

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

RFP LASC 2014-003
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
PROJECT COORDINATOR

I. PURPOSE

The Supreme Court of Louisiana (the “Court”) invites qualified vendors to submit proposals for providing services as a project coordinator for the Louisiana Court Improvement Program.

II. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

One (1) original and four (4) paper copies of each proposal must be **received**, either by hand delivery or by certified mail, no later than **4:00 p.m. (CST) on Tuesday, June 24, 2014**, at the following address:

Attn: Ms. Kären Hallstrom,
Deputy Judicial Administrator
The Supreme Court of Louisiana
1555 Poydras St., Suite 1550
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Any proposals which are received after this deadline will not be considered. All envelopes containing a proposal must bear the name of the entity making the proposal, and must have the following clearly written or typed on the face of the envelope: “Proposal for Court Improvement Program Project Coordinator.” No faxed or emailed submissions will be accepted.

All questions relative to this request for proposals (“RFP”) should be directed to Kären Hallstrom, Deputy Judicial Administrator, Division of Children and Families. Ms. Hallstrom may be reached via telephone at (504) 599-0770 or via e-mail at khallstrom@lasc.org. As set out in more detail below, all questions should be submitted by **4 p.m. (CST), on Tuesday, June 17, 2014**. The preferred method of receiving questions is via e-mail. Any oral explanations or instructions shall not be binding. All communications regarding the RFP shall be directed to Ms. Hallstrom.

The Court specifically reserves the right to reject, in full or in part, all proposals submitted, and/or to cancel this RFP, when such action is in the Court’s best interests. Any contract which may be awarded shall be based upon the proposal which is most advantageous to the Court, costs and other factors considered. All contracts are subject to the availability of funds.

III. TIMETABLE FOR PROPOSALS

Issue date of RFP	Friday, May 30, 2014
Deadline for receipt of questions	Wednesday, June 17, 2014
Deadline for receipt of proposals	Tuesday, June 24, 2014

IV. BACKGROUND

The Supreme Court of Louisiana is the highest court in the State, and thus is eligible to receive funds from the federal DHHS Administration for Children & Families three Court Improvement Program (“CIP”) grants: a basic grant, a grant for data collection and analysis, and a grant for training. The Court must apply for these grants every five (5) years and must make an annual request for funding including a strategic plan, detailed budget and letter of support from the Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services (“DCFS”).

The grant awards are subject to program standards and administrative requirements, including Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act, Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and circulars from the Office of Management and Budget. Federal funds awarded must be matched by non-federal sources at 25% of total expenditures. The Court must comply with the requirements included in the CIP Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-02 in order to receive federal CIP funds.

Submission of an annual program report is required for each grant, assessing the effectiveness of the activities supported with grant funds and in conformance with the CIP Program Instruction.

Financial reports must be submitted on an Online Data Collection system. An interim fiscal report of CIP expenditures and required match is due at the end of the first year of each grant period, and a final fiscal report is required at the end of the second year.

The Court currently has federal CIP grant approval for all three grants (basic, training and data) for federal fiscal years (“FFY”) 2012-2016 in two-year overlapping grant periods: FFY 2013-2015 and FFY 2014-2016.

The federal program instruction for these grants requires meaningful and ongoing collaboration, including working with DCFS to meet grant requirements and creating a multi-disciplinary statewide task force to guide CIP activities. Accordingly, the statewide Louisiana Child Advocacy Resource Effort (“CARE”) committee developed, implements and manages the CIP strategic plan and monitors progress toward outcomes to meet the requirements of the program instruction.

Subcommittees and workgroups are assigned to specific initiatives, such as disproportionate minority representation, continuous quality improvement, training and education, research and evaluation, and LGBTQ efforts. The CARE committee conducts quarterly meetings, and additional meetings of the committee, executive committee and working groups are held as frequently as needed. An annual independent evaluation of CIP is conducted consistent with the federal requirement for Continuous Quality Improvement (“CQI”).

Activities in the CIP strategic plan are primarily carried out through contracts for services. The CARE committee identifies the scope of services needed and vendor qualifications, and makes recommendations to the Court for contracts. Major CIP activities included in the current strategic plan are as follows:

1) Foster Collaboration

- Support interdisciplinary education and training
- CIP Judicial Fellow to address systemic issues with bench
- Support DCFS in collaborative approaches to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children in accordance with federal CIP program instructions

2) Improve Legal Representation for All Parties

- Promote and support high quality legal representation to parents, children, DAs and DCFS, both in and out of court, through targeted training
- Provide specialized training to judges hearing CINC cases

3) Address the Needs of Special Populations

- Research issues that lead to disproportionate minority representation and disparate treatment of children of color and develop responsive training
- Promote best practices in serving older youth
- Promote best practices in serving and working with LGBTQ youth in state care
- Improve the understanding and handling of cases involving human trafficking

4) Ensure High Quality Legal Processes in All Court Hearings

- Use of CIP Judicial Fellow to address needs in local courts
- Expand the use of IJJIS in the courtroom
- Work with foster parents to ensure their voices are heard in court
- Ensure that children’s voices are heard in CINC proceeding in accordance with law

