

Questions and Answers
for
School of Origin (SOO) Transportation RFP

Posted January 30, 2019

1. Will we get a list of TA Attendees?

Yes, this list will be posted on the State Contracting Portal.

2. Does DCF intend to begin the contract on May 1st, or is July 1st a more reasonable expectation?

The contract will be implemented for May 1st but DCF will not expect direct transportation to begin occurring at that time. The May 1st date incorporates time for hiring staffing, set up and implementation.

3. The RFP lists 350 children accessing SOO transportation, but our experience is 700-800 at any given time. Why is there a discrepancy?

Over the last summer DCF conducted a project to review current SOO cases and determined that staff had deviated from DCF policy in how children were relegated to SOO. Based on the results of this project, it was determined that roughly half of the children receiving SOO services should not continue the service but should be transitioned to schools closer to where they currently resided. On an on-going basis, DCF has committed to quarterly review of the SOO population to ensure the continued appropriateness of the children receiving SOO services and believes that the 350-400 number identified in the RFP is a far more accurate depiction of the need for this service.

4. Can you provide a list of current credentialed providers?

Yes, this will be posted on the State Contracting Portal.

5. Does this RFP include General Livery services?

No, this procurement is only related to SOO services.

6. Will General Livery continue to be provided through Credentialed Services?

Yes.

7. Does the rate include therapy transport?

No – Federal Guidelines define School of Origin Transportation as starting at the home where the child resides and then returning to the home at end of school day, although at times there may be an activity or appointment during this transition time that, at the Department's discretion, falls under the definition of SOO transport.

8. Can you provide the current rates for direct transportation?

Yes, current rates will be posted on the State Contracting Portal.

9. Will WRAPS (WAFS) continue to be provided to credentialed providers?

With execution of this contract, WRAPS/WAFS will be eliminated. The Contractor (through the Administrative & Support function of this service) will receive requests directly from DCF staff and will (if using Option B or C) be responsible for coordinating those requests directly with credentialed providers.

10. If the Administrative & Support provider chooses to continue to utilize the credentialed network for direct transportation (Option B or C), how will the rate for the credentialed providers be set?

The current DCF-established rate will continue to be utilized to pay the credentialed providers for the direct transportation piece of SOO services.

11. Will minutes be available for the Bidders Conference?

No, but every question asked at the Bidders Conference will be included in the Questions & Answers document.

12. Does the Administrative & Support provider have the ability to choose which credentialed provider they use if they choose to use credentialed providers (Option B or C)?

No- there will be a standard protocol developed with DCF a time of negotiation that will focus on assignment in the most efficient and economical manner.

13. If Option A is awarded to the Administrative & Support provider, will there continue to be a credentialed provider network for SOO transportation?

No.

14. Can startup costs be proposed?

Yes, this is an allowable first year expense.

15. Under Option C, should the provider propose their own rates, or will they be expected to utilize the existing DCF rates?

Any direct transportation proposed by the Administrative & Support provider should include a proposed rate schedule. The Administrative & Support provider will utilize their own rate schedule negotiated with DCF for any direct transportation services they provide under either Option A or Option C.

16. How long will the contract be awarded for?

DCF anticipates awarding this contract for an initial term of 3 years.

17. Under Option C, can you propose for portions of a Region or do proposals have to be submitted for an entire Region?

We're open to whatever the applicant is comfortable proposing.

18. Can proposals be submitted for more than 1 of the direct transportation options?

Yes, but pay close attention to the RFP description of the proposal submission requirements for submitting for more than 1 option.

19. If submitting for multiple direct transportation options, would each option be scored separately?

Yes.

20. If an applicant only chooses 1 direct transportation option and is not chosen for that 1, will the applicant still be considered for the Administrative and Support piece?

No.

21. Will the Administrative and Support awardee be responsible for reconciling all billing for direct transportation and batching it to DCF?

Yes. Credentialed providers (if continuing to be utilized under Option B or C) will no longer independently bill DCF once this contract is awarded. The Administrative & Support awardee will be responsible for submitting the billing for all direct transportation services to DCF and DCF will pay the credentialed provider of those services.

22. When the batch of direct transportation costs gets sent, will additional reports be required?

No, but separate reports to the Program Lead will be a requirement and will be mutually agreed upon prior to contract execution.

23. What if the selected Administrative & Support provider decides to expand the credentialed network?

If credentialed providers are going to be utilized, the selected Administrative & Support provider will be limited to utilizing only the credentialed provider network and will have no control over the current process for credentialing. This function will remain under DCF.

