

STATE OF CONNECTICUT PROCUREMENT NOTICE



Request for Proposals (RFP)

For

Quality Parenting Centers

RFP Number: 24030404

Issued By:

Department of Children and Families

March 4, 2024

The Request for Proposal is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal by filtering by Organization for Department of Children & Families:

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

on the Department's website:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Contract-Management/Home>

or from the Agency's Official Contact:

Name: Catherine Santiago
Address: 505 Hudson Street / Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 937-3832
E-Mail: DCF.FISCALCONTRACTS@ct.gov

RESPONSES DUE NO LATER THAN: 3:00PM / April 22, 2024

The State of Connecticut and the Department of Children & Families is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. The Agency reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or cancel this procurement at any time if deemed in the best interest of the State of Connecticut (State).

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

■ A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name and Number.** RFP #24030404 / Quality Parenting Centers
2. **RFP Summary.** 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.

There are currently twelve (12) Quality Parenting Center programs that are contracted by the Department to provide these services. These programs currently serve the Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, Manchester, Milford, New Haven, New Britain, Norwalk, Norwich, Torrington, Waterbury and Willimantic Area Offices. Through this procurement the Department is hoping to ensure QPC service access for all DCF Area Offices.

3. **RFP Purpose.** This RFP seeks to establish two (2) Quality Parenting Centers to serve the following DCF Area Offices, as defined below:

| | Middletown | Meriden |
|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Annual Visits | 4,284 | 3,384 |
| Annual Funding | \$885,744 | \$699,814 |

4. **Commodity Codes.** The services that the Agency wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:

- 93140000: Community and Social Services

■ B. INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contact.** The Agency 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 Agency. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other Agency employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to the Agency about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: Catherine Santiago
 Address: 505 Hudson Street / Hartford, CT 06106
 Phone: (860) 937-3832
 E-Mail: DCF.FISCALCONTRACTS@ct.gov

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

2. **Registering with State Contracting Portal.** Respondents must register with the State of CT contracting portal at <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration> if not already registered. Respondents must submit the following information pertaining to this application to this portal (on their supplier profile), which will be checked by the Agency contact.
 - Secretary of State recognition (CT Business License)– Click on appropriate response

- Non-profit status, if applicable
- Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V (<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CHRO/NotificationtoBidderspdf.pdf>)
- Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1): <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>

3. 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:

- Agency's RFP Web Page
<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Contract-Management/Home>
- State Contracting Portal (go to CTsource bid board, filter by "Department of Children and Families"
<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/BidBoard>)

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement check the Bid Board for any solicitation changes. Interested proposers may receive additional e-mails from CTsource announcing 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.

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

- RFP Planning Start Date: **January 2, 2024**
- RFP Released: **March 4, 2024**
- RFP Conference: **9:00 AM, March 8, 2024**
- Deadline for Questions: **3:00 PM, March 12, 2024**
- Answers Released: **On or About March 14, 2024**
- Letter of Intent Due: **3:00PM, March 28, 2024**
- Proposals Due: **3:00PM, April 22, 2024**
- (*) Proposer Selection: **May 1, 2024**
- (*) Start of Contract Negotiations: **May 8, 2024**
- (*) Start of Contract: **June 1, 2024**

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

- Total Funding Available: **\$1,585,558**
- Number of Awards: **Two**
- Per Contract Funding: **\$885,744 (Middletown) and \$699,814 (Meriden)**
- Contract Term: **1-3 years**, at the discretion of the Department

6. Eligibility. Private provider organizations (defined as nonstate entities that are either nonprofit or proprietary corporations or partnerships), CT State agencies, and municipalities are the only entities eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP.

A current investigation of Medicaid fraud or a judgment involving Medicaid fraud within the past five (5) years shall exclude an entity from participation in this procurement. Proposals from applicants who appear on the United States General Services Administration Excluded Parties List or the State Debarred Contractors List will not be considered. Consideration will be taken for applicants whose agency has required one or more corrective action plans in the past two years. Such applicants are not ineligible, but the history may be a scoring factor depending on circumstances surrounding the corrective action.

