**OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**Amended PLAN FOR PROCUREMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (July 2015)**

**SFY16 through SFY18**

 **INTRODUCTION**

In October 2011, representatives from various state agencies met with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to develop a strategic framework from which state agencies could begin work on their individual procurement plans. As a result, OPM revised the Procurement Standards to incorporate suggestions from the meeting. The purpose of these changes was to focus on ensuring effectiveness of services, enhancing client outcomes, and encouraging use of service delivery innovation. This document constitutes the OEC’s revised Procurement Plan for SFYs 2016-18.

1. **PURPOSE OF PLAN**

This plan describes the approach OEC, in conjunction with the Central Contracting Unit (CCU), will take for the procurement of human services for SFYs 2016-18. The plan is designed to meet operational requirements and be in compliance with existing legislation, regulations, and policies.

All OEC POS contracts include outcomes with specific measures for evaluating program effectiveness. The OEC and CCU both review aspects of the contracts based on contractor reporting as prescribed in the contract, either programmatic or fiscal, to determine compliance and performance when compared to what was contracted. Such reviews form a basis for follow-up with contractors to determine a correction plan or contract amendment.

1. **ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE/PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

As of July 1, 2015, the OEC currently has 146 Human Service POS contracts and utilizes the State Department of Education RFP processes and the Central Contracts Unit (CCU) in preparing and finalizing the contracts. The OEC was created to integrate funding sources and processes to support high quality early care and education.

In 2014, 52 contracts for child day care were issued as sole source contracts for two years. At the time of expiration (2016), the OEC will either put them out to bid or will be combining these with the OEC’s state funding grant program (School Readiness) which will be issued to municipalities using the existing grant process.

In 2014, these contracts were transferred from DSS to OEC and amended to extend the 45 POS contracts, funded under the Children’s Trust Fund line item of the state budget, for the Nurturing Families Network (34); Family School Connection (3); Help Me Grow (1); and Family Empowerment programs (7). A waiver was approved by OPM through SFY 2017 for 24 Nurturing Families Network contracts, which included funding for 1 Family School Connection and 3 Family Empowerment programs and the Help Me Grow program. The OEC requests a complete program waiver for the above programs through this procurement plan period, SFY 2018. The OEC is also requesting a sole source waiver for the United Way which is the only current service provider for the Help Me Grow program, mentioned above.

In 2014, the Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Social Services (DSS) transferred 16 federally funded POS contracts funded under the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood (MIECHV) program to the OEC. These contracts were to expire in SFY 2016. New funds were awarded in 2015 to amend the contracts through December 31, 2016. The vendors for these contracts were selected by agencies working within the community where the MIECHV program is offered.

Effective July 1, 2015, the Birth to Three program including 33 POS contracts was transferred from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to the OEC. OEC will perform a competitive procurement for this program as approved under the current DDS procurement plan, unless the outcome of changes to Medicaid funding preclude competitive bidding in which case this procurement plan will be amended. The narrative related to this program’s procurement plan is as follows: “These were amended and now all current contracts will expire June 30, 2017. If there are no additional RFPs for programs (based on some programs dropping their contracts or a sudden need for additional capacity in some areas of the state) then we will re-bid the Specialty Program contracts in FY17 and the General Program contracts in FY19 unless due to circumstances an extension is granted to ensure continuity for families.”

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Social Services and the Office of Early Childhood is in the process of being executed to formerly transfer the funds for the Healthy Start program to the OEC effective July 1, 2015. The Healthy Start program includes 5 POS contracts for which a waiver from competitive procurement is requested through SFY 2018.

1. **PLAN APPROACH AND PROCESS**

Key Principles

The OEC Procurement Plan, which focuses on developing stronger partnerships with State, Families, and Communities, is guided by the following principles:

* Establishing and maintain a high quality early childhood programs and services, and
* Improving the quality of Early Childhood services, programs, and the workforce.

Procurement Best Practices

In addition, the procurement process reflects best practices in the public sector which include the following principles:

* **Openness** – Current contractors will be notified at least 60 days in advance of their contract to be re-bid. RFPs will be posted on the DAS and OEC websites and advertised as needed.
* **Transparency** – RFPs will clearly state the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated as well as the weighted criterion. Results of the RFP process will be posted on the DAS website.
* **Fairness** – Contractors who participate in the development of an RFP for a new or existing will not be able to participate in the RFP. Members of the OEC evaluation team will have to sign a Conflict of Interest form in which they are obligate to disclose any potential conflict of interest in the related RFP respondent.
* **Competition** – All eligible contractors will have equal opportunity to complete for OEC contracts. No RFP requirements will specify any features that unnecessarily discriminate against current or potential contractors.
* **Standardization** – A standardized RFP process will be implemented. It includes use of a standardized RFP template, uniform submission requirements, an amount of time between release of RFP to submission date, standardized proposal review and scoring procedures and compliance with OPM RFP guidelines.
1. **PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- |
|  | **PROCUREMENT SCHEDULEFor SFY 2016, 2017, 2018** |
| **Program/Service Name** | **Last RFP(SFY, Qtr)** | **$ Amount(Total)** | **Contracts(Number)** | **Next RFP(SFY, Qtr)** | **RFP Cycle(In Years)** |
| Child Day Care Contracts | 2014 | $19,422,345 | 52 | At the time of expiration (2016), the OEC plans to combine these funds with other early care and education state grant program issued to municipalities using the existing grant process. | OEC was created to integrate funding sources and processes to support high-quality early care and education. |
| Birth--to-3  | 2012 | $60,768,546 | 33 | FY 2017 and 2019  | 5 |

