

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Adoption Services Specialized Administrative Support

Quality Assurance

RFP #: R-89-06-0601

Issued By:

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Adoption Services Specialized
Administrative Support Quality Assurance
RFP#: R-89-06-0601**

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SECTION I. GENERAL PURPOSE & VENDOR INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) releases this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purpose of obtaining a qualified vendor, experienced in child welfare programs, quality assurance methodologies and program evaluation, to provide quality assurance services for the evaluation of Ohio's Adoption Services program. The selected vendor will assist ODJFS in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Adoption Services program and assessing compliance with the adoption measures mandated in the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) Final Report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). In addition, the selected vendor will be required to complete the section pertaining to adoption and foster care recruitment of the ODJFS' CFSR report. Specific CFSR measures for ODJFS include: 1) scoring at or above the national average; and 2) making diligent efforts to recruit and retain families who reflect the diversity of the children in foster care and those waiting for adoption.

ACF's Children's Bureau monitors state child welfare services through the CFSRs, Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), and the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) Assessment Reviews. The CFSRs are designed to enable the Children's Bureau to ensure that state child welfare agency practice is in conformity with federal child welfare requirements, to determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in state child welfare services, and to assist states to enhance their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

Services performed and information gathered by the selected Adoption Services Quality Assurance vendor will allow ODJFS to continuously improve and enhance the Adoption Services program, thereby reducing the number of children awaiting adoption in Ohio. The information also will allow ODJFS to identify areas where corrective action may be required for compliance with CFSR mandates. In addition, the selected vendor's responsibilities shall include, but may not be limited to: 1) providing statistical information on various aspects of the Adoption Services program through development of semi-annual reports; 2) providing technical assistance to county and state personnel regarding the statistical information obtained; and, 3) facilitating and reporting on outcomes of adoption-related meetings focusing on improving the Adoption Services program.

1.2 Issuing Office

This RFP is released by and the subsequent contract will be with ODJFS. The ODJFS Office for Children and Families (OCF), which will administer the contract, is responsible for state level supervision for children's permanency planning programs. OCF supports communities and those who serve and advocate for children, adults and families in achieving safety, self-sufficiency and stability. Through partnerships, OCF promotes solutions that are flexible, accountable, broad-based and diverse.

If interested vendors have a need to communicate regarding this RFP, they must contact ODJFS using one of the mechanisms provided for in **Sections 1.7, Internet Question and Answer Period/RFP Clarification Opportunity**, or **1.9, Communication Prohibitions**, of this RFP. Vendors are cautioned that communication attempts which do not comply with these instructions will not be answered, and that ODJFS will not consider any proposals submitted to any address other than the one provided in Section 5.1 of this RFP. Vendor proposals must be submitted to ODJFS in strict accordance with proposal submission instructions provided in **Section 5.1, Proposal Submission Information**.

1.3 Background

It is a philosophical foundation of ODJFS that a permanent family is an inherent right of every child, and that for most children entering the child protection services system the family of choice is the child's birth or kin family. However, at any given time, more than 2,800 Ohio children are in the permanent custody of a public children services agency (PCSA) where returning to a birth or kin family is not an option. For the majority of these children in permanent custody, the most viable method for assuring a sense of permanency is through placement in adoptive homes. In Federal Fiscal Year 2006, more than 1,857 Ohio children in permanent custody were adopted.

Some of the children waiting to be adopted are living with the families who intend to adopt them but the adoption has not yet been finalized. For others, a permanent home has not yet been found. These children have come from homes where they may have suffered from abuse and/or neglect. Many of the children are older, are African-American, and/or often have brothers and sisters whom they want to remain with. In the vast majority of cases, their months or years in foster care have left an imprint on their self-esteem and emotional security which must be addressed.

During the first CFSR in May of 2002, ACF utilized only a single data-driven adoption measure. States were expected to move 32 percent of their caseload into adoptive homes within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care. Ohio did not achieve the CFSR measure of 32 percent.

Largely in response to criticisms of many of its measures, including the adoption measure, ACF changed its measures for the subsequent CFSR. For each of the four new permanency measures, including the measure focusing on adoption, ACF moved to what is called "composite" scores. These composite scores combine the results of several measures into a single (composite) score. Composites combine the results of several measures into a single score. That score itself was then "standardized" across all states and counties, resulting in a number between 50 and 150 for each state. ACF then determined that national average score to be the minimum score threshold. The new national average is a score of 106.4. States with scores that fall below the national average are required to address timeliness of adoptions in the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Child protection services in Ohio are operated by the 88 county PCSAs. ODJFS is responsible for policy development, supervision and the provision of technical assistance to Ohio's PCSAs. Responsibility for the safety and permanency of children entering the system rests primarily with each county PCSA. In instances where it is necessary to seek and receive permanent custody of children, the PCSA or private child placing agency (PCPA) awarded custody have complete parental rights and responsibilities. For nine years, ODJFS operated a program called AdoptOHIO which provided incentive payments to increase the number of private agencies developing adoptive families for children in the custody of PCSAs. Due to budgetary constraints, the AdoptOHIO program was restructured beginning in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2003. However, funds are made available to PCSAs to encourage increased adoptions specifically for children over the age of nine and for children who can be adopted within 24 months. Many PCSAs will seek to continue collaboration with private agencies.

Recent strides to improve permanency and adoption practices have been made in Ohio and in the nation. Among some of the more recent pieces of legislation and initiatives which govern the adoption of children are:

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) [PL 105-89]: This act helps to dismantle many barriers that may exist to finding permanent homes for children in foster care. It requires states to avoid foster care drift, moving children into permanent placement more quickly and measuring program success in terms of outcomes rather than process. ASFA intends to address the need to reduce the time children spend in foster care, reduce the disparity in permanency outcomes across racial categories and increase the placements of children with special needs.

Multi-Ethnic Placement Act and Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996: These provisions prohibit delays and denials in placing children on the basis of race, color or national origin. Any considerations of race, color or national origin in foster or adoptive placements must be narrowly tailored to advance the child's best interests and must be made as an individualized determination of each child's needs and in light of a specific prospective adoptive or foster care parent's capacity to care for that child. The legislation also requires states to recruit prospective foster and adoptive families which reflect the pool of waiting children.

AdoptOhio Kids Incentive Funds: In SFY 2007, ODJFS allocated \$9.1 million dollars in AdoptOhio Kids Incentive Funds to public children services agencies to promote permanent families for children through adoption. The goals were to increase the number of older children who received permanent homes, the target population being Children Ages 9 or Older and the second goal was to reduce the length of time it took to achieve adoptions of children by increasing the number of Children Adopted in Less Than 24 Months specifically for children age two years or less.

It is the belief of ODJFS that all factions of the community have a stake and role in the welfare of its children. Thus, it is critical to acknowledge, solicit and facilitate the active participation and support of all community members including: private enterprise, professional, social, auxiliary, civic and charitable associations; religious organizations and entities; government bodies; social service providers; media; and schools.

1.4 Overview of the Project

The Adoption Services program includes an array of innovative, coordinated approaches to address the challenge of finding homes for Ohio's waiting children. Strategies include: implementation of child-specific recruitment projects in the three largest metropolitan counties; a faith-based initiative to encourage the religious community to partner with ODJFS in the recruitment and retention of families; and an improved website and photo listing so that people throughout the state have access to information on the waiting children. The initiative includes extensive efforts in publicizing the needs of waiting children, recruiting families, matching those families to the children who are waiting, and fostering collaboration between public and private agencies.

1.5 Objectives of the Project

The objectives of this project are to:

- A. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the various components of the Adoption Services program to ensure that it is having the intended effect, such as compliance with the adoption measures as specified in the CFSR Final Report;
- B. Continuously improve and enhance the Adoption Services program in an ongoing effort to reduce the number of children awaiting adoption in Ohio;

- C. Achieve and maintain ACF's required composite score of at least 106.4 for the specified permanency measures;
- D. Facilitate adoption-related meetings with ODJFS, county staff and stakeholders; and,
- E. Facilitate CFSR adoption-related meetings related to evaluating and improving adoption policies and practices.