7. 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

8. 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 the e-mail address identified herein, by the deadline established in the Procurement Schedule. The subject line of the email must read, "**Name of Provider /Quality Parenting Centers 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 any Area Office 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.

9. Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or the Agency's procurement process must be directed, in writing, electronically, (e-mail) 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. All questions received before the deadline(s) will be answered. However, the Agency 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 Agency may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. If this RFP requires a Letter of Intent, the Agency reserves the right to answer questions only from those who have submitted such a letter. The Agency 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 Agency will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and, if available, on the Agency's RFP Web Page.

10. RFP Conference. An RFP conference will be held to answer questions from prospective proposers. Attendance at the conference is **non-mandatory**, but highly recommended. 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: **March 8, 2024**
- Time: **9:00AM**
- Virtual (Teams): [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Call In: [+1 860-840-2075, 262406754#](#)

11. 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: **April 22, 2024**
- Time: **3:00 PM**

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 Centers Electronic Proposal Submission**. One attachment must be submitted inclusive of the entire proposal in Portable Document Format (PDF) or similar file format and one attachment inclusive of the Budget and Narrative in Excel or similar file format. The following naming convention shall be used:

- Proposal: **Name of Provider / Quality Parenting Centers / Area Office <<INSERT>>**
- Budget: **Name of Provider / Quality Parenting Centers / Area Office <<INSERT>>**

12. Multiple Proposals. The submission of multiple proposals is an option with this procurement. Applicants are limited to one (1) proposal per defined Area Office. If multiple proposals are submitted, a separate email submission of each is required.

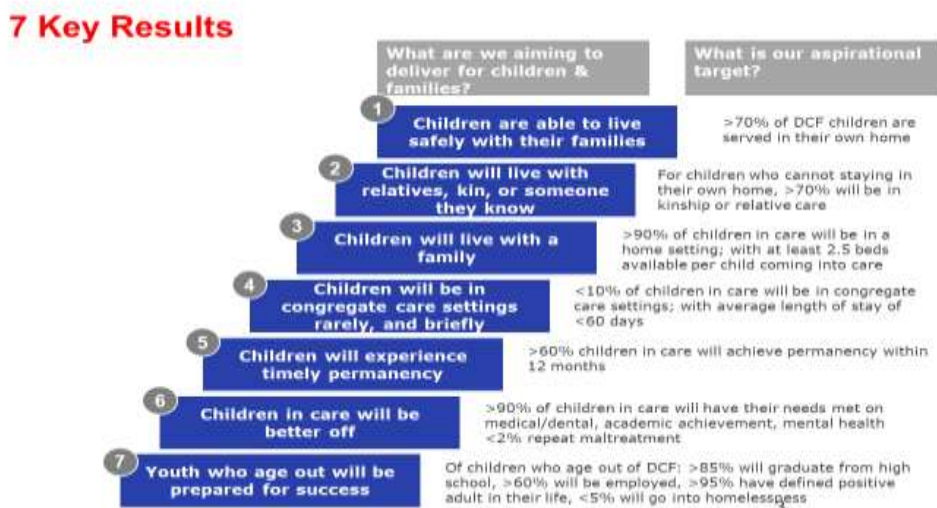
II. PURPOSE OF RFP AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. AGENCY 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:



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**

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.

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 and their presenting behaviors should also be considered. Consider need for coverage during breaks. | 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. |

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.

Service Delivery Components:

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 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.

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
- Visitation planning 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 parent's 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.martybever.com/sites/default/files/visit_coaching_manual.pdf
<https://martybever.com/content/visit-coaching>

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?

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. Any changes recommended by the QPC must be approved by the Department.

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.

Documentation: The Contractor will follow the terms of the family's Visitation Plan and will document all visit-related activities. The Contractor will document the visit 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.

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.

