths;
- d) Opportunities for self-evaluation;
- e) Formulation of Visitation Plan (plan for the upcoming visit)

During Family Time - Key Activities

- a) Develop capacity for play at all developmental levels
- b) Normalized parent/child interactions (includes mealtime, community activities, etc.)
- c) Skill Development and practice

Post Family Time - Key Activities

- a) Provide feedback about progress and parent's self-assessment
- b) Time for parents self-reflection
- c) Support and Encouragement

2. **Conducive Environment:** Homelike setting, private with appropriate toys and play materials. An environment that is comfortable and allows the parent to provide direct care to their child (bathing snack/mealtime, homework etc.) and an environment that promotes attachment/bonding.
3. **Flexibility in frequency and duration of visits:** Dependent on an assessment and developmental needs of child. Decisions are based on progress (needs of child, case and visitation plans). Visits are extended as parent moves closer to reunification.
4. **Coaching During Group Visits:** A play group for parents and their infants and toddlers in foster care. The first part is a structured playschool format, where the coaches help the parents use music, play, reading, and snack time to appreciate and build their children's skills. The second part is a parent support group where parents and the coaches discuss the children's safety, developmental and permanency needs. This component will not be implemented at this time.
5. **Communication:** Collaboration with the biological parents, caregiver and DCF is required.

The model focuses on the premise that the visit coach must be knowledgeable about children, family dynamics, parenting skills, a variety of cognitive styles shown by parents and cultural differences. The visit coach must be flexible and must be able to draw on a variety of intervention approaches to fit a particular visit.

For more information regarding the model, please access the links below.

https://www.martybeyer.com/sites/default/files/visit_coaching_manual.pdf
<https://martybeyer.com/content/visit-coaching>

3. **Assessment:** Consistent with the Visit Coaching model, the Family Time Specialist will work closely with the birth parents to develop goals for each visit consistent with the terms of the family's Visitation Plan set forth by DCF, including but not limited to: duration, frequency, individuals participating in the visits, and expectations surrounding parental behavior during parent/child interactions.

Every 90 days, the Contractor will provide a written summary to DCF, inclusive of an assessment of the quality of parent/child interactions, noting frequency/consistency of contact (documenting missed visits, visits that needed to end early or visits that were terminated). Other areas to include are as follows:

- Has/Have the parent(s) been successful in managing child's behaviors during visits?
 - Has/Have the parent(s) been responsive to the child's needs during visits?
 - How has the child responded/reacted to visits (with each parent)?
 - What is the feedback from the caregiver or child (if developmentally appropriate) regarding visits?
 - How has the parent(s) equally managed all the children during parent/child contact?
4. **Collaboration:** It is critical that ongoing communication with the assigned SW and QPC staff occur to ensure all pertinent case information is shared; feedback is provided around consistency and quality of parent/child contact; and safety issues impacting the visitation plan are discussed. This information helps to inform changes in visitation plans and expedites permanency for the child.

The Contractor will review the family's Visitation Plan with the biological parents, caregivers and DCF every 30 days to determine if modifications to the Visitation Plan are needed.

The Contractor will advise DCF of changes, progress, or concerns with visitation and will collaborate to develop a plan to address these issues. Any safety concerns that arise during the visit will be immediately communicated with the assigned DCF Social Worker.

The Contractor may be required to provide testimony in Superior Court for Juvenile Matters.

5. Documentation: The Contractor will follow the terms of the family's Visitation Plan and will document all visit-related activities. The Contractor will complete weekly progress notes within 5 business days of the activity and provide copies of notes to parent(s) and DCF.

The narrative shall include the following information:

- Date of Occurrence;
- Location and duration of visit;
- Individuals present (include any late arrivals or those who left early);
- Activities that occurred during the visit;
- Observations as to whether parents met expectations/behaviors and goals for the visit, to include: engagement of child by parent(s); ability respond to the physical, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of child; ability to set limits; parent's understanding of safety/risk concerns during visit; child's response/reactions before, during and following visit; etc.; and
- Information the child/parent(s) shared during the visit

Following the start of services (initial joint meeting), the Contractor will complete the 90 day summary assessment. This assessment documents parent/child interactions, consistency/frequency of contact, activities, parental behaviors, demonstration of parenting skills, continued safety concerns, child reactions, and other relevant information. This assessment will demonstrate parental engagement and progress, as well as highlight the need to adjust the family's Visitation Plan. The summary will also include targeted areas of intervention for the upcoming quarter.

