



**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Request for Interest (RFI) 753

**Children and Family Services (CFS)
Ombudsperson Services**

Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD), Children and Family Services (CFS) Bureau, announces a **Request for Interest (RFI) 753** seeking qualified applicants to provide CFS Ombudsperson Services. CFS provides child welfare services to Contra Costa County residents through various offices countywide.

I. Statement of Purpose

The CFS Ombudsperson is an independent and impartial person who assists clients, caregivers, tribal partners, schools, community partners and members of the public in obtaining a resolution to questions, conflicts or complaints concerning child welfare services policies, procedures and practices.

This RFI 753 is seeking at least one (1) qualified candidate to provide CFS Ombudsperson Services for Contra Costa County Children and Family Services (CFS). The main purpose of the CFS Ombudsperson is to promote and maintain good working relationship between all involved parties. Part of this role is to help clients understand the process and their rights and responsibilities. As systemic issues are identified, the CFS Ombudsperson makes formal recommendations to the CFS Director.

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

II. Funding

EHSD will award one (1) county standard contract in an amount up to **\$150,000.00 (\$75,000 annually)**, inclusive of all expenses to the successful Respondent for the anticipated period of **May 1, 2023 – April 30, 2025** (twenty-four months), with a possibility of one (1), one year (12 months) renewal based on contractor performance, availability of funds, and service need. The funding source is a combination of Federal, State, and County sources.

For individuals responding (Respondents), this is a fee-for-service based contract, inclusive of all expenses and subject to change at the discretion of CFS during contract negotiations. Please note, there are no guaranteed number of referrals being sent nor requested for services under this RFI. The anticipated fee-for-service schedule is as follows:



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ITEM (all inclusive*) \$75.00/hourly rate* *Pro-rated hourly rate: ½ hour increments minimum	Minimum Estimated Time Per Task
Referral (*includes paperwork/forms, research, consultation, meeting with client and staff, email correspondence, notes in log system)	30 MINUTES
Referral (*includes paperwork/forms, research, consultation, meeting with client and staff, and email correspondence, notes in log system)	60 MINUTES
Carry over same referral from one month to the next	N/A
Report (mid-year, year-end, monthly, *includes research and writing)	60 MINUTES
Exit interview (*includes scheduling, meeting, questionnaire form) to be administered at the discretion of CFS designee.	60 MINUTES
Training (as mandated by CFS Director or CFS designee)	60 MINUTES
Conference (supervision as mandated by CFS Director or CFS designee)	60 MINUTES
Administrative paperwork (i.e. demand, etc.)	N/A
EHSD Cell Phone (equipment and phone line connection)	N/A

EHSD will cover costs associated with design, printing and posting information related to ombudsperson services and costs associated with printing ombudsperson grievance and consent forms.

Cell phone and valid County email may be provided by the County. Details of phone line connection and cell phone equipment will be discussed upon contract negotiations.

III. Scope of Services

The scope of work is a general guide and is not intended to be a complete list of all work necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the role. The following include, but are not limited to, work tasks the selected candidate will be responsible to perform for the services described in this RFI:



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- A. Act as independent CFS Ombudsperson and primary point of contact to receive and resolve inquiries, issues and complaints (“inquiries”) received from individuals within the community on behalf of Contra Costa County EHSD CFS with an objective, independent, thorough, fair and impartial review of the inquiry.
 - Inquiries are typically limited to Child Welfare related topics, however other non-child welfare related inquiries can be received by CFS Ombudsperson. CFS Ombudsperson is expected to help redirect a non-child welfare related inquiry to provide helpful direction and linkage for inquiring party.
- B. Develop a system and protocol (set of processes, procedures and forms) for managing and responding to inquiries to be reviewed and approved by CFS Director.
- C. Assist the inquiring party and document resolution and recommendations in a consistent format. Consistent documentation will include:
 - Creation and use of standard reporting format.
 - Provision of copies to inquiring party, CFS Director and other designated parties as appropriate.
 - Develop and maintain individual files for every inquiry logged.
- D. Meet with needed individuals (EHSD staff, CFS clients, involved parties) over the phone, virtually, or at designated locations, (EHSD offices, private homes, community locations), as necessary to obtain information, make referrals and perform referral intake to support inquiry resolution.
- E. Resolution can include, but is not limited to the following:
 - Clarification of rules or policies for the inquiring party and/or staff and recommendations to the inquiring party regarding rules and policies.
 - Mediation between the client and staff as appropriate.
 - Development of agreements regarding actions by staff, inquiring party, and/or other parties.
- F. Prepare and provide timely response and documentation for all activities associated with the position, including but not limited to tracking documentation, written reports, scheduling meetings, inquiry coordination and invoice submission.
- G. Consult with EHSD CFS Bureau management and staff to ensure the proposed resolution for inquiry is within legal and regulatory requirements.
- H. Meet with CFS Director, or designee, at least monthly (or another mutually agreed upon schedule), to review performance, discuss recommendations, and offer feedback regarding service related issues or other topics.