■ C. SCOPE OF SERVICE DESCRIPTION**1. Organizational Requirements**

- (a) Purpose / Mission / Philosophy: Briefly describe the purpose, mission and philosophy of the agency and the proposed program. This section should also describe how your program or agency will adhere to applicable state and federal laws, regulations and policies specific to the services to be provided. A Table of Organization for the applicant agency must be included as **Attachment 1** of the proposal and must clearly identify where the proposed program will fall in the organizational structure of the agency.
- (b) Community Presence: Please describe the level of current presence your agency has in the proposed communities of service.
- (c) Location of Proposed Services: Proposers are not required to obtain possession of physical space prior to submission of a proposal, although preference will be given to proposals indicating possession of space and zoning compliance. The Department will require retention of space for all sites, in accordance with local regulations, prior to contract execution. If locations and zoning are not secured at the time of proposal submission, the proposer must affirm that both will be obtained by July 1, 2024. The Department reserves the right to terminate any negotiations or subsequent contracts if the proposer fails to obtain space or zoning compliance.
- (d) Corrective Action: If the agency required a Corrective Action Plan for any DCF-funded program in the past two (2) years, proposals must identify the program, the primary problem(s), and how the problem(s) was (were) addressed.

2. Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care

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 construction of culture, service provision must also be tailored to age, diagnosis, developmental level, geographical, economical, and educational needs. Detail your response according to 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 **Attachment 2**.
- 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 **Attachment 3**. 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.
- 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 demonstrate how the plan has been executed and its impact on our agency. Provide a copy of your agency's CLAS Plan as [Attachment 4](#).

3. Service Requirements

Proposals must address each of the following areas. The use of sub-contractors is permitted for these services.

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. DCF will be the sole referral source for the program.

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.

Referral Process: Proposals must describe how the applicant will adhere to the following referral guidelines, including meeting the timelines for assignment and intake:

Referrals will be received from the DCF Area Office. 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.

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.

Following this meeting, the Family Specialist will meet with the parents to begin planning for the first Family Time visit.

Within 5 calendar days of receipt of the referral, the provider will schedule the first visit between the biological parents and the child.

Site Requirements: Proposals must describe the following:

The location of the site, including its accessibility to public transportation.

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 [Attachment 5](#). Proposals indicating full siting and or zoning compliance at time of proposal submission will be awarded additional points during the scoring process for this RFP.

The extent to which the proposed site is ADA-compliant.

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 [Attachment 6](#).

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 and welcoming setting and normal experiences for child/family. In addition, that it provides age-appropriate toys and recreational activities for referred families.

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.

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.

Service Delivery Components:

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

Engagement: The Contractor must describe a plan 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. In addition, a detailed description of their engagement strategies with various specialized populations (for example, differing cognitive abilities, limited coping skills, limited parenting skills, trauma survivors and of various racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds, etc) served by the Department.

Visit Coaching Model: The Contractor must describe a detailed plan on how visit coaching model will be implemented.

Assessment: The Contractor must describe a detailed plan on how assessments will be completed in identified timeframes.

Collaboration: The Contractor must describe a detailed plan on collaboration with family members, foster parents and DCF staff.

Documentation: The Contractor must describe how the required documentation will be completed in accordance of all identified time frames.

Discharge: The Contractor must describe how discharge elements will be executed.

4. Staffing Requirements

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. It is the Department's expectation that each Visiting Coach perform 3-4 visits per shift.

(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:

Complete the table below with your agency contractual staffing numbers by role (supervisor, case manager, community support worker and support staff) and the percentage of staffing capacity by the same categories for community-based programs serving families for the end of fiscal years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. This chart can be submitted as **Attachment 7**.

| Name of Program/Service | Staff Position | Contracted FTE | Actual FTE % (n) on 6/30/19 | Actual FTE % (n) on 6/30/20 | Actual FTE % (n) on 6/30/21 | Actual FTE % (n) on 6/30/22 | Actual FTE % (n) on 6/30/23 |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |
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- A staff retention plan detailing measures taken to reduce staff turnover. The plan should describe how staff hiring and retention has been achieved to maintain contract staffing levels or how challenges in recruitment and turnover have been addressed.
- A detailed description of how staff have been and will be recruited and selected. Include your agency's plan to recruit a diverse staff including Spanish-speaking staff, who reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the families you plan to serve.
- A description of how the staffing plan will be appropriate to the language, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, varied cognitive abilities 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. 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.