1.6 Anticipated Procurement Timetable

DATE	EVENT/ACTIVITY
October 2, 2007	ODJFS Releases RFP to Potential Vendors on ODJFS Web Site; Q&A Period Opens - RFP becomes active - Vendors may submit inquiries for RFP clarification
October 10, 2007	Vendor Q&A Period Closes, 10 a.m. (for inquiries for RFP Clarification) - No further inquiries for RFP clarification will be accepted
October 17, 2007	ODJFS provides Final Vendor Question & Answer Document (estimated)
November 1, 2007	Deadline for Vendors to Submit Proposals to ODJFS (3 p.m.) - This is the proposal opening date, beginning the ODJFS process of proposal review
November 26, 2007	ODJFS Issues Contract Award Notification Letter (estimated) - Vendors that submitted proposals in response to this RFP will be sent letters stating whether their proposal was accepted for award of the contract
(Mid Jan. 2008)	Controlling Board Review of Contract (estimated—if applicable). -Contract with the selected vendor requires review and approval
January 21, 2008	Implementation* (estimated—following notification of all contractual and funding approvals) - ODJFS contracts are not valid and effective until the state Office of Budget Management approves the purchase order.
June 30, 2009	Project Completion** - All work must be completed and approved by ODJFS Contract Manager

ODJFS reserves the right to revise this schedule in the best interest of the State of Ohio and/or to comply with the State of Ohio procurement procedures and regulations and after providing reasonable notice.

* According to requirements of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 126.07, ODJFS contracts are not valid and enforceable until the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) certifies the availability of appropriate funding, as indicated by the approval of the Purchase Order (P.O.). The selected vendor may neither perform work nor submit an invoice for payment for work performed for this project for any time period prior to the P.O. approval date. The ODJFS Contract Manager will notify the selected vendor when the requirements of ORC Section 126.07 have been met.

The contract period is expected to run from January 21, 2008 to June 30, 2009 (SFYs 08 and 09) with the possibility of two (2) two-year renewals from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011 (SFYs 10 and 11) and from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 (SFYs 12 and 13). Renewal contracts are to be in effect contingent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funding from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2013. Since state law prohibits ODJFS from making financial commitments beyond the fiscal biennium (e.g., 7/01/07 through 6/30/09), the contract with the selected vendor will be subject to renewal each biennium from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2013. Renewal is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance by the vendor.

1.7 Internet Question & Answer Period; RFP Clarification Opportunity

Potential vendors may ask clarifying questions regarding this RFP via the Internet during the Q&A Period as outlined in Section 1.6, Anticipated Procurement Timetable. To ask a question, potential vendors must use the following Internet process:

- * **Access the ODJFS Web Page at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/>**
- * **Select “About Us” on the front page;**
- * **Select “Doing Business with ODJFS;”**
- * **Select “Requests for Proposals, Letterhead Solicitations, and Other Invitations;”**
- * **RFP Number [R89060601](#);**
- * **Select “Ask a Question about this RFP” function; and,**
- * **Follow the instructions to send an e-mail question.**

Questions about this RFP must reference the relevant part of this RFP, the heading for the provision under question, and the page number of the RFP where the provision can be found. The potential vendor must also include the name of a representative of the potential vendor, the company name and business phone number. ODJFS may, at its option, disregard any questions which do not appropriately reference an RFP provision or location, or which do not include identification for the originator of the question. ODJFS will not respond to any questions submitted after **10:00 a.m.** on the date the Q&A period closes.

ODJFS responses to all questions asked via the Internet will be posted on the Internet website dedicated to this RFP, for reference by all potential vendors. Potential vendors will not receive personalized or individual e-mail responses. Clarifying questions asked and ODJFS responses to them comprise the “ODJFS Q&A Document” for this RFP. If possible, ODJFS will post an interim Q&A Document, without identifying the vendors asking questions, as well as the final version (in which all vendors that posed questions will be identified). ODJFS strongly encourages vendors to ask questions as early as possible in the Q&A period so that interim answers can be posted with sufficient time for the possibility of vendors’ follow-up questions.

Vendor proposals in response to this RFP are to take into account any information communicated by ODJFS in the Final Q&A Document for the RFP. **It is the responsibility of all potential vendors to check this site on a regular basis for responses to questions, as well as for any amendments or other pertinent information regarding this RFP.**

Accessibility to the ODJFS Q&A Document will be clearly identified on the website dedicated to this RFP, once that document is made available.

IMPORTANT: Requests from potential vendors for copies of previous RFPs, past vendor proposals, score sheets or contracts for this or similar past projects, are Public Records Requests (PRRs), and are not clarification questions regarding the present RFP. PRRs submitted in accordance with directions provided in Section 1.9, Communication Prohibitions, will be honored. The posted time frames for ODJFS responses to Internet questions for RFP clarification do not apply to PRRs.

Vendors are to base their RFP responses, and the details and costs of their proposed projects, on the requirements and performance expectations established in this RFP for the future contract, NOT on details of any current or past related contract. Requirements under a current project may or may not be required by ODJFS under any future contract, and so may not be useful information for vendors who choose to respond to the RFP. If vendors ask questions about existing or past contracts using the Internet Q&A process, ODJFS will use its discretion in deciding whether to provide answers. Interested vendors should also refer to RFP Section 1.10, Time Frames and Funding Source, for related information.

There is an established time period for the Vendor Q&A process (see Section 1.6, Anticipated Procurement Timetable, above). ODJFS will only answer those questions submitted within the stated time frame for submission of vendor questions, and which pertain to issues of RFP clarity, and which are not requests for public information. ODJFS is under no obligation to acknowledge questions submitted through the Q&A process if those questions are not in accordance with these instructions.

* Should vendors experience technical difficulties accessing either the ODJFS website where the RFP and its related documents are published, they may contact the ODJFS Office of Contracts and Acquisitions, RFP/RLB Unit, at (614) 728-5693 for guidance.

1.8 Vendors' Library

ODJFS recognizes that vendors may not be familiar with some of the documents referenced in this RFP. The following documents are available, via the Internet, for review by vendors to provide additional information on the Adoption Services Program:

- Ohio Adoption Photo Listing at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/>; and,
- Past ODJFS Adoption Services Performance Reports at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/oapl/publications.htm>.
- CSFR Resource at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/index.htm#cfsr>

1.9 Communication Prohibitions

From the issuance date of this RFP until an actual contract is awarded to a vendor, there may be no communications concerning the RFP between any vendor that expects to submit a proposal and any employee of ODJFS in the issuing office, or any other ODJFS employee, or any other individual regardless of their employment status, who is in any way involved in the development of the RFP or the selection of the contractor.

The only exceptions to this prohibition are as follows:

1. Communications conducted pursuant to Section 1.7, Internet Q&A Period;

2. As necessary in any pre-existing or on-going business relationship between ODJFS and any vendor that could submit a proposal in response to this RFP;
3. As part of any vendor interview process or proposal clarification process initiated by ODJFS, which ODJFS deems necessary in order to make a final selection;
4. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, ODJFS will post those revisions, amendments, etc., to the website dedicated to this RFP;* and
5. Any Public Records Request (PRR) made through the ODJFS Office of Legal Services.

*** Important Note:** Amendments to the RFP or to any documents related to it will be accessible to interested vendors through the original web page established for the RFP. All interested vendors must refer to that web page regularly for amendments or other announcements. ODJFS may not specifically notify any vendor of changes or announcements related to this RFP except through the website posting. It is the affirmative responsibility of interested vendors to be aware of and to fully respond to all updated information posted on this web page.

ODJFS is not responsible for the accuracy of any information regarding this RFP that was obtained or gathered through a source other than the Q&A process described in this RFP. Any attempts at prohibited communications by vendors may result in the disqualification of those vendors' proposals.

1.10 Time Frames & Funding Source

ODJFS is seeking to contract with a vendor to provide services as stipulated in this RFP approximately from January 21, 2008 to June 30, 2009, subject to approval by the State Controlling Board.

