

Request for Information (RFI)

☐ Introduction:

The Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children's Services (OCS), is seeking public input to help develop a future grant solicitation to support family contact hours and/or transportation to those services.

Feedback will help OCS inform the services, safeguards, provider qualifications, and grant requirements that would be included in a future application package.

☐ Background Information:

OCS is exploring the possibility of a future federally-funded grant aimed at increasing the volume of safe, meaningful family contact for families involved with OCS and reducing transportation-related challenges. OCS is considering two service options:

- Family Contact: Supervised and supported family contact, including observation and quality documentation when appropriate, to include evening, and weekend hours in addition to daytime hours. Expanding locations so in addition to in-office visitation, families would have the option to meet in additional appropriate community locations such as parks, playgrounds, museums, zoo, etc.
- Transportation: Provide safe transportation to and from in-person family contact.

Through the envisioned grants, providers could propose to provide solely family contact, transportation, or offer both.

OCS invites public comment and suggestions about how to best structure the services above to meet the needs of families while also maintaining safety standards.

Some general requirements under consideration and in need of public comment are:

- Provide round trip physical travel services for youth to their family visitations.
- Provide enough vehicles to transport the estimated number of youths in the service area(s).
- Provide and maintain age-appropriate car and booster seats as required in AS 28.05.095.
- Timelines for confirming services.
- Background checks for anyone having contact with children.
- Ensuring driver has valid Alaska driver's license, driving certifications, and insurance.
- Reporting and documentation requirements, including those associated with the applicable federal funding source.

☐ Response Information: This RFI seeks public comment on the proposed services, all aspects pertaining to service provision, and suggestions for evaluation methodology of any potential grant program

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The topics listed below are provided as considerations for public comment but OCS invites any feedback related to a potential federally funded family contact and transportation grant.

1. **Service design:** What should these services look like in practice? What components are essential for services to be safe, helpful, family-centered, and responsive to children's needs?
2. **Family Contact Supports:** Describe the types of supervision, coaching, preparation, debriefing, or other supports for families that should be included before, during, or after family contact. What provider qualifications should be considered?
3. **Transportation:** What should be included in transportation services beyond driving, such as scheduling, coordination, car seats, safety, background checks, etc? What provider qualifications, driver qualifications, training, background checks, vehicle standards, insurance, and other safety protocols should be included?
4. **Access and availability:** Please share suggested service hours, community locations, languages, cultural considerations, or accessibility accommodations to reduce barriers for families. How should services address evening and weekend needs?
5. **Coordination and Communication:** What is the best way for providers to coordinate with OCS, caregivers, parents, Tribal partners, and other service providers while protecting confidential information?
6. **Documentation and Data:** What information should providers document or report to demonstrate that services occurred, identify barriers, while supporting quality improvement without creating unnecessary administrative burden?
7. **Provider capacity:** What would help organizations successfully offer these services? Please comment on staffing, scheduling, geographic coverage, reimbursement approach, technology, or other operational needs.
8. **Grant application package:** What should a strong application demonstrate? What requirements, scoring considerations, or instructions to applicants would help OCS select providers capable of delivering high-quality services?
9. **Rates:** What rate structure or reimbursement approach would reasonably support safe, reliable, and high-quality family contact and/or transportation services, including services provided during evenings, weekends, or across longer distances?
10. **Other recommendations:** Any other suggestions or feedback related to these services that should be considered.

This request is for public input only. It is not a solicitation, does not commit OCS to issue a grant, and will not result in an award. OCS may use the public input received to refine service requirements and develop a future Request for Proposal.

Interested parties may submit written responses either via mail or email. All responses – including those sent via mail -- must be received and date-stamped by DFCS by 5pm on Monday, October 26th ADT

Email responses to FCS.FMS.Vendor.Response@alaska.gov

Or via mail to:

**RFI 2027-2600-001 Public Comment
c/o DFCS Grants & Contracts
PO Box 112650
Juneau, AK 99811-2650**

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