Addendum 2

State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services
Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15
Request for Qualifications

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services is issuing **Addendum 2** to the **Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15 Request for Qualifications.**

Addendum 2 updates the following information:

Bidders' Conference Information

Bidders' Conference Information

The Department will hold an optional Bidders' Conference. The purpose of the Bidders' Conference is to allow potential Respondents the opportunity to ask clarifying questions pertaining to the requirements of the RFQ. A court reporter will capture and transcribe the conference and the questions raised at the conference will be posted as an addendum to this RFQ.

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 10:30–12:30 p.m. E.S.T.

Location: Norwalk City Hall
~~Room 128~~ Common Counsel Chambers 3rd Floor
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

In the event of any inconsistency between information provided in the RFQ and information in this addendum, the information in this addendum shall prevail.

State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services
Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15
Request for Qualifications

Addendum 2 issued March 18, 2015

Approved: _____
Crystal Redding

State of Connecticut Department of Social Services
(Original signature on document in procurement file)

This Addendum must be signed and returned with your submission

_____ _____
Authorized Signer Name of Company

Addendum 1

State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services
Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15
Request for Qualifications

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services is issuing **Addendum 1** to the **Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15 Request for Qualifications.**

Addendum 1 contains:

1. Bidders' Conference information;
2. Webinar Invitation; and
3. Amendments Section III. General Instructions A.3. Procurement Schedule

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1. Bidders' Conference Information

The Department will hold an optional Bidders' Conference. The purpose of the Bidders' Conference is to allow potential Respondents the opportunity to ask clarifying questions pertaining to the requirements of the RFQ. A court reporter will capture and transcribe the conference and the questions raised at the conference will be posted as an addendum to this RFQ.

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 10:30–12:30 p.m. E.S.T.

Location: Norwalk City Hall
Room 128
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851

2. Webinar Invitation

Title: Community Services Block Grant /Human Services Infrastructure Request for Qualifications (CSBG/HSI RFQ_030315)

Date: March 27, 2015 11:30-1:00 p.m. E.S.T.

Description: The Department of Social Services is conducting this webinar for the purpose of providing technical assistance specific to the Community Services Block Grant / Human Services Infrastructure Request for Qualifications. Examples of topics to be discussed are as follows: Purpose of the RFQ for Greater Norwalk; Inquiry procedure; Key Components of the RFQ, Appendix A, Important links, etc.

This is an opportunity to ask questions or request clarification of the RFQ. Webinar participants will hear from Key Department Staff, as well as invited guests.

Proposed Webinar Agenda:

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Purpose & Overview of the RFQ for Greater Norwalk
- ❖ Inquiry Procedures
- ❖ Key Components
- ❖ Program Specifics & Activities
- ❖ Questions

Who should attend?
Potential respondents to the CSBG/HSI RFQ_030315 should attend.

Space is limited.
Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5474995425804600322

3. Amendments Section III. General Instructions A.3. Procurement Schedule

All requirements of the original RFQ except those requirements specifically changed by this addendum shall remain in effect. In the event of any inconsistency between information provided in the RFQ and information in this addendum, the information in this addendum shall prevail.

Section III. General Instructions A.3. Procurement Schedule

Procurement Schedule. See below. The Department may amend the schedule, as needed. Any change will be made by means of an addendum to this RFQ and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and the Department's RFP Web Page.

RFQ Released:	Tuesday, March 3, 2015
Bidders' Conference:	**Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 10:30-12:30 pm. EST**
Technical Assistance Webinar:	**Friday, March 27, 2015, 11:30-1:00 p.m. E.S.T.**
Deadline for Questions:	**Tuesday, March ~~17~~ 31, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.**
Answers Released (tentative):	**Tuesday, ~~March 24~~ April 7, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.**
Optional Letter of Intent Due:	~~Tuesday, March 31~~ Friday, April 10, 2015 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.
Qualifications Due:	Tuesday, April 21, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.

State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services
Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15
Request for Qualifications

Addendum 1 issued March 11, 2015

Approved: _____
Crystal Redding

State of Connecticut Department of Social Services
(Original signature on document in procurement file)

This Addendum must be signed and returned with your submission

_____ _____
Authorized Signer Name of Company

PROCUREMENT NOTICE

State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services
Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure 03/03/15
Request for Qualifications

The State of Connecticut Department of Social Services, (Department/DSS) is requesting qualifications from private non-profit organizations or units of local government qualified to and interested in designation as the Community Action Agency for the Greater Norwalk catchment area, in accordance with the requirements of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901, et. seq.). The Greater Norwalk catchment area includes the communities of New Canaan, Norwalk, Wilton, Weston and Westport. This is an opportunity for a qualified entity to provide important and life changing services to the low-income populations within the communities of the Greater Norwalk catchment area.