5. Work-plan & Implementation Timeline

Describe your agency's work plan to specifically achieve the goals stated within this RFP, including action steps and timeline for successful implementation.

- (a) **Implementation Experience:** Include a narrative description of how your agency's prior successes and challenges informed the design and implementation of this work plan.
- (b) **Detailed Implementation Timelines:** Include detailed timeline, including a description of the following:
 - 1) Site obtainment
 - 2) Hiring, orienting, and training staff; and
 - 3) Zoning activities
- (c) Inclusion of detailed work processes leading up to availability of services and specification of date when applicants will begin to accept referrals.

6. Performance Measures, Data & Technology

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 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.

The following performance metrics have been created for the QPCs.

- Annual # of visits occurring per site
- Annual # of families served by the program
- #/% of families who engaged in the program
- #/% of families who met treatment goals
- Of children with a permanency goal of reunification, the #/% of families who transitioned to unsupervised parent/child contact

- (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.

■ D. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

1. Financial Requirements

Proposers must submit cover letters from their auditor for the last three (3) annual audits of their agency and a copy of their most recent financial audit, included as **Attachment 8**. If the three (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 three (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

Proposals must contain an itemized budget on the budget form delineated in Section IV (F), of this RFP. All startup costs must be clearly identified as 1 line item in the budget.

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.

III. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OVERVIEW**■ A. SUBMISSION FORMAT INFORMATION**

- 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– Forms.
- 3. Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms with the required proposal outline.
- 4. Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in the RFP 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:
 - Paper Size: Standard Letter
 - Print Style: 2-sided
 - Page Limit: 20 Single-Sided (10 sheets of Paper, printed Double-Side) for Section IV.E (Main Proposal)
 - Font Size: 12
 - Font Type: Times New Roman
 - Margins: Normal
 - Line Spacing: 1.5
- 7. 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.
- 8. 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 prior to submission. 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).
- 9. Conflict of Interest- Disclosure Statement.** Proposers must include, in Section D of their proposal, 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 Agency 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."*

■ **B. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

1. Evaluation Process. It is the intent of the Agency 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 Agency will conform with its written procedures for POS and PSA 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). Final funding allocation decisions will be determined during contract negotiation.

2. Evaluation Review Committee. The Agency will designate a Review Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The Review Committee will be composed of individuals, Agency staff or other designees as deemed appropriate. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Review 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. The Review Committee shall evaluate all proposals that meet the Minimum Submission Requirements by score and rank ordered and make recommendations for awards. The Agency Head will make the final selection. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Review Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.

3. Minimum Submission Requirements. 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) meet the Eligibility and Qualification requirements to respond to the procurement, (4) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (5) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Agency 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 Review Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The weights are disclosed below:

- Organizational Requirements **5 points**
- Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care **15 points**
- Service Requirements **40 points**
- Staffing Plan **20 points**
- Work Plan & Implementation **5 points**
- Data / Technology & Outcomes **10 points**
- Financial Profile **3 points**
- Budget and Budget Narrative **2 points**

Note: As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Plan, the Review Committee will review the proposer’s demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

5. Proposer Selection. Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Review Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to the Commissioner or Agency Head. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of the Commissioner or Agency Head. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Agency. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. 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 Agency’s discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process. The Agency reserves the right to decline to award contracts for activities in which the Commissioner or Agency Head considers there are not adequate respondents.

- 6. Debriefing.** Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the Agency, 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 Agency 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 Agency may schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. The Agency 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 Agency's competitive procurement, including the evaluation and proposer selection process. Any such appeal must be submitted to the Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General. Fully executed and approved contracts will be posted on State Contracting Portal and the Agency website.

