



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) Maryland Family Network (MFN) – Family Support Center (FSC) Ecosystem Improvement Initiative

1. Introduction and Overview

Maryland Family Network (MFN) is seeking a qualified vendor to conduct a comprehensive assessment and improvement initiative for the Patty Center – Family Support Services (FSC) program. This project aims to optimize the FSC ecosystem, streamline processes, improve communication, and enhance service delivery to families across Maryland. This is a one-time initiative funded by FY25 grant funds from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), with the objective of creating long-term, sustainable improvements.

1.1. About Maryland Family Network (MFN)

Maryland Family Network (MFN) occupies a crucial position within the early childhood education and family support system in Maryland, acting as a significant intermediary and coordinating body for a diverse range of programs and initiatives. The organization is deeply involved in the operational and strategic aspects of several key statewide networks. One of our primary responsibilities is managing the Family Support Center Network, often referred to as Patty Center – Family Support Services, which comprises 18 physical locations across the state [second paragraph of previous response]. These centers serve as vital community hubs, offering a variety of supports and resources to families with young children.

1.2. About the Patty Center – Family Support Services (FSC) Program

Patty Center – Family Support Services (formerly known as Family Support Centers) are community-based programs designed for expectant parents as well as parents and caregivers with children from ages birth to age 5 (four years, eleven months). Patty Centers create a warm, welcoming family centered environment which provides or links families to services. The centers build on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors (<https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>) by promoting nurturing and competent parenting, the physical and mental health of parents/caregivers and children, family economic success, and full growth and development of children.

The centers support:

- Parents/Caregivers to meet or exceed their goals related to family life;
- Parents/Caregivers to meet or exceed their goals related to family economic success; and
- Young children to develop fully physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively, preparing them to enter school ready to learn.

Patty Center - Family Support Services collaborates closely with local communities to empower families and help them thrive. For instance, some existing Centers partner with the local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices in the provision of education and employment services for parents. Some centers work closely with area high schools, functioning as an alternative education or external diploma site. Centers may be part of Judith P. Hoyer Early Learning Hub Partnerships. Programs may connect with Early Head Start, Head Start, or other early childhood settings. Centers may connect with their local

community college for adult education, English language classes, and workforce development services. Centers are expected to link participants to local and available high quality Pre-K environments when available.

2. Project Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this initiative is to enhance the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the FSC program ecosystem. This includes:

- Streamlining internal processes and systems at individual FSCs, MFN, and potentially MSDE (pending approval).
- Improving communication and information sharing among all stakeholders (FSCs, MFN, and MSDE).
- Optimizing service delivery to families served by the FSCs.
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of improvements beyond the contract period.
- Reviewing, refining, and creating, as needed, written materials that are clear and consistent.

3. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will be responsible for the following tasks:

3.1. Assessment and Evaluation:

- **MFN Level:** Evaluate MFN's internal operations related to the FSC program, including support, oversight, invoicing, communication, and information-sharing systems.
- **Individual FSC Level (18 FSCs):** Conduct a brief assessment of each FSC's internal systems, processes, operational procedures, and written materials (internal and family-facing). This includes, but is not limited to, forms, program descriptions, playbooks, guidebooks, exemplar materials, expectation documents, and checklists. The goal here is to identify opportunities for MFN to save centers time and effort by creating materials and tools that can be used across the network.
- **MSDE Level (Optional, Contingent on MSDE Approval):** If MSDE approves, conduct a similar assessment of MSDE's systems and processes related to the FSC program. Bidders should clearly indicate their ability and experience in working with state-level agencies.

3.2. System and Process Improvement:

- Based on the assessment findings, develop and implement recommendations for improvement in the following areas:
 - **Written Materials:** Revise and refine all written materials to ensure clarity, consistency, and effectiveness. Create new materials as needed.
 - **Invoicing Systems:** Streamline invoicing processes between FSCs, MFN, and MSDE.
 - **Communication Systems:** Improve communication flow and information sharing among all stakeholders. This includes exploring and potentially recommending specific communication platforms or mechanisms, especially for inter-FSC communication.
 - **Information Sharing Systems:** Optimize systems for sharing information among FSCs, MFN, and MSDE.
 - **Operational Procedures:** Identify and implement improvements to operational procedures at the FSC and MFN levels.

3.3. Capacity Building and Training:

- Provide comprehensive training and support to FSC staff, MFN staff, and potentially MSDE staff (if applicable) on all implemented improvements. This training should be designed to ensure the sustainability of the changes beyond the contract period.
- Develop easy to use materials for the training.

3.4. Development of Comprehensive FSC Operations Binder and Asynchronous Onboarding Plan:

- **FSC Operations Binder:** Compile all assessment findings, refined processes, systems, procedures, forms, rules, regulations, expectations, and exemplars into a single, comprehensive, and easily navigable "FSC Operations Binder." This binder should serve as the definitive resource for all aspects of FSC operations including expectations based on roles and responsibilities. It should be provided in both digital (searchable and easily updated) and physical formats. The binder should be organized logically, with clear indexing and cross-referencing.
- **Asynchronous Onboarding Plan:** Develop a comprehensive, role-differentiated asynchronous onboarding plan for new FSC employees. This plan should utilize the FSC Operations Binder and other relevant resources to provide consistent and effective onboarding experience for all new hires, regardless of their specific role. The plan should include modules, checklists, assessments (if appropriate), and clear timelines. It should be designed for self-paced learning, with mechanisms for tracking progress and ensuring completion.

