Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department
Children & Family Services
Request for Interest RFI #547
Ombudsman Services

A. Introduction and Background

The Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD or Department), Children & Family Services Bureau (CFS) is seeking applications from qualified individuals and/or agencies to provide Ombudsman Services. CFS provides child welfare services to Contra Costa County residents through offices countywide.

Issues can and do arise between the various parties, including child welfare and other staff, caregivers, parents, and children. Common issues involve communication, respect, information, resources, case decisions, legal rights, payments, and many other areas.

In administering issues and complaints, the Ombudsman acts as an impartial intermediary between CFS and other parties involved. The Ombudsman will receive and investigate complaints as referred by the CFS Director. These may be from program applicants, recipients, other county departments, community based organizations, individual community members, elected officials and others. The Ombudsman gathers information and works to resolve issues using various mediation skills.

The main purpose of the Ombudsman is to promote and maintain good working relationships between all involved parties. Part of this role is to help clients understand the process and their rights and responsibilities. As systemic issues are identified, the Ombudsman makes formal recommendations to the Bureau Director.

B. Scope of Work

The Scope of Work is to be used as a general guide and is not intended to be a complete list of all work necessary to complete the project.

The following are work tasks assumed necessary to complete the projects described in this RFI. Specific tasks will include but are not limited to:

1. Act as an Ombudsman to resolve issues and complaints received by the Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD or Department), Bureau of Children & Family Services (CFS)..

2. Develop a system and protocol – set of processes, procedures and forms – for managing and responding to client complaints to be reviewed and

approved by CFS Director and EHSD's Executive Team. Upon approval by the parties, implemented and utilized by the contractor.

3. Meet with providers and clients at EHSD offices, private homes and community locations as necessary to provide information, make referrals, and conduct complaint intakes.

4. Consult with CFS and EHSD (if necessary) management and staff to resolve issues of concern and complaints, and to ensure the proposed resolution is within legal and regulatory requirements.

5. Assist the complainant and document resolution and recommendations in a consistent format. Consistent documentation will include:
   a. Creation and use of standard complaint reporting format;
   b. Provision of copies to complainant, CFS Director and other appropriate parties; and,
   c. Develop and maintain individual case files for every complaint logged.

6. Resolution can include, but is not limited to the following:
   a. Clarification of rules or policies for the client and/or staff and recommendations to the complainant regarding rules and policies.

   b. Mediation between the client and staff as appropriate.

   c. Development of agreements regarding actions by staff, client, and/or other parties.

7. Meet with the CFS Director, or designee, at least monthly initially and then at least quarterly to provide feedback regarding client service issues and to make policy recommendations.

8. Compile program data for monthly reports summarizing the volume, source, nature, and outcome of complaints handled and reporting hours of service provision.

9. Provide input on CFS and EHSD trainings related to customer service, communication, conflict resolution and other related topics.

C. Required RFI Submissions

Those interested in responding to RFI #547 the following information must be submitted in the order specified below:

1. A cover letter describing interest in the ombudsman position and relevant experience and abilities.

2. Provide a résumé of your experience and other factors relevant to the services described in this RFI. Include information addressing work similar to this project, any related completed projects, and training. Organizations applying should provide resumes of key staff or job descriptions/minimum requirements for key positions.

3. Provide a statement, written solely by the respondent, addressing the following items:
    a. Summary of skills, resources, and experience relevant to the ombudsman position;
    b. The major steps, tasks, number of hours, and timeline in the delivery of ombudsman services.

4. Two (2) letters of verifiable business references. And,

5. Any relevant addenda which the respondent wishes to submit.

D. Minimum Qualifications

The respondent must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Masters of Social Work, or related degree, with at least two years relevant experience in the social work/child welfare field or a Bachelors of Social Work, or related degree, with at least four years relevant experience in the social work/child welfare field.

2. Demonstrated knowledge of the issues facing children and families involved in the Contra Costa's public sector EHSD programs and the services available to those clients.

3. Knowledge of how poverty impacts and stresses people using CFS's and EHSD's services.

4. Strong decision making skills and good judgment/problem solving abilities.

5. Experience in compiling data and writing reports summarizing work performed.

6. Strong written and excellent oral communication skills.

7. Experience with formal mediation, negotiation, advocacy or similar skill.

8. Ability to work well with difficult people, including those with mental health issues.

9. Knowledge of public benefits programs and populations served.

10. Ability to pass a background check as duties may include contact with children and access to confidential records, etc.

Any response that does not demonstrate that the respondent meets these minimum requirements by the deadline for submittal of Qualifications will be considered non-responsive and will not be eligible for award of the contract.

E. Selection Criteria

The submission packages will be evaluated by Departmental staff to identify the most qualified respondent(s). If more than one respondent is deemed to be highly qualified, the Department may require oral interviews and/or supplemental information from those respondents before making a final selection decision. Negotiations will begin upon identification of the most qualified respondent(s). If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated in a reasonable time frame, EHSD, in its sole discretion, may terminate negotiations with the respondent(s) and begin contract negotiations with another qualified respondent(s).

Evaluation criteria is based upon the following %s:

50% Experience
25% CFS Knowledge
15% Proposal Presentation
10% County Demographic Knowledge

F. Funding

Contract for up to $75,000 will be awarded and paid on an all inclusive hourly rate. The selected respondent will enter into a one-year Standard County contract. General Liability Insurance is required. Valid California driver's license and vehicle insurance are required.

G. Submission Process

Interested parties must submit complete RFI #547 proposals addressing the above requirements including letters of reference to:

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department
Contacts Unit, Attn: **RFI #547**
40 Douglas Drive, Martinez, CA 94553

Telephone: (925)313-1691
FAX: (925)313-1758
E-mail: contractbid@ehsd.cccounty.us

Proposal in response to **RFI #547** must be received by the D4partment not later the **5:00 PM, Tuesday, July 22, 2014**. Postmarks will not be accepted.