

**2015 CHILD CARE
RESOURCE
AND REFERRAL
PROGRAM
REQUEST
FOR
PROPOSALS**

Issued By:

**Department of Human Services
Division of Family Development
Jeanette Page-Hawkins, Director**

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Jennifer Velez, Commissioner

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A. PURPOSE OF FUNDING

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family Development (DFD), is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of awarding contracts for the administration of New Jersey's child care subsidy program and other supports that improve the provision of child care services.

The goals of this project are to (1) implement a unified statewide comprehensive child care delivery system, (2) provide eligible families with financial resources to access high quality child care services, (3) provide families comprehensive consumer education that promotes informed child care choices, (4) support providers' efforts to continuously improve their programs, and (5) improve the quality of and coordination of child care services.

This RFP is designed to secure a contract from one or more qualified agencies that will provide the services statewide, regionally or for a single county. An Applicant seeking to serve more than one county must submit a separate and distinct budget for each county to be served, and identify any differences in services between the counties.

DHS/DFD anticipates entering into a fifteen month contract term with the ability to renew the contract annually for up to four additional one year periods subject to, as determined in the sole discretion of DHS/DFD, (a) funding availability, (b) satisfactory evaluation by DHS/DFD of the successful Applicant's achievement of performance standards listed, and (c) changes in programmatic or service-related needs. The resultant contract may also be affected by any changes in federal or state statutes or rules as may arise prior to or during the contracting periods.

The goal of this contract(s) is to implement a comprehensive and effective child care delivery system in alignment with the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)'s goals to assist low to moderate-income families' to access high quality child care, improve the quality of care to support children's healthy development, and help programs meet higher standards.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This RFP supports DHS/DFD's efforts to strengthen its child care delivery system, and enhance the quality and availability of all child care programs subsidized with public funds.

DHS/DFD is the Lead Applicant for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), which was authorized by Congress through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by amending the Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations at 45 CFR Part 98. The funds to be awarded under this RFP have been made available through the CCDF to provide financial assistance to eligible Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and low-income families in need of child care.

The selected Applicant shall be responsible for locally administering and managing New Jersey's Child Care Subsidy Program. As a contracted agent for DHS/DFD, its primary functions are to administer an efficient and effective child care delivery system, be a single entry point to all eligible families, and serve as a community resource and linkage for families, the child care community, and general public to access child care services.

In addition to the core areas of program management, the selected Applicant(s) will be responsible for assisting in the management of DHS/DFD's EPPIC payment system.

Electronic Child Care (ECC) is an electronic web-based application that accurately and timely captures, tracks, and reports child care time and attendance data primarily utilizing Point of Service (POS) devices and an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The system calculates payments based on the attendance information captured via POS device swipes or IVR calls and directs the deposit of funds into provider-designated accounts on a biweekly basis.

With the implementation of Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System, and recent award of a Race to the Top federal grant, the selected Applicant will be required to help providers continuously improve and meet higher quality standards. Grow NJ Kids is a rating and improvement system designed to assess early care and education programs, provide training and incentives to improve them, and to communicate their level of quality to the public. The Applicant must also promote and administer specific quality initiatives in accordance with DFD's goals and priorities.

In addition to the core areas of program delivery, the selected Applicant shall maintain administrative and fiscal accountability, meet reporting requirements, and ensure program integrity to meet all program compliance and performance standards. If selected, as recipients of government funds, all agencies must adhere to all federal and state laws, TANF, CCDF, and Title IV-E statutory requirements.

Eligible Applicants

An eligible Applicant must comply with the statements below, as well as all requirements set forth in the RFP.

- Be for-profit, not-for-profit, or a public/governmental entity that can demonstrate the ability to administer and deliver the services required under this RFP.
- For-profit entities must obtain a Business Registration Certificate prior to the award of the contract, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:32-44.
- Have the necessary infrastructure, qualified staff, experience and skills, technical qualifications, and facilities, or have the ability to obtain them (including subcontractor arrangements) within thirty (30) days of contract award and sixty (60) days before the start of the contract.
- Demonstrate its ability to comply with the proposed/required time of delivery, performance schedule, and adding additional personnel to fulfill the requirements documented herein.
- Have a satisfactory record of integrity, judgment and performance. Contractors seriously delinquent in current contract performance, considering the number of contracts and the extent of delinquencies of each, shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary or evidence of compelling circumstance, be presumed to be unable to fulfill the requirement.
- An Applicant barred from receiving state or federal funds may not participate in this initiative, directly or indirectly, nor may an Applicant utilize such ineligible organization, agency or consultant in providing services under any contract awarded as a result of this RFP.
- Complete and submit the forms required by the RFP and as part of the resulting contract.

Conflict Of Interest

A contract will not be awarded to an Applicant that owns and/or operates a child care facility that is registered or licensed by the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF), Office of Licensing (OOL), except for Head Start.

A member of an Applicant's Board of Directors, an Officer, staff member or any other person in a position of trust, shall not use his or her position, or knowledge gained from that position of trust, in such a manner that a conflict arises between his or her personal, familial or financial interests and the interests of the DHS or its contracted Provider Agency. No contracted Applicant shall own, operate or have an interest in any supplier of goods or services to the Applicant, or any organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving the Applicant.

No Applicant Board Member, Officer, staff member, or any other person in a position of trust nor any member of his or her immediate family shall have any personal, familial or financial interest in, or substantial obligation to, any supplier of goods or services, or any other organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving the Applicant unless it has been determined by the Board of Directors and approved by DHS/DFD, based on the full disclosure of facts and circumstances, that such interest does not give rise to a direct conflict of interest or the substantial appearance of a conflict of interest. A position of trust may include Applicant staff members, Officers, Governing Board Members, legal advisors, agents, consultants or benefactors. See DHS' Contract Reimbursement Manual, Glossary of Terms, for definition of "Conflict of Interest"

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ocpm/home/resources/manuals/index.html>

Any Board Member aware of a potential conflict of interest with respect to any matter coming before the Board of Directors shall disclose such potential conflict to the Board. If it is determined that a conflict exists, the Board Member shall recuse himself or herself from any discussion or vote in connection with the matter involving a conflict.

C. AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING

Annual funding for these services totaled approximately \$42.8 million in Fiscal Year 2014. This equates to an estimated funding of \$53.4 million to be made available for the 15-month award, with the ability to extend the contract annually for up to four additional one year periods, under this Request for Proposal. The available funding will be allocated by County. Prospective Applicants should refer to **Attachment N** for the approximate amount anticipated to be available for each of New Jersey's 21 counties.

In addition to state funds, these contracts include federal funds from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Block Grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant, and Title IV-E (Foster Care) of the Social Security Act. The annualized statewide amounts that were available by program for 2014 are stated below.

There are approximately 55,000 children serviced monthly for which the 2014 DFD subsidy budget was approximately \$270 million statewide.

No match funds are required; however, the Applicant must identify any other sources of funding, both in-kind and monetary, that will be used. Any income resulting from this contract (e.g., interest on bank accounts, allowable fees) must be used to support the contract's operating costs.

Applicants currently doing business with the State of New Jersey may not fund any costs incurred for the planning or preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP from current DHS/DFD contracts.

Continued funding for the contract(s) resulting from this RFP is subject to the availability of state and federal funding. Contract awards are subject to change at time of contract extension or during a contract period based on prior expenditure trends and other factors. It is anticipated that these funds will be subject to the RFP process again in five (5) years.

D. CONTRACT PERIOD

The initial contract period is July 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 with the ability to extend the contract annually for up to four additional one year periods. Should the State determine an extension is warranted, the contract will be extended on a federal fiscal year, (October 1st through September 30th) for the subsequent periods. The actual contract start and end dates are contingent upon the contract being fully executed and signed by all appropriate parties (DHS/DFD and RFP Recipient). The Department reserves the sole right to extend the contract into a second and succeeding year(s).

E. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

- Through a written proposal, the Applicant must demonstrate the capacity to coordinate, develop and carry out the administrative, fiscal and service delivery elements of the specific child care programs in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, policies and procedures. An Applicant may initiate subcontracts for specific responsibilities. The selected Applicant shall be responsible to DHS/DFD for the acts and omissions of all subcontractors or agents and of persons directly or indirectly employed by such subcontractors and for the acts and omissions of persons directly employed by the selected Applicant submitting the proposal.
- The Applicant shall demonstrate its ability to coordinate its operation with preschool programs funded under Chapter 1 of the Education, Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 (Public Law 97-35), school and non-profit child care programs (including local public schools and community-based organizations receiving funds designated for pre-kindergartens and programs for handicapped children), organizations sponsoring before-and-after school activities, private child care providers, Head Start grantee agencies, sectarian providers; and with federal and/or state demonstration programs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to, clients, and the ability to provide services to these clients. The Applicant must comply with State and DHS rules and regulations governing the purchase of services contract process, the DHS Standard Language Document (SLD), the DHS [Contract Reimbursement Manual](#), the [Contract Policy and Information Manual](#), and all terms and conditions set forth in this RFP. Copies of these manuals and the DHS SLD are available on the web at: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ocpm/home/resources/manuals/index.html>

F. SCOPE OF WORK

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

1. Provide a service delivery system that is timely, customer friendly, convenient, consistent, accessible, and meets the needs of and provides quality care to all families from all areas of the counties served.
2. Maintain policies and procedures related to personnel management, fiscal/budget activities, general administrative services and risk management.
3. Submit reports and data on a timely basis as required by DHS/DFD.
4. Participate in monitoring, audits to the extent needed, and as required by federal, State, DHS/DFD and other stakeholders.
5. Provide sufficient space to conduct business and training.
6. Promote privacy when conducting client interviews and offer services in an area convenient to clients.
7. Maintain accurate and current client information in accordance with State and federal recording requirements and update on a monthly basis.
8. Offer flexible office hours to meet the needs of working families and providers; (i.e., 8 to 5) with scheduled times allocated for walk-ins.
9. Demonstrate experience with client service agreements and forms or other similar eligibility verification documentation agreement types.
10. Demonstrate expertise managing multiple programs and budgets for a single project.
11. Provide structured orientation training to new staff.
12. Maintain accurate and current client information in accordance with State and federal recording requirements and update on a monthly basis.
13. Service Locations:
 - a. The Applicant must either currently maintain a fully functional administrative office within the applicable county capable of handling all child care services required in this contract, or be able to demonstrate that a permanent, fully functional administrative entity will be established in the county for the purpose of carrying out the administration and operation of these child care program services within 30 days of contract award and 60 days before the start of the contract. "Fully functional" means accessible to families and persons with disabilities and able to conduct programmatic responsibilities as an all-inclusive county-based child care service entity as determined by DFD.
 - b. The Applicant may be required to out-station staff on-site in one or more locations throughout the county Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) One-Stop Offices and/or County Welfare Agencies (CWA).
 - c. The location of the main office, satellite offices, and out-posted staff location(s) shall be related to the needs of families to be served. Service locations must be accessible to families, meaning, at a minimum, that the family is able, by public or private transportation, to get to and from the provider's location.
 - d. The Applicant's office hours, locations and telephone numbers shall be posted and be readily visible on all their office buildings, promotional materials and website. Office hours shall be conducive to working families' work schedules. Office hours shall be Monday through Friday, with the flexibility of early and late hours. The

office shall operate at least forty (40) hours per week (52 weeks per year) excluding holidays (not to exceed 12 days per year).

- e. The Applicant shall notify DHS/DFD of any changes in the mailing address, telephone number(s), and/or physical location of its offices at least sixty (60) calendar days prior to changes. Upon DHS/DFD approval, all providers, families and relevant stakeholders must receive written notification no less than thirty (30) days before the move.
14. Maintain an adequate administrative organizational structure that meets the requirements prescribed by this RFP, including but not limited to Intake, Subsidy Eligibility, ECC Processing, Monitoring and Quality Assurance, utilizing a case management model. Sufficient qualified staffing, including appropriate support staff, to satisfy and meet client needs, perform all RFP requirements including program services, supervision, monitoring, management, fiscal and administrative oversight and in-house provider and client training must be in place. Staffing must include appropriate bilingual staff to meet the needs of providers and clients.
15. Have administrative personnel that can effectively resolve problems and employ effective strategies to enhance the service delivery system. Staff must be qualified at every level in an effort to ensure DHS-DFD's goals are achieved.
16. Ensure executive staff, preferably the director, or at least one representative attends DHS/DFD convened CCR&R Directors' meetings.
17. DHS/DFD requires changes in key personnel be communicated to DHS/DFD within five (5) business days of changes to the organizational structure that affects DHS/DFD's contracted services. New staff credentials and resume must be submitted to DHS/DFD within thirty (30) days of the change.
18. Continue the professional development of staff by establishing a professional development plan and provide opportunities for staff to participate in ongoing professional development activities that increase their knowledge of the early childhood field, provide formal training to all staff and develop protocols for supervision and monitoring of case file reviews to assure a 95% accuracy rate for each staff member.
19. Maintain personnel job descriptions.
20. Furnish and maintain current organizational charts identifying staff positions for DHS/DFD's contracted services and lines of authority for each service component identified in the resultant contract.
21. Employ a sufficient number of bilingual staff to provide services to clients or child care providers that have limited ability to speak English and provide appropriate qualified staffing to meet the responsibilities of the contract.
22. At a minimum, Administrators and Managerial staff must have a Bachelor's degree. Five years of relevant subject area experience are required for the following staff:
 - a. Program Director
 - b. Fiscal Officer
 - c. Lead Professional Development Trainer

23. Furnish and maintain a written, comprehensive multi-hazard plan to address emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts, such as “A Disaster Planning Guide for Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.”

a. General Program Requirements

- Cooperate with DHS/DFD to allow remote access to provider and parent data compiled utilizing NACCRRAware¹ or the Applicant’s alternate provider management system.
- Cooperate with DHS/DFD to meet the requirements for registered and approved providers that choose to become members of the Child Care Workers’ Union (CCWU).
- Develop and utilize sound fiscal and programmatic accountability procedures and policies, which are approved by DHS/DFD for all other service components of this unified child care service delivery system.
- Train staff on confidentiality practices and implement policies to safeguard information which is confidential and private. The Applicant and staff must agree not to make use of any private or confidential information other than as is necessary for performance of this project and must agree not to release or disclose any information to any other party unless authorized.
- Develop and maintain a protocol and procedures for shifting services in the event of extreme circumstances, such as a natural disaster or significant damage to the service location, and provide a detailed Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan that will be implemented in the event of an emergency.
- Establish a quality assurance process to ensure that all service components (eligibility, referrals, provider support, and subsidy payment authorization) are evaluated continuously for efficacy and use the data to create improvement plans that enhance overall program operation.
- Develop a marketing plan to promote the availability of child care subsidies and Grow NJ Kids.
- Maintain current and up-to-date records with documentation that applies to services provided for quality initiatives, as well as technical assistance, training opportunities, workshops, conferences, and other activities.
 - Maintain a centralized file documentation system for provider and client files.
 - Maintain case files in accordance with DHS/DFD’s record retention policy.
 - Have guiding principles for employees to follow to ensure a quality child care service delivery system and environment to all families, providers, partners, and the community at large.
 - Utilize only DHS/DFD developed and/or approved forms to document and verify child care services to be delivered.

¹ NACCRRAware is a web-based suite of software that facilitates the work of CCR&Rs available from the non-profit entity Child Care Aware of America. NACCRRAware is currently used by National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies’ members to assist CCR&Rs in performing their critical role by providing complete and accurate data and statistics.

