IN RE:
SSA/KC/12-001-S            PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

A Pre-Proposal Conference in the above-captioned matter held before the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources, on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, commencing at 1:15 p.m., at 311 West Saratoga Street, Baltimore, Maryland, and reported by Mallorie K. Cole, Court Reporter and Notary Public.

EVANS REPORTING SERVICE
The Munsey Building, Suite 705
Seven North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
410-727-7100
800-256-8410
1 APPEARANCES:

2 KOESHA HALL
3 KAREN POWELL
4 LARRY INGRAM
5 DONNA FOSTER
6 KATIE KAMIEIECKI
7 PAULA ANDERSON
8 DOROTHY JONES
9 MELISSA HALL
10 JANE WALKER
11 CLAUDIA DOCK
12 HERBERT K. LODDER
13 MARILYN DAVIS
14 SANDY JOHNSON
15 MERLE E. SMITH
16 SHERYL STEPHENS-TRASK
17 JILL TAYLOR
18 GLORIA J. HUDDLESTON
19 CHRISTA CONNELLY
20 EVETTE CLARKE
21 SCOTT MOORE
APPEARANCES

(Continued)

JACKIE JORDAN

JOHN L. MONROE, JR.

ARETHA ECTOR

CARRIE BROWN DUNKIN
MS. HALL: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Keosha Hall. I'm a little under the weather, so if you don't understand something that I'm saying or if I'm not speaking loudly enough, just let me know.

I just want to welcome you-all to the Department of Human Resources. Today we will share information with you in regards to the Request for Proposals, entitled the Maryland Kinship Care Resource Center, Agency Control No. SSA/KC/12-001-S.

If you haven't done so already, we want you to sign in at the front, indicate that you are MBE or not. If you could provide your business card, that will sufficient as well. And please note that Evans Reporting Service is transcribing this conference. When asking questions, please state your name and the name of the company for the record. A transcript of this conference will be made
available on e-Maryland Marketplace and the DHR
website.

We're going to start with
introductions. Again, I am Keosha Hall. I'm
the procurement officer for the solicitation.
We're going to start with the state
representatives here to my right.

MS. KAMIENIECKI: Hi. My name is
Katie Kamieniecki, and I'm with DHR
Procurement.

MS. POWELL: Good afternoon. My name
is Karen Powell, and I am with the Social
Services Administration here at DHR.

MS. FOSTER: Donna Foster. Minority
Business Enterprise Administrator for the
Department of Human Resources.

MS. HALL: And then we want to ask that
you guys state your name and the business
you're with. If there's more than one
representative, we just ask that you just have
one person state their name and the business.
MS. TAYLOR: I'm Jill Taylor, and I'm the program manager for Out-Of-Home Services for the Social Services Administration.

MR. LODDER: Pastoral Counseling Services of Maryland.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Gloria Huddleston, Millennium Health and Human Services Development Corporation. I am the president and CEO of the board.

MS. WALKER: Jane Walker, the Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health.

MS. JONES: I'm Dorothy Jones from Second Home.

MS. DUNKIN: Carrie Brown Dunkin from Innovative Clinical Associates. And I'm also here with Sheryl Stephens-Trask.

MS. ANDERSON: Paula Anderson with Pace Consulting.

MS. CLARKE: Evette Clarke, Progressive Life Center.
MR. INGRAM: Larry Ingram, Program Manager of Hiring Agreements.

MS. HALL: Anybody else?

If you didn't get a copy, we have some in the back, if you want to follow.

First, we're going to go over the Objective of the RFP, dealing with Section 1:

"The Department, through the Social Services Administration and Unit within the Department, intends to acquire the contractual services of a community-based organization with 501(c)(3) status to establish and operate a Kinship Care Resource Center within the State of Maryland. The Resource Center will serve as a statewide center which focuses on the needs and interests of relative kinship caregivers of children under the age of 18 years and in some cases up to the age of 21. Contractual services will include, but are not limited to: Short term counseling and/or information and referral to community resources; guidance in
successfully navigating the various community
systems; facilitation of support groups,
caregiver and children; and workshops and/or
training to strengthen and empower Kinship
Caregivers and their families. The Contract
will be awarded for two years beginning July 1,
2012 and ending June 30, 2014; with 3 one-year
renewal options to be exercised at the State's
sole discretion. Only one award is anticipated
from this solicitation."

As far as Section 2, for the purposes
of this RFP, the Procurement Officer, myself,
is the sole point of contact between the State
and the vendor community. You do not need to
contact anybody else in regards to that. If
you need help or have questions, I'm the person
you want to go to.

Section 1.5, Questions and Responses.
I think so far we maybe received one question.
But however, responses to all questions will be
posted on e-Maryland Marketplace and the DHR
website with sufficient time to allow officers
to review and to assist with formulating their
proposal submissions.

Any questions that are asked during the
class are responded to during the
class, and please be advised that
responses to these questions will be posted,
again, on e-Maryland Marketplace.

If you have any questions to ask after
this conference, please submit them
electronically. If there should be a
discrepancy between the responses given during
the conference and written responses provided
subsequently, the written responses shall
prevail.

Section 1.6, the proposal due date.
The proposal is due January 3rd, 2012, which is
a Tuesday, at 4 o'clock. There will not be any
extensions. Proposals arriving late cannot and
will not be accepted.

So if you're mailing your proposals,
please allow sufficient time for mailing to ensure that it is received by me prior to the proposal due date and time. Postmarked by the due date and time is not acceptable. It must be received by the procurement officer. Now I'm going to go over the general information, which is more so dealing with Section 2 of the RFP.