The contract period is expected to run from January 7, 2008 to June 30, 2009 (SFYs 08 and 09) with the possibility of two (2) two-year renewals from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011 (SFYs 10 and 11) and from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013 (SFYs 12 and 13). Renewal contracts are to be in effect contingent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funding from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2013. Since state law prohibits ODJFS from making financial commitments beyond the fiscal biennium (e.g., 7/01/07 through 6/30/09), the contract with the selected vendor will be subject to renewal each biennium from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2013. Renewal is contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance by the vendor, and is at the discretion of ODJFS.

Potential vendors are to be aware that ODJFS may, at its sole discretion, negotiate with all technically qualifying vendors for a revised cost proposal if the cost proposals of all technically qualifying vendors are in excess of the available funding for this project. Section 6.1 C. of this RFP establishes further information on ODJFS procedures to be implemented if this occurs.

SECTION II. VENDOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Vendors' proposals must address all the following minimum qualifications as well as organizational and staff experience and capabilities:

2.1 Mandatory Vendor Qualifications

In order to be considered for the contract expected to result from this RFP, ODJFS requires that interested vendors **must** meet **both** the following requirements:

- A. At least five (5) years experience in the field of child welfare and/or adoption; and,
- B. At least five (5) years experience which demonstrates knowledge of adoption measures related to HHS' CFSRs, child welfare permanency planning issues and methodologies, and group facilitation.

Vendors which do not meet all the above experience and qualifications will be disqualified from further consideration for contract award.

2.2 Organizational Experience and Capabilities

In order to be considered for the contract expected to result from this RFP, ODJFS requires that interested vendors provide the following:

- A. Information on the background of the company; including any sub-contractors; financial capacity; and any prior experience relevant to this RFP;
- B. Sample of a similar-sized project completed in the past five (5) years that demonstrates expertise in the field of adoption, child welfare and quality assurance;
- C. Names and contact information for an entity for which the vendor has performed similar project in the past five (5) years;
- D. At least five (5) years experience in providing quality assurance services; and,
- E. Experience in the past five (5) years which demonstrates adequate knowledge-base regarding standard adoption issues and practices, qualifications in performing large group (of 10 or more) assessments and evidence of evaluating short and long-term outcomes.

2.3 Staff Experience and Capabilities

The vendor must demonstrate significant expertise by assigning staff to key leadership roles for this project. Key positions will require profiles and curriculum vitae. The vendor must, at minimum:

- A. Identify and assign an individual who will serve as the Project Manager, including:
 - 1. The role in the project that the Project Manager will perform; and,
 - 2. The minimum qualifications required for that position if not yet filled, or if filled, the Project Manager's resume, education and experience in the areas described in Section III (Scope of Work and Specifications of Deliverables) of this RFP.
- B. Identify all other key positions the vendor (including any sub-contractors, if applicable) deems key to success of their proposed project;

For each key position, specify:

1. The role in the project that the key position will perform; and,
 2. The minimum qualifications required for that key position if not yet filled, or if filled, the member's resume, education and experience in the areas described in Section III (Scope of Work and Specifications of Deliverables) of this RFP.
- C. Include a current Table of Organization for all staff involved in this project (including vendor's own staff and any sub-contractor staff, if applicable) and a chart showing the number of hours devoted to the project by vendor or sub-contractor staff. The vendor must provide the percentage of time each key management person will devote to the project.

SECTION III. SCOPE OF WORK & SPECIFICATIONS OF DELIVERABLES

3.1 Scope of Work

The selected vendor for this project will be required to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Adoption Services program. Specifically, the vendor will be required to develop, analyze, and complete reports on the number of foster and adoptive placements, characteristics and number of children placed, the length of time to finalization, profiles of families most likely to adopt, the outcome of recruitment activities that occurred (including faith-based and child specific). The vendor will be required to meet with adoption professionals and families, as well as facilitate group discussions in order to obtain the statistical information required in Section 3.3 of this RFP. The selected vendor must have knowledge of adoption measures related to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CFSRs, child welfare permanency planning issues and methodologies, and group facilitation. Additionally, vendor proposals submitted in response to this RFP must reflect the vendor's understanding of, and commitment to, perform this Scope of Work fully. The selected vendor will be responsible for the deliverables as described in Section 3.3, including all preparatory and intervening steps, whether or not ODJFS has explicitly specified or delineated them within the RFP. In developing their proposals, all vendors must fully and appropriately plan and cost out their proposed projects, including all necessary preparatory and intervening steps.

3.2 Administrative Structures—Proposed Work Plan

Vendors are to include, at minimum, the following administrative structures and technical approach for the proposed work plan. The vendor shall include, at minimum:

- A. An explanation of the vendor's key objectives and technical approach to be implemented for the proposed project, identifying how the proposed approach will meet ODJFS' objectives as stated in Section 1.5 of this RFP. [Note: Vendors are not to simply restate the objectives identified in Section 1.5 of this RFP];
- B. A procedure for reporting work completed, and resolution of anticipated problems; and,
- C. Provide a timeline for each component of the scope of work and the project overall including the staff hours for personnel involved.

3.3 Specifications of Deliverables

- A. Develop and produce a semi-annual statewide report to be used by: 1.) ODJFS staff to perform trend analysis or answer media reports, allocations for funding, guide ODJFS in CFSR work, post on ODJFS' website for public viewing; and 2). county staff for the same purposes as well as for the development of policy. The semi-annual statewide report shall be in spread sheets using Excel software, and electronically submit to ODJFS to include, but may or may not be limited to, the following information:
1. Analysis of issues and trends affecting the number of children in foster care for whom the plan is for some type of permanency other than reunification with birth family, including: length of time in placement; permanency outcomes; comparison of permanency outcomes in the 88 counties; and matching procedures;
 2. Analysis of the counties' annual foster care and adoptive recruitment plans and activities and their impact on the numbers and characteristics of family resources recruited and retained in the counties as well as identification of promising/best practices;
 3. Analysis of the degree to which the pool of waiting families reflects the pool of waiting children; and,
 4. Analysis of all children in Permanent Custody (PC) and all children in Planned Permanent Living Arrangements (PPLA).
- B. Facilitate a series of six (6) committee meetings with up to 50 participants per meeting, representing stakeholders and public and private agencies to address the adoption measures and recruitment of foster caregivers and adoption components of the CFSR statewide assessment during March 2008 through June 30, 2008. The selected vendor will be required to record and process the official notes from the meetings. ODJFS will be responsible for the arrangement of meeting facilities as well as gathering the attendees;
- C. Provide technical assistance to ODJFS as needed to analyze data in regards to adoption and foster care measures;
- D. Prepare the final statewide assessment for the Adoption and Recruitment measures;
- E. Facilitate two (2) meetings per month for a six-month period to prepare the PIP as it relates to the adoption measure and recruitment of adoptive and foster caregivers. Approximately 100 participants will be at these meetings representing stakeholders, courts, foster and adoptive parents, and public and private agencies. The selected vendor will be required to record and process the official notes from the meetings. ODJFS will be responsible for the arrangement of meeting facilities as well as gathering the attendees;
- F. Monitor identified measures that will be listed in the PIP to be developed by ODJFS. ODJFS' PIP will address areas in which it was found out of conformity with any of the systemic factors under review by ACF;
- G. Beginning March 2009, prepare and submit quarterly reports to ODJFS' Adoption Services Section for the Adoption measure and the recruitment of foster caregivers and adoptive parents for the PIP. These reports will be part of the ODJFS quarterly report that will be submitted to HHS;

- H. Facilitate stakeholder meetings for up to 200 people for the ongoing quarterly meetings associated with the Permanency Adoption outcomes and Recruitment outcomes. Data collected/developed from the adoption and recruitment outcomes will be reported in the quarterly reports. The selected vendor will be required to record and process the official notes from the meetings. ODJFS will be responsible for the arrangement of meeting facilities as well as gathering the attendees;
- I. Provide on-site technical assistance to counties which score below ACF's minimum required composite score. Technical assistance shall include, but not limited to, analysis of CFSR data, barriers that are contributing to the county's low performance on the CFSR measure; and,
- J. Attend face-to-face quarterly meetings with ODJFS to review progress and identify strategies for the CFSR.