The designated Community Action Agency (CAA) shall provide, arrange for, coordinate and encourage the development of a wide range of services aimed at reducing poverty, revitalizing low-income communities and empowering families to become self-sufficient. The CAA will be required to conduct periodic needs assessments in the communities within their catchment area, perform community planning functions, including the annual preparation of a community action plan, and network with other agencies and organizations in the community to ensure that the needs of low income populations are met, to minimize overlapping and duplication of services and to leverage funding from multiple sources.

The designated CAA will qualify for the Greater Norwalk catchment area's share of funding under the federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the state-funded Human Services Infrastructure (HSI) program. CAAs are expected to supplement the resources provided by raising additional funds from federal, state and local governments, as well as private resources. CAAs traditionally serve as providers for such programs as job readiness, summer youth employment, asset development, housing/homeless services, child care and youth development and various emergency services, depending upon the needs of the community and their ability to obtain grants and contracts. The CAA may also be identified as the preferred provider for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) within the Greater Norwalk catchment area, although designation as the entity to administer this program is not guaranteed. The expectations and responsibilities of a CAA are more fully described in the CSBG Act, embedded as a hyperlink, Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 319yy (Community Action Agencies) and the Department's CSBG/HSI contract language template.

These funds are made available in this open competitive Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. Currently DSS has budgeted approximately $869,008.00, as the CSBG and HSI allocation to serve low-income persons in the Greater Norwalk catchment area for the contract period **May 25, 2015 through September 30, 2016.**

Eligible Entities:

Through this RFQ, DSS is seeking to select a qualified organization in or near the Greater Norwalk catchment area to provide comprehensive services to low-income individuals, families and communities in the Greater Norwalk catchment area. Qualifications will be accepted from qualified organizations in or near the Greater Norwalk catchment area that meet the qualifications under Title 42 of the U.S. Code Section 9909

Qualifications will be accepted from:

1. Private nonprofit organizations which may include an “eligible entity” as that term is defined under Title 42 of the U.S. Code Section 9902 (A) that is geographically located in the Greater Norwalk catchment area that is capable of providing a broad range of services designed to eliminate poverty and foster self-sufficiency and that meets all of the requirements of Chapter 106 (“Community Block Grant Program”) of Title 42 of the U.S. Code; or
2. Private non-profit eligible entity as that term is defined under Title 42 of the U.S. Code Section 9902 (A) that is geographically located in an area contiguous to or within reasonable proximity to the Greater Norwalk catchment area and that is already providing related services in that area. The term "private, nonprofit organization" also includes religious organizations.

Please note that federal law gives priority to private nonprofit organizations. Therefore, while we will accept qualifications from political subdivisions of the State or public agencies located in Greater Norwalk to serve as the eligible entity for Greater Norwalk, the designation of a political subdivision or public agency to serve as an eligible entity is contingent upon a determination that there are no private, nonprofit organizations identified or determined to be qualified under Title 42 of the US Code Section 9902 (A).

Qualifications:

Organizations eligible to apply for designation as the entity serving the Greater Norwalk catchment service area must:

- Currently provide services to low-income persons located within the Greater Norwalk catchment area, or that is contiguous to the catchment area.
- Demonstrate fiscal, programmatic and information technology capacity to provide services designed to eliminate the causes of poverty and foster self-sufficiency.
- Be governed by a local tripartite (three-part) board for private non-profit or local advisory board for local unit of government.
- Be fiscally solvent, which means, the Respondent’s current operating capacity covers two (2) months of resources to cover expenditures due to late payment issuance on the part of the Department.

The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal at http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=12 or from the Official Contact:

Name: Crystal Redding, Contract Administration and Procurement
Address: State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services
55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105
Phone: 860-424-5234
E-Mail: Crystal.Redding@ct.gov

The RFQ is also available on the Department’s web site at http://www.ct.gov/dss/rfp

Questions or requests for information in alternative formats must be directed to the Department’s Official Contact at 860-424-5234. Persons who are deaf or hearing impaired may use a TDD by calling 1-800-842-4524.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFQ Name.** Community Services Block Grant/Human Services Infrastructure Request for Qualifications **CSBG/HSI RFQ_030315**

2. **Commodity Codes.** The services that the Department wishes to procure through this RFQ are as follows:

   2000: Community and Social Services

3. **Contract Offers.** The offer of the right to negotiate a contract pursuant to this RFQ is dependent upon the availability of funding to the Department. The Department anticipates the following:

	Funding Source	
	CSBG	HSI
Total Funding Available	Up to $438,904.00 in federal funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2015 and Federal Fiscal Year 2016, pending availability of funding[1] (***Note: allocation includes one-time costs for start-up activities; training & technical assistance***)	Up to $430,104.00 for Federal Fiscal Year 2015 and Federal Fiscal Year 2016, pending availability of funding[2]
Number of Contracts	Up to one (1)	
Contract Term	One-year extensions exercised at the discretion of the Department	
Contract Period	**May 25, 2015 to September 30, 2016**	

The Department would prefer to contract with one (1) organization to serve the entire five (5) towns identified in the Greater Norwalk catchment area.