Section 2.14 is the Bid/Proposal Affidavit, Attachment B. This form must be completely filled out and submitted with your Technical Proposal. You only need to submit it with the original of Technical Proposal. Copies are not required. This will be described in more detail and will be discussed at proposal preparation.

Section 2.15, the Corporate Registration. Offerors must be certain that they are registered with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation in order to do business with the State of Maryland.
There is no nominal fee to register your company if you are not registered. In addition, all attached obligations with (inaudible) must be met. Failure to do so may result in an otherwise successful proposal being dropped for consideration for the award of a contract.

Section 2.17, the Contract Affidavit, Attachment C. This form is only to be submitted after notification of Contract award. Please do not include it with your technical proposal.

Section 2.24, Payment terms and Billing. The monthly invoice, which is Attachment O, is required by the 15th of the month following the report month. Payment will be made based upon 1/12th of the annual Contract amount each month. Please be advised that the full payment of any invoice is contingent upon the timely receipt of all deliverables. Failure to submit deliverables
timely may result in withholding a payment or a portion of payment until all deliverables have been submitted.

Section 2.27, which is e-Maryland Marketplace.

In order to receive a Contract award, the vendor must be registered on e-Maryland Marketplace. e-Maryland registration is only valid for one year, and please remember to keep your registration up-to-date. If you are uncertain as to the validity of your registration, please contact the e-Maryland Help Desk. The number for that is 410-767-1492.

Now we're going to have the MBE portion of the RFP, which is going to be done by Ms. Donna Foster here at the end, Sections 2.29 to 2.32.

MS. FOSTER: Good afternoon.
I will be covering Section 2.29 to 2.33, and I will be doing highlights of these
sections.

Are there any state-certified MBEs in the room already? Raise your hands.

Good, good. Good to see you.

And I want to encourage you, at the end of this pre-proposal conference, to use this opportunity to network with other companies that are here, as long as the room is available.

2.29. We're going to start in 2.30.

Minority businesses are encouraged to respond to the Requests for Proposal. Minority participation and Offerors shall structure its procedures for the performance of the work required in this Contract to attempt to achieve the MBE goal.

2.31. An MBE subcontract goal of 25 percent has been established for this procurement.

2.32(B) Contractor's responsibilities.

Contractors are to identify specific work
within the scope of the Contract appropriate for MBE subcontracting. You are to solicit minority businesses within at least ten days before the proposals are due. State-certified MBEs can be found on the Maryland Department of Transportation Directory. It's also listed in an RFP. But for your information, it's www.mdot.state.md.us. This directory is updated daily and is the current listing of state-certified MBEs.

The next section, 2.32(C), which deals with the MDOT Certified Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit. This document is submitted with your proposal. This is a two-page document. Make sure that you read that document completely and complete the form accurately.

The first page of this document, you must make a decision whether you intend to meet the entire MBE goal established for this procurement, which is 25 percent, or it is your
intent to request a Waiver of the goal in whole or in part. You must make a decision as to one or the other. You can't do both. One or the other. Either you're going meet the goal in its entirety, which is 25 percent, or identify that it's your intent to request a Waiver of the goal in whole or in part.

On the second page, you're going list the state-certified MBEs that you have identified to use to meet the MBE goal. You will only list percentages on this document. There are to be no dollar amounts listed on this document.

Pay close attention -- well, let me say this as well. This is an affidavit, so you will sign the document to affirm that the information that you have presented on the document is correct. Pay attention to the information in bold type in the Request for Proposal. If the Offeror fails to submit Attachment F, which is the MDOT Certified
Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit
with the offer as required, the procurement
officer shall determine that the offer is not
reasonably susceptible of being selected for
award. Pay close attention to the information
that is bold.

Additional documentation will be
requested within ten days of notification of
award or that you're the apparent awardee. One
is the Outreach Efforts Compliance Form, and
the other one is the Subcontractor Project
Participation Certification, okay?

If it has been identified on the
Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit
that you intend to request a Waiver in whole or
in part, your Waiver documentation and your
request for the Waiver will be submitted at
this time.

Again, please pay attention to the
information that's bold. If the apparent
awardee fails to return Outreach Efforts
Compliance Form, Subcontractor Project Participation Certification and the requested Waiver documentation within the required time, the procurement officer may determine that the apparent awardee is not responsible and, therefore, not eligible for Contract award. If the Contract is awarded, it is voidable.

2.32(D) deals with the Waiver. Again, if for any reason the Offeror is unable to achieve the Contract Goal for certified participation, an Offeror may request a Waiver to include the efforts made to select the type of work that you're going to subcontract to MBEs, a detailed statement of your efforts to secure MBEs for the procurement -- and this is going to include names, addresses, information that you sent to them, et cetera, okay?

Pay close attention to this section -- and you should know that if a request for a Waiver is denied, the offer is rejected, okay?

The next section, 2.32 (E) is an
Amendment for Unforeseen Circumstances. Any changes to the MDOT Utilization and Fair Solicitation Affidavit prior to or after contract execution must be reported and approved. Prior to the execution of the Contract, the information is reported to the procurement officer. After award notification is made to the State's Project Manager.

Section 2.33 deals with late payment. This entire section, simply stated, means if the subcontractor -- if your state-certified MBE subcontractor does a satisfactory job and is not disputed, then you must pay them promptly. If not, there are sanctions that can be applied for failure to pay the subcontractor promptly, and that's delineated in Section 2.33.

Any questions?

MS. HUDDLESTON: I know what happens when the (inaudible) is not the client. What happens with the subcontractor cannot deliver
what they had promised when you initially
entered into the partnership agreement.

