

Mat-Su Family Contact Coordination & Support

Contract Purpose: The goal of this project is to develop and implement a system of support and continued learning for Mat-Su family contact providers, including professionals, foster parents, and other non-traditional family time supporters utilizing the R.O.C.K. Mat-Su Best Practices Guides for Professionals, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters.

Issue Date: 11/13/20

Application Deadline: 12/15/20

Award to Successful Applicant: 12/21/20

Submit Questions Prior to Deadline: lprunella@rockmatsu.org

Total Amount Available: \$85,000.00

Task 1: Staffing and administrative support

Task 2: Onboarding & Training Fees

Duration of Contract: One year with renewal process

Contract Eligibility: A business, individual, or Tribal entity who is a R.O.C.K. Mat-Su partner (or the willingness to become a partner) that demonstrates familiarity with behavioral health and social service provision, the willingness to learn, and experience working with the target population.

Contact Information:

Lindsay Prunella

Operations Manager

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su

lprunella@rockmatsu.org

734-476-0686

Submit Proposal & Supporting Documents: lprunella@rockmatsu.org

Information for Applicant

Background

R.O.C.K. (Raising Our Children with Kindness) Mat-Su is a collaborative of community members working together to promote family resilience and reduce child maltreatment. Working collectively towards large-scale systems change, the partners of R.O.C.K. Mat-Su aim to strengthen families so all children are safe, healthy, and thriving, end child abuse and neglect, and reduce other Adverse Childhood Experiences.

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su is actively working on 16 strategies to achieve the dual goals of (1) promoting resilient families and (2) ending child maltreatment. Our work in primary prevention promotes family resilience to prevent abuse from happening in all families. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's secondary prevention work aims to treat abuse and prevent repeat maltreatment in families where abuse has occurred. Our strategy to coordinate and optimize family contact is directly connected to this RFP.

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su brought together community partners and the Butler Institute for Families in 2017 to identify ways supervised visitation for children in out of home placement can be improved in the Mat-Su. This led to the development of the Family Contact Improvement Partnership (FCIP) and a [Theory of Change](#) to help serve as a road map on our journey to improvement. The FCIP collective believes that culturally centered, meaningful, and healthy contact is best for a child to strengthen family relationships and help children thrive. FCIP has developed [Best Practices Guides](#) and trainings for professionals, foster parents, and family time supporters. A family time supporter is a relative, tribal member, caring community member, or family friend.

Purpose of the RFP

The goal of this project is to develop and provide a system of support and continued learning for family contact providers, including professionals, foster parents, and other non-traditional family time supporters.

Frequent and quality family contact is a primary indicator of successful reunification. When considering the importance of frequency of visitations, research suggests the frequency of family contact is directly associated with higher reunification rates, more stable permanent placements, and reduced time in out-of-home care (Davis, Landsverk, Newton, & Granger, 1996 & Mech, E.V, 1985). The primary goal of visits is for children to build healthy and positive relationships with their families (Fein, Maluccio, & Kluger, 1990). We continue to work together to improve the availability, frequency, and quality of contact for families in the Mat-Su Borough, yet there are challenges that stand in the way that must be tackled. Forty-three percent of children served in child welfare in the Southcentral region of Alaska are under the age of five. Research shows that the frequency of visitation, especially for very young children, should range from twice weekly visits up to daily visits. Ideally, family contact should include developmentally appropriate activities and coaching guidance to promote knowledge and support of the child's developmental needs (James Bell Associates, 2009).

R.O.C.K. Mat-Su seeks a business, individual, or Tribal entity to support family reunification through the facilitation, coaching and coordination of culturally-centered learning opportunities for individuals who are providing supervision of family contact in the Mat-Su. The successful applicant will utilize the Family Contact Improvement Partnership's (FCIP) Curriculum and Best Practices Guides for Professionals, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters as the foundation of this work. The applicant will need a strong understanding of the [Strengthening Families™](#) approach, as it is rooted in the curriculum and embedded in the Office of Children's Services policies and practices. Strengthening Families™ focuses on engaging families, programs, and communities by building five protective factors. Protective factors are the conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities or the larger society that mitigate risk and promote healthy development and well-being.

The Five Protective Factors are as follows:

1. Parental Resilience - The ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building trusting relationships including relationships with their own child, and knowing when to seek help when necessary.
2. Social Connections - Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental, and spiritual support.
3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development - Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development.
4. Concrete Support in Times of Need - Access to support and services that address a family's needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges.
5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children – Encourage family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.

Applicant Qualifications

The applicant must be an individual or agency that works within the Mat-Su Valley. Eligible applicants must be willing to collaborate with R.O.C.K. Mat-Su and to become a partner as outlined in [Section: Required Engagement](#) of this RFP.

