



Request for Proposal

A NORTHERN FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD WELFARE

Issue Date: 12 June 2017

Closing Date: 30 June 2017, 3:00 pm (EDT)

1.0 Proposal Invitation Summary

Northern Ontario requires a specialized framework for structuring, funding, governing and delivering child welfare services for non-Indigenous communities as well as for Indigenous communities. Implementation of this framework requires community input, collaboration, time and resources.¹

The current funding model and expectations for restructuring do not address the realities of the geography or the broader goal of devolution of services leading to the goal of an Indigenous child welfare system which is led and governed by Indigenous people. Nor does the model support the diverse non-Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario, including Francophone populations.

Agencies/firms/independent consultants with experience in child welfare are invited to submit proposals to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) for a project to develop a Northern Framework for Child Welfare Services that reflects the reality of the geography, the diversity isolated and remote community's experience, the greater social, health and economic challenges experienced in Northern Ontario juxtaposed against their right to equitable access to service. This Framework will clearly articulate the social, health, educational, economic, demographic and geographic uniqueness's of Northern Ontarians and serve as a matrix against which the Ministry and sector can inform appropriate, adequate and accessible service planning and delivery.

The goal is to ensure that children, youth and families have the same opportunities for protection and wellbeing as their fellow Ontarians who live in more southerly regions of the province. At present the ability to achieve this is inhibited by program models and funding approaches that do not take into account the complexities and challenges of the North.

The Framework will involve consultation and dialogue with the six (6) mainstream Children's Aid Societies (CASs) serving Northeast and Northwest Ontario (The Children's Aid Society of Algoma; Kenora - Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services; The Children's Aid Society of Nipissing and Parry Sound; North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services; The Children's Aid Society of the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin and The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay).

For more details on work description, scope and submission requirements see Sections 5.0 –10.0.

¹ OACAS: A Northern Framework for Child Welfare (Undated)

2.0 Organizational Profile

OACAS is a not-for-profit membership organization representing CASs in Ontario. The Association has served its members, the community, the public and the government in a variety of ways since 1912. OACAS is governed by a 16-member board of directors. OACAS provides support to its member societies in the areas of advocacy, government relations, communications, youth in care advocacy, information management, education and training, event management and member outreach.

OACAS's **Mission** is to be a leader and collaborator promoting the welfare of children, youth and families through **leadership, service excellence** and **advocacy**. The OACAS **Vision** is to be a highly effective children services system which has the confidence of Ontario families and communities. OACAS is guided by the following values: *collaborative, accountable, courageous, innovative and transparent*.

For more information, visit www.oacas.org

3.0 Our Members

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) represents 48 member agencies; 45 of 48 mandated CASs and 3 pre-mandated Indigenous agencies across Ontario. CASs are incorporated not-for-profit agencies governed by volunteer boards of directors elected from the local community and funded by the Province of Ontario.

Children's Aid Societies provide an essential service and are legislated to perform certain functions under the provisions of Section 15 of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*. The mandate of CASs, as described in this section of the CFSA includes the following:

- to investigate allegations that children are in need of protection;
- to protect children;
- to provide guidance for protecting children and for the prevention of circumstances requiring the protection of children; and
- to provide care for children assigned to its care under this Act.

CASs protect children from abuse, including neglect, help parents build healthy families and provide a safe, nurturing place for children and young adults to grow up and realize their dreams.

4.0 Background Information

The mainstream CASs serving Northern Ontario seek support to develop a Framework for child welfare services that reflects the reality of the geography, the diversity, the isolated and remote community's experience, the greater social, health and economic challenges experienced in Northern Ontario juxtaposed against their right to equitable access to service. This Framework will clearly articulate the social, health, educational, economic, demographic and geographic uniqueness's of Northern Ontarians and serve as a matrix against which the Ministry and sector can inform appropriate, adequate and accessible service planning and delivery.

The goal is to ensure that children, youth and families have the same opportunities for protection and wellbeing as their fellow Ontarians who live in more southerly regions of the province. At present the ability to achieve this is inhibited by program models and funding approaches that do not take into account the complexities and challenges of the North.