6. Discharge: Following completion of service, the contractor will facilitate a final meeting with the family and DCF that culminates in a Discharge Summary.

Families will be discharged from the program when they successfully transition to the low intensity level described above or at the request of DCF. Once the family transitions to the low intensity level and continues to experience positive interactions, the family will be discharged within 3 weeks. This allows sufficient time for the family to transition to a less restrictive visitation service if necessary and appropriate. If at the request of DCF, discharge will be coordinated with the assigned worker and family.

3. Staffing (6 points)

Proposals must describe the following:

- (a) Staffing Model: Proposals must describe the proposed staffing model necessary to perform the number of supervised visits proposed by the applicant. The staffing model should, at a minimum, include a supervisor, scheduler, drivers, and have sufficient staff available to ensure safety of children and support parent/child interactions involving multiple children, and in consideration of children's specialized needs. The Supervisor should have a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in the Human Services field. The staffing model proposed will be an area of consideration when reviewing applications.
- (b) Staff Qualifications: The staff categories to be assigned to the proposed program, including the extent to which they have or will have the appropriate training and experience to perform assigned duties. The proposal must describe the extent to which staff is or will be multi-lingual and multi-cultural.
- (c) Staff Recruitment and Retention: Proposals must include the following:
- How Providers will ensure that all employment candidates receive a criminal record and DCF abuse/neglect background check;
 - A staff retention plan detailing measures taken to reduce staff turnover;
 - A description of how staff will be recruited and selected;
 - A description of how the staffing plan will be appropriate to the language, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnic/racial/cultural factors of the target population; and

- A description of how the program will continue to provide services that are timely, effective, and true to the model if sickness, training, vacancies, leaves of absence, etc. make regularly scheduled staff unavailable.

Note: Preference will be given, through the scoring tool utilized by the Review and Evaluation Committee for this RFP, to current applicants with a demonstrated ability to adhere to their current staffing plan and those who have a demonstrated history of maintaining low vacancy rates.

- (d) Staff Training: All staff within the QPC will be required to participate in training on the Visit Coaching Model by the model developer. In addition, DCF trainings will be made available, including but not limited to: DCF 101, Trauma Informed Care, Structured Decision Making, the Early Childhood Learning series, documentation, and permanency/legal trainings offered by the Department. Additional training sessions may be identified.

4. Work-Plan & Implementation Timeline (15 Points)

Programs should be available by October 1, 2021. Proposals should clearly define the timelines and work processes leading up to availability of services.

Proposals must include a detailed start-up process and timeline, including a description of the following:

- The process for hiring, orienting and training staff;
- The process for transitioning existing clients out of the current program;
- All zoning and/or licensure activities; and
- The date when applicants will begin to accept referrals.

5. DCF & Family Partnerships and Community Linkages (5 points)

Proposals must describe a detailed plan for engaging, collaborating and communicating with DCF, birth family, caregivers, and children throughout the duration of the service. Proposals must also describe the applicant agency's willingness to partner with philanthropic organizations and its efforts towards developing such partnerships.

6. Data and Technology Requirements (5 Points)

The Department will require awarded contractor(s) to submit child and family specific data, and administrative service and training data. Under the Results-based Accountability framework in place for service evaluation throughout the state, the Department will assist contractors to provide information about the modality provided, quantity of service delivered, its consistency with Strengthening Families principles and the effect of the services. The Department requires contractor(s) to use data to ensure the quality of their services, including identifying program challenges or barriers, identify potential best practices, and achievement of the program's goals, objectives and outcomes.

The child and family specific data for this service will be collected using electronic, web-based applications designed for the EBPs implemented. Monitoring program outcomes and model fidelity is an important part of implementing an evidence-based service.