24. Can a new company become credentialed as an SOO provider?

Yes, if the Administrative & Support provider chooses Option B or C, new companies can continue to become credentialed, but currently credentialing for transportation is closed. DCF has 33 providers, 450 drivers and the capacity to transport 1,000 children, which is 67% more than our current need.

25. Can new drivers under existing credentialed providers continue to be credentialed?

Yes.

26. Do I have to complete this application in order to continue to be a credentialed provider?

No, you have to participate in this RFP process and submit a proposal if you want to be considered for the 1 statewide entity in Connecticut managing the Administrative & Support function detailed in the RFP. But, if the entity awarded the Administrative & Support function chooses to utilize Option A of the Direct Transportation services detailed in the RFP, DCF will no longer utilize a credentialed provider network.

27. Is General Livery a separate credentialing process than SOO?

Yes.

28. Is General Livery open for new providers?

No, all credentialing of new transportation providers is currently closed.

29. Is there a breakdown of what children are going to what specific schools?

No, our current system doesn't accommodate collecting that information, but this is something that we will be looking to the new provider to be able to provide.

30. Can you provide a breakdown of children being transported by Region?

See page 16 of the RFP.

31. Is there an average number of miles traveled each day for children?

No, our current system doesn't accommodate collecting that information, but this is something that we will be looking to the new provider to be able to provide.

32. Is there any way to get any idea of the average number of miles children travel?

No, DCF does not currently have a mechanism to collect that information, but DCF policy does not allow for placement of children into SOO services if their travel time will exceed an hour each way.

33. Does the Department envision cost savings as a result of batching children together (sharing vehicles and drivers)?

Yes.

34. Is the current system unable to determine what schools children are being transported to?

Yes, but this will be an expectation of the administrative & support provider.

35. Do we know what the current expenses are for the administrative & support portion of this RFP?

No, this function does not currently exist.

36. How much money was spent on direct SOO transportation services last year?

\$13,000,000, but this was for approximately 800 children who were primarily transported individually in one car, one driver per child.

37. Was that expense direct transportation service to children?

Yes.

38. Can you provide the approximate monthly cost for direct transportation services?

No. Because of the recent reduction in the number of children transported, and the current method of invoicing and payment, there is no way to accurately approximate a true monthly cost.

- 39. Does DCF envision that through this service the DCF Social Worker will go directly to the Administrative & Support provider with a request for SOO transport and that the Administrative & Support provider will set that transportation up (using either their own internal direct transportation or coordinating with the credentialed provider network)?**

Yes. DCF envisions that this is the (high level) manner in which SOO transportation will occur. It is not DCF's expectation that the Social Worker will have any direct communication with credentialed providers (if Option B or C is utilized). As part of the coordination of the direct transport, it is DCF's expectation that the Administrative & Support provider will identify efficiencies in transportation and dispatch accordingly (ie 2 separate Social Workers request SOO services for 2 different children. The provider should be able to identify if those 2 children live in close enough proximity to one another and are going to schools in close enough proximity to one another to justify dispatching 1 driver/vehicle and transporting the children together).

- 40. Will DCF allow DCF-referred children to receive transportation in tandem with Board of Education-referred children?**

Yes.

- 41. Under the budget instructions (page 19 and 20 of the RFP), if Option B or C is being proposed, what does the term 'costs of collaboration with credentialed providers' mean? Should that include direct transport costs, or just the administrative piece of the collaboration?**

That term, as used in that section of the RFP refers only to any costs the Administrative & Support provider might incur as a result of their collaboration with credentialed providers. It does not include the costs of the actual direct transportation service.

- 42. Who will be credentialing providers?**

Under Option A: It will be the responsibility of the Administrative & Support provider to ensure that each driver/vehicle meets and maintains all state, federal and DCF requirements.

Under Option B: DCF and its contracted provider will continue to be responsible for credentialing SOO transportation providers (as is the current process) and the Administrative & Support provider will be given a list of the DCF-credentialed providers for their use.

Under Option C: DCF will continue to credential the providers for the geographical locations the Administrative & Support provider will not be providing direct transportation for and the Administrative & Support provider will be responsible for ensuring that each driver/vehicle they provide the direct transportation for meets and maintains all state, federal and DCF requirements.

- 43. Do you have to be a credentialed provider to apply for this RFP?**

No.