The six mainstream Children's Aid Societies servicing Northern Ontario provide services from Parry Sound to north of Lake Superior as well as the span between the Manitoba and Quebec borders. Society information is available on the various organization's websites:

<http://www.algomacas.org/>

<http://www.neofacs.org/>

<http://www.krrcfs.ca/>

<http://www.casdsm.on.ca/default.aspx>

<http://www.parnipc.as.org/>

<https://www.thunderbaycas.ca/>

The proposal seeks support to further the work done to date to create a comprehensive analysis of the Northern child welfare landscape to inform Ministry and sector policy makers.

The work would include, but not be limited to reviewing and analyzing:

- the role of child welfare services,
- the available resources and their current distribution – both child welfare and other community supports,
- a mapping of service needs against available resources pre and post devolution of Indigenous Child Welfare Restoration,
- analysis of diversity factors (including Indigenous, African Canadian and Francophone populations),
- analysis of service expectations pursuant to the *French Language Services Act*,
- a description of “future state” options in a post-devolution environment,
- the degree to which the funding model enables northern agencies to meet mandatory service requirements (protection and wellbeing) under the *Child and Family Services Act*,
- the projected impact of the Shared Services Program and how it may enable Northern agencies to achieve greater effectiveness, realize value added opportunities and reinvest possible savings into service delivery,
- options for changes to support a sustainable and viable child welfare service system in the North.

The primary scope of the work is to coalesce social, health, educational, economic and demographic data within the context of the geographic uniqueness of Northern Ontario into a concise report detailing a Framework against which Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) and sector policy makers can inform child welfare service planning and delivery.

The scope of the work and its major responsibilities include:

- Consultation with the six mainstream Northern Ontario Children’s Aid Societies to solicit their feedback, input, client demographic data and perspectives on unique service demands within their jurisdictions,
- Consultation with key provincial and local stakeholders that may have a vested interest in the outcome (e.g. Indigenous child wellbeing agencies, ANCFSAO and OACAS),
- Consultation with the Shared Services Program,
- Consultation with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and such key informants as the Ministry’s Child Welfare Reform Project,
- Identify, integrate and analyze the various other sector initiatives detailing their potential impact on service delivery both provincially and within Northern Ontario,
- The formulation of best practice statements and recommendations to ensure the creation of a Framework predicated on equity of access and receipt of protection and well-being services, for children, youth and families throughout Northern Ontario.

5.0 Project Objective & Intended Outcomes

The primary outcome of the project is to develop a Framework for mainstream Northern Ontario child welfare services that reflects the reality of the geography and the diversity isolated and remote communities experience juxtaposed against their right to equitable access to service. This analysis will reference the social, health, educational, economic, demographic and geographic uniqueness’s of Northern Ontarians.

The Framework will also identify current limitations and propose recommendations to inform such Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Society Call to Action items as the funding model review, restructuring, Shared Services, devolution and diversity initiatives including but not limited to African Canadian, Indigenous and Francophone populations.

The proposal is predicated on the lived experience that the current funding model and expectations for restructuring do not address the realities of the geography or the impact of the devolution of services leading to the goal of an Indigenous child welfare system which is led and governed by Indigenous people. The existing child welfare system also does not consistently support the diverse non-Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario, including African Canadian and Francophone populations.

The Framework will also identify existing and potential partnership opportunities amongst Northern Ontario child welfare agencies and community based organizations.

From a sector perspective the project will inform the field’s commitment to the evolution of a child welfare system that responsibly utilizes fixed resources to ensure equitable access to services.

The project will also articulate best practice statements and recommendations as mechanisms to further inform provincial reconfiguration, the funding model, Shared Services and the sector’s provincial commitment to culturally appropriate service delivery.

6.0 Project Deliverables

The agency/firm/independent consultant will develop and execute the following:

1. Develop an overall **project plan**
2. Design, in consultation with OACAS and the Project Team, a Northern Framework for Child Welfare document consisting of
 - Draft mid-term report
 - Final report including appendices
3. Payment of invoices will be based on evidence of products and reports and not on time worked.

