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Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES
Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

**School of Origin Transportation
Request for Information**

Questions & Answers

1. I am wondering if this service would replace any active contracts that the state currently holds?

The Department of Children and Families currently holds a contract with an independent entity responsible for credentialing certain DCF service types. DCF, in turn has established, set rates for each separate service type. Transportation is one of these service types. Once a provider has successfully complete the credentialing process, DCF's credentialing provider notifies DCF that the provider has completed credentialing for a specific service type, at which point DCF executes a provider agreement with the provider. This agreement details the service type(s) the provider is credentialed to provider, as well as the billing rates associated with that service type, and notifies DCF staff that the provider is credentialed and available for use. The level and quantity of use depends solely on the location of the provider, the need for the credentialed service in the provider's Region and the availability of the provider at the time DCF staff require the service (so basically a fee-for-service, as needed basis).

That said, the RFI we've released is soliciting input that will serve to assist us with redesigning the Transportation service type. Our intent is to release a subsequent RFP (Request for Proposals) once the redesign is complete, at which point, yes, all current Transportation contracts would be replaced.

2. Which contracts would this project consolidate if it were to be procured?

All of them (although current providers remain eligible to participate in the RFP process- they are not excluded from re-award).

3. As well, given that school transportation has cost the state more than \$13 million in the last fiscal year does the department expect that a new transportation service contract will be similarly valued?

The current RFI and subsequent RFP are specific to DCF-contracted transportation services for children transported to school of origin when placed in living situations outside of their original school district (as opposed to Connecticut-state contracts for transportation services utilized by a variety of state agencies). While we don't discount the possibility of 1 central service provider to meet DCF's school of origin transportation needs, as we know the service continuum within the State, we're currently envisioning the award of multiple contracts for this service. That said, we don't have a set budget for the service, we pay for need, as such need may vary. We're in the middle of an internal review of all children currently utilizing the service, and reviewing for continued appropriateness in school of origin placement. We're anticipating that our numbers will decrease significantly after this review. We're also hoping for innovative ideas from RFI responses that will help us control and reduce costs for this service (transport batching, centralized dispatching, enhanced use of technology, etc.)

4. Also, will the inclusion of newer technologies and "smart" system be something considered for this RFI?

Yes. It's a piece of the transportation service model that we're hoping will be addressed in RFI responses so as to inform out requirements for the RFP.

- 5. What is the anticipated RFP release date for School of Origin Transportation RFP?**
DCF anticipates releasing an RFP for these services in late Fall/early Winter of this year.
- 6. What is the anticipated project Go Live date for School of Origin Transportation?**
DCF is targeting a go live date prior to the end of State Fiscal Year 2019.
- 7. Will DCF post or provide a list of respondents to this RFI?**
No.
- 8. What is the total number of one-way trips provided for the \$13,000,000 spend in the last fiscal year?**
Transportation data is not captured in such a way as to make this information available.
- 9. What is the average trip length (one-way trip) provided?**
There is no consistent or average trip length. Distance is specific to each child and their placement plan.
- 10. Does the total number of trips include trips currently provided directly by DCF caseworkers in their own or department vehicle? If so, please provide the number or % of trips that caseworkers provide.**
Absent exigent circumstances, DCF workers do not provide transportation to school of origin.
- 11. How much (dollar value or %) of the \$13,000,000 was paid directly to providers and what % was invoiced as wait time? How much was attributed to administrative cost?**
DCF does not pay wait time for this service, and administrative costs are built into the DCF-set rate for the service.
- 12. Can you provide a data snap-shot, for 3-6 months, of school of origin and community where student is placed?**
Please refer to the RFI. At this time, DCF has undertaken a statewide review of all School of Origin placements and anticipates that, once completed, the number of students receiving this service for the 2018/2019 school year will be significantly reduced. Because of this, while the Department will have this information available for the subsequent RFP, it is not available at this time.
- 13. Does the School of Origin transportation program only transport ambulatory students, or are wheel chair accessible vehicles needed? If non-ambulatory students are transported please estimate number or % of students needing accessible vehicles.**
The School of Origin Transportation service is only available to ambulatory students. DCF makes alternative arrangements for non-ambulatory students in its care.
- 14. Please define "DCF-involved" children.**
For this service, 'DCF-involved' child is defined as a child in DCF's care and/or custody.
- 15. In general, the McKinney-Vento act requires that school districts provide transportation to its students experiencing homelessness back to their school of origin. In Connecticut, what is the relationship of this responsibility of the school districts and the responsibility assumed by the state through its Department of Children and Families? Please describe the distinction, if any, between transportation that is the responsibility of the school district vs. that which is the responsibility of the Department of Children and Families.**
DCF bears responsibility for school of origin transportation for children in foster care. If the child is already outsourced by the Local Education Agency for transportation, and subsequently become DCF-involved (placed in foster care), the school district remains responsible for that child's transportation plan.
- 16. How many contractors and contracted vehicles were used to provide school of origin transportation to DCF-involved children in the Spring, 2018? Recognizing the a single contractor may operate from multiple locations, how many distinct locations were the contracted fleets based?**

Currently, the Department has credentialed 32 separate Transportation providers, averaging 400 statewide individual drivers. Further, targeted statistics will be available with release of the RFP for this service.

17. Who is involved in the decision for the child to return to the school of origin? Is anyone from Transportation involved in this conversation?

No, while based on a standardized decision tree, the decision to allow a child to remain in school of origin when placed outside of that school's geographical reach is internal to DCF only (the Social Worker and his/her chain of command).