MS. FOSTER: Between the prime and the
sub?

MS. HUDDLESTON: Yes.

MS. FOSTER: Okay. Well, the first
thing you should do is issue them some kind of
corrective action to see what the problem is
and how it can be resolved. If not, and it
comes to the point where you need to request a
subcontractor change, you have to submit a
request in the form of a memo to DHR and get it
approved, and we are looking for your efforts
to replace that subcontractor.

So you need to have documentation of
the failure of the subcontractor to comply.

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. What was
your name?

(Discussion off the record.)

MS. FOSTER: Anything else?

Thank you.
1     MS. HALL: I just want to go over
2     Section 2.3, and then I'll be followed by
3     Katherine Kamieniecki. She's going to do the
4     minimum wage requirements.
5     2.33 is the Prompt Payment Policy. It
6     is DHR's policy that if the subcontractor has
7     performed service under a State contract, they
8     should be paid by the prime contractor and paid
9     promptly. The State allows the Department
10    several remedies if there is an undisputed
11    amount that a contractor is holding from paying
12    to a subcontractor, including withholding
13    contract payment to the contractor.
14     (Discussion off the record.)
15     MS. HALL: We're going to go to
16     Section 2.3, which is the Living Wage
17     Requirement.
18     MS. KAMIENIECKI: My name is Katie
19     Kamieniecki, and I'm going to talk to you about
20     Maryland's Living Wage.
21     The Living Wage Law requires certain
contractors and subcontractors to pay minimum wage rates to employees who are paid under certain state service contracts. A solicitation for services under a state contract of $100,000 or more may be subject to Title 18, State Financing Procurement Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Effective September 27th, 2011, contractors and subcontractors subject to the Living Wage shall pay each covered employee at least $12.49 per hour if State contract services valued at 50 percent or more of the total value of the contract are performed in the tier one area.

If State contract services valued at 50 percent or more of the total value contract are performed in the tier two area, an Offeror shall pay each covered employee at least $9.39 per hour.

The specific Living Wage rate is determined by whether a majority of services
takes place in a tier one area or a tier two area of the State.

The tier one area includes Montgomery, Prince George's, Howard, Anne Arundel and Baltimore Counties and Baltimore City. The tier one area includes any county in the State, not including in the tier one area.

If a business has operations in areas with two different wage tiers, the rate you pay is determined by the area where 50 percent or more of the total contract value is performed. If the employees who performed those services are not located in either tier one or tier two, the Living Wage rate will be based upon where the majority of the recipients of the services are located. This contract has been determined to be a tier one contract. Additional information regarding State's Living Wage Requirement is contained in Attachment M, entitled "Living Wage Requirements for Service Contracts and Affidavit of Agreement."
The Affidavit of Agreement must be completed and submitted with the original copy of the technical proposal. Failure to complete and submit the Living Wage Affidavit Agreement will result in a determination that the Offeror is not responsible. The Maryland Living Wage Law is administered by the Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation. Additional Living Wage information pertaining to reporting obligations may be found by going to the Maryland State Department of Labor Licensing and Regulations or DLLR website at www.dllr.state.md.us, and clicking on Living Wage. Note the Living Wage rates are subject to annual adjustments by DLLR; however, the contractor's prices under the Contract may not change because of any Living Wage adjustments. Offerors must factor this into their pricing and proposal submissions.

Question?

MS. HUDDLESTON: Yeah. Unless there's
been some recent changes to the Living Wage Law, it's been my experience that community based organizations, 501 (c)(3), that are not -- subject to this, they can be exempt from this tier one if they submit that they are the type of nonprofit organization that are not making huge dollars?

MS. JOHNSON: My name is Sandy Johnson. The Living Wage Law does pass some exemptions, and attached to your solicitation are probably a list of those exemptions. If you have any additional questions -- and there's also a fax sheet that's on the DLLR website that tells you. And also, the form that you can take for Living Wage has a list of those exemptions on it. So if you --

MS. HUDDLESTON: That's what I thought. Thank you.

Gloria Huddleston, Millennium Health and Human Services.

MS. HALL: Next, we have Section 2.40.
MR. INGRAM: Being circulated throughout the room at this time is a packet for Hiring Agreements.

Good Afternoon. I'm Larry Ingram, Program Manager of Hiring Agreements. We have circulated for you a packet, giving some of the key elements of Hiring Agreements, as they relate to State contractors.

On the left-hand side of the folder is the Solicitation Clause, and I'll just read it as it is:

"By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the Bidder/Offeror agrees to execute and comply with the enclosed Maryland Department of Human Resources Hiring Agreement. The Hiring Agreement is to be executed by the successful Bidder/Offeror and delivered to the procurement officer within ten days following receipt of notice by the Bidder/Offeror that it is being recommended for a contract award. The Hiring Agreement will
become effective concurrently with the award of the Contract.

"The Hiring Agreement provides that the Contractor, Maryland Department of Human Resources, and the contracting entity will work cooperatively to identify and hire qualified current and former Family Investment Administration recipients, their children, foster care youth, and child support obligors to fill job openings resulting from this procurement, in accordance with Section 13-224 of the State Finance and Procurement Article."

The second item on the left-hand side is a replica of the Contract that the Contract awardee would be signing. It stipulates some of the key policies, duties, rights and responsibilities of the contractor. And on the last page is a place for signature, and our department will sign it also.

I need to say a little bit about the reporting of job activities for State
contractors. Most recently, in April of this year, the Board of Public Works issued Public Work Advisory, 2011-1, which stipulates more reporting. At this point, it becomes a number of things. But specifically to the State contractor, our office is now required to report the number of contracts a contractor may have, the number of jobs they offered to the targeted population, and the number actually hired. I need to let you know that.