6.1 Sample Project Workplan

Proponents are requested to submit a summary workplan which highlights the main phases, tasks, time allocation, timelines and signals key decision points. The following format is offered as an example, however **start and end dates must be firm**. Bidders are requested to indicate the approach by illustrating the phases, tasks, consulting days and timelines. This will also ensure that the Project Team can facilitate required approvals at the appropriate times.

Phase	Tasks	Days	Timing	Result
Phase 1: Foundational Work	Project orientation Develop project plan, seek input and approval of Project team			
Phase 2: Information Gathering	Document and data review including stakeholder engagement			
Phase 3: Strategic Analysis	Synthesis and analysis of findings Interim report to provincial project committee		3 month mark	
Phase 4: Final Report	Drafting of final paper to provincial project committee Communication planning French translation		6 month mark	

7.0 Performance Standards and Quality Measurement

All work completed by the bidder is subject to the review and approval of the OACAS and Project Team. At each phase of work the OACAS representative will review products and provide feedback and approval to proceed to the next phase.

The Bidder shall undertake all required revisions, changes, and amendments to work, as directed by the OACAS representative.

Work performed by the bidder shall be executed in a manner that is consistent with the requirements, as defined in the Contract and any resulting amendment from OACAS.

8.0 Requested Proposal Elements

Structure of the Proposal

The proposal shall include:

- About your firm: What specific attributes does your agency/firm possess to handle our needs? Please include relevant experience.
- A narrative indicating an understanding of the project
- A work plan, including time allotted to each phase
- Any value-added concepts or resources to be integrated into the project plan
- Named consultants, and rates of pay/fees, including primary contact, and other team members, if applicable
- Potential risks and mitigation strategies
- Estimated expenses

In addition, financial and time reporting will be required by the consultant, consistent with financial reporting requirements set by OACAS, and in compliance with mandatory procurement and accounting requirements.

Provide reference contacts for three clients including one which you no longer represent.

9.0 Duration/Period of the Agreement

Work will commence upon contract award. High level timelines for this 6 month project are identified in the sample project plan (6.1). Bidders are asked to confirm that this timeframe is achievable.

10.0 Proposal Procedure

The Bidder shall submit an electronic version of the proposal and all supporting documentation in Microsoft Word compatible format. Proposals are due on or before 30th June 2017 at 3:00 pm (EDT). Proposals should be sent to the OACAS representative:

Shelly Nixon
Senior Program Analyst
Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies
75 Front Street East, Suite 308, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1V9
416.987.3569 # | fax: 416.366.8317 | snixon@oacas.org |

Proposals received after the closing time will not be accepted. Bidders who need to withdraw or amend their proposal should do so before the closing date. The OACAS reserves the right to amend this Request for Proposal (RFP) document through written addendum, up to three (3) business days prior to closing time. Where no satisfactory proposal is received, OACAS reserves the right to cancel this RFP process,

request re-bids, or negotiate a contract for the whole or any part of the provision of the required service as outlined in this RFP.

The bidder shall not modify or withdraw its proposal without OACAS consent for a period of ninety (90) days after the closing date.

In its Proposal of Interest, each bidder must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest that might compromise the performance of the Services. If such a conflict of interest does exist, OACAS may, at its sole discretion, refuse to consider the proposal and disqualify the bidder from the bidding process. The bidder must also disclose whether it is aware of any OACAS employee, Board member or member of the Project team having a financial interest in the respondent and the nature of that interest. OACAS reserves the right to solely determine whether any situation or circumstance constitutes a conflict of interest.

The RFP tentative Timeline is as follows:

RFP Issued	12 June 2017
Deadline for questions, clarifications	21 June 2017, 3:00pm EDT
Proposals must be Submitted by:	30 June 2017, 3:00pm EDT
Notification of Interview (if necessary)	7 July 2017
Interviews and presentation of consultant (if necessary)	10 July 2017 – 21 July 2017
Bidder Selected and notified	24 July 2017
Contract Start Date:	1 August 2017

11.0 Evaluation and Award

The award shall be made to the Bidder whose proposal is deemed to be in the best interests of OACAS. If short listed for an interview, the Bidder will be required to make a presentation to the Selection Committee related to:

- the credentials and capability of the firm, and the personnel assigned in managing this project (previous campaign could be presented);
- how the Bidder will manage and complete the work;
- the Bidder's vision and plan to attain the goal of this project.