- 44. After the contract is awarded, if you come in over budget for the direct transportation piece, will DCF still pay?**

Yes, the direct transportation piece of this service will be established as a 'fee-for-service'. As such, there is no maximum budget, DCF pays (within defined rates) for actual services rendered. The Administrative & Support piece of this services will be strictly budget-based, meaning that the Department will define the set annual funding

for that piece of the service and will not deviate from the annual funding. The budgeted portion of this service is for administrative and support services only, the direct transportation portion of service will be paid using the set rate schedule(s) for actual services rendered.

45. How do you contact Stacie?

Stacie Albert is the official contact for this RFP. Her contact information can be found on page 1 and page 4 of the RFP.

46. Can technical, form, format and proposal submission questions be asked after the Question & Answer deadline?

No.

47. Is DCF allowing applicants to partner with other agencies?

Yes, DCF will allow partnership but will not allow subcontractors.

48. Are the DCF promulgated direct transportation rates applicable in a partnership situation?

No. In that case, it would be DCF's expectation that the rates proposed by the applicant be the rates paid to the applicant's partners.

49. What does DCF anticipate the cost of the Administrative and Support portion of this service to be?

It is anticipated that the total cost for this service (Administrative/Support and Direct Transportation) will not exceed \$6,000,000 annually.

50. Do we need to submit only Letter of Intent and Proposal Cover Sheet or there more documents to submit?

Instructions on applying for this grant are on pages 4 through 7 of the RFP. Proposals failing to completely adhere to all form, formatting and content submissions detailed in the RFP will not be evaluated.

51. We would like to know if Option A or Option B is awarded, would the awardee be responsible for credentialing including the background, DCF, and DMV reports for the drivers, or would this task remain through the existing credentialing process?

See question 42.

52. Can we utilize accountant prepared financial statements, tax returns, and a profit and loss statement to meet the financial requirement? If the above documents cannot be utilized can a CPA completed compilation or review meet the requirement?

Yes. Any of the methods detailed in this question will be accepted as meeting the financial requirement of the RFP.

53. Can a start-up subsidiary meet the qualifications? If so, what financials are required?

No.

54. For the 300-400 children expected to qualify for this program, what is the estimated volume of trips (by month)?

Average month has typically 20 days of school x 400 kids = 8,000 trips.

55. When does DCF expect the awardee to start transporting children?

Start of actual transporting children will be dependent on which option is chosen and will be negotiated with awardee, although DCF will minimally expect complete and full operationalization of the program prior to the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

56. Can you please be more specific about “a system to provide a quality assurance tracking system for each transport”?

Expectation is that a GPS type system be utilized to track start, route and end of each transport.

57. If GPS, does the current network have GPS, or would awardee need to implement?

All current Credentialed Providers are required to utilize a GPS tracking system for their own transports. The awardee under this contract would implement one universal tracking system that will be utilized for every school transport State wide. If the decision is made to utilize the current network, DCF will work with awardee to implement with current providers.

58. Does this include any other transportation, such as school-to-appointment? Or only home-to-school and school-to-home?

See question 7.

59. Can you please clarify the difference between Option A and Option C?

Both options will be responsible for the Administrative and Support functions. Under Option A the contractor will be responsible for all statewide direct transportation services. Under Option C the contractor will be responsible for direct transportation services for only a portion of the State while utilizing the current DCF Credentialed network to cover direct transportation for the rest of State.

60. Can the respondent propose using a combination of providers in the currently credentialed provider network, with providers credentialed by the bidder to DCF standards?

There will be one contract awarded. Refer to the 3 options on Page 19 of the RFP.

If Option A is chosen, the Contractor will be expected to provide direct transportation internally and will be responsible for independently ensuring that their staff meet all state and DCF licensing requirements for transportation of children.

If Option B is chosen, the Contractor will not be responsible for any certification or credentialing of direct transportation providers, that function will remain with DCF and its contracted provider for credentialing.

If Option C is chosen, the Contractor will be responsible for independently ensuring that their staff providing direct transportation meet all state and DCF licensing requirements while DCF and its contract provider for credentialing will continue to be responsible for credentialing the service providers used by the Contractor for direct transportation for the portion of the state for which the Contractor will not be providing the direct transport.

61. Can the bidder use different rates to arrive at their cost than the current credentialed rates?

Yes.

62. Will the successful bidder credential the network themselves to DCF standards, or will DCF continue to credential the network?

This depends on which Option is selected, refer to the 3 options on Page 19 of the RFP and see the answer to Question 60.

63. Would DCF consider the existing DMV checks, which are similar to the DCF requirements, to be adequate credentialing?

No.

