

Request for Information (RFI)

New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare and Community Services
Bureau of Permanency Services

RFI # 1126

Foster/Adoptive Certification or Approval Process Software

Issued: 4/21/2023

Responses Due: 5/19/2023

Purpose

The New York State (NYS) Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Division of Child Welfare and Community Services, Bureau of Permanency Services (BPS), is seeking information and collecting input from interested parties regarding the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a software application that can streamline and make easier the foster/adoptive certification or approval process by allowing applicants to create their own user accounts in order to access, manage, and update their applications and documents securely via computers, tablets and/or smartphones, while complying with NYS security policies and standards as well as any other relevant security frameworks.

OCFS's goals in issuing this RFI are to:

- Inform the public of OCFS's intent to establish a web-based module for the process of certification and approval process for foster and adoptive parent applicants
- Elicit descriptions of modular components that address the numerous functional areas of the foster/adoptive applicant process
- Support NYS statutory, regulatory and policy requirements in a streamlined process that allows foster/adoptive applicants access from any web browser

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes - it does not constitute a RFP or an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a promise to issue a RFP or an IFB. This RFI does not commit NYS OCFS to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Vendors are advised that OCFS will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP or IFB.

Program Background & Proposed Collaboration of Services

OCFS serves to support and strengthen families, promote permanency and the well-being of children. When a child is unable to be cared for in their home of origin, placement in a foster and/or adoptive home is necessary. OCFS is interested in exploring using a portion of the state's Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Transition Funding to procure a statewide Software as a Service (SaaS) toolset that assists with recruiting prospective foster and adoptive parents and shepherding them through initial certification/approval process and yearly recertification. This would replace a manual process that currently differs from county to county and between voluntary agencies, and will allow the state to implement a consistent, automated process to help support FFPSA needs and goals of reducing use of congregate care settings and increase use of foster and adoptive families for children who must be removed from their homes. The current certification/recertification processes require significant investments in time to complete, and poses risks to data quality and integrity due to the lack of a consistent business rule application.

OCFS is looking for information on how to create an application software platform that could be utilized to identify steps in the foster/adoption process that would help potential foster/adoptive parents complete all the paperwork online and provide administrators with a dashboard to track their work. It is the hope that the software system would allow administrators more time to address more complex child welfare needs and spend less time on paperwork and redundant data entry, while simplifying the application process for those seeking to become certified foster/adoptive parents or maintain certification. The application will need to be able to have functionality to run reports for a variety of aspects of the software platform.

It is the expectation of OCFS that the software system would provide valuable functionality as a complementary module with a CONNECTIONS interface. CONNECTIONS is the system of record for NYS: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/>.

Information received in response to this RFI may assist OCFS in developing the scope of work and requirements which may be used at a future date in the issuance of future solicitations. The software application tool could be structured in many ways. The system will be a flexible, statewide solution that will be a more sustainable and efficient system that will improve the State's and the local Social Service Districts' ability to achieve their core missions.

Descriptions of the desired licensing module, support operations and data management are noted below. The descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive of all functions that may be required by OCFS.

Desired Modules for Development and/or Integration

The following functions are expected to be accessed via portal(s) to facilitate a user experience that is friendly, easy-to-use (for example, allowing mobile accessibility), and provides appropriate workflow efficiency:

- A Licensing Module that will cover Foster + Adoption, Adoption Only, and Emergency processes.
- Securely collect information
- Securely submit/upload required documentation
- User friendly smart phone application submission, capable of accepting multiple file formats for required documentation.
- Access to Licensing Module for unlimited users (staff, applicants and other users).
- Access for all sub-agencies (counties and voluntary agencies) under the State
- Import of all historical data, and configuration and maintenance of any data exchanges via the API.
- Full configuration of the module to OCFS' data fields, workflows, and reports.
- E-signature capability
- Mapping/GPS home location feature
- The ability to exactly replicate the appearance of forms.

Support Operations

- The ability for ongoing changes, updates and improvements, including new features and changes to forms and data fields.
- Regular enhancement and updates to the software, based on feedback
- Changes to configurations, forms, and workflows per request
- Regular check-ins and meetings
- Reports to support ongoing practice and compliance monitoring
- Customer Success support to monitor training and implementation needs, and provide additional trainings, coaching and support as needed.

Data Management

- Data governance tools to catalog, store, access, and normalize the data
- Data analytics tools
- Data mapping

Guidance to Respondents

OCFS may use information obtained from responses to this RFI in making programmatic decisions and/or to develop a competitive procurement such as a RFP or an IFB. Note that any/all information obtained in response to this RFI may be utilized in a future procurement.

Any content that is proprietary and/or confidential must be clearly marked as such in the response. Failure to mark content as proprietary and/or confidential may result in its disclosure in the event a response is the subject of a Freedom of Information request under Public Officers Law Section 87. In any event, OCFS will determine, in its sole discretion, appropriate FOIL disclosure in accordance with Public Officers Law Section

87. All materials submitted by a respondent shall become the property of NYS OCFS and may or may not be returned to the respondent, at the sole discretion of NYS OCFS.

OCFS may issue announcements amending this RFI in response to questions. Any revisions to the RFI will be posted to the New York State Contract Reporter website (<http://www.nyscr.ny.gov>) and to the OCFS public website funding opportunities page (<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/>).

OCFS may communicate with any and all third parties, on the subject of this RFI or otherwise, during the duration of this RFI and/or following the receipt and consideration of RFI responses. This may be through email exchanges, phone discussions, meetings, and/or correspondence, and such communication may be with an individual respondent, a subset of respondents, or all respondents. As RFI responses are reviewed, OCFS reserves the right to send follow-up clarification questions to respondents of further interest.

Requested Information

Please return all of the requested information electronically. You may provide the requested information as a completed attachment and/or in the body of an email.

Please provide the following information:

- 1) Contact Information:
 - a. Name of individual responding
 - b. Name of agency/organization
 - c. Mailing address
 - d. Email address
 - e. Phone number

- 2) Indicate what features you envision a software application should include. Features must comply with the following security controls:
 - The NYS Information Security Policy: [NYS-P03-002](#)
 - FedRAMP: <https://www.fedramp.gov/baselines/>
 - NIST 800-53: <https://csrc.nist.gov/publications/detail/sp/800-53/rev-5/final>
 - Can the vendor provide a Consensus Assessment Initiative Questionnaire (CAIQ)?:<https://cloudsecurityalliance.org/artifacts/star-level-1-security-questionnaire-caiq-v4/>

- 3) Describe the security and privacy protocols and practices that would be necessary to protect users and data.

- 4) Provide questions that we may not have touched upon, that you feel are relevant to obtaining a software application that will meet the needs of OCFS.

Deadline for Responses

All respondents are requested to respond to this RFI with the information requested in the section entitled “Requested Information” no later than the deadline indicated on the first page of this announcement. Responses to this RFI must be made via email.

Delivery Method:	Address to:	Subject Line:
Email	RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV	RFI # 1126 Foster/Adoptive Certification or Approval Process Software

Questions

Questions regarding this RFI should be submitted via email to the OCFS Procurement Unit at: RFP@OCFS.NY.GOV prior to the due date and time noted above. Please submit your question with adequate time for response. OCFS recommends allowing at least five (5) business days. Be sure to put “**RFI # 1126 Foster/Adoptive Certification or Approval Process Software**” in the subject line. Late questions may not be addressed. Questions should not contain proprietary or classified information.