NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Q&A

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Children's System of Care (CSOC)

Stabilization and Assessment Services (STAS) 5-Bed Program Serving Youth with Mental/Behavioral Health Challenges Statewide

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Written questions related to the *content* of this Request for Proposal (RFP) were due on **Thursday, September 24, 2026**.

A non-mandatory conference was held on **Tuesday, September 22, 2026.**

Written *technical* questions about forms, documents, and format may be emailed at any time up to the due date to dcf.askrfp@dcf.nj.gov.

All responses must be submitted ONLINE.

To submit online, respondent must first complete and submit an Authorized Representative (AOR) registration form.

Click here to access the AOR Registration Form.

AOR Registration forms must be received by **Tuesday, October 20, 2026**.

All responses must be received by **Tuesday, October 27, 2026** (by 12:00 NOON).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Regarding the required PDF content of the response: For organizations electing DCF consideration based on their previously submitted May 1, 2026 STAS proposal, please confirm whether the requirement to request consideration of the remainder of the respondent's "unmodified response" means that PDF 2, PDF 3, and PDF 4 Sections A–C from the prior submission should not be updated or resubmitted unless otherwise instructed by DCF.**

Answer: Organizations electing DCF consideration based on their previously submitted May 1, 2026 STAS proposal should not update or resubmit PDF 2, PDF 3, or PDF 4 (Sections A-C). If a respondent desires to update any of the referenced previously submitted documents, or it is necessary to update any of the referenced previously submitted documents based on significant events that have occurred since the time of submission, the respondent must apply anew, submitting the four PDFs outlined on page 7 of the RFP.

2. **For organizations electing DCF consideration based on their previously submitted May 1, 2026 STAS proposal, please clarify whether DCF will consider the previously submitted PDF 3, including the proposed budget and budget narrative, without modification, or whether returning respondents must submit a revised PDF 3 reflecting January 1, 2027 through June 30, 2027 six-month initial budget period and funding amounts identified in the current RFP.**

   Answer: If an organization is electing DCF consideration based on their previously submitted response, DCF will consider the previously submitted PDF 3. Proposed budgets and budget narratives previously submitted for the May 1, 2026 STAS RFP do not need to be modified to be considered for this RFP.

3. **Page 8, Section I(F) – Required PDF Content of the Response / Page 10, Section II(B) – Target Population**

   For returning May 1, 2026 respondents, please clarify how the changes to the Target Population, including the expanded age range of 11–17 and inclusion of qualifying court-involved/DAP youth, should be addressed when the respondents previously submitted PDF 4 Sections A–C are being considered without modification. Should these changes be addressed within the new Section D?

   Answer: Yes, you may address target population in the new Section D.

4. **Page 10, Section II(B) – Target Population**

   For purposes of the expanded Target Population, please clarify whether all court-involved youth served through STAS must meet Detention Alternative Program (DAP) criteria and be awaiting CSOC out-of-home treatment services, and whether any additional referral, eligibility, supervision, or coordination requirements apply specifically to this population.

   Answer: No, court-involved youth do not have to be awaiting Children's System of Care (CSOC) out-of-home (OOH) treatment services. DAP STAS placement is defined as viable post-dispositional short-term Stabilization and

Assessment Services for New Jersey youth that are either detained or at risk of detention. No additional requirements apply specifically to this population.

5. **Page 8, Section I(F) – Required PDF Content of the Response / Page 49, Section IV(D) – Program Approach**

   Please confirm whether the vignette required under Section IV(D)(4) has a separate page limitation or whether it is included within the overall maximum 10-page limitation applicable to the new Section D submitted by returning May 1, 2026, respondents.

   Answer: The vignette is included in the 10-page limitation of new Narrative Section D.

6. **Pages 7–8, Section I(F) – Required PDF Content of the Response / Page 49, Section IV(D) – Program Approach**

   May the new Section D submitted by a returning May 1, 2026 respondent reference information contained within its previously submitted PDF 4 Sections A–C, or should the new Section D independently contain all information necessary to respond to the four Program Approach questions?