On the right-hand side of the folder, the first item is a sample letter, an intro letter, that you will be receiving if you are the awardee. Underneath it are specific recruitment guidelines. The next item on that side is the State contractor job order form. In other words, should employment come about or be developed as a result of this procurement contract, and the job opening occurs, the contractor is to forward a job order form filled out addressing the specifications for
employment.

At that time, our office is allotted three business days to find qualified candidates for your positions. And we will forward those candidates to you by the method of your choice.

After you have processed the candidates, the program asks that you complete -- is the next item in the back -- what's called a Data Flow Form. We are asking the contractor, and the contractor really is required to tell us what happened. Was this individual hired or not hired? If so, why not? And this is a crucial piece of the program, because with some of the candidates -- at any rate, you're not allowed to turn down employment. And so this is a check and balance system. If a candidate does not reasonably, I guess, comply or accept the position, then that candidate is, what we call, "sanctioned." And so it is important to fill out and complete the
1. Data Flow Form.

   I believe the last item in your packet is the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit form, whereby certain state contractors are allowed to receive up to $10,000 in tax credits over a two-year period per one employee from the targeted group.

   I would like to have your comments and your questions at this time.

   MS. HUDDLESTON: Is that the earned-income credit, or is this different from the earned-income credit?

   MR. INGRAM: No. This isn't the earned-income credit.

   MS. HUDDLESTON: Thank you.

   MR. INGRAM: I would like to say this also:

   Let's say you send us a job opening for any number of jobs, and we forward to you candidates. If any of those candidates are deemed qualified by your spreadsheet, then a
decision is expected to be made on the Department's targeted population. We've had some contractors who would receive the targeted candidates, who have the three-day time frame for being hired before any other candidates can be considered, except for under certain guidelines. And they would hold the candidates, open the flood gates, and then compare them all together. That is not the intent of the program.

If you deem them qualified, a decision is expected. Let's say, we send you candidates, and you say, "none of them are qualified"? At that point, you need a Waiver from our office stating that you have met the specifications of the law for this or these jobs at this time. You will provide the Waiver, and then you are free to advertise where you want to, and you're free to hire whomever you wish.

Questions or comments?
UNKNOWN SPEAKER 1: Is there a window to do that?

MR. INGRAM: Well, we are allowed the law, and this law is under House Bill 268, Section 13-224 of the State Finance and Procurement Article. We are allowed three business days to provide the contractor with qualified candidates, based upon the job order spreadsheet that the contractor provides.

When the three days are up, you should receive no additional candidates, and the window for our candidates closes, and a decision needs to be made on the candidates that we have presented to you.

And again, if we don't -- let's say we don't have any candidates for the job opening. If after three days you receive nothing, you contact our office, and we'll provide you a Waiver stating you have complied with the guidelines of the law; you're free to advertise and hire whomever you wish.
MS. HUDDLESTON: I assume you mean a (inaudible) decision?

MR. INGRAM: Well, yes. It means you've complied. Either we didn't anywhere that was qualified, or we didn't have anyone to send you at all, and that needs to be completed prior to you going forth with advertising and hiring. We have seen evidence of contractors, advertisements, so forth, haven't said anything to us, and other sorts of things. But we want to be very clear how the law is written and how it is to be followed.

Thank you for your patience.

MS. HALL: Next, we will have Ms. Karen Powell. She will be doing the specifications.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 2: Before Ms. Powell comes forward, before we go into Section 3, I just wanted to bring your attention back to 2.27, e-Maryland Marketplace. And it's stated early:
"In order to receive a Contract award, a vendor must be registered on e-Maryland Marketplace."

And I just wanted to bring to your attention and let you know that e-Maryland Marketplace is now getting a new website. You should be able to pull it up the same way, and if you are registered, you should stay registered. You should not do anything to your registration. However, if you encounter problems, I just want you to know that because they are moving over to a new system, that may present some issues.

As Keosha had earlier stated to you, make sure you keep that number in mind, that 410-767-1492. It's important that you keep that number.

That's it. Thank you.

MS. POWELL: Good afternoon. My name again is Karen Powell, and I am from the Social Services Administration. I wanted to give you
the highlights of the specifications in Sections 3.1 to 3.5.

The Social Services Administration believes that families have the ability to take care of themselves, and that we should let them be the first resources when they are caring for children, whenever that can be done safely and is in the child's best interest to be able to do that.

We have a commitment and believe that children deserve and have a right to be with families and in a permanent placement setting. And we also are supporting our family's inner practice model, which really advocates for the strengths of families and to make sure the families are involved in the decision-making process.

We are complying with the fostering connections legislation that promotes relative placements. We look at the solicitation for the resource center as an extension and as a
collaboration of that effort to be able to
demonstrate that we are committed to making
sure that children can and deserve and should
be given the opportunities to stay with their
relatives.

We want to be able to offer support to
not only the formal but the informal kinship
caregivers. So looking at the formals of those
families who are court ordered and are involved
with a local Department of Social Services and
committed and have custody to -- the local
department has been awarded by the court.

And the informal families, where the
parents have made arrangements with the
relative caregiver, to make decisions without
the involvement of the local DSS.

And we recognize that both of those
communities do face stress when they're caring
for families and the children when they have
experienced a hardship. And we want the
resource center to be an opportunity to provide
information and referral for those families as well as peer support, educational resources and health support for those families and that information to make it available so that they are in crisis and the idea that we can prevent them from coming into our child welfare system.