5) Respond to Title IV-E, CFSR, & the Program Improvement Plan

- Focus on safety through family engagement

- Increase the number of children who have permanency and stability in their living situations
- Collaborate with DCFS in its goal to improve case decision making, assessments, and permanency plans for older youth

V. SCOPE OF WORK

Proposer must be prepared to serve as Project Coordinator for the Louisiana Court Improvement Program in furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Court Improvement Program, including responsibility for the basic Louisiana Court Improvement Program Grant, the Court Improvement Program Data Collection and Analysis Grant, and the Court Improvement Program Training Grant. Responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

- 1) Serve as the primary contact with regional and national federal CIP administrators;
- 2) Staff and facilitate all meetings of the CARE advisory committee and workgroups;
- 3) Coordinate and prepare documentation for federal applications, annual funding requests and programmatic reports;
- 4) Ensure timely submission of all non-fiscal reports as required to federal administration and provide timely program reports, whether local, state or federal, as may be additionally required by Louisiana Court Improvement Program contracts, grants and sub-grants and/or the CARE Committee;
- 5) Coordinate and monitor activities of CIP contractors;
- 6) Review and approve all contractor invoices for services;
- 7) Serve as the CIP representative with DCFS with respect to the federal Child and Family Services Review and Title IV-E eligibility reviews;
- 8) Participate in annual federal CIP meetings;
- 9) Coordinate and provide training statewide;
- 10) Create and distribute best practices bulletins;
- 11) Represent the Louisiana Court Improvement Program on statewide committees, including the LSBA Children's Law Committee, the Louisiana Children's Justice Act Task Force, the Together We Can Conference Planning Committee, the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Victims Act Model Court Team, the LGBTQ Task Force and the Casey Communities of Hope;
- 12) Oversee continued development and implementation of the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System, Child in Need of Care module;

- 13) Establish and maintain effective working relationships with judges, court personnel, attorneys, professionals, and federal, state and local government officials.
- 14) Conduct research, compile and analyze data, make recommendations, and coordinate resulting activities to implement the CIP strategic plan.

Proposer must be willing and able to travel frequently statewide and occasionally out-of-state, including annually for the mandatory CIP conference, and devote an average of thirty (30) to forty (40) hours per week to performing these services.

VI. CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

One (1) original and four (4) paper copies of each proposal must be provided.

Your proposal should address each of the areas outlined below and provide the information requested. Your response should include the following:

A. Cost

The information regarding Cost should include:

1. Your hourly rate and/or proposed flat monthly rate;
2. Your expectations, if any, regarding expense reimbursement, including travel expenses and office/equipment expenses.

B. Qualifications

The information regarding Qualifications should include, but is not limited to the following:

1. Proposer's Experience and Qualifications

The proposal must set forth a description of the proposer's experience with regard to the essential functions outlined in Section V, Scope of Work. Qualifications should include:

- A graduate degree in law, social work, judicial administration, public administration or a related field with preference given to a Juris Doctor admitted to practice law in Louisiana and in good standing, and at least five (5) years of experience working in the child welfare and/or the juvenile court system.
- Knowledge of federal and state child welfare law, including the provisions of the Louisiana Children's Code relative to child protection.

- Knowledge of the principles and practice of grant writing, administration, management, reporting and evaluation, including federal fiscal and program regulations.
- Knowledge of current literature, principles, practices, best practices and outcome measures related to child welfare and/or juvenile court systems.
- Demonstrated experience in prepared and extemporaneous speaking before large audiences.
- Training experience, preferably with judges, court administrators, attorneys, child welfare practitioners, and Court Appointed Special Advocates.
- Understanding of Continuous Quality Improvement principles and the ability to query, obtain and analyze data from a variety of information systems, including AFCARS and NCANDS, and other data reports that may be provided by DCFS.
- Demonstrated experience in multi-disciplinary collaboration and group leadership, management and facilitation.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning for short-, mid- and long-term goals with proven ability for follow-through.

2. Proposer's References

Provide at least two references. The Proposer's References shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Client name
- Client address
- Contact name
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Letters of reference (if available)

Please note that the Court may or may not elect to contact references provided.

VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Court will evaluate all proposals and, if a proposer is to be selected, select a proposer on the basis of the following criteria:

- A. Cost (25 percent)**
- B. Qualifications (75 percent)**

VIII. CONTRACT AWARD

The Court reserves the right to enter into a contract without further discussion of the proposal based on the content of the proposals submitted. Ordinarily, nonresponsive proposals will be rejected outright. Nevertheless, the Court may elect to conduct discussions, including the possibility of limited proposal revisions, but only for those proposals reasonably susceptible of being selected for award. If improper revisions are submitted, the Court may elect to consider only your unrevised initial proposal. The Court may also elect to conduct negotiations, beginning with the highest ranked proposer, or seek best and final offers. If negotiations are conducted, the Court may elect to disregard the negotiations and accept your original proposal.

IX. TERM OF INITIAL AGREEMENT

Proposer should be prepared to start no later than July 1. Any contract to be awarded is expected to be for the remainder of the current CIP grant award period ending September 30, 2016.