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- I. Compile and deliver monthly reports summarizing programmatic data, including but not limited to, the volume, source, nature, and outcome of inquiries handled and associated time spent on each inquiry.
- J. Provide input to CFS Director on EHSD CFS Bureau trainings related to customer service, communication, conflict resolutions and other related topics to help identify areas of service delivery improvement if/as needed.
- K. May assist with CFS staff exit interviews at the discretion of the CFS Director or designee.

Limitations:

The CFS Ombudsperson does not have the authority to do the following:

- A. Make recommendations to the court or overturn court orders.
- B. Engage in case management tasks with EHSD Staff or Clients. Case management specific inquiries/questions are to be redirected to the designated CFS staff member on a case by case basis at the discretion of the CFS Director.
- C. Investigate matters in which appeals or lawsuits are pending.
- D. Change or make exceptions to state or federal laws or regulations.
- E. Give legal advice.

IV. Minimum Qualifications

Responses that do not demonstrate the Respondent's capacity to meet the minimum qualifications, licenses, experience and skills below will be considered non-responsive and will not move forward for contract consideration.

Applicants must demonstrate/have:

- Education and work experience:
 - Possession of a Master's Degree in Social Work, Psychology, or related degree, from an accredited college or university and at least two (2) years relevant work experience in the social work/child welfare field, or;
 - Possession of a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Psychology or related degree, from an accredited college or university, and at least four (4) years relevant work experience in the social work/child welfare field, ombudsperson services, and/or human resources;
 - Prior child welfare ombudsperson experience is preferred.



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- Knowledge of the issues facing children and families involved in Contra Costa's public sector, EHSD programs and the services available to those clients.
- Knowledge of diverse backgrounds, cultural sensitivity, and other impacts/stresses for individuals using CFS services.
- Knowledge of public benefits programs and populations served.
- Be detail oriented and able to meet competing deadlines.
- Possess strong decision-making skills and good judgment/problem solving abilities.
- Experience in compiling data and writing reports summarizing work performed.
- Possess strong oral and written communication skills.
- Experience with formal mediation, negotiation, advocacy or similar skills.
- Be able to be impartial, fair, objective and thorough.
- Ability to produce clear, succinct and timely reports.
- Ability to work well under challenging situations, which may or may not involve clients with mental health issues.
- Ability to pass a Live Scan criminal background clearance, and provide County with letters certifying completion and that no criminal history records exist. Note: duties may include access to confidential records.
- Ability to provide proof of successful Mandated Reporter Trainer completion within last 12 months, or ability to successfully complete Mandated Reporter Training requirements within first week of awarded contract term.

V. License Requirements

Valid Class C California Driver's License.

VI. Insurance Requirements

Automobile liability insurance and commercial general liability insurance are required with a combined single limit coverage of at least \$500,000.



VIII. Fiscal Requirements

Interested Respondents must submit a written narrative that demonstrates they possess the following:

- A. Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources during the performance of the contract to deliver services timely specified in the Scope of Services above.
- B. An adequate accounting system and/or application in place to properly account for the funds and to segregate expenses by funding source (i.e., Excel, QuickBooks, etc...).

IX. Review and Selection Criteria

The submission packages will be evaluated by Department Staff to identify the most qualified respondent(s). If more than one Respondent is deemed to be highly qualified, the Department may require oral interviews and/or supplemental information from those Respondents before making a final selection.

Contract negotiations will begin upon identification of the most qualified Respondent. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated in a reasonable timeframe, EHSD, in its sole discretion, may terminate negotiations with the awarded Respondent and begin Contract negotiations with another qualified Respondent.