Insurance

The applicant must obtain and maintain insurance coverage that is appropriate to their business operations and the nature of the work and services provided. Application will not be considered without proof of insurance.

Prior Experience

In order for offers to be considered, responsive applicants who will staff the contract must meet these minimum prior experience requirements:

1. Minimum of three (3) years of experience providing services to children and families in a health or social service setting;
2. Minimum of one (1) year of experience providing services to families who are at-risk, utilizing a trauma-informed care approach and working towards mitigating safety risks for the family members;
3. Minimum of one (1) year of experience working with Alaska Native populations;
4. Pass a background check;
5. Must have completed the online Alaska Mandated Reporter Training or do so within three (3) months of the contract start date; and
6. Must have completed facilitation training or do so within six (6) months of the contract start date.
7. Must have completed coaching training via International Coaching Federation (or another accredited program) or do so within six (6) months of the contract start date.

Minimum Training Requirement

In order for offers to be considered, responsive applicants who will staff the contract must have current training (or do so within six (6) months of the contract start date) that address the following:

Examples of some potential training sources include [Supervised Visitation Network](#), [Zero to Three](#), [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), [The Community Technical Assistance Center of New York](#), and [Mental Health Technology Transfer Center](#).

1. Safety for all participants;
2. Mandatory child abuse reporting;
3. Professional boundaries, conflict of interest, confidentiality, and maintaining neutrality;
4. Basic stages of child development;
5. Effects of separation, divorce, and/or ambiguous loss on children and families;
6. Grief and loss associated with parental separation and removal from the home due to child abuse and neglect;
7. Cultural sensitivity and diversity;
8. Family violence, including domestic violence and the effects of domestic violence on children;
9. Child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse;
10. Substance abuse;
11. Provisions of service to parents and children with mental health and developmental issues or other physical or emotional impairment;
12. Parent introduction/re-introduction;
13. Parenting skills;
14. Assertiveness training and conflict resolution;
15. How to provide guided interactions to increase parental capacities;
16. How and when to intervene during visits or exchanges to maintain the safety of all participants;
17. Observation of parent/child interactions;
18. Preparation of factual observation notes and reports; and
19. Relevant laws regarding child custody and visitation as well as child protection.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Deliverables

The contractor will be required, but not limited, to provide the following deliverables:

1. Participate in [Required Engagement](#) outlined in the Application Requirements section of this RFP.
2. Become a trained facilitator in the R.O.C.K. Mat-Su “Innovations in Family Contact” training for professionals, foster parents and Family Time Supporters.
3. Provide a minimum of 2-3 training sessions.
4. Provide support & continued learning for training participants
 - a. Develop and maintain monthly cohort learning opportunities for individuals who have participated in the training.
 - b. Provide onsite or virtual coaching sessions for organizations / individuals who have participated in the training per request.
 - c. Answer questions and provide information/resources/outreach to training participants and interested individuals/organizations.
 - d. Offer support to organizations as they make changes to support best practices.
5. Assist in the development and coordination of a registration system for Family Time Supporters that includes screenings/background checks.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Cover Letter

Please provide a one-page cover letter explaining how you or your organization’s values align with the values embedded within the [Family Contact Best Practices Guide for Professionals](#).

2. Target Population

Provide a description of how you or your organization is uniquely positioned to increase the competency of Mat-Su's family contact network to meet the unique developmental needs and concerns/challenges of children in out of home placement. Please provide an explanation on how you plan to develop supportive relationships with Mat-Su organizations, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters.

3. Applicant Policies & Procedures

Please provide an explanation of how you would maintain confidentiality for training participants and their clients during coaching sessions.

4. Insurance

The applicant must obtain and maintain insurance coverage that is appropriate to their business operations and the nature of the work and services provided. Please provide proof of insurance.

5. Education / Professional Development Plan

Please provide a timeline for participation in professional development/training of staff involved in the contract, including how you will incorporate the following:

- A. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's Innovations in Family Contact Training for Professionals, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters.
- B. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's Face to Face: Confronting Racial Inequities
- C. Seek consultation or training concerning contract staff's [Prior Experience](#), [Minimum Training Requirement](#), or topics that come up while supporting training participants.

6. Required Engagement

The applicant must provide a plan for engagement in the following opportunities. The applicant must demonstrate a commitment and plan to attend the following:

- D. **Family Contact Improvement Partnership**
 - a. **Full Partnership Meetings:** The applicant will engage in the FCIP full partnership meetings. Currently, meetings occur on a quarterly basis.
 - b. **Ad hoc Workgroup Meetings:** The applicant will engage and collaborate in ad hoc workgroup meetings. Currently, meetings occur twice monthly.
 - c. **Evaluation Workgroup Meetings:** The applicant will engage in the FCIP evaluation workgroup and assist in the coordination of these efforts. Currently, meetings occur as needed.
- E. **Engaging and Partnering with the Office of Children's Services and other Mat-Su Organizations Providing Family Contact Services.**

The applicant will demonstrate a willingness to engage and collaborate with OCS and other Mat-Su organizations to ensure organizations and training participants are well supported as they incorporate and implement best practices into their family contact program.