IV. REQUIRED PROPOSAL SUBMISSION OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

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To access the Consolidated Budget Form, please go to:
<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/Contract-Management/Home>
 scroll down to RFP forms "DCF RFP Budget POS" Excel file

G. Attachments

Mandatory submission with proposal, unless otherwise indicated

- 1. **Attachment #1 Table of Organization**
- 2. **Attachment #2 Culturally Diverse Communities**
- 3. **Attachment #3 Culturally Diverse Families**
- 4. **Attachment #4 Culturally Diverse Organizations (CLAS Plan) (if appl.)**
- 5. **Attachment # 5 Proof of Siting**
- 6. **Attachment #6 Program Pictures (if sited)**.
- 7. **Attachment #7 Staffing Chart**
- 8. **Attachment #8 SSA Audits (if req.)**

V. 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by the Agency, 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 Agency. The Agency 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 Agency. At its sole discretion, the Agency 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 Agency, 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency.
2. **Amending or Canceling RFP.** The Agency reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if the Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency 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 Agency may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The Agency 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 Agency reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. The Agency further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the Agency may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. The Agency may set parameters on any BFOs received.
7. **Clerical Errors in Award.** The Agency 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 Agency is the sole funder of a purchased service, the Agency reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The Agency also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The Agency 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 Agency.

■ **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 ensure 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. Consulting Agreements Representation, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 4a-81 the successful contracting party shall certify that it has not entered into any consulting agreements in connection with this Contract, except for the agreements listed below. "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 contracts. "Consulting agreement" does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of chapter 10 of the Connecticut General Statutes as of the date such contract is executed in accordance with the provisions of section 4a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Such representation shall be sworn as true to the best knowledge and belief of the person signing the resulting contract and shall be subject to the penalties of false statement.
- 4. Campaign Contribution Restriction, C.G.S. § 9-612.** For all State contracts, defined in section 9-612 of the Connecticut General Statutes as having a value in a calendar year of \$50,000 or more, or a combination or series of such agreements or contracts having a value of \$100,000 or more, the authorized signatory to the resulting contract must represent that they have received the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice advising state contractors of state campaign contribution and solicitation prohibitions, and will inform its principals of the contents of the notice, as set forth in "Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations." Such notice is available at https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/data/forms/ContrForms/seec_form_11_notice_only.pdf
- 5. Gifts, C.G.S. § 4-252.** Pursuant to section 4-252 of the Connecticut General Statutes and Acting Governor Susan Bysiewicz's Executive Order No. 21-2, the Contractor, for itself and on behalf of all of its principals or key personnel who submitted a bid or proposal, represents:
 - (1) That no gifts were made by (A) the Contractor, (B) any principals and key personnel of the Contractor, who participate substantially in preparing bids, proposals or negotiating State contracts, or (C) any agent of the Contractor or principals and 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 requests 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;
 - (2) That no such principals and key personnel of the Contractor, or agent of the Contractor or of such principals and key personnel, knows of any action by the Contractor to circumvent such prohibition on gifts by providing for any other principals and key personnel, official, employee or agent of the Contractor to provide a gift to any such public official or State employee; and
 - (3) That the Contractor is submitting bids or proposals without fraud or collusion with any person.Any bidder or proposer that does not agree to the representations required under this section shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.

