



## Iowa's Child Welfare System and Child Welfare Service Procurements for State Fiscal Year 2018

### I. Introduction

- A. In 2016 the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS or Department) intends to request proposals to provide Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES), Foster Group Care Services (FGCS), Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) and other child welfare services. Interested service providers will be required to submit bids on a competitive basis in order to be eligible for selection as a contractor to provide them.
- B. This document is intended to inform the public about decisions, guiding principles, and other matters on which a Request For Proposal (RFP) will be based.

### II. Approach To Future Procurements

- A. Building on past methodologies used to procure services, the DHS intends to reach the largest group of stakeholders and move along together toward developing the RFPs.
- B. Public conversations will be intentional and as collective as possible instead of in bits and pieces between agencies or individuals and DHS, or within DHS, and between providers within their own organizations, etc.
- C. Fundamentally, thinking will be shifted and information will be collected and shared in as broad a way as possible to ensure clear understanding and philosophical agreement regarding the service system.
- D. Contracts are the vehicles to carry out the intent of what we want for Iowa's children and families.

### III. Iowa's Vision, Philosophical Base, and Direction Toward a Child Welfare System of Care

#### A. Where We Are Now

- 1. We can build on the child welfare redesign work from around 2005-2006, the foundation and new thinking established, e.g., the model of practice, decisions of standardizing who would receive services in our system, and how services would be provided.

2. The contract for Community Care was the first run at performance-based contracting and thinking differently about paying providers and the orientation from which providers looked at our families.
3. The implementation of Differential Response is another example providing results of looking at things differently.
4. Services have moved from “pilot” status to statewide contracts quickly compared to other states; Parent Partners is a good example and Iowa is the only state to provide these services statewide.
5. Parent Partners is also a good example of one of the most important things DHS does; i.e., building the partnership it has with providers.
6. The first implementation of Family Safety, Risk and Permanency (FSRP) was a fundamental shift in providers talking to one another; state government and providers wanting to learn from each other became obvious.
7. “Buy in” vs. “ownership”: Buy in is not as substantive and not as successful in the long run as everyone owning where we are headed and moving there together. The intent is to agree on the existing boundaries and work together to move beyond them together.

## B. Areas For Improvement

1. Kids have to be safe. How do we define safe? What makes us safe and how do we incorporate that into the system?
2. Safe families and safe neighborhoods
  - a. Keeping kids connected with families – children and youth need to be with families. We want a family driven system.
  - b. The system (DHS, public and private provider partners, and all interested stakeholders) exists to support and advocate for families.
  - c. If a child needs shelter or foster group care, the entire focus should be on delivering the right service for the right duration and getting the child back with their family.
  - d. Contracts are intended to be the vehicle for kids and communities to get better outcomes; contracts and the system should not simply focus on compliance.

- e. Families are defined as dysfunctional if they don't work with the system. Is that true dysfunction if the system is more focused on compliance than outcomes?

### 3. A System of Care Is Not Case Management

- a. The child welfare system must begin to develop more evidence based and data driven approaches that support strong children, strong families, and strong community networks focused on whole person growth and development.

### 4. Procurements and The Evolution of The Child Welfare System Of Care

- a. Model examples to support child well-being are Iowa's Children's Disability Workgroup and the current Children's Mental Health and Well-Being Workgroup: Encouraging a child and family driven, cross-system spectrum of effective, community-based services, supports, policies, and processes for children and youth, from birth through young adulthood. The focus is organized into a flexible coordinated network of resources with meaningful partnerships with families, children and young adults.

## C. Where Are We Heading

### 1. Form following function

- a. Contracts should be primarily based on their intended function or purpose or philosophy.
- b. DHS and its provider partners must be focused and disciplined to get the philosophy right.
- c. Based on the common philosophy, determine if contracts enhance or detract from the philosophy.
- d. Conversations leading up to the procurements will help DHS and partners to know how far and how fast to push each other.
- e. Conversations will help guide what Iowa Code, administrative rules, procedures or protocols, and contractual changes are needed.

### 2. The Guiding Principles for Iowa's Future Child Welfare System are available from the Division of Adult, Children, and Family Services, Iowa Department of Human Services.

### 3. Resources

- a. A public/private partnership must be mindful of financing.
  - b. Funding will be one of the determining factors on how fast and far the next procurement process moves towards a family and community focused system of care.
4. Approaches must be defined as immediate, short-term or long-term, regarding problems and solutions.
5. Training and mentoring
- a. Investment in the right training is needed to improve outcomes.
  - b. Good policies will help define the right training parameters.
  - c. Trauma informed care (TIC)
    - i. TIC is one of the system's operational elements, similar to addressing disproportionality and cultural competency.
    - ii. We are trauma informed but must properly operationalize the approach.

#### D. How We Are Going To Get There

1. Technical Assistance (TA)
  - a. The Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa in partnership with the DHS is seeking technical assistance from the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities to help inform the procurement process and prepare providers for transformational changes. Conversations will focus on:
    - i. Practice challenges
    - ii. Policy challenges
    - iii. Regulatory challenges
    - iv. Fiscal challenges
2. Three parts of TA
  - a. Part 1: Initial meeting with service providers. Input from this session will inform the design of all subsequent activities.
  - b. Part 2: Discussions and interviews with state leaders and key stakeholders to prepare for a system of care summit meeting. The summit is intended as a one day meeting with DHS, provider partners, the judicial system, key legislators, managed care organizations, and other key stakeholders. Case

studies from other states that have successfully made the transformation will be used (e.g., Wraparound Milwaukee)

- c. Part 3: TA for DHS to develop a request for proposal (RFP), focusing on service components, outcome measures, and financing.
- d. Funding is being sought from Casey for this TA request.

### 3. Request For Information (RFI)

- a. Released November 30, 2015 regarding the Child Welfare Emergency Services, Foster Group Care, and Supervised Apartment Living child welfare services at this link:  
[http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/index.php?pgname=viewrfp&rfp\\_id=11906](http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/index.php?pgname=viewrfp&rfp_id=11906)

## IV. Timeline and Communication

- A. The goal is to focus on the fundamental philosophy; this will guide writing an RFP.
- B. Back and forth communication can and will occur up to the time the DHS begins writing the RFP (circa May 2016).
- C. DHS will still take input beyond May 2016, but feedback to interested parties will be limited due to the competitive nature of procurements.
- D. The intent of the Department is to release the RFPs in 2016 with new contracts to be effective July 1, 2017.