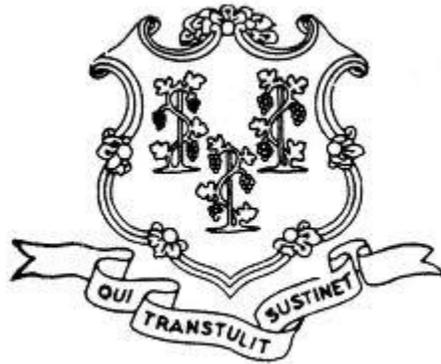


**Request for Information (RFI)**

**School of Origin Transportation**



**August 1, 2018**

**State of Connecticut  
Department of Children and Families**

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**Department of Children and Families  
Request for Information (RFI)**

**TITLE**

School of Origin Transportation Service

**OVERVIEW**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF/Department) is seeking input from current providers and any other interested persons or entities regarding the development of a more efficient and cost effective transportation model that will ensure DCF-involved children arrive to and from their school of origin safely and economically, when such children are living outside of their school of origin's geographical district. The information received through this process is expected to support the procurement process of a redesigned credentialed service component across the State.

**SCHEDULE**

RFI Development	July 2018
RFI Published	August 1, 2018
Final Questions Due	August 13, 2018
Final Questions & Answers Posted	August 17, 2018
RFI Submission Deadline	September 14, 2018

**BACKGROUND**

The DCF-Credentialed School of Origin Transportation Service was implemented as a result of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Public Law 110-351, that required the Department of Children and Families to minimize changes in the educational placement of children in its care and custody and, whenever it is in their best interests, ensure that they remain in the school they were attending before any initial or subsequent change in placement.

Rational for this Act was based on research that demonstrated children who change schools frequently due to changes in foster care placements or congregate care settings are more likely to fall behind their peers, have negative school experiences and drop out of school before graduation. The Department is currently providing School of origin Transportation to over 850 children and youth across the state.

School transportation became a DCF-Credentialed service in 2014. The need for transportation services has increased steadily over the last several years resulting in Department spending in excess of \$13,000,000 in the last fiscal year, a 45% increase over the prior 3 years. And, while the Department is continuing to achieve and advance its goal towards permanency and kinship placements, transportation spending continues to increase. Recent examination of this service has shown that there are both internal and external inconsistent practices within this service type that could be corrected or improved

upon with redesign of the program model. To this end, DCF is striving to provide school transportation across the State in a manner that is in children's best interest, is fiscally responsible to the citizens of the State of Connecticut and is performed in the most efficient and collaborative manner possible for our providers.

### **RFI PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The purpose of this RFI is to obtain the critical input of current providers and other stakeholders to assist in the design of a regional or statewide school transportation service. Although some core elements have been outlined herein, the Department is hopeful that stakeholders' extensive knowledge-base will inform the details of the desired new service, and provide the Department with creative and innovative ways to think about accomplishing this mission critical service redesign whose ultimate goal is to create a more efficient and cost effective system for transporting DCF youth to and from their school of origin.

DCF recognizes that this redesign will result in fairly significant practice and policy modifications in order to support and implement an effective school transportation service. These efforts have begun and will continue to be a primary focus of the Department throughout this upcoming year.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

All interested parties are encouraged to respond to this RFI. Submissions will be accepted from any agency, person, or entity wishing to comment upon and/or provide input regarding the school transportation service design. All parties responding to this RFI must identify themselves and provide a brief explanation of their interest in school transportation. Responding to this RFI will not help or hinder participation in future competitive procurements. See **RFI RESPONSE FORMAT**.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, CLARIFICATION AND QUESTIONS**

Questions related to submission of responses to this RFI must be submitted, via email, to the contact listed below no later than **3:00 P.M., August 13, 2018**.

Subject line of any email sent containing a question related to this RFI must be: '**School of Origin Transportation Service RFI Questions**'.

Answers to all submitted questions will be de-identified and compiled into a Question and Answer document and posted as an addendum to the RFI on both the Department's website and the State Contracting Portal administered through the Department of Administrative Services on August 17, 2018. The Department reserves the right to reject any question submitted after the August 17, 2018 deadline.

**RFI SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

The Department welcomes your response to this RFI by providing feedback to any or all of the Concept Questions posed in this document.