4. Deliverables

The vendor will be expected to deliver the following:

- **Detailed Project Plan:** A comprehensive project plan with timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
- **Assessment Reports:** Individual reports for each FSC, MFN, and (if applicable) MSDE, outlining findings and recommendations.
- **Revised Written Materials:** Updated and improved versions of all relevant written materials.
- **System and Process Improvement Plans:** Detailed plans for implementing improvements to invoicing, communication, and information-sharing systems.
- **Training Materials:** Comprehensive training materials for FSC, MFN, and (if applicable) MSDE staff.
- **Training Sessions:** Delivery of training sessions to all relevant staff.
- **Comprehensive FSC Operations Binder:** A complete and finalized FSC Operations Binder in both digital and physical formats.
- **Asynchronous Onboarding Plan:** A fully developed, role-differentiated asynchronous onboarding plan for new FSC employees.

5. Timeline

This project must be completed by **June 30, 2025**. Proposals should include a detailed timeline demonstrating the vendor's ability to meet this deadline. The timeline should include specific milestones and deliverables.

6. Budget

Proposals should include a detailed budget breakdown, including:

- Personnel costs (hourly rates and estimated hours for each team member)
- Travel expenses (if applicable)
- Materials and supplies (including printing costs for the physical binders)
- Any other direct costs

- Indirect costs (overhead)

7. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested vendors must submit a proposal that includes the following:

- **Cover Letter:** A brief introduction of the vendor and a summary of their qualifications.
- **Company Profile:** Information about the vendor's organization, including its history, size, and relevant experience. Include resumes of key personnel who will be assigned to this project.
- **Project Understanding:** A clear demonstration of the vendor's understanding of the project goals, objectives, and scope of work, *specifically addressing their approach to creating the FSC Operations Binder and Asynchronous Onboarding Plan.*
- **Capacity Statement:** This project has a very quick turnaround given the breadth of the scope of work. Please be sure to explain how you will maintain the appropriate capacity through the contract period to ensure work is completed by June 30, 2025.
- **Proposed Methodology:** A detailed description of the vendor's proposed approach to the project, including specific methodologies and tools that will be used. *Include specific examples of how they will approach the creation of the binder and onboarding plan, including proposed organizational structures, content development strategies, and technology to be used (if any).*
- **Project Plan and Timeline:** A comprehensive project plan with timelines, milestones, and deliverables, demonstrating the ability to meet the June 30, 2025, deadline. *The timeline should include specific milestones for the development and delivery of the binder and onboarding plan.*
- **Budget:** A detailed budget breakdown as described in Section 6.
- **References:** Contact information for at least three (3) clients for whom the vendor has performed similar work. Preferably, these references should be from non-profit organizations or government agencies. *Ideally, references should be able to speak to the vendor's experience in creating similar operational manuals or onboarding programs.*
- **Conflict of Interest Statement:** A statement disclosing any potential conflicts of interest.
- **Proof of Insurance:** Verification of adequate liability insurance.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Qualifications and Experience (30%):** The vendor's demonstrated experience in conducting similar assessments and improvement initiatives, particularly within the non-profit or government sectors. Experience working with family support services or related fields is highly desirable. *Specific experience in developing operational manuals and onboarding programs will be given significant weight.*
- **Project Understanding and Methodology (30%):** The clarity and comprehensiveness of the vendor's understanding of the project and the appropriateness and feasibility of their proposed methodology. *The vendor's understanding of and approach to creating the FSC Operations Binder and Asynchronous Onboarding Plan will be a major focus of this evaluation.*
- **Project Plan and Timeline (20%):** The feasibility and completeness of the project plan and the vendor's ability to meet the project deadline.
- **Budget (15%):** The reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.
- **References (5%):** The strength of the vendor's references.

9. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format:

- To mherschfeld@marylandfamilynetwork.org and yourvoice@marylandfamilynetwork.org

- No later than 5pm ET March 24, 2024. Late submissions will not be considered.

10. Questions and Clarifications

Any questions or requests for clarification regarding this RFP can be submitted in writing to mherschfeld@marylandfamilynetwork.org.

We will hold an open office hour on Monday March 17 from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm ET.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

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Meeting ID: 271 480 882 056

Passcode: Qt7Wa3RP

11. Right of Refusal

MFN reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposals received, and to accept the proposal that is deemed to be in the best interest of MFN. MFN also reserves the right to negotiate with any vendor after the proposals have been submitted.

12. Confidentiality

All information provided in this RFP and any subsequent communications related to this project should be treated as confidential. Vendors shall not disclose any information related to this project to any third party without the prior written consent of MFN.

13. Contract Award

MFN anticipates making a single contract award (subcontracting for added capacity will be considered), after fully considering all proposals submitted.