**LEVELS OF CARE REQUESTING WAIVER**

**DUE TO USE OF PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT IN LIEU OF COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program/Service Name** | **Last RFP(SFY, Qtr)** | **$ Amount(Total)** | **Contracts(Number)** | **Next RFP(SFY, Qtr** | **Rationale for Practice Improvement (see page 3 of plan)** |
| None |  |  |  |  |  |

**LEVELS OF CARE REQUESTING WAIVERS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **WAIVER REQUESTSFor SFY 2016, 2017, 2018** |
| **Program/Service Name** | **Last RFP(SFY, Qtr)** | **$ Amount(Total)** | **Contracts(Number)** | **Next RFP(SFY, Qtr)** | **Rationale for Waiver Request** |
| Nurturing Families Network (NFN) | 2008 | $10,230,306 | 34 | SFY 2019 | Contractors were originally selected through a competitive procurement process to provide one of three program components -- nurturing connections, home visiting services or nurturing parenting groups to first-time parents.  Contractors are either one of or working with the 29 birthing hospitals in CT. The hospitals are a critical partner in the implementation of the program. Contractors that are not birthing hospitals have established Memoranda of Agreement with the hospitals and the establishment of protocols over time, which allow NFN staff access to medical records, the maternity ward, and affiliated prenatal clinics. It would be difficult and costly to re-establish and replicate these working relationships. Contractors' staffs have gained unique experience through 180 hours of training, at the State's expense, to ensure quality service and program delivery. Given there are no problems with the effective delivery of this program, disruption would cause hardship to the families who are offered this service for up to five years.  The contractors have also established a network of community-based services for families.In addition, the state recently transferred the 22 MIECHV home visiting programs to the OEC. Steps are underway to have these MIECHV programs share in the recruitment and referral process and site staffing at the NFN sites for this purpose. MOA’s to do this have recently been in put between these MIECHV sites and NFN sites and area hospitals. An RFP and new site selection process would destabilize and potentially undo these agreements and efforts jeopardizing recruitment and referral plan for the MIECHV program as proposed in the MIECHV grant application to the federal funding agency. |
| Family School Connection  | 2007 | $500,323 | 3 | SFY 2019 | Contractors were originally selected through a competitive procurement process to provide home visiting services to families of children identified at risk for child abuse and neglect based on school observations of the children's readiness for school and the parents' responsiveness to their children's needs. Each contractor has developed a Memorandum Of Agreement with an elementary school and the corresponding school district, and have spent time developing protocols to work within these schools, with the teachers and administrators. Based on the program's success implementing and unique experience through 180 hours of training to ensure quality service and program delivery, the cost to the State of a competitive procurement process would outweigh the benefits of the process and could cause hardships to families. Services can be provided to families for the length of time a child attends the partner school.  |
| Family Empowerment Programs  | 2000 | $174,357 | 7 | SFY 2019  | Contractors were originally selected through a competitive procurement process.  Contractors have successfully provided more than 12 years of services to parents who are seeking assistance from organizations for issues related to domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health services, incarceration, etc. The contractors have embedded the parenting services into a unique setting where the target population is receiving another service. Based on the years of program success, special capabilities, and training of the staff, the cost to the State of a competitive procurement process would outweigh the benefits of the process and could cause hardships to families requiring the services. It will be difficult and costly to re-establish and replicate these unique settings -- a prison, domestic violence shelter, substance abuse facility, hospital, and child guidance clinic. |
| Help Me Grow  | None | $331,462 | 1 | Sole Source | Contractor is the only provider of this particular type of service.  Contractor provides researched connections to referrals and resources for relative and professional caregivers of children utilizing the 2-1-1 database system.  It would be cost prohibitive to create a duplicate system. |
| Healthy Start (HSP)  | 2002 | $1,251,522 | 5 | SFY 2019 | Contractors were originally selected through a competitive procurement. Contractors' and subcontractors' staff provides expedited eligibility services to pregnant women and children: case management; care coordination; and health insurance application assistance. Based on their success in delivering services, unique experience, training, and special capacity disruption of services could result in a hardship for prenatal and postnatal mothers. |
| MIECHV Program  | 2012 | $8,000,000 | 16 | N/A | Vendors have been approved by HRSA. Federal grants have been given to the state to support the continuation of services. The last grant application stipulated that the State could not start any new program sites – which could be the possible result of a RFP process. |

1. **Communication Protocol**

The primary contact for the OEC is the Fiscal Manager. Staff within the agency will include the executive management team and the group external to the agency is the Central Contracting Unit (CCU). The Policy and Procedures currently used by the OEC and shared with essential staff indicate proper communication with potential contractors.

1. **Timeframe of Plan**

The OEC procurement plan is proposed for State Fiscal Years 2016 -18.

Structure of Plan

The re-bid plan is organized on a contractor type basis. The schedule will identify the point when all existing contracts will be re-bid based on funding.

Multi-year Contracting

Following the final funding award decisions for a particular RFP, the OEC will put in place multiyear contracts with the selected contractors. The term is not yet determined.

1. **IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT**

Implementation and oversight of contracts with be performed by the OEC with assistance from the CCU. The CCU will assist the OEC in monitoring all contracts for adherence to budgets, values, and terms to determine if amendments are required or if there is an adherence issue with regard to contract specifications.