

Title: Letter of Interest (LOI) # 1060
Licensed Clinicians to Function as the Qualified Individual (QI)
Related to Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

Agency: Children and Family Services, New York State Office of
Bureau of Contract Management

Contract term: To be determined by the individual counties

Date of issue: January 15, 2021

Due date/time: March 12, 2021 by 4:00 PM Eastern Time

Location: All New York State regions with the exclusion of New York City

Counties: Statewide with the exclusion of New York City

General

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is seeking Letters of Interest from licensed clinicians with a minimum of two (2) years of experience in the child welfare field, to function as a Qualified Individual (QI) for the purpose conducting assessments of youth in foster care in accordance with the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and corresponding New York State standards. To meet the requirement of two (2) years of experience in the child welfare field, applicants must have worked for or under contract with a child welfare program in their professional capacity as a licensed clinician for a minimum of two (2) years within the last fifteen (15) years. Child welfare programs include, but are not limited to, a local department of social services, a voluntary authorized agency, a residential agency serving youth or families, a community-based provider, and/or other entity that addressed issues of child safety as it pertained to abuse and neglect, provided and/or coordinated services for children and families to address challenges such as substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence.

Background

FFPSA requires an assessment of a child by a QI who is a licensed clinician for a child to enter certain types of residential placements. More specifically, within thirty (30) days of a child being placed in a New York State Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) setting, a qualified individual must assess the child's strengths and needs using an age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, functional federally approved assessment tool to determine if the child's needs can be met with family members or, in a foster family home, or if not, in one of the other OCFS approved residential settings (i.e. facilities for pregnant or parenting youth or independent living facilities) which would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short- and long-term goals of the child and their permanency plan. In addition, the QI must develop a list of child-specific short-term and long-term mental health and behavioral goals.

Under federal law, the QI may not be a person employed by OCFS or by a LDSS and cannot be connected to or affiliated with any placement setting in which foster children are placed. However, this requirement may be waived by the Secretary of DHHS upon request of a state certifying that trained professional or licensed clinician can maintain objectivity in the assessment process. It is the intent of OCFS to seek such waiver.

Scope of Work

Individuals or organizations with employees holding the following licenses and meeting the minimum qualifications specified above and throughout the course of this document are encouraged to indicate interest in and eligibility to provide the services described herein: physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, nurse practitioner, psychoanalyst, registered nurse, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, mental health counselor, master social worker, licensed creative arts therapist, within their scope of practice under their licensure.

OCFS is seeking individuals or organizations interested in providing the role of a QI as set forth in the [Family First Prevention Services Act \(FFPSA\)](#). QIs will assess the child's strengths and needs using a federally approved, age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, functional assessment tool, specifically the Child and Adolescent Needs Assessment (CANS) and/or the Child and Adolescent Services Intensity Instrument (CASII). The assessment will determine if the child's needs can be met with family members, in a foster family home, and/or if the child's needs meet the criteria for a QRTP level of care.

QIs must be able to provide the services outlined below:

- Utilize an OCFS-approved CANS and/or CASII as part of child's assessment. These tools must be age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, and functional. QIs will be certified and trained in the use of CANS and/or CASII before services are performed.
- Conduct interviews with family and youth to obtain or clarify any information needed to complete functional assessments and formulate child-specific short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals.
- Work in collaboration with the local department of social services (LDSS), QRTP, and permanency team to gather information to formulate determination.
- Provide recommendations regarding whether the needs of the child can be met with family members and/or through placement in a foster family home.
- If applicable,
 - document the reasons why the child's needs cannot be met by the family or in a foster family home setting;
 - document which congregate residential setting would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short-term and long-term goals specified in the permanency plan;
 - document why the recommended placement in a QRTP is the setting that will provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment;
 - document how that placement is consistent with the short-term and long-term mental and behavioral goals as specified in the permanency plan; and
 - provide written reports with recommendations within thirty (30) days of the

child's placement in the QRTP.

Interested individuals or organizations that meet these requirements should inform OCFS by a Letter of Interest (LOI). To be considered responsive, an individual or organization's LOI must be received no later than the deadline specified on the first page of this announcement. Please see the **How to Apply** section for additional information and submission requirements.

Required documentation:

A completed Attachment 1 – Letter of Interest that includes a brief description of

- your interest in applying for this opportunity and how your experience, with emphasis on experience in the child welfare field, will lend itself to the facilitation of this function;
- a list of the counties outside of New York City where you are able to provide this service;

and attests that you

- are a licensed clinician and currently hold a valid New York State clinical license for one of the following professions: physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, nurse practitioner, psychoanalyst, registered nurse, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, mental health counselor, master social worker, licensed creative arts therapist;
- have two (2) or more years of child welfare experience as outlined above; and
- agree to provide the required services if selected.

Cost of Preparing Documents

OCFS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation of documents submitted in response to this solicitation.

How to Apply

To be considered responsive, interested parties must complete and submit all required documents to this solicitation conforming with the format and content requirements as explained. A response that does not provide all the information requested may be subject to rejection. The response should contain sufficient information to assure OCFS of its accuracy. The information provided should, wherever possible, verify that the individual or organization meets the requirements outlined in this announcement.

Each applicant is required to complete and provide the following document:

- **Attachment 1 – Letter of Interest (LOI)**

Applicants must submit their LOI via email to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov no later than the deadline specified on the first page of this announcement.

Please enter “**LOI # 1060 Family First Prevention Services**” in the subject line of the email submission of your application and identify the name of the applicant in the body of the email and in the filenames of attached documents to ensure your submission is processed efficiently. **Early submissions are encouraged as late responses may be subject to rejection.**

Please limit your LOI to a maximum of 2 page(s), Arial 12-point font, single line spacing and one-inch margins. Please see the **Attachment 1 – Sample Letter of Interest** provided for your reference. If applicable, LOI should attempt to conform to the guidance outlined in **Attachment 2 – Guidelines for Preparing Letters of Interest.**

Questions

Any questions or requests for further information must be submitted via email to RFP@ocfs.ny.gov before the due date and time of this announcement. Please submit your questions with adequate time for responses; OCFS recommends allowing at least five (5) business days. Be sure to put “**LOI # 1060 Family First Prevention Services**” in the subject line. **Late questions may not be addressed.**

Diversity

OCFS is committed to identifying, addressing, and reducing disproportionality, and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in our systems of care and custody. Authentic partnerships and joint decision-making with families and communities promote social justice and race equity in order to address disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system. OCFS strongly encourages qualified minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned businesses to submit an LOI.

Contact Information

Primary contact:

Director of Contracts
New York State Office of Children and Family Services
52 Washington Street
Room 202S – Procurement Unit
Rensselaer, NY 12144
RFP@ocfs.ny.gov

Submit to contact:

Director of Contracts
New York State Office of Children and Family Services
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Attachments

Please see the following attachments to this announcement, which are available on *The New York State Contract Reporter* (Contract Reporter) website at <https://www.nyscr.ny.gov> or the OCFS website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/>.

Attachment 1 – Sample Letter of Interest*

Attachment 2 – Guidelines for Preparing Letters of Interest (for reference only)

* Attachments marked with an asterisk **must** be completed and included with your bid proposal.