- 6. Iran Energy Investment Certification C.G.S. § 4-252(a).** Pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-252(a), the successful contracting party shall certify the following: (a) that it has not made a direct investment of twenty million dollars or more in the energy sector of Iran on or after October 1, 2013, as described in Section 202 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010, and has not increased or renewed such investment on or after said date. (b) If the Contractor makes a good faith effort to determine whether it has made an investment described in subsection (a) of this section it shall not be subject to the penalties of false statement pursuant to section 4-252a of the Connecticut General Statutes. A "good faith effort" for purposes of this subsection includes a determination that the Contractor is not on the list of persons who engage in certain investment activities in Iran created by the Department of General Services of the State of California pursuant to Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Public Contract Code. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the ability of the State agency or quasi-public agency to pursue a breach of contract action for any violation of the provisions of the resulting contract.
- 7. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and 4a-60a.** If a bidder is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide the State agency with *written representation* in the resulting contract that certifies the bidder complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. This 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 authorized signatory of the contract shall demonstrate his or her understanding of this obligation by either (A) initialing the nondiscrimination affirmation provision in the body of the resulting contract, or (B) providing an affirmative response in the required online bid or response to a proposal question, if applicable, which asks if the contractor understands its obligations. If a bidder or vendor refuses to agree to this representation, such bidder or vendor shall be rejected and the State agency or quasi-public agency shall award the contract to the next highest ranked vendor or the next lowest responsible qualified bidder or seek new bids or proposals.
- 8. Access to Data for State Auditors.** The Contractor shall provide to OPM access to any data, as defined in C.G.S. § 4e-1, concerning the resulting contract that are in the possession or control of the Contractor upon demand and shall provide the data to OPM in a format prescribed by OPM [or the Client Agency] and the State Auditors of Public Accounts at no additional cost.

VI. APPENDIX

A. 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) |
| FOIA | Freedom of Information Act (CT) |
| IRS | Internal Revenue Service (US) |
| LOI | Letter of Intent |
| 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) |
| RFP | Request For Proposal |
| SEEC | State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT) |
| U.S. | United States |

- *contractor*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that enters into a POS contract with the Agency as a result of this RFP
- *proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that has submitted a proposal to the Agency in response to this RFP. This term may be used interchangeably with respondent throughout the RFP.
- *prospective proposer*: a private provider organization, CT State agency, or municipality that may submit a proposal to the Agency 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 Agency as a result of this RFP

B. Appendix #1: Proposal Checklist

To assist respondents in managing proposal planning and document collation processes, this document summarizes key dates and proposal requirements for this RFP. This document does not supersede what is stated in the RFP. It is the responsibility of each respondent to ensure that all required documents, forms, and attachments, are submitted in a timely manner.

C. Appendix #2: Letter of Intent

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

D. Appendix #3: Proposal Cover Sheet

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

E. Appendix 4: Quality Parenting Center Scope of Service

For reference only

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST**Key Dates**

| Procurement Timetable | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Agency reserves the right to modify these dates at its sole discretion. | | |
| Item | Action | Date |
| 1 | Bidders Conference | 9:00 AM / March 8, 2024 |
| 2 | Question Submission Deadline | 3:00 PM / March 12, 2024 |
| 3 | Release of Answers | March 14, 2024 |
| 4 | Letter of Intent Submission Deadline | 3:00 PM / March 28, 2024 |
| 5 | Proposal Submission Deadline | 3:00 PM / April 22, 2024 |
| 6 | Program Implementation Target Date | June 1, 2024 |

Registration with State Contracting Portal (if not already registered):

- Register at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/CTSource/Registration>
- Submit Campaign Contribution Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1): <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-PSA/Forms/Ethics-Forms>
- Submit Proof of Entity Status (if applicable)
- Submit Notification to Bidders package
- Submit Proof of Secretary of the State recognition (CT Business License)

Letter of Intent

- Submit by March 28, 2024 (3:00PM)

Proposal Content Checklist

- Cover Sheet** (using RFP Appendix #3)
- Table of Contents** (using RFP Section IV (Table of Contents))
- Declaration of Confidential Information**
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure**
- Main Proposal**
- Budget**
- Attachments**

Formatting Checklist

- Is the proposal formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 (letter-sized) paper?
- Is the main body of the proposal within the page limit?
- Is the proposal in 12-point, Times New Roman font?
- Does the proposal format follow normal (1 inch) margins and 1 ½ line spacing?
- Does the proposer's name appear in the header of each page?
- Does the proposal include page numbers in the footer?
- Are confidential labels applied to sensitive information (if applicable)?