   Answer: The new Narrative Section D is not required to independently contain answers to questions from Narrative Sections A-C. New Narrative Section D may reference the previously submitted sections.

7. **Startup expenses: Will DCF provide examples of allowable startup expenditures, including furniture, beds, appliances, safety equipment, accessibility improvements, licensing costs, technology, vehicles, staff recruitment and initial training?**

   Answer: All start-up costs are considered "cost-related" and are subject to contract negotiations and DCF approval. You may refer to the DCF Contract Reimbursement Manual for guidance on allowable and unallowable costs. Contract Reimbursement Manual. Funds for approved startup costs will be released upon the execution of a finalized contract and are paid via Scheduled Payments. Examples of startup costs *may* include materials and supplies, including computers, cell phones, furniture, beds, appliances, safety equipment, accessibility improvements, licensing costs, technology, and vehicles; hiring personnel, such as costs for job postings; or other one-time costs to launch the program.

8. **Leasing: May startup funding cover a security deposit, initial rent, broker fees, utility deposits and other costs necessary to secure a leased residence?**

   Answer: Reasonable first month rental payments and facility modifications are potential examples of allowable startup costs. Security and utility deposits would not be allowable as start-up costs as they could potentially be recouped at a later date, e.g., end of lease.

9. **Property acquisition: May the one-time startup allocation be used toward purchasing a residential property, including a down payment or closing costs? If not, which property-related startup expenses are allowable?**

   Answer: Capital expenditures for land or buildings are unallowable as a direct cost. You may refer to the DCF Contract Reimbursement Manual for guidance on allowable and unallowable costs. Contract Reimbursement Manual.

10. **Property improvements: May startup funds cover renovations required for the Certificate of Occupancy, fire inspection, accessibility, security and DCF group-home licensing?**

    Answer: All start-up costs are considered "cost-related" and are subject to contract negotiations and DCF approval. Facility modifications are a potential example of allowable startup costs.

11. **Must the applicant have a specific facility/property identified and secured at the time of proposal submission, or may the applicant provide a detailed site-acquisition plan and secure the location after receiving an award?**

    Answer: The applicant may provide a site acquisition plan and secure the home after award.

12. **Pre-award commitments: If a property must be identified, will a letter of intent, proposed lease or purchase agreement contingent upon DCF award and licensing approval be sufficient?**

    Answer: Yes.

13. **Licensing timeline: Must the applicant already possess a DCF Office of Licensing certificate, or may a new residential provider obtain the required license after the award and before opening?**

    Answer: A provider may obtain the required licensure post-award and before opening.

14. **Prior residential experience: Is previous operation of a licensed children's group home required, or may an organization demonstrate capacity through relevant youth services, trauma-informed programming and the experience of proposed employees, consultants and partners?**

    Answer: Please reference the Table of Minimum Staffing Credentials and Service Requirements for a DCF contracted provider of the STAS service line, effective 12/1/2025 for qualification details.

15. **Clinical partnerships: May the applicant satisfy psychiatric, pediatric, nursing, clinical and specialized assessment requirements through subcontractors or affiliation agreements rather than employing every professional directly?**

    Answer: Please reference the Table of Minimum Staffing Credentials and Service Requirements for STAS identifies the required clinical/professional staff. Any specialized assessment that fall outside of that required staff clinical expertise may be provided by subcontractor or through an affiliation agreement with individuals who provide the specialized care.

16. **Accreditation: May an organization without current Joint Commission, COA or CARF accreditation apply if it presents a detailed plan to obtain site-specific accreditation within 24 months of the award?**

    Answer: Yes, if not currently accredited, awardees must achieve accreditation within 24 months of award.

17. **Medicaid enrollment: Can the required NJ licensing, accreditation, Medicaid/NJ FamilyCare enrollment, and facility approvals be obtained after award (provided the program is operational within 120 days), or must the organization already be enrolled as a Medicaid provider at application?**

    If post-award enrollment is permitted, how will services be reimbursed while enrollment is pending?

    Answer: Yes, if awarded, required licensure, Medicaid/NJ Family Care enrollment, and facility approvals may be obtained after award, and must be achieved within 120 days of award. Accreditation must be achieved within 24 months of award.