- Cooperate with DHS, DCF, and the CCWU to resolve provider disputes.
- Develop and maintain written policies and procedures relating to internal controls, procurement, travel, Human Resources (including hiring, performance evaluations, salary ranges for each position, and professional development of staff). The Applicant shall add new policies and protocols as they become necessary.

b. Fiscal Requirements

The Applicant shall:

- Maintain separate bank accounts for administrative and operational funds.
- Promptly inform DFD of all bank account information that is necessary for the electronic transfer of funds into these accounts.
- Ensure fiscal accountability for all Applicant-developed payment processes and that effective internal controls are present.
- Adhere to DHS/DFD directives (to be provided) for processing of levies, repayment agreements and any other unusual payment/recoupment issues of parents and providers.
- Administer the contract’s program and fiscal requirements as stated in the DHS Contract Reimbursement Manual and the Contract Policy and Information Manual.
- Employ a full-time fiscal officer to serve as a liaison with program staff, monitor spending, prepare budget modifications, as necessary, and report quarterly expenditures to the DFD.
- Provide access to fiscal information and records for DFD staff or other State/federal staff for audits or compliance reviews.
- Ensure that continuous communication exists between fiscal and program staff.

c. Information Systems

The Applicant shall:

- Administer the child care subsidy programs through the applicable State-maintained automated systems. The automated systems which will be used are:
 - Online Management for Economic Goal Achievement (OMEGA) system;
 - Childcare Automated Resource and Eligibility System (CARES);
 - Electronic Payment and Processing Information (EPPIC) system for all the child care programs and payments;
 - Professional Impact of New Jersey (PINJ) and Registry One for workforce, professional development training and scholarship data management system;
 - Grow NJ Kids management system; and

- Any future system, including but not limited to the Consolidated Assistance Support System (CASS) and Document Imaging System (DIMS), both of which may include child care subsidy programs.
- Assume the cost of installing telecommunication equipment and operating and maintaining all computer equipment, as well as any physical site modifications and/or preparations necessary to accommodate the equipment included in the Budget (Attachment G).
- Provide a data security plan and procedures compliant with all relevant statutes and regulations including, but not limited to: the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 [45 CFR § 164.512(j)].
- Comply with data security requirements for protected information.
- Provide all staff with data security training in accordance with requirements.
- Certify that the DFD-provided automated systems for fiscal and programmatic accountability and reporting will be utilized as required. (The automated systems provided shall be used to administer the subsidy programs funded through Work First New Jersey (WFNJ), Transitional Child Care(TCC), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Child Protective Services (CPS),Post Adoptive Child Care (PACC), Kinship and Department of Education (DOE) Preschool Wraparound Child Care).
- Purchase, maintain and support computer equipment that is necessary to access and operate the State's automated child care system(s). All hardware/software and network services are to be maintained by and are the sole responsibility of the Applicant.
- Distribute software and updates as needed (CARES version updates, provided to the Applicant from the state).
- Obtain Internet connectivity and services as necessary to support the Selected Applicant's data and email needs in satisfying the program requirements.
- Provide workstations with standard specifications, including the following minimum requirements: Microsoft Windows 7, Internet Explorer 8, Microsoft's Windows Update Software, and a security suite for adequate anti-virus protection.
- Assume the costs of the monthly data line EVPL (T-1) charges.
 - If multiple sites exist (entity supports multiple counties and/or multiple sites within a county), then the entity must initiate and assume the cost of the purchase and installation of the hardware necessary to ensure interconnectivity between the sites.
- Assume the cost of installing telecommunication equipment and operating and maintaining all computer equipment as well as any physical site modifications and/or preparations necessary to accommodate the equipment.
 - Maintain a firewall to protect network connectivity.
 - Work with State network staff to establish an Extranet Partnership.

DHS/DFD shall:

- Provide the necessary software (GLPRO and CARES installation pack with the most current version) for Applicant's installation on all the workstations.
- Provide data connectivity between one main location within the Applicant and the host application in Trenton by establishing one (1) data line EVPL and one (1) router at that main location.
- Provide update files via secure FTP for entities to retrieve CARES revisions.
- Provide application support (issues concerning the use of CARES and OMEGA) via the DFD Helpdesk at 609-588-3717 or dfd-helpdesk@dhs.state.nj.us
- Provide initial application training.
- Provide ECC and EPPIC training.

If the Selected Applicant does not have prior experience with DFD systems, it will be provided with orientation and training.

d. Reporting

The Applicant must ensure that it is satisfying all applicable federal, State, and DHS/DFD reporting requirements and submit the reports identified below to DHS/DFD.

- **Program Reporting**

Program reports are required monthly, quarterly or annually as indicated below, and are due to DHS/DFD on the 15th of the month following the reporting period.

- Eligibility Services Statistical Reports – due monthly.
- CCR&R Services referral reports - due monthly.
- Training and Technical Assistance – due monthly.
- Family Child Care Provider and Family, Friend and Neighbor – due monthly.
- Quality Improvement Specialist Technical Assistance Report – due monthly.
- Quality Assurance and internal case file review Reports - due quarterly.
- Recoupment and Repayment Agreement reports – due quarterly.
- Year-End Summary Report – due within sixty (60) calendar days following the end of the resultant contract period, and shall include the year-end results of each service component.
- Submit annual report with assessment of families' child care needs. Report should detail complete and current information about the range of choices available to families in the community (e.g., pre-school services, child care options, financial assistance, and specialized child care services).
- Submit annual report that includes compilation and analysis of the child care supply and demand data in the community.

The Applicant shall fully cooperate with DHS/DFD in the collection and analysis of data for an annual market rate study report of Child Care and Early Childhood Education Providers, in accordance with instructions from DHS/DFD.

Other reports may also be required, as determined in the discretion of DHS/DFD.

- **Fiscal Reporting**

Fiscal reporting is required on a quarterly basis, combining subcontracted and Applicant expenditures. An Annex B budget worksheet, as detailed in the DHS Contract Manuals referenced in Section E - Applicant Qualifications - on page 6 of this document, must be submitted with expenditures reported on a cumulative basis by the 20th day of the following month after each calendar quarter.

The Final Report of Expenditures is due 120 days after the end of the contract period. All expenditures must be reported on an agency-wide basis, including the subcontractor's(s) costs.

- e. **Coordination with Other Agencies**

The Applicant shall:

- Coordinate and interact with Head Start, County Welfare Agencies (CWAs) DFD, DFD contracted child care centers, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) Local Offices, Department of Children and Families' Office of Licensing (DCF/OOL), Department of Labor and Workforce Development's One-Stop Career Centers, School-Based Youth Services Programs, Adolescent Pregnancy and Prevention Programs, Teen Parenting Programs, local school districts, and any other provider entities and agencies or resources as deemed appropriate.

- **Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCF/DCP&P)**

The Applicant must interact with DCP&P's local offices to:

- Maintain open lines of communication and a good working relationship, including procedures for the prompt resolution of problems;
- Develop and implement procedures for referral and admission;
- Determine or rule out the availability of a child care placement in publicly or privately funded programs that are reasonably accessible to the family;
- Notify DCP&P, the child care provider and/or the service agencies within five (5) working days of any change in child care status, including case transfers to other DCP&P offices, changes in the child's placement, changes in assessed co-payments, discontinuation of child care services, and termination of the DCF case;
- Maintain accurate records of the referral and placement of eligible families/clients;

- Promptly and accurately process application forms and supporting documentation to ensure children are recorded in CARES and EPPIC and child care providers are paid in a timely manner; and
 - Promptly respond to child care issues and hold regularly scheduled child care meetings, as required.
- **County Welfare Agencies/One-Stop Career Centers**
- The Applicant must coordinate with the County Welfare Agencies/One-Stop Career Centers to:
- Provide notification on all issues which impact the participant's eligibility for or ability to obtain child care services or child care conditions (e.g., change in child care provider, hours of care; co-payment amount).
 - Assist in child care related initiatives, as directed by DHS/DFD.
- **School Districts**
- The Applicant must provide technical assistance and facilitate child care centers' coordination with School Districts, Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA), and Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI) school districts and perform the following functions:
- Maintain open lines of communication and a good working relationship, including procedures for the prompt resolution of problems;
 - Develop and implement procedures for referrals;
 - Ensure that families that are entitled to receive WrapAround child care services in conjunction with former Abbott programs are promptly notified regarding the availability of this service and that applications are processed timely;
 - Promptly communicate changes in circumstances that affect a child's eligibility for child care services or conditions to the school district.
- **Kinship Navigator Agencies**
- The Kinship Navigator consists of regionally contracted program providers at DCF-Division of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP). The Applicant shall coordinate efforts with DFCP to support the provision of child care services to the families that participate in the Kinship Navigator program and are eligible for a child care subsidy.
- **Early Head Start and Head Start Agencies**
- The Applicant must maintain open lines of communication and a good working relationship to support and coordinate the provision of child care services to the families and key partnerships with DHS/DFD. The Applicant must establish procedures for referrals and the prompt resolution of problems.

f. Supportive Programs

- **Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI)**

Program Description

The NJ Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) is an approach to preventing child abuse and neglect by strengthening families through early care and education. The fundamental principle is that certain protective factors contribute towards family resiliency and strength.