3.4 Selected Vendor Compensation Structure

The Cost Proposal must display the per-deliverable cost for all contract deliverables per SFY 2008 and 2009 as well as for SFYs 2010 through 2013 (for renewal purposes), which includes, at minimum, Deliverables A through J, as described in Section 3.3, Specifications of Deliverables.

The Cost Proposal should display cost information explaining each per-deliverable cost. The selected vendor will invoice ODJFS after satisfactory completion of each of the contract deliverables*, for the cost, as represented on the selected vendor's Cost Proposal, of the deliverable(s) completed. All costs, including staff time and other administrative costs, that will be incurred by the selected vendor in order to successfully accomplish the entire scope of work and project objectives of this RFP, must be included in the vendor's Cost Proposal and be rolled into the costs of one or more deliverables, as appropriate. The sum of the total costs for all deliverables must represent the firm, all-inclusive price for performance of all project work.

This sum total of all of the vendor's proposed deliverable costs (for SFYs 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013) will be the vendor's grand total used in Phase III of the Proposal Evaluation and Selection process, described below in Section VI.

*ODJFS may negotiate with the selected vendor for a payment schedule permitting interim payments for certain deliverables, not to exceed the per-deliverable total cost.

SECTION IV. CONDITIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Through this section of the RFP, ODJFS notifies vendors seeking award of a contract of certain conditions and requirements which may affect their eligibility or willingness to participate in any procurement (RFP, RLB, etc.) process; or their eligibility to be awarded a contract; and of requirements that would be in effect should they be awarded a contract.

4.1 State Contracts

Proposals must list any current contracts the vendor has with State of Ohio agencies. The list must indicate the purpose of the contract, the amount of the contract, the time period covered by the contract, and the percentage of the project completed. Vendors must complete a copy of the Required Vendor Information and

Certifications Document (provided as **Attachment A.**) to report this information and include the completed document in the vendor's proposal as specified in **Section 5.2 B.1.**, of this RFP.

4.2 Interview

Vendors submitting proposals may be required to participate in an in-depth interview as part of the evaluation process. The interview, if necessary, may include participants from ODJFS and/or other state or county agency staff or other representatives it may appoint, as appropriate. ODJFS reserves the right to select from responding vendors for interviews and may not interview all vendors submitting proposals. The vendor shall bear all costs of any scheduled interview.

4.3 Start Work Date

The selected vendor must be able to begin work no later than seven (7) working days after the time funds are encumbered and approved by the Office of Budget & Management. The selected vendor will be notified by the ODJFS contract manager when work may begin. **Any work begun by the vendor prior to this notification will NOT be reimbursable by ODJFS.**

4.4 Proposal Costs

Costs incurred in the preparation of this proposal are to be borne by the vendor, and ODJFS will not contribute in any way to the costs of the preparation. Any costs associated with interviews will be borne by the vendor and will not be ODJFS' responsibility (see Section 4.2, above).

4.5 Trade Secrets Prohibition; Public Information Disclaimer

Vendors are prohibited from including any trade secret information as defined in ORC 1333.61 in their proposals in response to any ODJFS RFP, RLB or other procurement efforts. ODJFS shall consider all proposals voluntarily submitted in response to any ODJFS RFP (or etc.) to be free of trade secrets and such proposals shall, in their entirety, be made a part of the public record.

All proposals and any other documents submitted to ODJFS in response to this RFP shall become the property of ODJFS. This RFP and, after formal announcement by ODJFS of the results of this RFP project (e.g., notices provided to responding vendors regarding vendor selection, notice of project cancellation, etc.), any proposals submitted in response to the RFP are deemed to be public records pursuant to R.C. 149.43. For purposes of this section, "proposal" shall mean both the technical and the cost proposals (if opened by ODJFS) submitted by the vendor, any attachments, addenda, appendices, or sample products.

Any proposals submitted in response to this or any ODJFS RFP which make claims of trade secret information shall be disqualified from consideration immediately upon determination that such unallowable claim has been made.

4.6 Contractual Requirements

- A. Any contract resulting from the issuance of this RFP is subject to the terms and conditions as provided in the model contract, which is included as **Attachment D** of this RFP;
- B. Many of the terms and conditions contained in the model contract (See **Attachment D**) are required by state and federal law; however, the vendor may propose changes to the model

contract by annotating the model, and returning it with the vendor's proposal submission. Any changes are subject to ODJFS review and approval;

- C. Payments for any and all services provided pursuant to the contract are contingent upon the availability of state and federal funds;
- D. All aspects of the contract apply equally to work performed by any and all sub-contractors;
- E. The contractor, and any sub-contractor(s), will not use or disclose any information made available to them for any purpose other than to fulfill the contractual duties specified in the RFP. The contractor, and any sub-contractor(s), agrees to be bound by the same standards of confidentiality that apply to the employees of ODJFS and the State of Ohio. Any violation of confidentiality will result in an immediate termination of the contract, and may result in legal action;
- F. As a condition of receiving a contract from ODJFS, the contractor, and any sub-contractor(s), shall certify compliance with any court order for the withholding of child support which is issued pursuant to Section 3113.217 of the ORC. The contractor, and any sub-contractor(s), must also agree to cooperate with ODJFS and any Ohio Child Support Enforcement Agency in ensuring that the contractor or employees of the contractor meet child support obligations established under state law;
- G. By signing a contract with ODJFS, a vendor agrees that all necessary insurance is in effect; and
- H. The selected contractor shall be required to comply with prevailing wage standards, as established in ORC 4115.03 to 4115.16.

4.7 Travel Reimbursement

Travel should be folded into the overhead, per diem, or the hourly rates which are built into the cost of the deliverables. Travel is not to be listed separately unless otherwise specified in Section 5.2 C. (Format for Organization of the Proposal—Cost Proposal) of this RFP.

4.8 Minority Business Enterprise

ODJFS is required by Section 125.081(B) and 123.151 of the ORC to award fifteen percent (15%) of its total procurements to vendors certified as Minority Business Enterprises (MBE). Ohio certified MBE is defined in ORC Section 122.71. If the proposal is not submitted by a certified MBE, the vendor is strongly encouraged to sub-contract a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the total contract price to an Ohio certified MBE.

The proposal must clearly indicate the name of the proposed Ohio MBE vendor and the exact nature of the work to be performed under the proposed subcontract. The proposal must include a letter from the proposed MBE, signed by a person authorized to legally bind the sub-contractor, indicating the following:

1. The sub-contractor's legal status, federal tax ID number, and principle business address;
2. The name, phone number, and fax number of a person who is authorized to legally bind the sub-contractor to contractual obligations;
3. A complete description of the work the sub-contractor will do;
4. A commitment to do the work, if the vendor is selected;

5. A statement that the sub-contractor has and understands the RFP, the nature of the work, and the requirements of the RFP; and
6. A copy of the Ohio MBE certificate.

There may be no dollar amounts of any kind included with the MBE information; inclusion of dollar amounts will result in the disqualification of the primary vendor's entire proposal.

A listing of Ohio certified MBEs can be accessed through the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Web Site at: <http://das.ohio.gov/Eod/MBESearch/index.asp>

While ODJFS strongly encourages the use of MBE sub-contractors, the vendor's use of an MBE sub-contractor will have no effect on vendors' technical scores or on final contractor selection for this RFP, **unless** Section VI, Criteria for Proposal Evaluation and Selection of this RFP (and/or the Technical Proposal Score Sheet for this RFP) affirmatively establish an MBE participation criterion.

4.9 Sub-contractor Identification and Participation Information

Any vendors proposing to use a sub-contractor for any part of the work described in this RFP must clearly identify the sub-contractor(s) and their tasks in their proposals. The proposal must include a letter from the proposed sub-contractor(s), signed by a person authorized to legally bind the sub-contractor, indicating the following:

1. The sub-contractor's legal status, federal tax ID number, and principle business address;
2. The name, phone number, and fax number of a person who is authorized to legally bind the sub-contractor to contractual obligations;
3. A complete description of the work the sub-contractor will do;
4. A commitment to do the work, if the vendor is selected; and
5. A statement that the sub-contractor has read and understands the RFP, the nature of the work, and the requirements of the RFP.

There may be no dollar amounts of any kind included with sub-contractor information; inclusion of dollar amounts will result in the disqualification of the primary vendor's entire proposal.