    Scheduled payments for startup funds will be issued at contract execution. DCF and awardee will work collaboratively to align the program's opening with the licensing and Medicaid enrollment timeline.

18. **Ownership conflict: If a property is owned by an officer, board member or related entity, may the nonprofit lease it for the program if the relationship is disclosed, independently reviewed and approved by the board? What additional documentation would be required?**

    Answer: It is DCF's expectation that respondents and awardees be aware of and comply with all applicable statutes and regulations related to corporations, non-profits, conflicts of interest, and other relevant areas, as well as their own organizational rules and requirements, e.g., bylaws.

19. **120-day requirement: When does the 120-day implementation period begin—upon notification of award, contract execution or receipt of startup funding?**

    Answer: The 120-day implementation period begins upon notification of award (the date on the award letter).

20. **Extension process: What circumstances would support an extension beyond 120 days if licensing, construction, zoning or Medicaid enrollment is delayed?**

    Answer: DCF will review and may grant, on a case-by-case basis, written requests for extensions.

21. **Funding & Per Diem Rates: The operating budget relies on a per-diem rate of $895.38 per bed. Could you clarify if this rate is calculated on a per-day basis for each youth housed (occupied bed only), or if it applies regardless of occupancy?**

    How is projected utilization factored into the contract totals?

    Answer: The rate of $895.38 will be reimbursed per occupied bed per diem. That per-diem rate is all inclusive; it should cover all required services per youth per day. Proposed budgets should reflect full occupancy.

22. **Cash flow: Because the operating award is occupancy-based and 100% occupancy is not guaranteed, should applicants demonstrate cash reserves or a line of credit? Is there a recommended amount?**

    Answer: The proposal does not request information regarding cash reserves or lines of credit. Proposed budgets should reflect full occupancy.

23. **Initial referrals: Will DCF or the Contracted System Administrator (CSA) assist with referrals immediately upon opening. Is there an anticipated ramp-up period before reaching five occupied beds?**

    Answer: Yes. As soon as the home is fully licensed and operational, referrals may begin. Referrals shall be generated by a Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) Liaison and/or Care Management Organization (CMO) sent to the CSOC CSA. The CSOC CSA reviews referrals and renders a determination about whether a youth meets criteria for stabilization and assessment services. If authorized for care, the CP&P and/or CMO liaison will coordinate admission planning directly with the awarded provider. Ramp up to the full census is allowable but not required.

24. **Insurance: Must applicants provide evidence of the required insurance with the proposal, or is insurance required only after an award and before contract execution?**

    Answer: If awarded, documentation of compliant liability insurance policies will be required after an award and before contract execution.

25. **Service population: May the proposal include our existing domestic violence prevention, mentoring and family-support services as supplemental components, provided all required STAS clinical services remain available?**

    Answer: Yes, but it will not replace the proposal requirements.

26. **Is an organization based outside New Jersey eligible to submit a proposal without currently having a NJ residential facility or license?**

    Answer: All respondents must be business entities that are duly registered to conduct business within the State of New Jersey.

27. **For the evaluations, neurological assessment specifically, can that be accessed in the community through the youth's insurance?**

    Answer: Insurance is the preferred method of payment for a neurological evaluation when a youth is referred by a medical professional indicating the assessment is clinically necessary.

28. **On page 23, it states that the program must be able to "serve all genders as determined by need, with appropriate assignment of bedrooms." Can you clarify if that means we would have to put biological males and females together in the same living environment?**

    Answer: All genders may be served in the same program. No referral may be declined based on gender.

29. **For the operating expenses, does this mean we do not bill Medicaid until July 1, 2027?**

    Answer: The intended initial contract term is January 1, 2027 - June 30, 2027. Providers may begin billing Medicaid as soon as they start serving youth (per youth/per diem).

30. **Start-Up vs. Award Funding: We would like to confirm whether the allocated start-up expenditures (up to $81,703) are inclusive within the total award ceiling or if they represent supplementary funding provided on top of the base operational amount.**

    Answer: DCF will initially make available up to $896,499 in state funds for each 5-bed program, inclusive of start-up. Of this amount, up to $814,796 is available for operating expenses and up to $81,703 is available for one-time start-up expenses.