The Contractor will submit individual, client level data to the department's Program Information Exchange (PIE) and/or other system as directed by the department. Complete, timely and accurate data is essential for both the Provider and the Department to help support service provision, identify trends and measure important outcomes. As such, while it is ideal to enter data ongoing and as soon after the event as possible, it is expected that data be entered within 20 days following the end of each month. Such a timeframe is consistent whether as a Contractor the data is batched or directly entered. The Contractor will ensure that the data submitted under PIE and/or other systems are in conformance with the applicable data specifications and picklists. Furthermore, the data must use the conventions and logic as determined by the department to ensure accurate, unduplicated client counts. These data, as set forth by DCF, will be sent to the department. For more information regarding PIE, go to the DCF website as follows: <https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/ORE/PIE>.

- (a) Outcome Achievements: Proposals must describe the agency's success in achieving positive outcomes related to the outcomes listed in the attached Scope of Service. Specific examples must be provided to support all claims.

- (b) Quality Improvement Experience: Describe your agency's prior experience collecting and reporting data for program administration, continuous quality improvement (CQI), and for reporting on program progress. Describe how this experience positions your organization to meet the data and reporting requirements of this RFP. Each Provider is required to develop a quality assurance plan to ensure model fidelity.
- (c) Quality Assurance Resources: Describe the resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical plant, technology) your agency dedicates to information management, continuous quality improvement, and data analytics.

D. COST PROPOSAL COMPONENT

1. Financial Requirements (3 points)

Proposers must submit cover letters from their auditor for the last 3 annual audits of their agency and a copy of their most recent financial audit, included in Section H of the proposal. If the 3 most recent audits are available via the Office of Policy and Management's EARS system, such must be noted in the proposal, and cover letters and the last audit should **not** be included in the proposal.

If less than 3 audits were conducted, detail must be provided as to why, and any supporting documentation assuring the financial efficacy of the applicant agency should be included (i.e. an accountant prepared financial statement, a tax return, a profit and loss statement, etc.).

2. Budget Requirements (20 points)

Proposals must contain an itemized budget on the budget form included as Form #8 in Section IV (I.h), of this RFP. All startup costs must be clearly identified as 1 line item in the budget. Applicants must submit their budgets to include the full proposed cost of operating the program, including service to the full capacities delineated herein. Applicants are free to propose a budget total at their discretion, although the total requested DCF funding must not exceed the current DCF funding for the congregate program the applicant is proposing to close.

A budget narrative must be provided, explaining all costs contained in the budget. All start-up costs must be listed separately and clearly detailed in the budget narrative.

All other funding, including agency financial support must be identified.

IV. PROPOSAL OUTLINE

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B. Table of Contents	2
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D. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement	
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1. Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care	
a. Culturally Diverse Communities	
b. Culturally Diverse Families	
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a. Target Population	
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7. DCF & Family Partnerships & Community Linkages	
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1. Financial Profile	
2. Budget and Budget Narrative	
<p>To access the Consolidated Budget Form, please go to: http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/contract_management/xls/dcf_rfp_budget.xls.</p>	
H. Appendices	
1. Appendix #1 Gift & Campaign Contribution Certification	
2. Appendix #2 Consulting Affidavit	
3. Appendix #3 CHRO Contract Compliance Package, Parts I-III	
<p>The CHRO Package should be accessed from the DCF Internet site http://www.ct.gov/dcf/LIB/dcf/contract_management/pdf/Bidders_CHRO_Compliance_Package.pdf</p>	
4. Appendix #4 Culturally Diverse Communities	

5. **Appendix #5 Culturally Diverse Families**
6. **Appendix #6 Culturally Diverse Organizations**
7. **Appendix #7 Proof of Zoning Compliance**
8. **Appendix #8 Program Pictures**
9. **Appendix #9 Financial Profile** *(if req.)*

V. RFP ATTACHMENTS**I. Attachment #1: Letter of Intent**

To be completed and submitted to the Official Agency Contact for this procurement by the due date delineated in this RFP.

II. Attachment #2: Proposal Cover Sheet

To be utilized as Page 1 of all proposals (as indicated in Section IV.A of this RFP).