Respondents will be scored on the following criteria with a possible score of 100 points:

Points	Item
40	Letter of Interest (Qualifications Statement) describing interest in providing the services and relevant qualifications and experience which support the services described in this RFI.
40	Professional Knowledge: Child Welfare knowledge, background, diverse populations, and other factors relevant to the services described in this RFI.
10	Fiscal Narrative to meet Fiscal Requirements.



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10	Provide three (3) letters of verifiable professional references, including name, business, phone and email address.
100	Total Points

X. Submission Requirements

Interested parties must submit all of the following documentation to be considered as a Respondent for this RFI:

1. A Letter of Interest (Qualifications Statement) describing the following:
 - a. Describe Responding individual or agency (Respondent) interest in the CFS Ombudsperson role and relevant experience and abilities.
 - b. Why are you/agency responding to this opportunity?
 - c. Describe minimum qualifications of Respondent related to education and work experience – summary of education, skills, job resume, training/resources and associated experience to deliver services under this RFI.
 - d. Describe Respondent’s ability to deliver cultural sensitivity to work with diverse populations.
 - e. Describe Respondent’s availability to deliver services under this RFI?
 - f. Describe Respondent’s recommended system and protocols for managing and responding to inquiries.
 - g. Describe Respondent’s experience compiling and writing data reports.
 - h. Describe Respondent’s experience with formal mediation, negotiation, advocacy or similar skills.
 - i. Describe Respondent’s ability in handling conflict or challenging situations.
2. Current Respondent resume(s), which includes experience, qualifications, licenses and other factors relevant to delivering the services described in this RFI.
3. Three (3) verifiable professional/business references. Name, business, phone, and email address for each required.
4. Fiscal Narrative to confirm and demonstrate the Respondent’s possession of the following:



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- a. Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources during the performance of the contract to ensure timely delivery of services specified above.
- b. Adequate accounting system or application in place that will properly account for the funds and segregate expenses by funding source.

Interested parties must submit complete proposals including all documentation above, along with the Respondent's email address and contact phone number to:

Contra Costa County – Employment and Human Services Department
Contracts Unit, Attention: RFI 753
Telephone: (925) 608-4969
Email: contractbid@ehsd.cccounty.us
Website: www.ehsd.org/rfi

Submissions may be sent **via e-mail only** to contractbid@ehsd.cccounty.us. Attachments must be in MS Word, MS Excel, and/or pdf file format.

Responses must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Thursday, January 5, 2023 without exception. Please note that responses will not be returned, and late deliveries will **NOT** be accepted.

XI. Restriction and Disclosure

All information received in response to this RFI shall become the property of Contra Costa County.

Any information deemed confidential or proprietary by the Respondent must be clearly marked and identified by the Respondent as such and include an explanation of why such information is exempt from disclosure under applicable law. Such clearly marked and identified confidential or proprietary information will be protected and treated with confidentiality only to the extent permitted by law. Information not protected from disclosure by law will be considered a public record.

Proposals will be received, maintained, and may be disclosed to the public consistent with the California Public Records Act (PRA) and the Freedom of Information Act. Proposals will be exempt from disclosure until the evaluation and selection process has been completed. Respondents should be aware that EHSD is required by law to make its records available for public inspection and copying, with certain exceptions. (See California Public Records Act, California Government Code Section 6250 et seq. and the Freedom of Information Act - 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552).



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EHSD will not notify Respondent of requests for release of information or that EHSD released data unless EHSD receives a request for information previously marked and identified by the Respondent as confidential or proprietary. If EHSD receives a request for release of such previously marked and identified confidential or proprietary information, EHSD will notify the Respondent of such request to allow the Respondent to challenge such request consistent with applicable law.

The County reserves the right to reject any proposal and negotiate any terms that best serves the County. All proposals become the property of the County, without obligation to the Respondent. The RFI process may be cancelled at any time without written notice.

Only Respondents submitting a proposal in accordance with RFI **753** may appeal the RFI process. Appeals must be submitted in writing. The appeal request must clearly state the area(s) of contention, how the individual/organization was damaged, and actions sought.

Appeals must be submitted and addressed as follows:

Contra Costa County
Employment and Human Services Department
Attention: EHSD Director
40 Douglas Drive
Martinez, CA 94553

Appeals must be received within ten (10) business days from the date of the award/denial letter. Notification of a final decision on the appeal shall be made in writing to the Respondent.