And the objectives for the resource center would be to develop and implement programs and services that are designed specifically to preserve, empower and strengthen those kinship families throughout the entire State of Maryland and to look at developing relationships with public and private organizations so that you can advocate in an effort, again, to link those families with preventative rehabilitation and supportive services to meet the needs so that they can continue to maintain the children in their care appropriately.

And then also to provide the Department with a comprehensive data profile of what the
kinship population in those families look like in the State of Maryland.

And in terms of the scope of services, we would expect the Offeror to be able to have paid and volunteer staff, and that you're going to collaborate with our local Department of Social Services to, again, support these families, and being able to take care of their relatives.

During the first year of the Contract, it would be an expectation that the Offeror would have (inaudible) to go around the State to get information to find out what the needs of the families are and how we can best support them.

And then during Year 2, the expectation would be that you would host a statewide Kinship Care Conference, and the topics generated from the listening tours would be provided as workshops during that conference, and that the conference would be hosted in
subsequent years if the options would be exercised for the person who was awarded the Contract.

The other expectation would be that an advisory board would be established with statewide representatives from the Kinship Care community as well as community and faith-based advocates, along with a cross-section and a diverse group of community service providers, again, so that they can help inform the decisions and the resources that the Kinship Care providers would be needing.

Also to be able to provide content to DHR to help populate our Kinship Care website. DHR will host the website, but the expectation would be that the resource center would give us the information so that we can post it online.

In addition, there would be an expectation to publish a quarterly newsletter with relative Kinship Care information, pertaining to trainings, support groups,
workshops, or any other information that you
would deem necessary or relevant that could
benefit the Kinship Care population, again,
throughout the State of Maryland. And as part
of that, to also be able to maintain a
statewide roster of kinship caregivers.

The requirements for the Offeror will
be to be a community based nonprofit 501(C)(3)
and to be able to have at least three years of
prior experience providing the services as they
are outlined in the RFP. In terms of the
location, for the vendor to be able to have
office space to accommodate staff and the
ability to conduct client interviews, meeting
space for approximately up to 25 people within
the location where the center would be housed,
and also a separate space that would be
available for age-appropriate activities for
the children of the caregivers, and for the
location to be accessible to public
transportation, but not more than a ten-mile
radius within Baltimore City, in terms of the
location.

In terms of outreach, it would be
expected that the resource center would provide
us with an extensive and in-depth outreach
strategy to really maximize our access to
kinship caregivers across the State and to be
able to partner with agencies to not only
solicit the assistance to promote the existence
of the center, but also to coordinate the
resources for the families who would come to
the attention and ask for assistance, whether
that be local Departments of Social Services,
local management boards, local health
departments, juvenile services; perhaps
libraries, schools, to name a few, in terms of
the collaboration.

Also the expectation will be to develop
and provide and print resource literature on
subjects relevant to kinship care families, and
that can be in the form of brochures, booklets,
flyers, and also to, again, collaborate with public and private agencies to make that resource available. The resources should be made available to families electronically but also hard copies. The expectation would be for the information to be displayed publically within the facility that was housing the resource center and to be updated at least semi-annually.

In addition, looking at developing partnerships with other community outreach programs that are going to foster parenting skills parenting skills through education and peer learning support for the resource center, and to look at exploring funding opportunities to support the learning objectives besides the financial resources that would be available through the contract for the resource center services.

In terms of publishing a quarterly newsletter that's going to give information
about current and upcoming events, but also legislative information and any additional information that the resource center would need to be relevant and appropriate the needs of the kinship care population that you are servicing.

The expectation would be to allow DHR 45 days to prove the newsletter before it was actually published, and that the first edition would be published no later than 90 days after the start of the Contract, and then subsequent issues would be published quarterly. And those would also be distributed electronically and also via the U.S. Postal System.

In terms of counseling, the resource center would have an agreement with a licensed social worker to provide regional counseling and up to 90 days of short-term counseling would be available to families upon their request. However, that would be limited to 50 hours per family for a calendar year.

In terms of training, workshops and
support groups, there would need to be a continuous and ongoing separate training for the Kinship Care providers but also for the children for being cared for by these providers and to develop a statewide support group network that would meet at least monthly to be available for, not only the caregivers, but also the children, and looking at developing age-appropriate social, emotional and cultural activities for the children as well as the caregivers.

And as I said earlier, the first year would be the expectation to do the listening tours around the State and then to host the Kinship Care Conference during the second year. And as part of the ongoing training and support groups, the resource center would be expected to develop guidelines for providing emergency transportation and developing the criteria for when those resources could be available, whether that be you're actually
providing the transportation or make the bus
tokens or cab vouchers or some sort of
assistance available for emergency
transportation for the caregivers.

An advisory board would need to be
established, and the statewide representation
should be up and running no later than 60 days
after the contract award, and 25 percent of
that membership should be dedicated to relative
caregivers, and the role of the advisory board
is to also provide feedback to DHR and the
affiliates when requested, as well as providing
information to inform the needs and the
resources of the kinship caregivers.

And there should be an elected officer,
and the advisory board should establish bylaws
and they should meet at least four times a
year, and that DHR should receive copies of the
agendas, minutes, attendance sheets within ten
days after an advisory board meeting is held.

The kinship care roster that the
resource center would be expected to include
should have basic demographic information about
the families who are contacting or receiving
services from the resource center, and they
should include the jurisdiction where that
family lives, as well as an e-mail address, the
age of the caregiver, the number of children in
that person's care, the relationship between
the caregiver and the child, the services
requested or needed in addition to the services
that were actually received by the family or
the children.