X. PUBLIC NATURE OF PROPOSAL AND PROSPECTIVE CONTRACT

All proposals submitted in response to this request for proposals, and any contract which might ultimately be agreed upon, will be open to public inspection by any interested person, firm or corporation.

It should be noted and understood that all proposals, contracts and other documents presented in connection with this RFP become the property of the Court.

XI. SUBMISSION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND REDACTION OF PROPOSALS

Trade secrets or other proprietary information submitted by a proposer as part of its RFP may not be subject to public disclosure, provided the proposer specifies the relevant law supporting its request for confidentiality. However, the proposer must invoke the protections of this section prior to or upon submission of its proposal, must identify the specific data or other materials to be protected, and must state the reasons why protection is necessary. Any aspect of the proposal which addresses the price of providing the requested services will not be considered confidential under any circumstance. Any proposal marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

The proposer must clearly designate the part of the proposal that contains a trade secret and/or privileged or confidential proprietary information as “confidential” in order to claim protection, if any, from disclosure. The proposer shall mark the cover sheet of the proposal with the following legend, specifying the specific section(s) of the proposal sought to be restricted in accordance with the conditions of this legend:

“The data contained in pages _____ of the proposal have been submitted in confidence and contain trade secrets and/or privileged or confidential information and such data shall only be disclosed for evaluation purposes, provided that if a contract is awarded to this proposer as a result of or in connection with the submission of this proposal, the Supreme Court shall have the right to use or disclose the data therein to the extent provided in the contract.”

Further, to protect such data, each page containing such data shall be specifically identified and marked “CONFIDENTIAL.” All markings must be conspicuous; use color, bold, underlining, or some other method in order to distinguish the mark from the other text. You are required to mark the original copy of your offer to identify any information that is exempt from public disclosure. **In addition, you must submit one complete copy of your offer from which you have removed any information that you marked as exempt, i.e., a redacted copy.** The information redacted should mirror in every detail the information marked as exempt from public disclosure. The redacted copy should:

- a. Reflect the same pagination as the original, and
- b. Show the empty space from which information was redacted

Proposers must be prepared to defend the reasons why the material should be held confidential. If a competing proposer or any other person seeks review or copies of another proposer’s confidential data, the Court will notify the owner of the asserted data of the request. If the owner of the asserted data does not want the information disclosed, it must agree to indemnify and hold the Court harmless against all actions or court proceedings that may ensue (including attorney’s fees), which seek to order the Court to disclose the information. If the owner of the asserted data refuses to indemnify and hold the Court harmless, the Court may disclose the information.

XII. COURT DISCRETION

The Court specifically reserves the right to reject, in full or in part, all proposals submitted, and/or to cancel this request for proposals, when such action is in the Court’s best interests. Any contract which may be awarded shall be based upon the proposal which is most advantageous to the Court, costs and other factors considered. All contracts are subject to the availability of funds.

XIII. CHANGES, ADDENDA, WITHDRAWALS

The Court reserves the right to change the calendar of events or issue addenda to the RFP at any time. The Court also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP.

If the proposer needs to submit changes or addenda, such shall be submitted in writing, signed by an authorized representative of the proposer, and cross-referenced clearly to the

relevant proposal section. **All such changes must be received prior to the deadline for proposal submission.**

XIV. COST OF PREPARING PROPOSALS

The Court is not liable for any costs incurred by proposers prior to issuance of or entering into a contract. Costs associated with developing the proposal, preparing the proposal, and any other expenses incurred by the proposer in responding to the RFP are entirely the responsibility of the proposer, and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the Court.

XV. AUDIT OF RECORDS

The State Legislative Auditor or other auditors so designated by the Court shall have the option to audit all accounts directly pertaining to the resulting contract for a period of three (3) years after project acceptance or as required by applicable State or Federal law. Records shall be made available during normal working hours for this purpose.

XVI. RECORDS RETENTION

The successful proposer shall maintain all records relating to any contract which is agreed upon for a period of at least three (3) years after acceptance by the Court.

XVII. CHOICE OF LAW

The resulting contract shall be governed by Louisiana law.

XVIII. NO MANDATORY ARBITRATION

The resulting contract shall not contain any provision mandating that the parties submit to arbitration.

XIX. FIXED PRICING REQUIRED

Any pricing provided by proposer shall include all costs for performing the work associated with that price. Except as otherwise provided in this RFP, proposer's price shall be fixed for the duration of any resulting contract. This clause does not prohibit proposer from offering lower pricing after award.

XX. NON-INDEMNIFICATION

Any term or condition is void to the extent it requires the Court to indemnify anyone.

XXI. PUBLICITY

Contractor shall not publish any comments or quotes by Court employees, or include the Court in either news releases or a published list of customers, without the prior written approval of the Court.

XXII. TERMINATION DUE TO UNAVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

Payment and performance obligations under the resulting contract shall be subject to the availability and appropriation of funds therefor. When funds are not appropriated or otherwise made available to support continuation of performance, the contract shall be canceled.