III. Attachment #3: Gift & Campaign Contribution Certification

To be completed and submitted with all proposals (as indicated in Section IV.H (1) of this RFP).

NOTE: Per Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7gg, notarization of this form is suspended for this procurement.

IV. Attachment #4: Consulting Affidavit

To be completed and submitted with all proposals (as indicated in Section IV.H (2) of this RFP).

NOTE: Per Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7gg, notarization of this form is suspended for this procurement.

Attachment #1

LETTER OF INTENT
(MANDATORY NON-BINDING)

Date: _____

Our agency is planning to apply for funding in response to the RFP entitled **Quality Parenting Center** at the following location(s):

Location 1	
Location 2	
Location 3	
Location 4	

AGENCY NAME:
FEIN:
AGENCY ADDRESS: (street, city ,state, zip)
AGENCY CONTACT:
POSITION/TITLE:
TELEPHONE NUMBER:
FAX NUMBER:
EMAIL ADDRESS:

Mandatory Letter of Intent must be received by **3:00 p.m.** on **May 17, 2021** to **Stacie Albert (Stacie.Albert@ct.gov)**.

Attachment #2**PROPOSAL COVER SHEET****Quality Parenting Center
Request for Proposals**

Proposed Site:	
Program Proposed for Closure:	

Name of Agency: _____**Agency Address** _____**Application
Contact Person:** _____**Contact Person
Phone & Fax:** _____**Contact Person
Email Address:** _____

This application must be signed by the applicant's executive director or other individual with executive oversight for agency services delivered in Connecticut

By submitting this application, I attest that all the information included within the application is true.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (Printed): _____ Title: _____

Attachment #3

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GIFT AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION CERTIFICATION**

Written or electronic certification to accompany a State contract with a value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4-250 and 4-252(c); Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Orders No. 1, Para. 8, and No. 7C, Para. 10; and C.G.S. §9-612(g)(2)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Complete all sections of the form. Attach additional pages, if necessary, to provide full disclosure about any lawful campaign contributions made to campaigns of candidates for statewide public office or the General Assembly, as described herein. Sign and date the form, under oath, in the presence of a Commissioner of the Superior Court or Notary Public. Submit the completed form to the awarding State agency at the time of initial contract execution and if there is a change in the information contained in the most recently filed certification, such person shall submit an updated certification either (i) not later than thirty (30) days after the effective date of such change or (ii) upon the submittal of any new bid or proposal for a contract, whichever is earlier. Such person shall also submit an accurate, updated certification not later than fourteen days after the twelve-month anniversary of the most recently filed certification or updated certification.

CHECK ONE: ☐ Initial Certification ☐ 12 Month Anniversary Update (Multi-year contracts only.)
☐ Updated Certification because of change of information contained in the most recently filed certification or twelve-month anniversary update.

GIFT CERTIFICATION:

As used in this certification, the following terms have the meaning set forth below:

- 1) "Contract" means that contract between the State of Connecticut (and/or one or more of its agencies or instrumentalities) and the Contractor, attached hereto, or as otherwise described by the awarding State agency below;
- 2) If this is an Initial Certification, "Execution Date" means the date the Contract is fully executed by, and becomes effective between, the parties; if this is a twelve-month anniversary update, "Execution Date" means the date this certification is signed by the Contractor;
- 3) "Contractor" means the person, firm or corporation named as the contractor below;
- 4) "Applicable Public Official or State Employee" means any public official or state employee described in C.G.S. §4-252(c)(1)(i) or (ii);
- 5) "Gift" has the same meaning given that term in C.G.S. § 4-250(1);
- 6) "Principals or Key Personnel" means and refers to those principals and key personnel of the Contractor, and its or their agents, as described in C.G.S. §§ 4-250(5) and 4-252(c)(1)(B) and (C).