In terms of report, Attachment P in the
solicitation packet is a monthly progress
report, which is basically a summary of the
services that the family receives, and it's
broken down by the type, the outcome, and the
location, meaning the jurisdiction where that
family lives. A summary of the number of
attendees for the support groups and what the
focus of the discussion was during any
particular meeting. Number of phone calls that were received; again, the referrals that were made, any types of referrals that were made.

The report should also include the numbers, types and dates for training that was offered to the kinship caregivers, and also a list of the number of attendees, and it should also -- the report should include any sort of problems that should arise and the resolution of those problems and whether or not the activities was achieved and describe how it relates to the scope of the project.

So all of that is outlined in Attachment P and should be submitted monthly.

Attachment Q is a Quarterly Progress Report, which is a description of the program accomplishment and activities during any previous three-month period, and it should also report any sort of challenges, referral information or supplementary documents that have affected the scope of the work.
Attachment R is an Annual Report, which at minimum should provide an overview of all the services that were provided during the year as well as the outcome of those services. There should be statistical data on the number of families served, and again outlines any identified barriers and recommendations, explaining how the plan is going to be put in place to improve those areas. And it should be completed on the company's letterhead.

For personnel requirements, at a minimum, the staff should be hired as outlined in the RFP. The project director and the project coordinator are the key personnel, and they should be responsible for the essential functions for the work that's outlined in the RFP. The project director is basically responsible for the overall implementation of the proposed project and will oversee the administrative requirements to make sure that you are achieving the projected goals and the
objectives of the project.

The project director will preside over
the advisory board. At a minimum, they must
have a master's degree in social work or
related field, in addition to knowledge about
child welfare and juvenile services, as well as
Kinship Care services, and with a minimum of
seven years of professional employment
experience in a human service capacity, in
either a public or private agency or
institution. And four of those seven years
must have been in an administrative supervisory
or consultative capacity, and they must have a
valid driver's license and have successfully
completed a criminal background check as well
as a child protective services background
clearance.

The project coordinator is the person
who will be designated to receive the
day-to-day responsibilities of ensuring that
the services are available and that the center
is as functioning; they shall provide written feedback from the Kinship Care services after the services have been completed and then after any sort of training sessions that are conducted. This person, at a minimum, should have a bachelor's degree in social work or a related field, and have strong writing skills, public service skills, as well as community organizing abilities. In addition, they should have knowledge of the child welfare and juvenile systems, and kinship care experience or service is preferable.

The additional staff should be family advocates. There should at least three, no less than three, individuals who, again, have a general knowledge of kinship care services, and their role is to assist in accessing community services and resources. They should be able to respond to callers and assist with the day-to-day operation of the center, and to be able to provide general, clerical support.
Any staff or individuals who are affiliated with the center and assisting with the services, with the children and the families, should be required to attend an initial training that kind of gives an overview of the scope of the works. Customer service, racial and cultural sensitivity and confidentiality issues, and they all are required to have a criminal background check and child protective services clearances for any staff prior to them starting any work with the project.

And in terms of the deliverables, a draft announcement and samples of the resource center information and -- for review and approval within 15 days after the start date after the Contract, and the first announcement for the resource center information to the local department should be available 30 days after the Contract is started, and then from that point, be provided semiannually. There
should be an outline of the content of the resource center's website, made available to DHR, within 30 days after the start date as well.

The other deliverable, in terms of the quarterly newsletter, as I mentioned, DHR would be required to have a proof, which would (inaudible) 45 days before it would be published, and the expectation would be that the first quarterly newsletter would be ready for distribution after 90 days after the award of the Contract. The start of the Contract, and a copy of agenda, minutes and attendance sheets from the advisory board, are again, due to DHR within ten days after the date of the meeting.

Also, copies of the agenda and attendance sheets from the support groups are also due to DHR within ten days, following the date of the meeting.

And Attachment 0 in your packet is the
Monthly Invoice Report, which is due the 15th of the month, following the monthly report, along with the monthly progress report, which again, is attachment P, which is due with the monthly invoice by the 15th of the month following the close of that reporting period.

And the Quarterly Progress Report, Attachment Q, is due the 15th of the month following the end of the reporting quarter. And the annual report is due 30 days after the end of the contract year, including the continuation, if the option years are exercised.

And then there is the expectation that there would be a comprehensive statewide roster of the kinship care families who are serviced within 30 days after the end of the first year of the Contract; therefore, after (inaudible) they are exercised.

Any questions about the specifications?

MR. LODDER: Ms. Powell, is there any
jurisdiction that has already done this well, that has been a model for people's thinking so that -- I don't know, Vermont, maybe, has done this real well already --

MS. POWELL: You mean within the State of Maryland?

MR. LODDER: Obviously not. No. It was within their own state.

MS. POWELL: I'm sorry? Within?

MR. LODDER: Within their own states --

MS. POWELL: Nationally?

MR. LODDER: Right.

MS. POWELL: I'm not sure of any. We can investigate that, if that's something, and look at that in writing, but I'm not sure.

Chicago, Illinois has done some good work, in terms of kinship, and they have been fairly progressive. And I know Ohio has. But in terms of who has had a resource center and a model, I'm not sure.

MS. WALKER: Jane Walker, Maryland
Coalition of Families. Two questions:

One: The counseling services, and the contracts, your expectation is that you would have an agency or an individual contracted in each of the 24 jurisdictions to be able to work with kinship care?

MS. POWELL: It would need to be a regional who would be available to provide those services regionally.

MS. WALKER: And these for that are to be included, incorporated into this contract?

MS. POWELL: Yes.