The selected applicant shall provide participating providers with education and guidance in implementing the SFI protective factors framework in their work with infants, young children and their families; such as social-emotional development, parent relationships, child abuse prevention, community resources, family-friendly policies and other related topics covered at core training and quarterly SFI meetings.

Using funding provided by DCF, the Applicant serves as the vendor for SFI training in all 21 NJ counties. The program supports the development of a strong working relationship with the Department of Children and Families, Division of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP), Office of Early Childhood Services. The Applicant will train the director and at least one staff member in designated child care centers and Family Child Care Providers in each of their assigned counties, and demonstrate to providers how to encourage parents at their programs to become involved in planning activities and networking with other parents to give support.

The participating providers will receive education and guidance in implementing the SFI Protective Factors Framework in their work with infants/young children and their families, such as social-emotional development, parent relationships, child abuse prevention, community resources, family-friendly policies and other related topics covered at core training and at quarterly SFI meetings.

Program Requirements

- Conduct SFI trainings.
- Provide core training and technical support to local participating providers for implementation of SFI.
- Assess knowledge and application of SFI principles and monitor providers' compliance.
- Conduct a minimum of two on-site visits per year.
- Meet quarterly with local SFI participating providers.
- Collect SFI data elements for quarterly and annual reporting to DFD and DFPC.

- **Family Child Care (FCC) Registration**

Program Description

The voluntary statewide registration of family child care providers, under the authority of the Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, contracts with certain agencies or organizations to serve as sponsoring

organizations for the voluntary statewide registration of family child care providers. The FCC registration program recruits, trains, inspects and monitors the FCC providers to ensure that the homes are in compliance with the Manual of Requirements for the FCC Registration (N.J.A.C. 10:126)

The selected Applicant will serve as a sponsoring organization responsible for service requirements for sponsoring organizations in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:126.

Program Requirements

- The Applicant must comply with the regulations governing sponsoring organizations, in accordance with the Manual of Requirements for Family Child Care Registration, N.J.A.C. 10:126.
- The Applicant shall be responsible for the regulatory, enforcement and support aspects of the FCC registration program. The regulatory and enforcement aspects include:
 - Conduct orientation to inform and educate FCC providers about the child care subsidy program eligibility requirements, OOL registration mandates, pre-service and in-service trainings, and ECC requirements;
 - Inspect and evaluate prospective provider homes and existing homes for renewal, as well as monitor at least 20 percent of all registered homes on a random basis each year;
 - Investigate complaints concerning registered providers;
 - Manage enforcement activities to ensure provider compliance with registration requirements;
 - Immediately notify OOL of any imminent danger or hazard that may threaten the health and safety of children served in a registered family child care home;
 - Provide 8 hours of pre-service training and 8 hours of in-service training for registered providers (at no cost to the provider);
 - Administer the local provider appeals process;
 - Ensure the due process rights of providers in enforcement procedures;
 - Collect data and assist with the Market Price Study federal requirement.
 - Submit monthly and quarterly reports to DCF and DFD as required;
 - Provide information and technical assistance to registered providers and prospective providers;
 - Allow for distribution and presentation of CCWU information during family child care training sessions, as agreed upon by DHS, DCF and the CCWU;

- Distribute educational and technical assistance materials to assist the provider in operating a family child care program; maintain a list of support services available and refer providers and parents of enrolled children upon request; issue Certificates of Registration and collect the \$25.00 required registration fees (a sponsoring organization is entitled to issue Certificates of Registration and collect the \$25.00 required registration fees from family child care provider applicants and family child care providers, payable to the sponsoring organization each time a Certificate of Registration is initially granted or renewed) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 10:126, Department of Children and Families' Office of Licensing, Manual of Requirements for Family Child Care Registration;
- Maintain bilingual or multilingual outreach strategies to counties with significant numbers of non-English speaking residents;
- Ensure staff shows photo identification before entering a provider's home; and
- Ensure staff notifies a provider of the type of visit before entering a provider's home.

Note: None of the program requirements are intended to establish an employee-employer relationship between the Sponsoring Organization and the Family Child Care Provider.

- **Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN), formerly known as Approved Home Enrollment**

Program Description

FFN means a child care provider not registered pursuant to the Family Child Care Provider Registration Act. The home must be evaluated and all members of the household age 14 and older must pass a Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) background check. In addition, pursuant to Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) regulatory requirements (45 CFR 98.41) on Health and Safety, FFN Homes must meet minimum health and safety training standards.

Program Requirements

- Conduct orientation to provide information and education regarding the child care subsidy program eligibility requirements, DHS/DFD minimum health and safety training requirements, and ECC requirements.
- Provide and/or coordinate the required minimum health and safety training as identified by DHS/DFD.
- Inspect and evaluate prospective provider homes and existing homes.
- Conduct a Self-Arranged Care Inspection.
- Inform providers of essential health and safety policies, such as, infectious disease prevention, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), shaken baby syndrome, emergency preparedness and planning, etc.
- Investigate complaints.

- Distribute educational and child development information to FFN.
- Collect provider profile data.
- Submit reports as required.

g. Subsidy Programs

State/Federally Funded Subsidy Programs

- **Active Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

TANF provides a child care subsidy to parents who are currently receiving TANF cash assistance while engaged in an Employment Directed Activity (e.g., an occupational training program, job search, etc.). The program also serves employed TANF families, who still qualify to receive additional benefits, such as a cash grant. Payment of child care services, including after-school child care in the case of a child over six years of age and care for children with special needs, shall be available for Work First New Jersey/TANF eligible dependent children during the recipient's period of eligibility and for the 24 consecutive months following ineligibility for cash benefits as a result of earned income or other circumstances.

- **Transitional Child Care (TCC)**

Former TANF recipients who have become employed are eligible for TCC for two years after their TANF case is closed. Similar to active TANF families, the establishment of a child care subsidy is initiated by the County Welfare Agency/County Board of Social Services (CWA/CBSS).

- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)**

Families are eligible for the CCAP child care component if they are in need of child care services in order to remain employed full-time, to accept full-time employment, to avoid dependency on TANF or to attend full-time educational and/or work/training programs. For initial program entry, the maximum annual gross income of the family shall not exceed 200 % of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Child care services continue until the gross annual income of the family exceeds 250 percent of the FPL, adjusted for family size.

- **Child Protective Services (CPS)**

A child is eligible for CPS child care services if the child is under the CPS supervision of Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), including children in out-of-home placements supervised by DCP&P. Any parent and his or her children, a legal guardian and his or her children, or the foster parent of a protective services child under the supervision of the DCP&P shall be given the opportunity without delay for child care services.

- **Community Care Quality Slots (formerly known as Community Care Vouchers)**

The Community Care Quality Slots (CCQS) are a number of slots allocated to a network of providers that are committed to continuous program improvement and agree to participate in Grow NJ Kids at the State reimbursement rate. Initial eligibility for the program is family gross annual income at or below 250% of the FPL.

- **Department of Education Preschool WrapAround Child Care Program**

The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) provides preschool education services for the typical school day (up to 6 hours). Income eligible families of the children enrolled in these programs may apply for WrapAround child care (additional four hours of child care during the school year and full-time care during the summer months) through the CCR&R.

In addition to the administration of the subsidy program, the Applicant provides technical assistance and facilitates child care centers' coordination with School Districts, Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA), and Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI) school districts as designated by the NJ DOE.

- **Kinship Child Care**

Families who obtain Kinship Legal Guardianship of a child in their care and are income eligible (up to 350% of FPL, or 500% for caregivers more than 60 years old) may receive a child care subsidy. The Kinship Legal Guardianship Program is under the purview of Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCF-DCP&P) and their contracted regional providers.

- **Post Adoption Child Care**

Preschool child care services may be available for children whose adoptions were finalized after January 1, 2005. Child care services are available to adoptive parents who work or attend school full-time.