64. Should Proposers use the “CFRFP Budget” Excel as the budget template, or the “Consolidated Budget” referenced in the RFP?

From the link in the RFP, choose the Request for Proposal (RFP) link in the first section of the page. From there, scroll to the RFP Forms section and choose the DCF RFP Budget POS link. This is the budget that should be completed in its entirety and returned with your proposal.

65. Please clarify that DCF is requesting the Consolidated Budget to include the Proposer’s complete income and expenses, not just income and expenses associated with the administration of this program?

No, while a whole agency budget will be required from the successful bidder, for purposes of proposal submission, the DCF RFP Budget POS should only be completed for this program, although any program income anticipated beyond DCF’s allocation should be included.

66. Please clarify in which section DCF would like to see the proposed total annual administration cost – the Budget Narrative?

If referring to the A/G (Indirect Rate), this information should be captured on Staff Salaries tab of the DCF RFP Budget (for administrative staff) and on line 809 of the Itemized Expenses tab of the DCF RFP Budget (for the A/G Rate). If referring to a proposed profit margin, if such is being proposed, it should be included on line 807 of the Itemized Expenses tab and clearly identified and justified in the Budget Narrative.

67. Can the bidder submit one electronic billing file to DCF monthly for all trips performed that month? Does DCF have an electronic billing format they would like the bidder to use.

DCF currently does not have a specified billing format. One page 18 the proposer is being asked to identify a detailed plan on how each Administrative function will be delivered.

68. Will DCF provide an electronic (CSV, other) eligibility file so the awardee can track, manage and monitor which children are eligible for transportation? If so, how frequently does DCF expect to update this file? If not, how does DCF envision providing transportation eligibility to the awardee?

The contractor will not be responsible for determining eligibility. DCF will determine eligibility and only those children determined by DCF to be eligible will be referred to the Contractor.

69. Can DCF share how much is currently spent for ABH to maintain the existing credentialed network?

Advanced Behavioral Health is responsible for Credentialing 14 different service types. The total annual cost is not broken out by service type.

70. Does DCF have a current estimate of what it costs to administer the program currently?

No.

71. Will updates to the RFP be posted on Biznet or the DCF website or both?

Both.

72. In Section B, Assurances, under Item 1, Collusion, proposers are asked to attest that: “The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.” Given that DCF has invited bidders to present, as part of bids under options A or C, letters of agreement with transportation providers, including presumably providers on the DCF certified list of providers of school transportation, we are assuming that negotiations entered into with other providers who may be considering proposals with the intent to develop such letters of agreement during the bidding period would not be considered collusion in the sense meant in this section. Is this correct?

Correct. Collusion is, by definition, an intent to cheat or deceive through secret conspiracy. Partnership among agencies for performance of the services requested herein is not collusion.

73. In Section B, Assurances, under Item 3, Competitors, it states: “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.”

This section of the RFP is designed to prevent bid-rigging on the part of proposers. It is specific to a situation in which providers are colluding to steer the award of state contracts (ie. An agreement among a group of providers to under or over bid a service to steer it towards 1 particular provider, or an agreement among a group of providers to not bid on a service so that provider A can be awarded this time with the understanding that provider B will apply next time). Partnership among a group of providers that is properly identified and detailed in the proposal is not collusion of an attempt to restrict competition.

74. Part A: Given that under Option A for Direct Transportation Service Delivery, “partnership with existing credentialed providers or school transportation entities for the direct provision of transportation services will be allowed” and the response at the bidders conference that such letters of agreement would be permissible under Option C, it is likely that some providers may be asked to be part of multiple proposals. Given this, we assume that:

- a proposer can also be involved in other proposals as a partner under a letter of agreement. Is this correct?
- a transportation provider can participate through a letter of agreement in more than one proposal submitted by others. Is this correct?

Correct.

75. Part B: It is also likely that there will be discussions of proposed costs with potential partners under Options A and C. We assume that disclosure of the proposed costs to these organizations would be assumed and not violate the restriction in the last sentence given the intent and structure of the RFP. Is this correct?

Correct. This is not collusion or an attempt to restrict competition, it is a DCF-authorized ability to partner.

76. Under Option C, the budget will be just for administration and working with the network of providers while under Option A, the direct transportation costs will be a major factor. Proposers under Option A can propose options they would provide transportation at substantially less than the current rates offered to credentialed providers. Will the committee rate options based on the merits of each option within its terms when awarding rating points for the budget and cost proposal?

Yes.