4.10 Public Release of Records

Public release of any evaluation or monitoring reports funded under this agreement will be made only by ODJFS. Prior to public release of such reports, ODJFS must have at least a 30-day period for review and comment.

4.11 Confidentiality

All contracts will require that the contractor maintain the confidentiality of information and records which state and federal laws, rules, and regulations require to be kept confidential.

4.12 Key Personnel

ODJFS will require a clause in the resulting contract regarding key personnel in that any person identified as critical to the success of the project may not be removed without reasonable notice to ODJFS, and replacements will not be made without ODJFS approval.

4.13 Ethical & Conflict of Interest Requirements

- A. No contractor or individual, company or organization seeking a contract shall promise or give to any ODJFS employee anything of value that is of such character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the employee with respect to his or her duties;
- B. No contractor or individual, company or organization seeking a contract shall solicit any ODJFS employee to violate any of the conduct requirements for employees;
- C. Any contractor acting on behalf of ODJFS shall refrain from activities which could result in violations of ethics and/or conflicts of interest. Any contractor or potential contractor who violates the requirements and prohibitions defined here or of Section 102.04 of the ORC is subject to termination of the contract or refusal by ODJFS to enter into a contract; and
- D. ODJFS employees and contractors who violate Sections 102.03, 102.04 2921.42 or 2921.43 of the ORC may be prosecuted for criminal violations.

4.14 Health Insurance Portability & Accessibility Act (HIPAA) Requirements

As a condition of receiving a contract from ODJFS, the contractor, and any sub-contractor(s), will be required to comply with 42 U.S.C. Sections 1320d through 1320d-8, and to implement regulations at 45 C.F.R. Section 164.502 (e) and Sections 164.504 (e) regarding disclosure of protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. Protected Health Information (PHI) is information received by the contractor from or on behalf of ODJFS that meets the definition of PHI as defined by HIPAA and the regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Health & Human Services, specifically 45 CFR 164.501 and any amendments thereto. The selected vendor can reasonably anticipate HIPAA language in the contract that results from this RFP.

In the event of a material breach of contractor obligations under this section, ODJFS may at its option terminate the contract according to provisions within the contract for termination.

4.15 Waiver of Minor Proposal Errors

ODJFS may, at its sole discretion, waive minor errors or omissions in vendors' Technical and/or Cost proposals/forms when those errors do not unreasonably obscure the meaning of the content.

4.16 Proposal Clarifications

ODJFS reserves the right to request clarifications from vendors of any information in their Technical and/or Cost proposals/forms, and may request such clarification as it deems necessary at any point in the proposal review process.

4.17 Contractual Requirements and Prevailing Wage Requirements

Any contract resulting from the issuance of this solicitation is subject to the terms and conditions as provided in the model contract, which is provided as **Attachment D** to this RFP. Potential vendors are strongly encouraged to read the model contract and to be fully aware of ODJFS' contractual requirements. Additionally, the selected contractor will be required to comply with prevailing wage standards, as established in ORC 4115.03-4115.16.

4.18 Unresolved Findings for Recovery (R.C. 9.24)

ORC Section 9.24 prohibits ODJFS from awarding a contract to any entity against whom the Auditor of State has issued a finding for recovery, if the finding for recovery is “unresolved” at the time of award. By submitting a proposal, the vendor warrants that it is not now, and will not become, subject to an “unresolved” finding for recovery under R.C. 9.24 prior to the award of any contract arising out of this RFP, without notifying ODJFS of such finding. ODJFS will review the Auditor of State’s website prior to completion of evaluations of proposals submitted pursuant to this RFP. ODJFS will not evaluate a proposal from any vendor whose name, or the name of any of the sub-contractors proposed by the vendor, appears on the website of the Auditor of the State of Ohio as having an “unresolved” finding for recovery.

4.19 Mandatory Contract Performance Disclosure

Each proposal must disclose whether the vendor’s performance, or the performance of any of the proposed sub-contractor(s), under contracts for the provision of services that are the same or similar to those to be provided for the project which is the subject of this RFP has resulted in any “formal claims” for breach of those contracts. For purposes of this disclosure, “formal claims” means any claims for breach that have been filed as a lawsuit in any court, submitted for arbitration (whether voluntary or involuntary, binding or not), or assigned to mediation. If any such claims are disclosed, vendor shall fully explain the details of those claims, including the allegations regarding all alleged breaches, any written or legal action is resulting from those allegations, and the results of any litigation, arbitration or mediation regarding those claims, including terms of any settlement. While disclosure of any formal claims in response to this section will not automatically disqualify a vendor from consideration, at the sole discretion of ODJFS, such claims and a review of the background details may result in a rejection of the vendor’s proposal. ODJFS will make this decision based on its determination of the seriousness of the claims, the potential impact that the behavior that led to the claims could have on the vendor’s performance of the work, and the best interests of ODJFS.

4.20 Mandatory Disclosures of Governmental Investigations

Each proposal must indicate whether the vendor and any of the proposed sub-contractor(s) has been the subject of any adverse regulatory or adverse administrative governmental action (federal, state, or local) with respect to vendor’s performance of services similar to those described in this RFP. If any such instances are disclosed, vendor must fully explain, in detail, the nature of the governmental action, the allegations that led to the governmental action, and the results of the governmental action including any legal action that was taken against vendor by the governmental agency. While disclosure of any governmental action in response to this section will not automatically disqualify a vendor from consideration, such governmental action and a review of the background details may result in a rejection of the vendor’s proposal at the sole discretion of ODJFS. The decision by ODJFS on this issue will be based on a determination of the seriousness of the matter, the matter’s potential impact on the vendor’s performance of the work, and the best interests of ODJFS.

4.21 Mandatory Disclosures of Work Location

Proposals must explicitly state the location(s) (city, state/province, country) where work described in this RFP would be performed, whether by the vendor or by any sub-contractors.

4.22 Vendor Selection Restriction

Any vendor deemed not responsible, or submitting a proposal deemed not to be responsive to the terms of this RFP, shall not be awarded the resulting contract.

4.23 Declaration of Material Assistance Requirements

Any vendor responding to any ODJFS RFP, RLB, or any other procurement opportunity is required to provide certification that the vendor has not provided material support or resources to any organization listed on the "Terrorist Exclusion List" (TEL) maintained by the U.S. Department of State. The Declaration of Material Assistance Form, provided as **Attachment C** to this RFP, must be printed, completed, and signed by the interested vendor's authorized representative, and returned to ODJFS as a component of the vendor technical proposal/bid. Failure to properly complete the form or to provide it as part of the proposal submitted to ODJFS may result in the disqualification of the vendor's proposal from consideration.

Vendors may access the TEL from the Ohio Homeland Security Office website, located at <http://www.homelandsecurity.ohio.gov/hls.asp> or via e-mail to homelandsec@dps.state.oh.us for the current list of excluded organizations and additional information.

4.24 Ohio Presence Consideration

The vendor that is awarded the contract resulting from this RFP is required to maintain a physical presence in Ohio throughout the term of the contract, including all renewal periods. Therefore, each vendor must either demonstrate in its proposal that it currently has a physical presence in Ohio or demonstrate concrete plans for establishing a physical presence, to include the actual or proposed location of the vendor's presence. Vendor proposals must identify the work to be performed for this project at that location and identify vendor personnel, either by staff name or function that will operate from the Ohio location. ODJFS reserves the right, at its sole discretion to reject any proposals which fail to comply with this requirement.

SECTION V. PROPOSAL FORMAT & SUBMISSION

5.1 Proposal Submission Information

ODJFS requires proposal submissions in both paper and electronic format. The proposal must be prepared and submitted in accordance with instructions found in this Section. The proposal submission must be comprised of:

- **Seven** paper copies (**one signed original** and **six** copies) and one CD-ROM copy of the Technical Proposal;

AND

- in a sealed, separate envelope, **three** paper copies (**one signed original** and **two** copies) and one CD-ROM copy of the Cost Proposal.