- **Special Initiatives Programs (SIP)**

SIPs are implemented when funds become available. SIPs are special targeted programs to address service gaps and families' child care needs such as infant/toddler, preschool or school-age initiatives. Eligibility criteria are specific to the type of services required and developed with the implementation of the initiative.

Program requirements for the child care subsidy programs are contained in the Child Care Services Manual (N.J.A.C. 10:15) and DFD Instructions (DFDI) to be provided.

h. Program Eligibility Requirements and Standards

- The Applicant shall develop, coordinate and deliver a comprehensive program of initial eligibility and redetermination services and activities for all subsidy programs identified in this RFP in accordance with program eligibility requirements.
- Establish an Intake Unit, as the single point of entry to manage families potentially eligible for services.

- Maintain communication with School Districts, DCP&P and CWA to ensure that families that apply for child care services are eligible to receive the applicable program type of services, i.e., WrapAround, Child Protection or TANF child care services.
- Determine initial child care subsidy eligibility based on DHS/DFD policies and timelines and perform redeterminations at required intervals in accordance with program requirements.
- Determine who is eligible to receive federal and State financial assistance, within a 95% or greater accuracy rate.
- Maintain sufficient records to verify that client eligibility was determined in accordance with DHS/DFD requirements and policy.
- Process cases and agreements for child care subsidy eligibility in the DHS/DFD systems within a 95% or greater accuracy rate.
- Ensure all agreements are uploaded to the time and attendance and payment system (EPPIC) timely and within an accuracy rate of 95% or greater.
- Review and process timely EPPIC daily batch file error reports and necessary corrective actions to ensure accurate time, attendance and payment.
- Review and identify all issues that require corrective action in a timely manner to ensure accurate time and attendance reporting and payment.
- Ensure staff complies with priority levels as defined in policy when serving families.
- Ensure child care subsidy program applications are available to the public, through various media throughout the service area to ensure potentially eligible families are afforded the opportunity to apply for child care assistance.
- Conduct orientation with parents and providers detailing the subsidy programs' eligibility requirements and advise all clients of other community services including children's health and insurance resources.
- Ensure clients are eligible and obtain evidence and/or verify required elements of eligibility (i.e. proof of income, school or training, identification, residency, household composition and child citizenship and immigration status) in accordance with policy.
- Utilize DHS/DFD data systems and supports (i.e., child support, Work Number, EPPIC, Wage Match and Unmatched Social Security reports, etc.) as tools to assist in eligibility determination and program integrity.
- Provide to every family a referral of eligible child care providers for their children during the initial and redetermination application process.
- Provide services over the phone, by appointment and on a walk-in basis, and at times and locations that are convenient for working families.
- Assist families through the application process to access services quickly.

- Notify parents in writing and by phone of all changes that impact their eligibility, i.e., parent, child or provider is no longer qualified, in the timeframes required by and as directed by DFD policy and guidance.
- Prepare and implement a continuous quality improvement plan to ensure customer service is courteous, prompt, and responsive. Solicit and evaluate feedback from the families and incorporate best practices into daily operations.
- Maintain applications and case files for all clients seeking eligibility, i.e., approvals, denials, ineligible and incomplete, per DHS/DFD policies and guidance.
- Notify clients of their right to appeal in cases where a determination of ineligibility for services, termination, suspension, or reduction in services has been made.
- Establish an internal appeals and resolution process for disputes raised by parents (for issues other than child abuse/neglect) prior to the matter being forwarded to DFD. Cooperate with DHS, DCF, and the CCWU to resolve provider disputes as agreed upon in the CCWU Agreement.
- Inform parents of their responsibilities and rights for the receipt of services (e.g., their right to visit the child care site(s) to which they have been referred, and their responsibility to report to the Applicant changes that could affect program eligibility).
- Perform quarterly quality assurance reviews of active and denied cases.
- Coordinate with other eligibility agencies and relevant agencies as defined by DHS/DFD to ensure accuracy of data and appropriate assignment of cases and agreements in all DHS/DFD systems.

i. Resource and Referral Services

- The Resource and Referral component provides a wide variety of services to families seeking child care, child care providers and communities to address child care, early care and education, and school-age needs.
- Resource and Referral services must provide consumer information and education related to child care, early care and education, and school age services and programs.
- Referrals must be based on each family's preference and each child's individual needs by offering maximum choices within the constraints of stated needs and preferences.

Program Requirements and Standards

- Ensure that all families and providers represented in the service delivery area have access to information about child care such as program eligibility requirements, information on licensing, certification and registration and the benefits of high quality programs.

- Provide parents with written information about the benefits of high-quality programs to assist them in evaluating pre-school and child care environments and in making informed decisions when selecting child care.
- At a minimum, provide five (5) referrals that match the parents' expressed needs and preferences.
- Provide families access to online referrals through an Online Child Care Search function which will provide users with instantaneous child care, early care and education, and school-age options based on their search query.
- Implement all reasonable measures (i.e. training, monitoring, quality assurance reviews etc.) to ensure that the Applicant's staff does not recommend or endorse any particular program or child care setting.
- Provide additional referrals and resource information for other community services, including but not limited to, health care, insurance, child development and screenings, and other social and supportive services as appropriate.
- Maintain family information for those families who seek child care resources and referrals and other referrals indicated by DHS/DFD.
- Promote the development of quality child care services by explaining to providers the benefits of accreditation and Grow NJ Kids. Provide technical assistance to providers on how to become accredited and enroll in Grow NJ Kids.
- Conduct monthly parent orientation and group presentations on Grow NJ Kids; provide information about the different types of program settings and program types to help parents make informed decisions.
- Promote community and consumer awareness of DHS/DFD child care programs and quality initiatives to support community involvement in quality child care.
- Provide information on child care resources and other relevant materials and information available to both parents and providers in various formats (i.e. printed materials, website, e-mail communications, etc.).
- Provide family friendly environments and protocols which may include printed materials and information or parent education videos running in the lobby or intake area regarding the components of quality child care.
- Conduct a minimum of four outreach events per year to inform the general public of child care programs and services.
- Conduct parent/provider satisfaction surveys of child care providers and families annually.
- Provide comprehensive technical assistance to employers on employer supported child care options and work/family issues as needed.
- Maintain updated child care provider information including license and/or certification status of child care learning centers, school age centers, registered family child care homes, and exempt programs such as Family Child Care and Family, Friend and Neighbors.

- Review and update each provider's profile and applicable licenses at least once annually. Verify and determine if the provider continues to meet DHS/DFD provider eligibility criteria prior to authorizing an agreement and payment.
- Develop and implement a process for maintaining accurate and current provider information.
- Submit monthly and quarterly statistical reports as required.
- Provide information via the website on the Child Care Subsidy Program, how to choose quality child care, Grow NJ Kids trainings and other DHS/DFD information when required.

Resource and Referral Software and Database Requirements

- Purchase, maintain, and utilize DHS/DFD approved software and applications. Software and applications must:
 - Perform critical functions, such as tracking, monitoring and providing complete and accurate data.
 - Be web based to collect, report, and distribute information in an efficient, meaningful, and cost-effective manner.
 - Have the capability to provide statistics related to providers and client data management.
- The selected applicant must routinely update the provider databases to include information on local licensed child care facilities, Head Start centers, registered family child care providers, Family Friend or Neighbor Caregivers, licensed summer camps, and pre-schools.
- Use and maintain a State approved web-based system which provides DHS/DFD access and authorization to access useful and accurate referrals and detailed information about each child care provider and/or program.
- NACCRRAware or Applicant's alternate system, must comply with DHS/DFD approved data fields and elements. The Applicant will be responsible for funding the cost of any license including, but not limited to, the annual fee, hosting and storage costs, and concurrent user fees as needed to meet requirements.
- Implement a database update plan and schedule to cleanse and purge data to ensure the integrity of the database.
- Develop and utilize comprehensive policies and procedures on the maintenance of the database, report generation, and maintaining data security and reliability of the vendor, and individual users.
- Work with DHS/DFD, Office of Information Systems (OIS) and/or its designee when system changes or new systems are implemented.
- Participate in system requirement meetings or testing.
- Obtain any additional software for website, telecommunications, e-mail, storage, tracking and evaluating of consumer information, processing referrals, gathering customer satisfaction data, and any/or other needs

necessary to meet program requirements upon DHS/DFD systems and budgetary prior approval.