LETTER OF INTENT
(MANDATORY NON-BINDING)

Date: _____

Our agency is planning to apply for funding in response to the RFP entitled ***Quality Parenting Centers***

- Site 1 - Middletown
 Site 2 - Meriden

| |
|---|
| 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 **March 28, 2024**
Catherine Santiago (DCF.FISCALCONTRACTS@ct.gov).

PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Quality Parenting Centers for Proposals

- Site 1 - Middletown
- Site 2 - Meriden

Name of 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: _____

Quality Parenting Centers**A. Description, Contract Capacity and Unit of Service****1. Service Description**

This service provides a site-based supervised parent/child visitation program (Family Time) designed to provide a safe and comfortable place for parents to interact with their children. The Contractor utilizes coaching and other strategies that provide parents with opportunities to learn and practice new skills and maintain the parent/child relationship.

2. Contract Capacity/Length of Service

The Contractor will provide up annual capacity as defined in Part I, Section B.1 of this contract.

Length of Service: The frequency of visitation is in accordance with the family's DCF established Visitation Plan. At a minimum, Supervised visits will be conducted twice a week for a period of six (6) months per family. Length of service may be extended dependent on the needs of the family and child, at the discretion of DCF.

B. Service Delivery Requirements**1. Target Population**

Quality Parenting Centers are designed for families with children (from birth up to age 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, at the discretion of DCF.

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.

2. Referral Process

DCF is the only referral source for the program.

The Contractor will adhere to the following referral process.

- a. Referrals will be accepted by the Contractor from the DCF Area Office Gatekeeper. A standardized Referral Form will be utilized, form and format will be mutually agreed upon, and accompanied by a Release of Information from DCF to the Contractor. Within 2 days of receipt of the completed referral, the Contractor will assign the case to the Family Time Specialist who will contact the referring DCF Social Worker to gather additional information about the family and child.
- b. Within 3 business days of the referral, the Contractor 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.
- c. Initial visitation will occur within 5 calendar days of receipt of the referral.

3. Service Location and Operating Hours

The Contractor will provide supervised parenting time 7 days a week. The hours will 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 | 12:00 - 8:00 PM |
| Saturday - Sunday | 9:00 - 5:00 PM |

The site will have at least 2 bathrooms accessible to children/families during family time. In addition, families must have access to a kitchen, waiting area, space to allow for privacy, and play/recreational area.

The contractor is required to establish and maintain a child and family friendly site consistent with engaging all participants in order to meet the requirements of this service. Waiting areas will be comfortable and will emphasize a family-like environment. Age-appropriate toys, reading materials, and activities will be available in all areas where children and families interact including visitation rooms and waiting areas.

4. Staffing

The staffing model for the program shall be maintained as defined in Part I, Section B.2 of this contract

The Supervisor shall have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a Human services field.

The Contractor will ensure that they have culturally and linguistically diverse staff that is reflective of the children and families they are to serve. Staffing must demonstrate:

- a. Experience in working with families and children with complex needs, various degrees of family functioning that may be characterized by an array of risk and safety factors;
- b. Experience in working with child and family serving systems, such as but not limited to, child welfare, judicial, educational, behavioral health and other community-based agencies.
- c. Experience in providing direct services to diverse populations;
- d. Multi-lingual capabilities relevant to the communities, children and families to be served;
- e. Knowledge of the cultural, linguistic or experiential backgrounds of the communities, children and families to be served and
- f. Hiring practices that demonstrate outreach efforts.

5. Services

Quality Parenting Centers (QPC) 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, promote attachment, and enhance parental protective actions and capacities.

Parent child visitation is 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.

The families referred to the QPC will require close supervision and monitoring to ensure child safety as well as the ability to intervene when necessary due to safety concerns.

The frequency and duration of parent/child visitation may be increased as parents are learning and demonstrating new skills, engaged in services and benefiting from service interventions. Any changes in visitation must have DCF approval and be reflected in the family's Visitation Plan.

a. Engagement:

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

The Family Time Specialists 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.

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 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 provide parents with opportunities to learn and practice new skills.