[1] Identified federal CSBG allocation includes 2 Federal Fiscal years to be used during the proposed contract period. Proposed annual CSBG allocation is $219,452.00. Funds will be allocated annually thereafter, based upon the amount of federal resources allocated to DSS for these purposes. One-time costs

[2] Allocation for HSI includes 2 funding strings: HSI-state $255,546.00, which must be reflected as incurred costs no later than June 10, 2015. HSI-federal proposed annual HSI allocation is $87,279.00. Funds will be allocated annually thereafter, based upon the amount of resources allocated to DSS for these purposes.

■ B. ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS

BFO	Best and Final Offer
CAA	Community Action Agency
CAFCA	The Connecticut Association for Community Action
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CT)
Contractor	A private 501(c)(3) nonprofit provider organization or unit of local government that enters into a contract with the Department as a result of this RFQ
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant
CT	Connecticut
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
DEPARTMENT	Department of Social Services (CT)
DSS	Department of Social Services (CT)
EMS	Eligibility Management System
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
HHS	Health and Human Services (CT)
HSI	Human Services Infrastructure (CT)
HUSKY	State of CT Health Coverage Program for Children & Adults
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (U.S.)
LIHEAP	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
LOI	Letter of Intent
LPA	Limited Purpose Association
MIS	Management Information System
OAG	Office of the Attorney General (CT)
OCS	Office of Community Services
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
Prospective Respondent	A private 501(c)(3) nonprofit provider organization or unit of local government that may submit an application to the Department in response to this RFQ, but has not yet done so
Respondent	A private 501(c)(3) nonprofit provider organization or unit of local government that has submitted an application to the Department in response to this RFQ
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
ROMA	Results Oriented Management and Accountability
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSBG-TANF	Social Services Block Grant – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TFA	Temporary Family Assistance
U.S.	United States

II. PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Department of Social Services (DSS) administers and delivers a wide variety of services to children, families, adults, people with disabilities and the elderly, including health care coverage, child care, child support, long-term care and supports, energy assistance, food and nutrition aid, and program grants. DSS administers myriad state and federal programs and one-third of the state budget, currently serving more than 848,000 individuals in nearly 540,000 households (April 2014 data).

By statute, DSS is the state agency responsible for administering a number of programs under federal legislation, including the Food Stamp Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Social Security Act.

The Department is headed by the Commissioner of Social Services, Roderick L. Bremby. The agency delivers most of its programs through 12 field offices (including three benefits centers available by phone) located throughout the state, with central administrative offices located in Hartford. In addition, many services funded by the agency are available through community-based agencies and partner contractors.

Mission and Vision

DSS Mission

Guided by shared belief in human potential, we aim to increase the security and well-being of Connecticut individuals, families, and communities.

DSS Vision

To become a world-class service organization.

B. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to administer the federal “War on Poverty” programs in the mid-1960s. The CAA concept continues today under the Coates Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998, also called the federal CSBG Act (see 42 U.S.C § 9901 *et seq.),* and under Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 319yy (Community Action Agencies). The CSGB Program is administered at the federal level by The Office of Community Services (OCS) which is a branch of the Department of Health and Human Services. In Connecticut, there are currently ten (10) organizations designated as "eligible entities" authorized to receive a portion of the CSBG funds allocated to the State. DSS administers these funds and using an allocation formula, provides the funds to CSBG "eligible entities" that serve low-income individuals and families in twelve (12) identified catchment areas to ensure statewide coverage. DSS is designated as the principal state agency for the allocation and administration of the block grant within the State of Connecticut.

In November 2004, DSS matched its commitment of CSBG resources through the identification of HSI resources specifically identified for CAAs to assist in their CSBG efforts.

CSBG eligible entities are a network of private non-profit and public agencies. These entities provide a range of services and integrate and coordinate these services with other

organizations. This multi-faceted approach distinguishes CSBG programs from other anti-poverty efforts and maximizes the likelihood that the individuals and families assisted will become self-sufficient. In Connecticut, all CSBG eligible entities are private non-profit organizations.