- F. **Partnering with Foster Parents & Family Time Supporters**

The applicant will demonstrate a willingness to engage and collaborate with training participants and the organizations that support them to ensure training participants are well supported as they incorporate and implement best practices into their family time routine.

7. Evaluation and Reporting

It is the expectation of R.O.C.K. Mat-Su that the successful applicant will provide a quarterly report demonstrates outputs and engage in quarterly meetings with R.O.C.K. Mat-Su staff to discuss challenges and incongruences between expectations and deliverables. The successful applicant will be required to work with R.O.C.K. Mat-Su staff and the FCIP evaluator to support evaluation efforts and to determine which output and outcome data will be tracked.

Please acknowledge your agreement with the evaluation and reporting expectations written above.

8. Timeline

Based on the anticipated contract award date, please provide a proposed project timeline. Applicant's timeline must include planning/preparation for the following:

Task 1: Staffing and administrative support

Task 2: Onboarding & Training

9. Budget

The successful applicant will receive one year of funding with potential for ongoing funding. An annual evaluation and renewal process will occur with an opportunity for the funder to opt-out if deemed necessary, retain the option to renew, or place the funding back out to bid. The length of the contract will be from date of award, for approximately one year. At the sole discretion of R.O.C.K. Mat-Su, an additional one-year renewal option may be exercised to extend the period of performance of the resulting contract.

The contract will be payable quarterly following establishment of services. Applicants must provide a detailed budget that includes the following:

Task 1: Staffing and administrative support

Task 2: Onboarding & Training Fees

10. Scope of Work

Please provide a plan for how you will execute the deliverables outlined in the Section: [Deliverables](#) of this RFP.

Submit to:

Lindsay Prunella
R.O.C.K. Mat-Su Operations Manager
777 N Crusey St,
Ste A101
Wasilla, AK 99654
lprunella@rockmatsu.org

Scoring Matrix		Score
Cover Letter		2
One-page cover letter explaining alignment of your organization's values with the values embedded within the Family Contact Best Practices Guide for Professionals.		
Target Population		4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Description of how you or your organization is uniquely positioned to increase the competency of Mat-Su's family contact network to meet the unique developmental needs and concerns/challenges of children in out of home placement. B. Explanation of how you plan to develop supportive relationships with Mat-Su organizations, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters. 		
Applicant Policies & Procedures		1
Please provide an explanation of how you would maintain confidentiality for training participants and their clients during coaching sessions.		
Insurance		1
Please provide proof of insurance. *Application will not be consider without proof of insurance.		
Education / Professional Development Plan		3
Provide a timeline for participation in professional development/training of staff involved in the contract, including how you will incorporate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's Innovations in Family Contact Training for Professionals, Foster Parents, and Family Time Supporters. B. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's Racial Equity Training C. Seek consultation or training concerning contract staff's Prior Experience, Minimum Training Requirement, or topics that come up while supporting training participants. 		
Required Engagement		3
Provide a plan for how your organization will engage in the following opportunities (<i>described in Application Requirements section Required Engagement</i>). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Family Contact Improvement Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Full Partnership Meetings b. Ad hoc Workgroup Meetings c. Evaluation Workgroup Meetings B. Engaging and Partnering with the Office of Children's Services and other Mat-Su Organizations Providing Family Contact Services. C. Partnering with Foster Parents & Family Time Supporters 		
Evaluation and Reporting		1
Please acknowledge your agreement with the evaluation and reporting expectations written above.		
Timeline		6
Provide a proposed project timeline. Must include planning/preparation for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task 1: Staffing and administrative support Task 2: Onboarding & Training 		
Budget		6
Provide a detailed budget that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task 1: Staffing and administrative support Task 2: Onboarding & Training Fees 		

Provide a plan for how you will execute deliverables outlined in the Section: [Deliverables](#) of this RFP.

1. Provide support & continued learning for training participants
 - a. Develop and maintain monthly cohort learning opportunities for individuals who have participated in the training.
 - b. Provide onsite or virtual coaching sessions for organizations / individuals who have participated in the training per request.
 - c. Answer questions and provide information/resources/outreach to training participants and interested individuals/organizations
 - d. Offer support to organizations as they make changes to support best practices.
2. Assist in the development and coordination of a registration system for Family Time Supporters that includes screenings/background checks.