The vendors' total proposal submissions (both the technical and cost proposals in all required copies) must be received by ODJFS complete no later than **3:00 p.m., local time on Thursday, November 1, 2007**. Faxes or e-mailed submissions will not be accepted. **Proposals must be addressed to:**

**Office of Contracts & Acquisitions
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
30 East Broad Street, 31st Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3414
ATTN: RFP/RLB Unit**

Vendors' original technical and cost proposals must contain all the information and documents specified in Section 5.2, "Format for Organization of the Proposal." All copies (both paper and CD-ROM) of the original proposal must include copies of ALL information, documents, and pages in the original proposal.

Along with the Technical proposal, the vendor must submit the Cost Proposal in a separate, sealed envelope/package labeled: **"NOTE: DO NOT OPEN. COST PROPOSAL ENCLOSED FOR ADOPTION SERVICES SPECIALIZED ADMIN. SUPPORT QA, RFP#: R-89-06-0601 SUBMITTED BY [VENDOR'S NAME HERE]."**

The CD-ROM copy of the Technical Proposal must include all components of the technical proposal, including any required or voluntary attachments to it. The CD-ROM copy of the Cost Proposal must include all cost proposal components, including any required or voluntary attachments. **The CD-ROM containing the Cost Proposal must be submitted in the sealed envelope containing the hardcopy Cost Proposal.** Both CD-ROMs must be labeled with the vendor's name, the RFP number, and the proposal submission date or proposal due-date, at minimum. The requested CDs will be used by ODJFS for archiving purposes and for fulfillment of Public Records Requests, and failure to include them or to properly label them may, at ODJFS discretion, result in the rejection of the vendor from any consideration.

All proposal submissions must be received, complete, at the above address, via mail or hand delivery by the above date and time. Materials received separately from a vendor's proposal submission (e.g., letters of recommendation from past customers of the vendor's services) will not be added to the proposal nor considered in the review and scoring process. Materials received after the date and time as stated above will not be included in any previous submissions, nor will they be considered. ODJFS is not responsible for proposals incorrectly addressed or for proposals delivered to any ODJFS location other than the address specified above. No confirmation of mailed proposals can be provided.

For hand delivery on the due date, vendors are to allow sufficient time for downtown parking considerations, as well as for security checks at both the lobby of the Rhodes State Office Tower (address as stated above) and again on the 31st Floor. All proposals received on the due date by the Office of Contracts & Acquisitions, on the 31st Floor of the Rhodes Tower. **ODJFS is not responsible for any proposals delivered to any address other than the address provided above.**

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the vendor of the conditions contained in this RFP, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between ODJFS and the vendor selected.

5.2 Format for Organization of the Proposal

A. Overall Proposal Organization

A sample Technical Proposal Score Sheet is provided as **Attachment E.** of this RFP. **Vendors are strongly encouraged to use the Score Sheet to check their proposals for quality, compliance, and completeness prior to submission.**

The vendor's Technical Proposal must contain the following components (organized in five (5) primary tabs and divided into sub-tabs) as described below. Any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to a specific RFP section number/letter must be provided as an appendix to the proposal and so marked as an additional tab. ODJFS reserves the right not to

review submitted appendices which includes information/materials not required in the RFP. All pages beyond Tab 1 shall be sequentially numbered.

Vendors must organize their Technical Proposals in the following order:

Tab 1 Required Vendor Information and Certifications Document

Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (W-9) Form

Declaration Regarding Material Assistance/Non-Assistance to a Terrorist Org.

Tab 2 Vendor Experience & Qualifications

Sub-Tab 2a. Mandatory Vendor Qualifications (Section 2.1, A. through B.)

Sub-Tab 2b. Organizational Experience & Capabilities (Section 2.2, A. through E.)

Sub-Tab 2c. Staff Experience and Capabilities (Section 2.3, A. through C.)

Tab 3 Scope of Work and Specifications of Deliverables

Sub-Tab 3a. Deliverable A

Sub-Tab 3b. Deliverable B

Sub-Tab 3c. Deliverable C (etc. through Deliverable J)

Tab 4 Administrative Structures—Proposed Work Plan (Section 3.2, A. through C.)

Tab 5 Vendor Attachments or Appendices

All pages in the Technical Proposal must be sequentially numbered, with the exception of Tab 1 contents.

NOTE: Vendors are required to submit **one additional CD-ROM copy** (using TWO CD-ROMs) of their entire proposal package in non-rewriteable CD format. One CD-ROM is to contain the complete Technical Proposal, including any required or voluntary attachments to it, and the other CD-ROM is to contain the Cost Proposal including any required or voluntary attachments to it. One document may, at vendor option, be excepted from the electronic technical proposal version: the “Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (W-9) Form” (**provided as RFP Attachment B.**), which is to be signed by the vendor and submitted with the paper copies of the technical proposal. **The CD-ROM containing the Cost Form must be submitted in the sealed envelope containing the hardcopy Cost Form.**

B. Technical Proposal Details

The vendor’s Technical Proposal must contain the following components, at minimum. It is mandatory that vendor proposals be organized in the following order, and that wherever appropriate, sections/portions of the vendor proposal make reference by section number/letter to those RFP requirements to which they correspond.

IMPORTANT: Any vendor Technical Proposals found to contain any prohibited cost information shall be disqualified from consideration. Prohibited cost information is defined as any dollar amounts which ODJFS might find indicative of the relative cost or economy of the proposed project. However, information on the assets, value, or historical business volume of the vendor is NOT considered to be such prohibited cost information, and MAY be included in any vendor’s technical proposal. Any prohibited cost information must be submitted with the separate, sealed project budget/Cost Proposal. The Technical Proposal is defined as any part of

the vendor's proposal (either as required by ODJFS or sent at vendor's discretion, such as work plan, resumes, letters of recommendation, letters of cooperation from any subcontractors, etc.) which is not specifically identified by ODJFS as a required component of the separate, sealed project budget/Cost Proposal. Should a vendor feel it is important to include any documents containing such prohibited cost information in the technical proposal, the cost information in those documents must be made unreadable by the vendor before submission of the proposal to ODJFS.

**1. (Tab 1)
Required Vendor Information & Certifications
Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (W-9) Form
Declaration Regarding Material Assistance/Non-Assistance to a Terrorist
Organization**

In this section, the vendor is required to provide required information and certifications of eligibility for state contract awards, as described in **Attachment A.** to this RFP, entitled "Required Vendor Information & Certifications Document." Vendors may, at their discretion, either print **Attachment A.**, complete and sign it (in blue ink), and return it as the content of their Proposal Tab 1; or they may provide all the required information and certifications (each fully re-stated from **Attachment A.**) on their own letterhead, properly signed (in blue ink), and use that document as the content of their Proposal Tab 1. Vendors who fail to provide all information and certifications as described in **Attachment A.** in their Proposal Tab 1 risk disqualification.

The vendor must attach the **Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (W-9) Form**, which is provided as **Attachment B.** to this RFP, completed with an original signature in blue ink.

Vendors are required to provide a declaration regarding material assistance to a terrorist organization or an organization that supports terrorism as identified by the U.S. Department of State Terrorist Exclusion List and described in **Attachment C, Declaration Regarding Material Assistance/Non-Assistance to a Terrorist Organization.** Vendors MUST print **Attachment C.**, complete and sign it (in blue ink), and return it as the content of their Proposal Tab 1. Vendors who fail to provide a signed and completed **Attachment C.** risk disqualification. This form may also be accessed and printed at the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security's Website at <http://www.homelandsecurity.ohio.gov>.

The signed originals of the above referenced forms (**RFP Attachments A., B., and C.**) are to be provided in the vendor's original proposal; photocopies of the completed and signed forms must also be provided with each of the required copies. **Failure to include any of these forms in Tab 1 may result in the vendor's disqualification from any consideration.**

In the event that the vendor proposes the use of any subcontractors, information on the subcontractor(s) and letters of commitment as required by Section 4.8, Minority Business Enterprise or 4.9, Subcontractor Identification and Participation Information should also be provided in Tab 1.

In order to be acknowledged as a vendor with an Ohio presence (as described in RFP Section 4.24, Ohio Presence Consideration) for additional scoring consideration, the vendor must demonstrate in this Tab1 section of its proposal either that it currently has a physical presence in Ohio or has concrete plans for establishing a physical presence. Information to be presented includes the actual or proposed location of the vendor's presence, a description of the work to be performed at that location, and the number of its personnel to operate from the Ohio location. If the Ohio location is planned but not yet operational, an estimated implementation schedule should be provided.