12.0 Project Budget

A maximum of \$25,000 is allocated for this project to cover the anticipated costs of a consultant complete the work of the project. This is inclusive of HST.

Of the allocated maximum, up to \$10, 000 is available to cover travel costs associated with the project. This is inclusive of HST and all related travel tax(es).

13.0 Selection Criteria

Proposals will be assessed on the following:

- Demonstrated experience with an understanding of OACAS' desired outcomes;
- Proposed Bidder's experience, understanding and expertise in relevant work;
- Quality of the proposal, including the methodology and approach to be used;
- Expected ability to deliver initiatives on time and within budget.

Submitted proposals do not in any way constitute a binding agreement between OACAS and any Bidder. OACAS shall not be obligated in any manner to any Bidder, unless and until a written contract has been duly executed between OACAS and the successful Bidder.

14.0 OACAS Project Team

Project Manager: Shelly Nixon

Project Champions:

- Brad Bain, Executive Director, The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
- Elaina Groves, Executive Director, The Children's Aid Society of the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin
- Gisele Hebert, Executive Director, Children's Aid Society of Nipissing and Parry Sound
- Bill Leonard, Executive Director, Kenora – Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services
- John Raymond, Executive Director, North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services
- Kim Streich – Poser, Executive Director, The Children's Aid Society of Algoma

15.0 Additional Terms and Conditions

15.1 Confidentiality

Any and all information relating OACAS and CASs, which is made known to the Bidder, its agents or employees in the course of providing service to OACAS, shall remain confidential to all parties. The RFP process in its entirety shall also remain confidential to all parties. The Bidder, its agents and employees shall abide by all applicable Provincial and Federal laws and regulations concerning the handling and disclosure of private and confidential information.

15.2 Contractor Security Screening

Upon notification, a bidder is expected to provide the necessary information for each individual requiring Security Clearance, as may be requested. The bidder will obtain and pay for their criminal record checks through an OPS Vendor of Record arrangement, local police, or a RCMP accredited agency before a contract is signed, if required.

15.3 Conflict of Interest

The bidder must not engage in any activity where such activity creates a conflict of interest that compromises, or could be seen to compromise, the integrity or competitiveness of RFP process.

15.4 Indemnification

The Bidder shall hold OACAS, its Board of Directors and employees harmless and shall indemnify any and all awards and costs related to any claim or action brought against any of them for property damage, bodily injury, death or other causes, as a result of responding to this RFP or a service provided to the OACAS by the Bidder. The Bidder is responsible for ensuring that it has proper and adequate insurance to cover all services provided to OACAS and all claims or action that may be brought against OACAS, its Board of Directors and employees, as a result of a service provided to the OACAS by the Bidder.

OACAS has the right to demand and inspect the Bidder's contract of insurance.

15.5 Ownership

All data, documentation, information, notes, completed questionnaires, reports, analyses, intellectual property or other material produced for or in conjunction with, created as a result of, or otherwise associated with OACAS and the services to be provided under this RFP and the contract made hereafter, shall remain the property of OACAS.

15.6 Assignment

The Bidder shall not assign or transfer all or any part of its rights or obligations under this agreement without the prior written consent of OACAS.

15.7 Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario.

Bid Interest Form

***Request for Proposal #YYYYMMDD.001
Consulting Services – (Name of Project)***

Issue Date: (date)

Closing Date: (date) at (time am/pm) EST

In order to ensure that you receive any and all addendum issued in connection with this Request for Proposal, please complete the following information **as soon as possible** and fax or email to:

Name: Project Lead

Title:

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies

75 Front Street East, Suite 308, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1V9

Fax: 416.366.8317 | Project Lead e-mail address | phone number

Company Name: _____

Representative: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Please indicate by checking the appropriate box your intention in responding to this RFP.

Intend to Respond

Do NOT intend to respond