It may be necessary for the Contractor to end a visit abruptly or cancel a visit based on 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.

b. Visit Coaching Model:

The Contractor will implement the Visit Coaching Model in their Family Time work. The four principles of Visit Coaching are empowerment, empathy, responsiveness, and active parenting.

The Contractor will offer a range of coaching approaches and interventions based on the individual strengths and needs of the parents and child(ren). These strategies include:

- use of play;
- modeling;
- instruction; and
- rehearsal

The Contractor will offer the primary components of the Visit Coaching model, including:

- i. Pre- meeting Activities (inclusive of engagement, building relationships, identification of parental strengths/needs, self-evaluation, and focus/plan for upcoming visit)
- ii. During Family Time (capacity for developmentally appropriate play, normal parent/child interactions/experiences, and skill development and practice)
- iii. Post Family Time (provide feedback about visit, including progress and challenges, parental self-reflection, support and encouragement)

c. 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:

- i. Has/Have the parent(s) been successful in managing child's behaviors during visits?
- ii. Has/Have the parent(s) been responsive to the child's needs during visits?
- iii. How has the child responded/reacted to visits (with each parent)?
- iv. What is the feedback from the caregiver or child (if developmentally appropriate) regarding visits?
- v. How has the parent(s) equally managed all the children during parent/child contact?

d. Collaboration:

It is critical that ongoing communication with the DCF 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.

e. Documentation

The Contractor will follow the terms of the family's Visitation Plan and will document all visit-related activities.

Weekly Progress Notes: The Contractor will complete weekly progress notes within 5 business days of the visit and provide copies of notes to parent(s) and DCF.

The narrative shall include the following information:

- i. Date of Occurrence(s)
- ii. Location and duration of visit(s)
- iii. Individuals present (include any late arrivals or those who left early)
- iv. Activities that occurred during the visit(s)
- v. Observations as to whether parents met expectations/behaviors and goals for the visit, to include: engagement of child by parent(s); ability to 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.

- vi. Information the child/parent(s) shared during the visit

90-day Summary Assessment: The Contractor will complete the 90-day summary assessment, 90 days after the initial visit. This assessment will measure and evaluate parental engagement and progress, highlight any need to adjust the family's Visitation Plan and include targeted areas of intervention for the upcoming quarter.

Specifically, the assessment documents the following:

- i. parent/child interactions,
- ii. consistency/frequency of contact,
- iii. activities, parental behaviors,
- iv. demonstration of parenting skills,
- v. continued safety concerns,
- vi. child reactions,
- vii. other relevant information.

f. 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 can safely transition to unsupervised contact or at the request of DCF. Once the family transitions to the lower intensity level and continues to experience positive interactions, the family will be discharged within 3 weeks. This allows sufficient time to assess safety and progress as well as transition the family to a less restrictive visitation service if necessary and appropriate. If at the request of DCF, discharge will be coordinated with the Contractor, family, and DCF.

g. Transportation

Transportation will be provided directly by the Contractor to and from the center unless alternate arrangements can be made with the child's caregiver. Biological parents may access public transportation when/where available.

6. Data and Outcome Reporting Requirements

a. Reporting Requirements

- i. The Contractor will submit timely and accurate child and family specific and administrative program data as required by the Department, including the web-based Provider Information Exchange (PIE). Repeated tardy, missing, and/or inaccurate data submissions will result in corrective action and could result in contract termination. The Contractor will engage and use data to ensure the quality of their services, including identifying program challenges or barriers, to identify potential best practices, and achievement of the program's goals, objectives and outcomes.
- ii. The Contractor may be required to submit other data and reports as requested by DCF within the timeframes and using the formats determined by the Department.

b. Outcome Expectations

The following performance metrics will be collected on a monthly basis:

- Annual # of visits occurring per site
- Annual # of families served by the program
- #/% of families who engaged in the program
- #/% of families who met treatment goals
- Of children with a permanency goal of reunification, the #/% of families who transitioned to unsupervised parent/child contact