Submissions must be emailed to the contact person at the email address listed below, no later than 3:00 PM, local time, September 14, 2018 with an email subject heading “**School of Origin Transportation Service RFI**”:

Melanie Sparks  
Division of Contract Management  
E: Melanie.Sparks@ct.gov

**RFI RESPONSE FORMAT**

Responses to this RFI must be submitted using the within the parameters defined below using the outline provided in the “RFI Response Outline” section of this document. Respondents may submit comments with respect to any or all of the questions that the Department has posed. Responses should be organized under the three broad headings below. Submissions are not to exceed 30 double spaced pages, using 12 point, Times New Roman font. Please number all pages of the submission and include the question number and the question written out above each response.

Page Limit	30 (does not include the Cover Page)
Submission Format	Email Only
Font Size	12 pt
Font Type	Times New Roman
Margin	1 inch all sides
Line Spacing	Double

**Please ensure all pages of the RFI submission are numbered and include the number of the question with the question written out above your response.**

**RFI CONCEPT QUESTIONS**

DCF recognizes the importance of stakeholder input and welcomes responses on the questions below to inform the design of School of Origin Transportation. Respondents may choose to respond to all or a limited number of questions, based on interest and/or knowledge. Response to this RFI will be used to inform planning and program development and will not be evaluated for quality or completeness. Although these questions have been designed as a guide, respondents are encouraged to provide additional feedback that may be helpful. Responses to this RFI will not help or hinder the respondent's success in achieving future awards from the department

1. It is clear that there is a need for a redesign of school of origin transportation service. What would you consider essential components of this system?

2. What model or best practice would you recommend for a dispatch system/ trip coordination system?
3. What ideas or practices would you recommend with regard to the utilization of technology for school of origin transportation?
4. What are the best ways to increase coordination, collaboration and integration across the system?
5. What model or best practice would you recommend for On Boarding drivers, including background checks, training and re-certification?
6. What model or best practice would you recommend for the supply and maintenance of vehicles to provide this service?
7. What costs are important for DCF to consider in funding school of origin transportation?
8. Would you recommend a regional service area model or statewide model and why?
9. What barriers/challenges do you envision in implementing this service? Please identify strategies to overcome these barriers/challenges.

### **DISPOSITION OF SUBMISSIONS**

The Department is seeking information for information purposes only and will not be obligated in any way to use any of the information received. Individuals and/or agencies responding to the RFI will not be compensated in any way. Responding to this RFI will not enhance an individual or agency's chances of receiving future work from the Department. Similarly, not responding to this RFI will not be a detriment to any individual or agency when responding to future competitive procurement opportunities.

All RFI responses submitted will become the property of the State of Connecticut. Due regard will be given for the protection of proprietary information specifically identified in any response received. However, individual and/or agencies should be aware that all materials associated with this RFI are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

**RFI RESPONSE OUTLINE**

**School of Origin Transportation  
Request for Information  
Cover Sheet**

Name of Respondent:	
Affiliation (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parent/Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Service Provider <input type="checkbox"/> Provider Association <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	
Agency Name:	Address:
Phone:	Email:

**Reason(s) for Respondent's interest in the School of Origin Transportation Service?**

*Please include a brief explanation of your interest in this service and the outcomes of the Department's redesign of the service, including any historic involvement in DCF Transportation Services.*

## Concept Questions

*Please include all questions listed below in your response. If choosing to not answer one of the questions listed below, please just list 'NA' in the Answer section.*

1. **It is clear that there is a need for a redesign of school of origin transportation service. What would you consider essential components of this system?**

**ANSWER:**

2. **What model or best practice would you recommend for a dispatch system/ trip coordination system?**

**ANSWER:**

3. **What ideas or practices would you recommend with regard to the utilization of technology for school of origin transportation?**

**ANSWER:**

4. **What are the best ways to increase coordination, collaboration and integration across the system?**

**ANSWER:**

5. **What model or best practice would you recommend for On Boarding drivers, including background checks, training and re-certification?**

**ANSWER:**

6. **What model or best practice would you recommend for the supply and maintenance of vehicles to provide this service?**

**ANSWER:**

7. **What costs are important for DCF to consider in funding school of origin transportation?**

**ANSWER:**

8. **Would you recommend a regional service area model or statewide model and why?**

**ANSWER:**

- 9. What barriers/challenges do you envision in implementing this service?  
Please identify strategies to overcome these barriers/challenges.**

**Additional Narrative**

*Please include any additional feedback, ideas or narrative not included in answers to the Concept Questions. Please be mindful of the page limit for responses to this RFI.*