- Maintain adequate IT general and system internal controls, record retention, and disaster plans and procedures.

j. **Provider Subsidy Management and Payment Authorization Services and Standards**

- The Applicant shall ensure that public funds directly linked to the written authorization of child care services outlined in the child care subsidy program policies and in this RFP are applied to eligible children, parents and providers.
- Provide guidance, research and troubleshoot ECC related concerns and questions with satisfactory resolution of all issues in a timely manner to meet DHS/DFD program and payment directives.
- Work with State staff and trainer(s) to conduct orientation and ongoing training as needed.
- Conduct daily reviews of batch rejects and resolve discrepancies. Research and investigate all manual claim and payment adjustment requests submitted by providers.
- Adhere to DHS/DFD payment authorization policies and procedures.
- Collect, review, evaluate and process all provider documents prior to approval for payment including but not limited to obtaining the appropriate Licensing and/or Certification and Exemption Notification; verifying compliance with Office of Licensing, Department of Health, and Department of Education policies and procedures or applicable licensing/regulatory requirements. Develop a system to ensure all documents are current.
- Provide orientation to providers on program payment and eligibility requirements and policies.
- Ensure written agreements between eligible families and providers are approved, and established in a timely manner and in accordance with policy.
- Ensure an effective and efficient system for providers to meet the eligibility requirements as mandated by CCDF and State regulations.
- Implement an effective and efficient system to ensure providers are not authorized for payment beyond their current license or registration expiration date.
- Provide on-site E-Child Care training and technical assistance to families and child care providers to ensure prompt, accurate, and timely issuance of payments.
- Employ an appropriate number (which shall be contingent on the demographics of the area being served) of full-time ECC Specialists and ensure the ECC Specialists are subject matter experts (SME) on the use of the system to resolve ECC related issues and concerns.
- Provide assistance to providers for timely entry in EPPIC including:

- Provide technical assistance and guidance to providers to complete paperwork for ECC provider set-up.
- Assist with the ECC equipment process and provide ECC equipment support.
- Assist with the ECC banking process and provide ECC banking support.
- Assist with the IVR process and provide IVR support.
- Assist with ECC card-linking, lost cards or ordering of new cards.
- Accurately enter provider information in EPPIC with 100% accuracy and prevent duplicate entry of provider.
- On behalf of eligible children, process attendance and manual requests for payments to participating providers within two pay cycles per DFD policy.
- Verify providers do not receive duplicate payments.
- Conduct monthly quality assurance reviews of provider payments, provider attendance adjustments and manual claim requests to verify child attendance and accuracy of payments to the providers.
- Identify overpayments and payment issues in a timely manner and process timely recoupment of overpayments in accordance with DFD policy.
- Develop and implement reasonable steps to promptly identify, notify and recoup parent and provider overpayments in a timely manner in accordance with DFD policy.
- Monitor for under or non-utilization of attendance recording system.
- Obtain and retain a copy of each provider's dated certificate issued by an approved accrediting agency as proof of accreditation status.
- Submit monthly, quarterly and annual reports as required.
- In cases of suspected fraud by providers, the Applicant should notify DHS/DFD and contact its own legal consultant and coordinate with local law enforcement agencies regarding criminal investigation. DHS/DFD must be kept apprised of any criminal investigations.
- Track the number of designated children and providers from entry until exit from services and monitor utilization of slot funding.

k. Provider Training, Technical Assistance and Orientation Requirements:

- Support provider efforts to continuously improve their programs, meet and exceed health and safety standards, and provide professional development training and technical assistance opportunities for child care providers.
- Provide orientation, training and technical assistance to increase the capacity of child care providers to provide high quality opportunities and meet health and safety standards.

Training

- Develop a training plan and detailed schedule and provide specific outreach plans of the training opportunities to the community.
- Coordinate and collaborate with Professional Impact of New Jersey (PINJ) to record and track data.
- Utilize PINJ Training, Tracking and Technical Assistance modules.
- Designate a Lead Trainer as the primary point of contact to coordinate trainings, counsel providers related to educational and Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential related scholarships, as well as courses and resources available through the community and technical college system.
- Become knowledgeable about the educational opportunities available in the county and provide these opportunities to the providers.
- Develop a curriculum for training sessions that will enable participants to satisfy licensing/registration requirements and regulations and Grow NJ Kids Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements.
- Offer training as prescribed by DHS/DFD related to health and safety and promote quality early childhood settings and experiences for children and families.
- Ensure all training staff become active members in the PINJ and are approved as instructors to provide training. Information about trainer approval may be found at www.pinjregistry.org.
- Offer baseline health and safety pre-service and in-service training to all providers in alignment with OOL and DHS/DFD recommended listing.
- Provide training throughout the entire contract period. Instructor led facilitated trainings shall be offered at various times and places in order to serve the widest possible audience.
- Provide a computer on-site for providers to use for training.
- Market the availability of the training throughout the county.
- Provide written information to all centers and home-based providers at least monthly on relevant policies, procedures, and training requirements, updated information for the availability of technical assistance, training opportunities, and other assistance/resources.
- Perform ongoing evaluations of training and use data to inform decisions and improvement.
- Conduct orientation for Family Child Care and Family, Friends and Neighbors (FFN) and Approved Home Providers.

Annual Training calendar at a minimum must include:

- ECC
- Specific Health and Safety Training (CCDF Requirement)

- 20 hours of free pre-service and in-service training in alignment with OOL training and DHS/DFD recommendations to FCC
- CPR and First Aid Training to FCC and FFN
- Emergency planning and preparedness
- Child Development Training specific to setting (centers and family child care providers) and age group (i.e. infant/toddler, preschool and school-age)
- Other trainings as specified by DHS/DFD

Technical Assistance

On-site technical assistance is defined as an intentional process that uses various strategies over time to improve the quality of a child care program or an individual provider's practices through visits to the program.

- Develop a plan for on-site and in-house technical assistance, including outreach
- Provide services to improve child care centers' and the registered Family Child Care and Family Friend or Neighbor Caregivers' compliance with OOL and DHS/DFD guidelines and/or regulations, as well as Grow NJ Kids.
- Provide a Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS) with expertise in child care and early childhood education to provide the following services to centers and family child care providers:
 - Classroom observation and modeling to support appropriate practice.
 - Staff and director consultation related to meeting OOL licensing regulatory requirements and continuous quality improvement.
 - Coach and mentor programs through Grow NJ Kids standard, i.e. self-assessment, improvement plan, coordination and linking of resources and supports.
 - Assist with Grow NJ Kids recruitment and enrollment.

Technical Assistance must reference at a minimum:

- Program Subsidy Policies
- Early Learning Guidelines
- Grow NJ Kids Standards
- Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R), ECERS-R Social Emotional subscale, Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), ITERS-R Social Emotional Subscale
- Information or access to financial literacy/business development training for child care providers
- Curriculum for select or new programs as endorsed by DHS/DFD

These requirements and session topics may change with advance notice to the Applicant by DHS/DFD.

Orientation Requirement for Providers

The Applicant shall provide orientation to all providers for families enrolled in their child care subsidy programs.

- Orientation must be structured and formal
- Orientation must be held, at a minimum, monthly

Orientation must reference at a minimum:

- Overview of the key provider eligibility requirements
- Health and Safety Requirements
- ECC Requirements and issues
- Payment Requirements
- Training Requirements
- Reporting Requirements under State and federal law and DFD policies

Quality Improvement and Training Services and Standards

- Provide informational and orientation meetings on DHS/DFD Grow NJ Kids.
- Conduct outreach and promote Grow NJ Kids and the child care quality resources and incentives.
- Provide technical assistance to child care programs seeking to participate in Grow NJ Kids or any DHS/DFD quality initiative.
- Provide technical assistance to Grow NJ Kids participating programs on the best use of their quality improvement enhancement dollars.
- Recruit prospective FCC providers and child care programs for Grow NJ Kids.
- Provide quality coaching and mentoring services to programs in Grow NJ Kids.
- Provide quality trainings supported and sponsored by DHS/DFD (Grow NJ Kids participants), such as infant/toddler and SFI.
- Collaborate with other Grow NJ Kids partners.
- Participate in Grow NJ Kids and other quality initiatives meetings and trainings.
- Facilitate provider and program meetings.
- Document work and record data.
- Submit reports as determined by DHS/DFD.

G. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONFERENCE

The Division of Family Development will conduct a **Mandatory Technical Assistance Conference** that will provide clarifying information about the Child Care Resource and Referral 2015 RFP and related proposal procedures.

Attendance at the conference is **MANDATORY**. A representative of your agency must attend and sign in at the conference. Proposals submitted by any agency or organization not officially represented at the conference will be considered disqualified for funding consideration at time of proposal receipt. At the conference, persons attending who are representing more than one agency/organization must sign-in separately for each agency/organization.

The Technical Assistance Conference will provide potential Applicants an opportunity to ask any and all pertinent questions regarding the RFP and receive technical information regarding the RFP from Department representatives.

NOTE: No further technical assistance on the programmatic aspects of this RFP will be provided after the Technical Assistance Conference is held.

Applicants are **required** to pre-register for the Technical Assistance Conference no later than Wednesday, November 26, 2014. Attachment L must be completed and faxed to 609-588-7240 or e-mailed to penelope.casarico@dhs.state.nj.us. Each applicant will be limited to two representatives at the conference. In addition, please advise if special accommodations for someone with a physical disability will be required. If you have any questions regarding the process, call the Office of Policy and Standards Development at 609-588-2290.

The Technical Assistance Conference is scheduled as follows:

Place: New Jersey Division of Family Development
Quakerbridge Plaza
Building 5 - 1st Floor, Rooms A and B
Mercerville, NJ 08619

You must sign in with security in Building 6 before heading to Building 5.

Date: Monday, December 1, 2014

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Directions to the Conference site are provided with this RFP package as *Attachment K*.

NOTE: In the event of the closure or delayed opening of State offices, the Technical Assistance Conference will be rescheduled. Announcements concerning the closure or delayed opening of State offices are broadcast on radio stations throughout the State.

H. PROPOSAL CONTENT OUTLINE

Applicants must submit **one signed original and nine (9) copies** of the complete proposal package.

- Failure to submit a signed original and the required number of copies will result in the proposal not being considered for funding (disqualification). Note: It is suggested that a blue ink pen be used for all required signatures.

All proposals submitted for consideration must include all of the following items. The documents should be submitted in the order stipulated be securely fastened.

- Proposal/authorization cover sheet (Attachment H) - signature required
- Checklist (Attachment I)
- Table of Contents
- Narrative: All narrative information provided for sections I through III below, shall not exceed fifty (50) single-spaced, one-sided pages. You may not use a type font lower than 12 point.

Section

- I. General questions
- II. Administrative questions
- III. Program goals questions

- Budget Forms (Attachment G)
- Statement of Assurances (Attachment A) - signature required
- Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion (Attachment B) - signature required
- Executive Order No. 189 – Conflict of Interest (Attachment C)
- N.J.S.A. 52:34-13.2 Certification-Source Disclosure Certification Form (formerly Executive Order No. 129) (Attachment D)
- Public Law 2005, Chapter 51 (Executive Order No. 134) “Pay to Play” Certification and Disclosure form, and Executive Order No. 117 - Certification of Compliance forms (only required of for-profit agencies.) (Attachment E) - can also be downloaded at:
 - <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms/sdcertificationform-dpa.pdf>
 - Note: completion of the “Pay-to-Play” forms requirement does not apply to non-profit or public agencies.
- Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran (Attachment F)
- N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2- Ownership Disclosure Form (Attachment O)

Failure to submit the following required documents may render the Applicant's proposal ineligible for funding consideration.

- a. Copy of the Applicant's organizational chart
- b. Copies of Resumes and/or Job Descriptions
- c. Copy of the most recent organization-wide audit report or financial statement
- d. Agency's Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy (Must include Policy of Applicant Agency. Attachment C is provided **only** for guidance.)
- e. List of the Board of Directors, Officers and their terms (**non-profits only**)
- f. Charitable registration status (**for non-profits only**)
- g. Applicant's Certificate of Incorporation
- h. Letters of collaboration (minimum of three)

The Applicant shall thoroughly respond to the questions below. The questions are considered basic and fundamental to clearly demonstrate how the Applicant will effectively administer and deliver the solicited services to meet the specific needs of the families, providers and community; as well as DHS/DFD mandates and requirements. If applying for multiple counties, please note any distinctions.

PROGRAM NARRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Section 1: General Administrative Question

1. Provide a brief description of the Applicant's mission and goals, including its history, purpose, goals and objectives, the number of people served, population, services provided, geographic area served, staff experience, and/or accomplishments.
2. Justify the need for the proposed services in the community to be served. Describe the basis for concluding that each of the proposed services is needed in the community and the factors that make the Applicant the most capable to provide these services. The description should include the nature of the problem and/or service to be provided, existing services, current statistics, and current studies that have been conducted within the community or statewide that are relevant to the requested services in the RFP.
3. Provide a description of the Applicant's previous or related experience working with the client population described in this RFP and the Applicant's performance; as well as number of years providing child care and related services, and quantitative outcomes. The description should include information on the accessibility of services, and experience and knowledge in child care service delivery, working with low to moderate-income families (up to 250% Federal Poverty Level), working with providers, working in collaborations, experience with rate agreements or other similar agreement types, and managing multiple funding sources, including any current community partners and key stakeholders.
4. If the client population to be served needs limited English speaking and/or bicultural services, describe how the Applicant will work to ensure access to the program, and provide outreach and referral services that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate for the population to be served.

5. Provide information on accessibility of the services to be provided, such as: the hours and days that each service will be available to clients, including a description of how emergencies are handled, a list and description of location(s) where services will be provided; handicapped accessibility accommodations, and client eligibility and referral processes.

Section 2: Administrative Questions

1. Describe the plan to hire sufficient qualified staff to meet all RFP requirements. Required full-time staff includes but is not limited to: Program Director, Fiscal Officer, Program Subsidy Manager, Consumer Education and Referral Specialist, Technology Specialist, Lead Trainer, Quality Improvement Specialist, E-Child Care Specialist, Information Technology Specialist and Policy Specialist.
 - At a minimum Administrator and Managerial staff must have a Bachelor's degree. Five years of relevant subject area experience are required for the following staff:
 - Program Director
 - Fiscal Officer
 - Lead Professional Development Trainer
2. Demonstrate relevant and pertinent expertise of the staff it proposes to appoint to the leadership roles for this project. Profiles and resumes of individuals proposed for positions must be included to demonstrate those individuals' qualifications.
3. Provide documentation to clearly illustrate that no less than 100% of the Program Director's, Fiscal Officer's, Lead Trainer's, and Subsidy Manager's work hours will be dedicated to the DHS/DFD project exclusively.
4. Describe the Applicant's capacity and structure to effectively deliver and achieve the service requirements and performance specifications. Outline how all the solicited services will be met, coordinated, complemented or enhanced within the Applicant's operation. The Applicant's proposal should include its policies and procedures for administrative and programmatic accountability, and a description of how it will implement DHS/DFD policies and initiatives.
5. Describe the Applicant's system to collect, manage and accurately report data. Include the Applicant's experience with data collection and analysis of data from project activities to support recommendations related to strengthening the system of quality child care, identifying service gaps and risk, and program improvement. Include the Applicant's method to ensure submission of timely reports and ability to respond to requests for consultation and ad hoc data, when needed. Address the Applicant's history of timely reporting.
6. Provide a brief summary that describes how the Applicant will allocate resources when there are changes in enrollment, and/or priorities change with set funding allocations.
7. Describe the Applicant's plan for internal accountability and quality assurance measures to reduce incidences of misreporting, improper payments or fraud, administrative and/or payment errors for each program type. Include preventive strategies, processes and procedures to minimize improper payments, utilization of reports and staff training plans.