MS. WALKER: What if they have private insurance or medical assistance or -- that would be covering that?

MS. POWELL: Then I would say that they would be billed for those services if they have the resources to provide them, to get with their private insurance.

MS. WALKER: I would expect that most people in one way or another would have...
And the same with the emergency transportation runs. That's to be built into this project?

MS. POWELL: Yes.

MS. WALKER: Even though, in some of the world jurisdictions, transportation can be unbelievably expensive. But all that is to be included?

MS. POWELL: Yes.

MS. WALKER: And then the last one is: We are to submit the names of all of the kinship caregivers that would be encountered, either participating in training, support groups, phone calls, one-to-one? Is that right?

MS. POWELL: Yes.

MS. WALKER: Do we ask permission before we submit their names? I would think that -- when we do this kind of reporting in other contracts we have, we would submit initials, not full names, unless we could get
specific written release to be able to submit somebody's name to DSS. I think some people might have concerns about that.

MS. POWELL: If the person has concerns about that, then that would be fine, if they were not willing to release their information. But if we could at least have some sort of identifier to say --

MS. WALKER: Right. We would definitely -- so you're saying that would be acceptable --

MS. POWELL: That would be -- if the person is not willing to -- yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 3: (Inaudible.)

MS. POWELL: I'm having a hard time hearing you --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 3: I'm sorry.

(Inaudible) have access to it, but you have a login, and you can see all the same information as well so that for all the reporting and documentation we have, without
1 (inaudible.)

2 So would that be something that, you
3 know, we can probably look at --
4 MS. POWELL: That there would be an
5 interface for it?
6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER 3: (Inaudible.)
7 Everything (inaudible) have electronic
8 system that can be designed to do that so that
9 (inaudible) call or asking about a report, the
10 person -- any one of your -- in your team
11 (inaudible) contract and have that information
12 readily available. (Inaudible.)
13 That's what we're trying to do now.
14 And I just want to make sure we do it on a
15 front side. (Inaudible.)
16 MS. POWELL: My initial thought would
17 be the cost of developing that interface. How
18 would that be paid for?
19 But I think we would want the file more
20 so -- the documentation more so than the access
21 to the system.
UNKNOWN SPEAKER 3: Exactly. That's the reason why we were saying that if we were submitting that, we would take care of that and do that already. We have developers already on site that can do that. I just want to know (inaudible) to have something like that, you know --

MS. POWELL: And I would not be able to make that decision. I think that would need to be a conversation and a question we would need to pose to our IT staff, in terms of developing and participating in some sort of interface like that.

MS. HUDDLESTON: HIPAA violations would then --

MS. POWELL: There would be some access to some secure network. That's why I think our IT people -- I would not be able to answer that question.

MS. HALL: You can also submit that question in writing, and then we can look at it
and have a response submitted back.

MS. CLARKE: Just a point of clarification in regards to counseling fees.

For those families who are not in short or can't get access to insurance, is there a maximum amount of families per year that the resource center is slated to be (inaudible.)

MS. POWELL: The projection for that, right? As long as it can be available as the families are requesting if they did not have the resources to pay for it, yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 4: I wanted to know if DSS would be supplying the clients -- their clients, informal ones as well, because -- do you have informal (inaudible) calling in for any services that you might be able to share with the contractors?

MS. POWELL: I'm not sure if the local departments maintain that sort of list, and I think we would have to have the permission. If the clients would call DHR, then we would refer
them to the resource center. As opposed to
giving the resource center a list, we would
give them the resource center's number so that
they could make that call themselves.

But how would the contractor know that
it's coming from DSS, that the referral was
from -- because part of some of the
reporting -- does it not say where they have
been referred from?

MS. POWELL: That could be a question,
I would think, that you would ask if the person
is calling, just as any other family member
would call and ask for services. I would
suggest that if they called, that would be part
of whatever screening you would do, to say, how
did you find out about the resource center?

Was there a follow-up question to that?

Did that answer your question?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 4: That's fine.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Currently, is there a
resource center, currently?
MS. POWELL: No, there is not.

MS. HUDDLESTON: This is a new initiative --

MS. POWELL: The last award was in 2008. So there's not been a vendor since that time.

MS. HUDDLESTON: So there's been no program? So it's just kind of been hanging out there -- what's the story?

MS. POWELL: Actually, trying to get to this part and looking at funding and issuing the RFP.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Okay.

MS. POWELL: But we are still providing kinship care services throughout the State. There is no resource center that is coordinating all those efforts.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 3: That's what we were wondering. Because the services are coming from here.

MS. POWELL: And from the local
departments, primarily.

MS. CLARKE: Evette Clarke, Progressive Life Center.

Is the funding, this time around, the same as when it was put out a few years ago, or has the funding shifted, more or less, availability...

MS. HALL: Can you speak the question one more --

MS. CLARKE: The question is:

Is the funding for this particular RFP the same as when the RFP was put out a couple of years ago, or is it more or less?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 5: What we can say at this time is that your financial proposal should be based on what the cost (inaudible.) And a lot of these questions that you're asking, we'll get back to you. The question will be written out, and there will be a written response.

MS. HUDDLESTON: So would that be a
UNKNOWN SPEAKER 5: You should base your proposal (inaudible.) That's all I can say about that.

MS. WALKER: The last page of the proposal says, "contract award, if any, resulting from the RFP is subject to appropriate state approvals for awards exceeding $200,000, which would require approval of the Board of Public Works." So is 200,000 the ballpark or starting point?

MS. POWELL: I'm going to defer to Procurement.

(Unintelligible and overlapping speakers.)