**2. (Tab 2)
Vendor Experience & Qualifications**

a. Mandatory Vendor Qualifications (Sub-Tab 2 a.)

The vendor must include information on the mandatory experience of the vendor, as described in **Section 2.1**, of this RFP.

b. Organizational Experience & Capabilities (Sub-Tab 2 b.)

The vendor should include information on the relevant experience of the vendor including any subcontractors; and any prior experience relevant to this RFP, as described in **Section 2.2**, of this RFP.

c. Staff Experience and Capabilities (Sub-Tab 2 c.)

Under this section the vendor is required to include resumes, education, experience, and list of related published works of all key personnel for this project, and describe any appropriate supplemental and support staff (including any subcontractors) to be involved, as described in **Section 2.3**, of this RFP.

**3. (Tab 3)
Scope of Work & Specifications of Deliverables**

This section should describe in detail how the vendor proposes to perform each tasks of the scope of work identified in Sections 3.1, Scope of Work and in Section 3.3, Specifications of Deliverables, of this RFP. The responses must address each element separately. Vendors should place their responses for each Deliverable identified in Section 3.3 behind separate sub-tabs as described above.

**4. (Tab 4)
Administrative Structures—Proposed Work Plan**

This section should describe in detail (in the order as outlined) the vendor's administrative structures as specified in Section 3.2, Administrative Structures—Proposed Work Plan of this RFP.

**5. (Tab 5)
Vendor Attachments or Appendices**

This section should, at a minimum, include excerpts/samples of work products described in RFP Section 2.2.

C. **Cost Proposal**

Three (one signed original and two copies) copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope, and labeled: **“NOTE: DO NOT OPEN. COST PROPOSAL ENCLOSED FOR ADOPTION SERVICES SPECIALIZED ADMIN. SUPPORT QA, RFP#: R-89-06-0601 SUBMITTED BY [VENDOR’S NAME HERE].”**

This envelope/package must also contain the labeled Cost Proposal CD-ROM. The Proposal must include a statement that the prices quoted are firm.

Vendors are to complete the Cost Proposal Form, provided as **Attachment F** to this RFP according to instructions, sign it, and submit it fully completed as the separate sealed cost proposal. The Cost Proposal Form requires interested vendors to provide a group of individual prices for those services defined in Section 3.3 Specifications of Deliverables. Vendors are to use their professional comprehension of the effort required to perform those services and to offer to ODJFS its flat, all-inclusive fee for performing each. The prices offered in the vendor’s Cost Proposal will be the prices in effect throughout the contract period, including any renewal contracts, as described in Section 1.10, Time Frames & Funding Source, of this RFP.

Vendors are to use the format in **Attachment F, Cost Proposal Form**, to submit their cost proposal for SFYs **2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013**. At the vendor’s discretion, additional documentation may also be included with the completed **Attachment F**, as explanatory information, but when making the vendor selections and when executing the contract, ODJFS will consider only the dollar amounts displayed on the Cost Proposal Form.

In calculating their total proposed cost, vendors must consider cost resulting from each deliverable listed in Section 3.3 of this RFP, as well as all program costs, primary and incidental, necessary to complete all program activities (whether explicitly identified by ODJFS in this RFP or not).

D. **IMPORTANT – VENDOR DISQUALIFIERS FOR PROPOSAL ERRORS:**

- Any vendor’s Technical Proposal found to contain any cost information shall be disqualified from consideration. Cost information is defined as any dollar amounts which might be deemed to be indicative of the relative cost or economy of the proposed project. Information on the assets, value, or historical business volume of the vendor is NOT considered to be such prohibited cost information, and MAY be included in any vendor’s technical proposal as information on business capacity and stability. All prohibited cost information must be submitted with the separate, sealed Cost Proposal. The Technical Proposal is defined as any part of the vendor’s proposal (either as required by ODJFS or sent at vendor’s discretion), such as work plan, resumes, letters of recommendation, letters of cooperation from any sub-contractors, etc., which is not specifically identified by ODJFS as a required component of the separate, sealed Cost Proposal. Should a vendor determine to include in the technical proposal any documents which contain such cost information, the cost information in those documents must be made unreadable by the vendor before submission of the proposal to ODJFS. Failure to follow these instructions will result in disqualification; and

- Any trade secret, proprietary, or confidential information (as defined in Section 4.5 of this RFP) found anywhere in a vendor's proposal shall result in immediate disqualification of that vendor's proposal.

SECTION VI. CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION & SELECTION

6.1 Scoring of Proposals

ODJFS will contract with a vendor that best demonstrates the ability to meet requirements as specified in this RFP. Vendors submitting a response will be evaluated based on the capacity and experience demonstrated in their Technical and Cost Proposal. All proposals will be reviewed and scored by a Proposal Review Team (PRT), comprised of staff from ODJFS, Office for Children and Families and their designees. Vendors should not assume that the review team members are familiar with any current or past work activities with ODJFS. Proposals containing assumptions, lack of sufficient detail, poor organization, lack of proofreading and unnecessary use of self-promotional claims will be evaluated accordingly. PRT members will be required to sign disclosure forms to establish that they have no personal or financial interest in the outcome of the proposal review and contractor selection process.

Selection of the vendor will be based upon the criteria specified in Sections II., III., IV., and V. of this RFP. Any proposals not meeting the requirements contained in those sections of this RFP will not be scored or may be held pending receipt of required clarifications. The PRT reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, received in response to this request. The review team may waive minor defects that are not material when no prejudice will result to the rights of any vendor or to the public. In scoring the proposals, ODJFS will score in three phases:

A. Phase I. Review—Initial Qualifying Criteria:

In order to be fully reviewed and scored, proposals submitted must pass the following Phase I. Review. **Any “no” for the listed Phase I. criteria will eliminate a proposal from further consideration.**

1. Was the proposal received by the deadline as specified in Section 1.6?
2. Did the vendor submit seven (7) paper copies and one electronic copy of their Technical Proposal, as well as their Cost Proposal (in a separate sealed envelope labeled: **“NOTE: DO NOT OPEN. COST PROPOSAL ENCLOSED FOR ADOPTION SERVICES SPECIALIZED ADMIN. SUPPORT QA RFP#: R-89-06-0601 SUBMITTED BY [VENDOR’S NAME HERE].”**)?
3. Does the vendor’s proposal include all required affirmative statements and certifications, signed by the vendor’s responsible representative, as described in **Attachments A and C** to the RFP?
4. According to those certifications, does the vendor affirmatively indicate that it is not on the federal debarment list; that there are no unfair labor findings against it; and it is not in violation of ORC Section 9.24, and therefore may enter into a contract with ODJFS?

5. Does ODJFS' review of the Auditor of State website verify that the vendor is not excluded from contracting with ODJFS by ORC Section 9.24 for an unresolved finding for recovery (*i.e.*, the proposal of any vendor whose name appears on the Auditor's website as having an unresolved finding for recovery will be eliminated from further consideration.)?
6. Did the vendor's proposal demonstrate at least five (5) years experience in the field of child welfare and/or adoption; and,
7. Did the vendor's proposal demonstrate at least five (5) years experience which demonstrates knowledge of adoption measures related to HHS' CFSRs, child welfare permanency planning issues and methodologies, and group facilitation?

B. Phase II. Review—Criteria for Scoring the Technical Proposal:

The PRT will then score those qualifying technical proposals, not eliminated in Phase I. Review, by assessing how well the vendor meets the requirements as specified in Sections II, III, IV, V, and VI. of this RFP. Using the score sheet for Phase II scoring (see **Attachment E** of this RFP for specific evaluation criteria), the PRT will read, review, discuss and reach consensus on the final technical score for each qualifying technical proposal.

A maximum of **1,058** points will be awarded for the Technical Proposal. A technical proposal must achieve a total of at least **823** points (a score which represents that the vendor can successfully perform the resulting contractual duties) out of the possible **1,058** points to qualify for continued consideration. Any proposal which does not meet the minimum required technical proposal points will be disqualified from any further consideration and its cost proposal will neither be opened nor considered.