8. Briefly describe the Applicant's Conflict of Interest policy (current or proposed) and any internal checks and balances that have been put into place to ensure that employees or members of their families and friends who may be eligible to receive subsidy assistance are treated equitably, and are not given any unfair advantage over other eligible families. Include the Applicant's plan to ensure that employees are not involved with their own, relative's, or friend's cases.
9. Describe measures that the Applicant will take to ensure confidentiality of client information. Indicate if a client confidentiality agreement must be signed by each Applicant employee. If yes, attach a copy of the agreement.

Section 3: Program Service Goals Questions

1. Describe the Applicant's plan for optimal customer service. The plan shall include a customer satisfaction determination process that centers on the customer's experience with services, phone call response time and follow-up performance standards, and include a process to adapt services based on customer satisfaction data.
2. Describe the Applicant's plan to promote Grow NJ Kids and support programs through consumer education, referral, marketing and outreach. Include the Applicant's plan to improve the quality of child care through the provision of high-quality technical assistance and training to early child care and education professionals and child care providers in accordance with projected level of service.
3. Describe the Applicant's plan for payment authorization and reimbursement process to ensure accurate and timely payment within the set timeframe as outlined in policy. Include policies and procedures established for program integrity and oversight, and accounts payable/accounts receivable system.
 - a. Provide an outline of proposed financial analyses to be conducted on a regular or periodic basis.
 - b. Provide a description of the Applicant's proposed methodology for monitoring of attendance records and tracking manual adjustments.
 - c. Provide a description of the Applicant's administrative and fiscal technical assistance to providers.
4. Describe the Applicant's plan to maintain a comprehensive and current database of all the legally operating providers and eligible providers available in the county.
5. Describe what strategies or methods will be utilized to support the child care providers in their efforts to comply with DHS/DFD program requirements and continuously improve their program.
6. Provide the Applicant's plan for meeting the requirements of training and support to Family Child Care and Family, Friends and Neighbor providers.
7. Describe the Applicant's plan for ensuring formal linkages and coordination with other key partners, as required in this RFP.
8. Describe, within the parameters of the State requirements, the timelines and internal procedures for conducting approved home inspections. Include procedures for scheduling, interviewing, home inspection practices, follow-up visits, training and technical assistance provided. Also describe proposed Applicant materials that will be used, other than those mandated by DFD, to administer this process.

9. Identify those community agencies with which formal coordination and referral agreements will be accomplished, and delineate the elements that will be addressed with these agencies through a written agreement.
10. Describe the outreach efforts that will be conducted to inform the general public about child care services.

I. TIMETABLE

Time frames for completion of the RFP process are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| November 17, 2014 | RFP published on the DHS website |
| November 26, 2014 | Deadline Date for Pre-Registration for the Mandatory Technical Assistance Conference |
| December 1, 2014 | MANDATORY Technical Assistance Conference |
| December 29, 2014 | <u>Deadline for Receipt of Grant Proposals</u> (No later than 4:00 PM) |
| On or After | |
| February 18, 2015 | Notification of Grant Awards (Subject to Funding Availability) |
| July 1, 2015 | Contract Begins (Subject to Funding Availability) |

J. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Eligible Applicants interested in applying for these funds must submit **one signed original and nine (9) copies** of the complete proposal document, including all support materials, to be received by the Office of Policy and Standards Development **no later than 4:00 p.m. on December 29, 2014. FAXED proposals/documents will not be accepted.** Proposals may be **mailed or hand delivered** as follows:

Mail/US Post Office Delivery:
 Office of Policy and Standards Development
 Department of Human Services
 Division of Family Development
 PO Box 716
 Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0716

OR

Hand Delivery or Commercial Courier/Mail Service*:
 Office of Policy and Standards Development
 NJ Division of Family Development
 Quakerbridge Plaza
 Building #3
 Quakerbridge Road
 Mercerville, New Jersey 08619

**Building #3 is the only location that will be recognized for Hand Deliveries or Commercial Courier/Mail Service.*

- Directions to Quakerbridge Plaza are contained in *Attachment J*.
- Faxed documents/information will not be accepted at any time.
- Applicants are responsible for mailing and delivering proposals well in advance of Friday, December 29, 2014 at 4:00 pm to ensure that the proposals are received on time.
- Postmarks and other similar documents do not establish receipt of a proposal.
- Proposals that do not meet the criteria stated above and are not received by the deadline date and time are deemed late and will not be considered for funding.
- Any documents that arrive under separate cover will not be included as part of the proposal package.

K. PROPOSAL SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

A review team will review and evaluate each proposal. The review team will consist of staff members of the DFD, DHS, and may include representatives of other state/local agencies and organizations.

Proposals will be rated based on the narrative information provided as outlined in the Program Narrative Requirements section of this RFP. Applicants are eligible to receive a maximum point score of 100 points for proposal content. Proposals receiving an average numerical rating of 65 or less will not be considered for funding.

After the team review is complete, a list of recommended proposals will be submitted to the Director of the Division of Family Development and the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services for final approval. During the selection process, additional information may be requested.

Proposal Selection Criteria:

- Ability to meet the service requirements and performance specifications as indicated in this RFP;
- Experience of the Applicant in providing child care and related services to eligible families;
- Experience of the Applicant in developing collaborative relationships;
- Effectiveness of the total program design;
- Realistic and attainable program goals and objectives;
- Compliance with the criteria and intent contained in the RFP; and
- Practicality and soundness of the proposed budget as it relates to the total program design and the goals described in the Applicant's proposal.

L. NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF AWARD

Applicants will be notified of their proposal award status on or after February 18, 2015. All grant awards will be contingent upon subsequent contract negotiations.

The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals when it is in the Department's best interest to do so. The Department's best interests include, but are not limited to, loss of funding, inability of the Applicant to provide adequate services, an indication of misrepresentation of information, and/or non-compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

The Department also reserves the right to conduct a facility inspection and/or pre-award survey with any individual, agency or organization that submits a proposal in response to this RFP.

All proposals are considered public information and, as such, will be made available upon request after the completion of the RFP process.

The Department reserves the right to base the final contract on the total amount of funds available at the time of contract negotiations.

M. APPEAL PROCESS

An appeal will not be heard based on a challenge to the evaluation of a proposal.

An appeal of the selection process will be heard only if it is alleged that the Division has violated a provision of its contracting manual in the awarding of a grant. Applicants requesting an appeal based on a statutory or regulatory violation must submit a written request stating the alleged violation to the Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, Office of the Director, PO Box 716, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0716, no later than 10 calendar days following the date of a non-award notification.

N. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

The Provider Agency may not subcontract any of the services that it has committed to perform or provide pursuant to this Contract without the prior written approval of the Department. Such consent to subcontract shall not relieve the Provider Agency of its full responsibilities under this Contract. Consent to the subcontracting of any part of the services shall not be construed to be an approval of said subcontract or of any of its terms, but shall operate only as an approval of the Provider Agency's request for the making of a subcontract between the Provider Agency and its chosen subcontractor. The Provider Agency shall be responsible for all services performed by the subcontractor and all such services shall conform to the provisions of this Contract.

If a Provider Agency receives DHS approval to subcontract, it must ensure that subcontractors comply with all applicable federal, State and local laws, rules and regulations, including the Department's Standard Language Document and the Department's Contract Policy and Information Manual and Contract Reimbursement Manual. The subcontract shall not be in conflict or less restrictive than any of the Department of Human Services' policies or procedures. The Provider shall outline in the Annex A of the Department Contract a description of how the Provider intends to monitor any subcontract it signs to ensure compliance with the Departmental Contract.

Upon award notification, DHS/DFD will negotiate a contract with the selected Applicant(s) and proceed with the process of preparing and finalizing formal contract(s) with the selected Applicant(s), as appropriate.

Funding and issuance of this proposed contract is contingent upon the availability of sufficient resources in the SFY 2015, Division of Family Development budgets. DFD shall have no legal responsibility for payment unless and until funds are made available to DFD from the Legislature and incorporated in the DFD budget for this purpose.

The Department assumes no responsibility or liability for the costs incurred by an Applicant for the planning or preparing of a proposal in response to this RFP.

The Department reserves the right not to issue a grant for any of the subsequent years after the first term of the contract under certain circumstances, such as, but not limited to, the unsatisfactory work of the grant recipient, failure to meet agreed upon performance benchmarks, or the failure to submit required documentation in the timeframes requested.