MS. POWELL: Any other questions?

MS. HUDDLESTON: Yeah. Is the 2008 -- is that already public information?

MS. WALKER: It has to be.

MS. POWELL: In terms of the award?
MS. HUDDLESTON: Yeah.

MS. POWELL: That, I am not certain of.

MS. HALL: Everything that you guys are asking, we have the answers being recorded, and we'll be able to get back to you with that.

MS. HUDDLESTON: Great. Thank you.

MS. POWELL: Any other questions?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER 5: From the 2008 award, is there any dos and don'ts that we should do as we go forward in writing this, that -- what worked and what did not work? Or no suggestions?

MS. POWELL: I think the suggestions of what we would like to see are outlined in the specifications. I think that is a -- kind of a summary of what we would like to be able to offer for the families and for the resource center, once it's awarded.

Any other questions?

Thank you.

MS. HALL: I'm going to be going over
Section 4, which is the Requirement for Proposal Preparation.

A proposal contains two volumes: A Technical volume and a Financial volume. Accompanying those two volumes is a transmittal letter. This letter should be on company letterhead and contain the name of the company, the title of the solicitation, the Federal Tax ID number, or your social security number, and be signed by an individual who's authorized by the company to the information contained in the proposal. A transmittal letter should also acknowledge receipt of any amendments or addendum to the RFP that has been issued.

Please refer to Section 4.2(B) for the format of your technical proposal. Please address all sections listed. Please also ensure that your discussion of proposed services, Section 4.2(F) follows the format as listed in this section, to include the scope of the project, Offeror requirements, contractor
requirement, deliverables, the contractor's project manager and the post-award orientation conference.

In Section G, which is the References section, it shows that reference letters are sent to you separately in sealed envelopes for inclusion with your proposal. Reference letters are not to be sent to me directly.

In Section I, Financial Responsibility and Stability, you only need to submit one of the four items listed to satisfy this requirement.

In Section J, the Economic Benefit to the State of Maryland, please ensure that you only include percentages in this section. Do not include actual dollar amounts. Percentages only.

In Section M, which is the Forms, these forms only need to be submitted with the original copy of the proposal. You do not have to submit copies of these documents with the
six copies of the proposals.

Section 4.3, Financial. The Financial Proposal, which is Attachment A, contains all clause information for all products and services proposed. Financial information should not be presented in any portion of the technical proposal. Please ensure that the Financial Proposal is sealed separately from the Technical Proposal. Remember to include your budget and narrative in this section.

Section 5, which is Evaluation. An Evaluation Committee established by the Department will evaluate all proposals received by the closing deadline. The Evaluation Committee will rank the proposals according to the evaluation criteria listed in Section 5.5 of the RFP.

The Evaluation Committee will evaluate your proposals according to the final criteria, which is listed in the order of importance. Proposed qualifications, understanding of the
problem, references, financial responsibility
and stability, and economic benefits of the
State.

If necessary, the Committee may request
clarifications for any information in your
proposals -- any information that they might
not understand, they might ask you questions to
clarify it, clarify the answer.

In addition, Offerors may be
(inaudible) of oral presentations for their
Technical Proposal in order to further clarify
the information included in their proposals,
possibly on short notice.

All discussions may also be used in
order to answer any questions and that result
in clarification.

The Technical Proposals will then be
ranked, based upon the evaluation criteria
started previously. Proposals will be
determined to either be reasonably susceptible
for award or -- reasonably susceptible for
award. Technical Proposals deemed to be reasonably susceptible for award will continue in the evaluation process.

Any Technical Proposal not reasonably susceptible for contract award will be dropped with -- from further consideration, and the financial proposal will be returned unopened.

The Financial Proposals will be opened and evaluated. If necessary, and if it determines to be in the best interest of the State, best and final offers of the Financial Proposals may be requested from the Offerors.

After review of all Financial Proposals, the Financial Proposals will be evaluated and ranked, based upon price. A recommendation for award will be made, based upon which proposal represents the best value to the State. Considering price and technical factors in the overall evaluation, the Technical Proposal is given equal weight to the Financial Proposal.
If we have any questions, remember to state your name and your company's name, for the record.

MS. WALKER: Jane Walker, Maryland Coalition of Families.

Is there a page limit on the Technical Proposal? I didn't read one.

MS. HALL: No.

(Discussion off the record.)

MS. POWELL: At least the 250 should be the people who are served. There may be some overlaps of some of the people who were served; maybe some of your outreach, you know, may extend beyond that 250 who might be a candidate for that conference.

MS. HALL: Anybody else?

Thank you guys. We appreciate it.

(Discussion off the record.)

MS. HALL: It was: In the overall evaluation for Technical Proposal is given, equal weight to the Financial Proposal -- it's
supposed to be: Financial factors will be
given greater weight than the technical
weight -- sorry -- the technical factors.

The correction is: The financial
factors will be given greater weight than the
technical factors.

(Conference adjourned at 2:27 p.m.)
1 State of Maryland
2 Baltimore City

I, Mallorie K. Cole, a Notary Public of
the State of Maryland, Baltimore City, do hereby
certify that the above-captioned proceedings took
place at the time and place herein set out.

I further certify that the proceedings
were recorded stenographically by me, and that this
transcript is a true record of the proceedings.

I further certify that I am not of
counsel to any of the parties, nor an employee of
counsel, nor related to any of the parties, nor in
any way interested in the outcome of the action.

As witness my hand and seal this
13th day of December, 2011.

Mallorie K. Cole
My Commission Expires 03-03-2014
INDEX

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Introductions 5
Review of Requests for Proposals Sections 7