All Phase II technical proposal evaluation criteria will be scored according to the following scale, based on a proposed plan's ability to meet ODJFS needs. The Technical Proposal Score Sheet (see **Attachment E.**) uses the following point values for rating each requirement.

0	6	8	10
Does Not Meet Requirement	Partially Meets	Meets Requirement	Exceeds Requirement

Technical Performance Scoring Definitions:

“Does Not Meet Requirement”- A particular RFP requirement was not addressed in the vendor's proposal, **Score: 0**

“Partially Meets Requirement”-Vendor proposal demonstrates some attempt at meeting a particular RFP requirement, but that attempt falls below acceptable level, **Score: 6**

“Meets Requirement”-Vendor proposal fulfills a particular RFP requirement in all material respects, potentially with only minor, non-substantial deviation, **Score: 8**

“Exceeds Requirement”-Vendor proposal fulfills a particular RFP requirement in all material respects, and offers some additional level of quality in excess of ODJFS expectations, **Score: 10**

IMPORTANT: Before submitting a proposal to ODJFS in response to this RFP, vendors are strongly encouraged to use the Technical Proposal Score Sheet (**Attachment E.**) and the above technical performance scoring information to review their proposals for completeness, compliance and quality.

All the remaining qualified Technical Proposals will proceed to the next level of review, which is consideration of the Cost Proposal. Any other proposals will be disqualified from further consideration, and the corresponding Cost Proposals will neither be opened nor will be scored.

For those technically qualified vendors with an Ohio presence, their final technical score will be the sum of the score they earned according to the Phase II review described above plus the additional ten points. That sum will be used for those vendors in Phase III, as described below.

C. Phase III.—Criteria for Considering the Cost Proposal

The Cost Proposal will be reviewed by ODJFS. The grand total of each technically qualified vendor's Cost Proposal is divided by that vendor's final Technical Proposal score. This compares the cost with the quality of the Technical Proposal, which will provide an average cost-per-quality point earned on the Technical Proposal.

If the cost proposals of all technically qualifying vendors (as determined by the scoring process described in this section and by the Technical Proposal Score Sheet, **Attachment E** to this RFP) are in excess of the available funding for this project, ODJFS may, at its sole discretion, negotiate with all technically qualifying vendors for a revised cost proposal. Vendors may then submit one last and best offer, or may request that ODJFS view its original cost proposal as its last and best offer, or may formally withdraw from further consideration, and shall formally indicate its choice according to directions provided by ODJFS at that time. Upon receipt of all last and best offers, and assuming that one or more have submitted a cost proposal that is within project budget, ODJFS will then consider those vendors' revised cost proposals which are within the budget according to the cost-point assignment process described in this section, above, and in the Technical Proposal Score Sheet, **Attachment E**, for calculation of the winning score.

6.2 Review Process Caveats

ODJFS may, at its sole discretion, waive minor errors or omissions in vendors' Technical and/or Cost proposals/forms when those errors do not unreasonably obscure the meaning of the content.

ODJFS reserves the right to request clarifications from vendors to any information in their Technical and/or Cost proposals/forms, and may request such clarification as it deems necessary at any point in the proposal review process. Any such requests for proposal clarification when initiated by ODJFS, and vendors' verbal or written response to those requests, shall not be considered a violation of the communication prohibitions contained in Section 1.9 of this RFP. Such communications are expressly permitted when initiated by ODJFS, but are at the sole discretion of ODJFS.

Should ODJFS determine a need for interviewing vendors prior to making a final selection, results to interview questions shall be scored in a manner similar to the process described in Section 6.1, Scoring of Proposals, above. Such scored results may be either added to those vendors' proposal scores, or will replace certain criteria scores, at the discretion of ODJFS. The standards for scoring the interviews and the method used for considering the results of the interviews shall be applied consistently for all vendors participating in the interview process for that RFP.

ODJFS reserves the right to negotiate with vendors for adjustments to their proposals should ODJFS determine, for any reason, to adjust the scope of the project for which this RFP is released. Such communications are not violations of any communications prohibition, and are expressly permitted when initiated by ODJFS, but are at the sole discretion of ODJFS.

Any vendor deemed not responsible, or any submitting a proposal deemed not to be responsive to the terms of this RFP, shall not be awarded the contract.

6.3 Final Vendor Recommendation

The PRT will recommend to the Director of ODJFS the technically qualified vendor offering the proposal most advantageous to ODJFS, as determined by the processes and requirements established in this RFP.

6.4 Tie Breaker

In the event that two or more of the proposals have a score which is tied after final calculation of both the technical proposal and the cost proposal, the proposal with the higher score in the technical proposal will prevail.

SECTION VII. PROTEST PROCEDURE

7.1 Protests

Any potential, or actual, vendor objecting to the award of a contract resulting from the issuance of this RFP may file a protest of the award of the contract, or any other matter relating to the process of soliciting the proposals. Such a protest must comply with the following guidelines:

- A. A protest may be filed by a prospective or actual bidder objecting to the award of a contract resulting from this RFP. The protest shall be in writing and shall contain the following information:
 1. The name, address, and telephone number of the protestor;
 2. The name and number of the RFP being protested;
 3. A detailed statement of the legal and factual grounds for the protest, including copies of any relevant documents;
 4. A request for a ruling by ODJFS;
 5. A statement as to the form of relief requested from ODJFS; and
 6. Any other information the protestor believes to be essential to the determination of the factual and legal questions at issue in the written protest.
- B. A timely protest shall be considered by ODJFS, if it is received by ODJFS' Office of Legal Services, within the following periods:
 1. A protest based on alleged improprieties in the issuance of the RFP or any other event preceding the closing date for receipt of proposals which are apparent or should be apparent prior to the closing date for receipt of proposals shall be filed no later than 3:00

p.m. the closing date for receipt of proposals, as specified in Section 1.6, Anticipated Procurement Time Table, of this RFP.

2. If the protest relates to the announced intent to award a contract, the protest shall be filed no later than 3:00 p.m. of the eighth (8th) calendar day after the issuance of the Letter of Intent to Award the contract.
- C. An untimely protest may be considered by ODJFS if ODJFS determines that the protest raises issues significant to the department's procurement system. An untimely protest is one received by ODJFS' Office of Legal Services after the time periods set forth in Item B. of this section.
 - D. All protests must be filed at the following location:

Chief Legal Counsel
ODJFS Office of Legal Services
30 East Broad Street, 31st Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-0423
 - E. When a timely protest is filed, a contract award shall not proceed until a decision on the protest is issued or the matter is otherwise resolved, unless the Director of ODJFS determines that a delay will severely disadvantage the Department. The vendor(s) who would have been awarded the contract shall be notified of the receipt of the protest.
 - F. ODJFS' Office of Legal Services shall issue written decisions on all timely protests and shall notify any vendor who filed an untimely protest as to whether or not the protest will be considered.

7.2 Caveats

ODJFS is under no obligation to issue a contract as a result of this solicitation if, in the opinion of ODJFS and the proposal review team, none of the proposals are responsive to the objectives and needs of the Department. ODJFS reserves the right to not select any vendor should ODJFS decide not to proceed. Changes in this RFP of a material nature will be provided via the agency website. All vendors are responsible for obtaining any such changes without further notice by ODJFS.

SECTION VIII. ATTACHMENTS AND THEIR USES

- A. **Required Vendor Information and Certifications** (*To be completed & included in proposal packet as specified in Sec. 5.2, B, 1*)
- B. **Request for Taxpayer Identification Number (W-9) Form** (*To be completed & included in proposal packet as specified in Sec. 5.2, B, 1*)
- C. **Declaration of Material Assistance Form** (*To be completed & included in proposal packet as specified in Sec. 5.2, B, 1*)
- D. **ODJFS Model Contract** (*For vendor reference purposes*)
- E. **Technical Proposal Score Sheet** (*For vendor self-evaluation purposes...do not submit*)
- F. **Cost Proposal Form** (*To be completed & included in cost proposal packet as specified in Sec. 5.2, C*)