

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
FOR  
COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FOR  
IDENTIFIED NEEDS**

**DATE: September 23, 2019**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Children and Families (Department) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to Florida’s vendor community to obtain the latest information available on technologies that provide a method to expedite the facilitation of meeting identified needs for children and families in crisis and caregivers who provide support during times of crisis.

This is an RFI as defined in ss. 287.012(22), Florida Statutes (F.S.), for planning purposes only. This is not a solicitation for offers. The information gathered from this RFI may be used to develop a future competitive solicitation. Please monitor the Vendor Bid System for any changes or notices prior to submitting a response.

**II. PURPOSE OF AN RFI**

Rule 60A-1.042, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), provides that an agency may request information by issuing a written RFI. Agencies are authorized to use an RFI in circumstances including, but not limited to, determining whether to competitively procure a commodity or contractual services, determining what solicitation process to use for a particular need, or researching general, special, and/or technical specifications for a solicitation. A vendor’s response to an RFI is not an offer and the agency may not use the vendor’s submission to justify a contract with that vendor without otherwise complying with Chapter 287, F.S., and Rule 60A-1.042, F.A.C. Vendors submitting a response to an agency’s RFI are not prohibited from responding to any related subsequent solicitation.

Any future purchase of the services will be conducted in accordance with Chapter 287, F.S. The Department may use responses to this RFI to prepare one (1) or more competitive solicitations and as the basis for any subsequent vendor meetings.

**III. BACKGROUND**

Under s. 20.19, F.S., the Department is charged with ensuring the safety, permanency, and well being of children in the State of Florida. Children need to grow up in a safe and permanent home, where they are free from abuse, neglect, and other forms of maltreatment by their caregivers. The Department must assure the safety and welfare of vulnerable children as a primary priority. The Department must also attempt to strengthen and support the child’s family. According to federal and state laws, the health and safety of the child must be paramount in all service, placement, and permanency decisions made.

Additionally, s. 39.001, F.S., requires the Department to provide for the care, safety, and protection of children in an environment that fosters healthy social emotional, intellectual, and physical development; to ensure secure and safe custody; to promote the health and well-being of all children in the state’s care; and to prevent the occurrence of child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

**IV. GOAL**

The Department intends through this RFI to obtain the latest information available on technologies that can help the Department meet its goals of becoming a prevention-focused agency by increasing pre-crisis contacts through referrals to community services and face-to-face services. Additionally, the Department seeks to reduce re-entry into our system of care by reducing recidivism, measuring how effective our services are twelve (12) months after contact with a family, and holding ourselves accountable to ensuring they are receiving quality care.

To help achieve these goals, the Department is interested in solutions that will assist in reducing the impact of a crisis on a family, resulting in family stability, and ultimately reducing the need for children to be placed outside their home. In circumstances where removal from a home is unavoidable, these technologies will also be leveraged to provide support for caregivers who have stepped in as placements for the children entering out of home care.

For this RFI, the Department is seeking the latest information available on commercial off-the-shelf technologies that provide a means of expediting the facilitation of meeting identified needs for children and families in crisis and caregivers who provide support during times of crisis. The system should be capable of communicating needs of children and families in crisis or caregivers, identified by child protective investigators or case managers, to entities and individuals in local communities, to facilitate the service of the identified need.

## **V. RESPONSE**

In furtherance of the goals listed above in Section IV., the Department is seeking responses to include the following:

### **A. Contact Information:**

1. Primary contact;
2. Address;
3. Phone; and
4. Email.
5. Are you a [certified business enterprise](#) with the State of Florida?
6. Customer references, including any previous work with federal, state, local, or county government.

### **B. Product Information:**

1. What commercial off-the-shelf technologies or online platforms are available that can assist the Department in meeting the goals described in Section IV.?
  - a. What are the features of the available technologies or online platforms?
  - b. How agile are the technologies or online platforms and how can they be leveraged (e.g. web-based, mobile device ready)?

- c. What security access measures, safeguards, including user controls, and administrative access are included in the technologies or online platforms?
2. What commercial technologies are in development, but not yet available, that would the Department in meeting the goals described in Section IV.?
3. What additional recommendations does your company have to assist the Department in meeting the goals described in Section IV.?

**VI. RESPONSE FORMAT**

Respondents should respond at least to the following sections at a minimum:

- A. Introduction;
- B. Background; and
- C. Response to Section IV and V.

**PLEASE NOTE: Any submitted material is subject to the Public Records Act, s. 119.07, F.S.**

**VII. RESPONSE SUBMISSION**

Responses should address each request and question in Section V., point by point. Responses shall be submitted in both Microsoft Word and portable document format (“PDF”) labeled with Respondent’s organization’s name and the RFI number in the email subject line.