31. **Facility Specifications & Zoning: We currently own a commercial/residential building in Newark, NJ with 6 units, and we are evaluating whether combining two units to create a unified 5-bed home meets compliance.**

    Additionally, does the facility need to be zoned strictly commercial, or is a residential/community-based classification acceptable under New Jersey's Office of Youth Residential Licensing standards?

    Answer: The home must be licensed as a DCF Children's Group Home. Respondents must provide evidence of, or demonstrated ability to meet, all DCF and other applicable state and federal licensure standards. DCF's Office of Licensing standards related to Children's Group Home are specified in this manual: Manual of Requirements for Children's Group Homes N.J.A.C. 3A:56. All DCF licensing laws and regulations may be found here: http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws.

32. **Program location: Are there any municipal zoning, spacing or location restrictions applicants should consider before selecting a property?**

    Answer: The home must be licensed as a DCF Children's Group Home. Respondents must provide evidence of, or demonstrated ability to meet, all DCF and other applicable state and federal licensure standards. DCF's Office of Licensing standards related to Children's Group Home are specified in this manual: Manual of Requirements for Children's Group Homes N.J.A.C. 3A:56. All DCF licensing laws and regulations may be found here: http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws.

33. **Technical assistance: Will DCF offer a bidders' conference, technical-assistance session or written responses to questions before the submission deadline?**

    Answer: Yes. There was a non-mandatory virtual conference on 9/22/2026 at 10:30 A.M. Conference slides may be found here: https://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/providers/contracting/forms/2026-RFP-CSOC-STAS-PPT.pdf. Written responses to questions about content of the RFP were to be submitted before 9/24/2026; responses will be published on the DCF website. Written questions that are technical in nature, e.g., about forms or format, may be emailed at any time before the due date to dcf.askrfp@dcf.nj.gov.

34. **Submission Format: Could you confirm the exact method required for proposal submission (e.g., electronic upload via specific portals, physical mail, or hand delivery)?**

    Answer: Applications are required to be submitted electronically in PDF format. To submit the application, respondents must request access to DCF's secure FTP website by submitting an Authorized Organization Representative (or AOR) form. The AOR form must be submitted to dcf.askrfp@dcf.nj.gov at least 5 business days before the response deadline. Once the AOR form is submitted, the provider will be given access and instructions to DCF's secure FTP website to upload your application. Please refer to page 5 of the RFP for additional information.

35. **Are entities under a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) eligible to submit a response to this RFP?**

    Answer: Yes, entities under a CAP or PIP from DCF (or another state entity) may submit a response to this RFP. Respondents must include a copy of any CAP or PIP issued by DCF or any other state entity within the last two years. The respondent may provide any other pertinent information that will explain or clarify the respondent's current position in relation to the CAP or PIP. Please refer to page 43 of the RFP.

36. When two entities (a Corporation and an LLC) share common ownership and management, but are registered as separate entities, may each submit a separate response to a DCF RFP?

Answer: Two separately registered entities under common ownership may separately apply for this RFP. However, if the two commonly owned entities are interdependent on each other to accomplish the RFP deliverables, only one response should be submitted. For example, if the Corporation's proposal includes and is dependent on work through the LLC, or vice versa, the Corporation and the LLC are essentially functioning as one entity and only one proposal should be submitted.

37. When two entities share common ownership and management and one is under a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), are both entities required to disclose that CAP or PIP.

Answer: Responses require the submission of CAPs, PIPs, and other reviews in process or completed by DCF or other state entities within the last two years. When evaluating responses, DCF may also consider anything else in its records that speaks to past performance. Although two separately registered entities, CAPs, PIPs and other records of one entity may be relevant to the performance of the second entity, especially when there is common ownership or management or involvement of both entities in the work described in the proposal. Respondents may submit other pertinent information to explain or clarify their position in relation to the CAP or PIP, which could include explanation of how one entity's CAP or PIP is not relevant to the performance of the other.