I, the undersigned, am a Principal or Key Personnel of the person, firm or corporation authorized to execute this certification on behalf of the Contractor. I hereby certify that, no gifts were made by (A) such person, firm, corporation, (B) any principals and key personnel of the person firm or corporation who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating state contracts or (C) any agent of such, firm, corporation, or principals or key personnel who participates substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating state contracts, to (i) any public official or state employee of the state agency or quasi-public agency soliciting bids or proposals for state contracts who participates substantially in the preparation of bid solicitations or request for proposals for state contracts or the negotiation or award of state contracts or (ii) any public official or state employee of any other state agency, who has supervisory or appointing authority over such state agency or quasi-public agency.

I further certify that no Principals or Key Personnel know of any action by the Contractor to circumvent (or which would result in the circumvention of) the above certification regarding **Gifts** by providing for any other Principals, Key Personnel, officials, or employees of the Contractor, or its or their agents, to make a **Gift** to any Applicable Public Official or State Employee. I further certify that the Contractor made the bid or proposal for the Contract without fraud or collusion with any person.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION CERTIFICATION:

I further certify that, on or after December 31, 2006, neither the Contractor nor any of its principals, as defined in C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(1), has made any **campaign contributions** to, or solicited any contributions on behalf of, any exploratory committee, candidate committee, political committee, or party committee established by, or supporting or authorized to support, any candidate for statewide public office, in violation of C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2)(A). I further certify that **all lawful campaign contributions** that have been made on or after December 31, 2006 by

the Contractor or any of its principals, as defined in C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(1), to, or solicited on behalf of, any exploratory committee, candidate committee, political committee, or party committee established by, or supporting or authorized to support any candidates for statewide public office or the General Assembly, are listed below:

Lawful Campaign Contributions to Candidates for Statewide Public Office:

<u>Contribution Date</u>	<u>Name of Contributor</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Description</u>

Lawful Campaign Contributions to Candidates for the General Assembly:

<u>Contribution Date</u>	<u>Name of Contributor</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Description</u>

Sworn as true to the best of my knowledge and belief, subject to the penalties of false statement.

Printed Contractor Name

Printed Name of Authorized Official

Signature of Authorized Official

Subscribed and acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Commissioner of the Superior Court (or Notary Public)

Attachment #4



STATE OF CONNECTICUT CONSULTING AGREEMENT AFFIDAVIT

Affidavit to accompany a bid or proposal for the purchase of goods and services with a value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 4a-81(a) and 4a-81(b). For sole source or no bid contracts the form is submitted at time of contract execution.

INSTRUCTIONS:

If the bidder or vendor has entered into a consulting agreement, as defined by Connecticut General Statutes § 4a-81(b)(1): Complete all sections of the form. If the bidder or contractor has entered into more than one such consulting agreement, use a separate form for each agreement. Sign and date the form in the presence of a Commissioner of the Superior Court or Notary Public. **If the bidder or contractor has not entered into a consulting agreement, as defined by Connecticut General Statutes § 4a-81(b)(1):** Complete only the shaded section of the form. Sign and date the form in the presence of a Commissioner of the Superior Court or Notary Public.

Submit completed form to the awarding State agency with bid or proposal. For a sole source award, submit completed form to the awarding State agency at the time of contract execution.

This affidavit must be amended if there is any change in the information contained in the most recently filed affidavit not later than (i) thirty days after the effective date of any such change or (ii) upon the submittal of any new bid or proposal, whichever is earlier.

AFFIDAVIT: [Number of Affidavits Sworn and Subscribed On This Day: _____]

I, the undersigned, hereby swear that I am a principal or key personnel of the bidder or contractor awarded a contract, as described in Connecticut General Statutes § 4a-81(b), or that I am the individual awarded such a contract who is authorized to execute such contract. I further swear that I have not entered into any consulting agreement in connection with such contract, **except for the agreement listed below:**

Consultant's Name and Title	Name of Firm (if applicable)
-----------------------------	------------------------------

Start Date	End Date	Cost
------------	----------	------

Description of Services Provided:

Is the consultant a former State employee or former public official? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES: _____
Name of Former State Agency Termination Date of Employment

Sworn as true to the best of my knowledge and belief, subject to the penalties of false statement.

Printed Name of Bidder or Contractor	Signature of Principal or Key Personnel	Date
	Printed Name (of above)	Awarding State Agency