Submit one (1) original electronic copy of the Response, and one (1) electronic redacted copy (if applicable) to the Point of Contact, listed below, within the required date and time, identified in Section X., below. The response must be submitted to the contact and email address identified below:

Michele Stevens  
Purchasing & Contract Client Services  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
1317 Winewood Blvd., Ste. 202-O  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0950  
Phone: (850) 717-4581

**VIII. PROCESS**

Responses to this RFI will be reviewed by the Department for informational purposes only and will not result in the award of a contract. The Department will review the responses to determine the feasibility of issuing a competitive solicitation for the defined products and services.

Any request for cost information is for budgetary purposes only. If necessary, the Department may ask to hold presentations with one (1) or more of the responding vendors.

Responding to the RFI does not prevent a vendor from being eligible to contract with an agency pursuant to ss. 287.057(17)(c), F.S.

**IX. PRESENTATIONS**

After the Department receives responses to this RFI, and at the sole discretion of the Department, one (1) or more Respondents may be selected to demonstrate to the Department the Respondent’s products and services relating to the information submitted in the RFI response. The purpose is to learn about the most current solutions available. This economy of presentation will be applied to all verbal discussions as well. The meeting moderator will be polite but direct to keep discussions on topic and will not allow the meetings to take on a sales tone. Vendors are encouraged to bring technical and legal representatives to the presentation meetings.

**X. TIMELINE**

Listed below are important dates and times when actions should be taken or completed. If the Department finds it necessary to update any of the dates and, or times noted, it will be accomplished by an Amendment to the RFI. All times listed below are in Eastern Standard Time (EST) in Tallahassee, Florida.

Event	Date
Release of RFI	09/23/2019
Deadline to submit inquiries	09/30/2019
Department’s response to inquiries	10/04/2019
Deadline to submit responses and close of RFI	10/11/2019

**XI. RFI QUESTIONS AND CONTACT**

Respondents shall address all questions regarding this RFI in writing to the Point of Contact identified in Section XIV. The Department will post answers to questions on VBS as noted in Section X., Timeline.

**XII. CONFIDENTIAL, PROPRIETARY OR TRADE SECRET INFORMATION**

If Respondent considers any portion of the documents, data or records submitted in response to this RFI to be confidential, proprietary, trade secret or otherwise not subject to disclosure pursuant to Chapter 119, F.S., the Florida Constitution or other authority, Respondent must mark the document as “Confidential” and simultaneously provide the Department with a separate redacted copy of its response and briefly describe in writing the grounds for claiming exemption from the public records law, including the specific statutory citation for such exemption. This redacted copy shall contain the Department’s RFI name, number, and the name of the Respondent on the cover, and shall be clearly titled “Redacted Copy.” The Redacted Copy should only redact those portions of material that the Respondent claims are confidential, proprietary, trade secret or otherwise not subject to disclosure.

In the event of a request for public records pursuant to Chapter 119, F.S., the Florida Constitution or other authority, to which documents that are marked as confidential are responsive, the Department will provide the Redacted Copy to the requestor. If a requestor asserts a right to the Confidential Information, the Department will notify the Respondent such an assertion has been made. It is the Respondent's responsibility to assert that the information in question is exempt from disclosure under chapter 119 or other applicable law. If the Department becomes subject to a demand for discovery or disclosure of the Confidential Information of the Respondent in a legal proceeding, the Department shall give the Respondent prompt notice of the demand prior to releasing the information, unless otherwise prohibited by applicable law. The Respondent shall be responsible for defending its determination that the redacted portions of its response are confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or otherwise not subject to disclosure.

By submitting a reply, the Respondent agrees to protect, defend, and indemnify the Department for any and all claims arising from or relating to the Respondent's determination that the redacted portions of its reply are confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or otherwise not subject to disclosure. If Respondent fails to submit a redacted copy of information it claims is confidential, the Department is authorized to produce the entire documents, data, or records submitted to the Department in answer to a public records request for these records.

**XIII. VENDOR COSTS**

Vendors are responsible for all costs associated with the preparation, submission, and any potential meeting to discuss this RFI. The Department will not be responsible for any vendor related costs associated with responding to this request.

**XIV. SOLE POINT OF CONTACT**

If you have questions concerning this RFI, please contact:

Michele Stevens  
Departmental Purchasing  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
1317 Winewood Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0950  
Phone: (850) 717-4581  
Email: [michele.stevens@myflfamilies.com](mailto:michele.stevens@myflfamilies.com)

**ALL EMAILS TO THE POINT OF CONTACT SHALL CONTAIN THE RFI NUMBER IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE EMAIL.**

**XV. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any person with a disability requiring special accommodations to participate in the RFI shall contact the Department sole point of contact at the phone number provided in Section XIV. at least five (5) working days prior to the event. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please

contact this office by using the Florida Relay Services which can be reached at 1 (800) 955-8771 (TDD). Certified Business Enterprises are encouraged to participate in the RFI process.