Geographic Area to Be Served – Greater Norwalk
The Greater Norwalk geographic area is comprised of the following towns: New Canaan, Norwalk, Weston, Westport and Wilton. According to 2012 U.S. Census, estimated population was 160,570for the Greater Norwalk catchment area. Of that number, 9.4% or 8,070 Norwalk residents live in poverty.

The population and poverty rate for the Greater Norwalk catchment area is broken out by town in the chart below:

Town	Total Population	White	Black	Asian/Pacific Island	Native American	Other Multi-Race	*Hispanic Any Race	% Poverty
New Canaan	19,794	18,482	142	647	0	523	539	2.2%
Norwalk	85,856	64,401	11,042	3,930	174	6,306	17,966	9.4%
Weston	10,203	9,506	206	171	0	320	403	2.7%
Westport	26,516	24,272	312	1,137	0	795	877	3.7%
Wilton	18,201	16,589	242	1,034	24	312	437	2.5%

(Data Sources: 2014 CERC town profiles and 2012 US Census- population distribution percentages are approximate)

C. PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Division of Integrated Services is a division of the Department of Social Services. The Division invests in several major initiatives to provide assistance to low-income residents through important and life-changing services. The Office of Community Services (OCS), within the Division, is responsible for the administration and programmatic oversight of the CSBG and HSI programs. CSBG is a federally funded, antipoverty program that is designed to create, coordinate and deliver an array of services and activities to assist low-income families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency. HSI is the state's additional commitment to assist eligible entities with meeting its goal of self-sufficiency.

There are currently ten (10) CAAs and one (1) Limited Purpose Association (LPA) that qualifies for CSBG funding in Connecticut. Each CAA has a specified catchment area. In Connecticut, CSBG funds are primarily used by CAAs to provide planning and coordination, organize services, develop innovative and effective approaches to addressing the causes of poverty, and to broaden the resource base for programs and services and core administrative expenses. With CSBG as base funding, CAAs operate a wide range of programs with other funds from other DSS programs for which they may qualify. Such programs include but may not be limited to, Human Services Infrastructure, Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance, Social Services Block Grant, Hispanic Human Resource Development, Youth Services and Nutrition Services,

other federal and state agencies and municipalities, as well as private donations. During FFY 2013, Connecticut CAAs served a total of 365,827 persons.

The purpose of the CSBG program is to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. This is accomplished by using CSBG funds to support local efforts to identify, reduce or eliminate the causes of poverty and to help solve problems that block the achievement of economic self-sufficiency. CSBG eligible entities are mandated to focus their efforts on assisting individuals to become self-sufficient, including creating and participating in community revitalization projects that provide enhanced economic opportunities for the target population. CSBG eligible entities also strive for maximum participation from residents of the low-income communities so that they become empowered to respond to the unique problems and needs within their own communities.

Only those organizations designated as a CAA receive CSBG funding. A CAA must:

- Be governed by a tripartite board composed of representatives of the low-income neighborhoods being served, elected local officials and key community resources such as business and commerce, faith-based organizations, other service providers and community groups.
- Conduct periodic assessments of the poverty needs and condition within their community and serve as a principal source of information or inventory of community resources.
- Conduct needs assessments, including data analysis and community and individual surveys.
- Identify gaps in services and unmet needs, based upon the results of the needs assessments and surveys.
- Develop goals and strategies that when implemented will empower low-income people, reduce poverty, increase self-sufficiency and improve conditions and opportunities within the community that support family stability and advancement.
- Provide, arrange, coordinate and encourage the development and implementation of a wide range of services aimed at furthering the goals of the CSBG Act.
- Mobilize and coordinate programs and resources within the organization.
- Partner with public and private service providers to achieve family and community improvement goals.
- Initiate program planning and implementation, including the administration of programs, solicitation of funds through grants and contracts and coordination of programs and services with other government and community based organizations to improve outcomes and avoid duplication.
- Maintain an outcome based system for assessing and reporting the effectiveness of its anti-poverty strategies in terms of results achieved among low-income people and communities.
- Comply with Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Goals and National Performance Indicators.
- Perform community planning functions.
- Utilize an outcome based performance measurement systems to identify program objectives, track performance and report on the success of programs undertaken.
- Collect data and report on activities as set forth in the resultant contract between the Department and the successful Respondent.

In addition to CSBG funding the CAA shall receive HSI funding. The receipt of that funding shall require the CAA to:

- Comply with the Principles of ROMA-based Case Management in CT CAAs, Principles of Management Information System (MIS) for ROMA Implementation and Principles of ROMA Implementation in CT.

- Comply with the contractual requirements of the HSI program as set forth in the resultant contract, embedded in the following hyperlink, CSBG template.

- Utilize the Department's Eligibility Management System (EMS) – read only access to assist current and potential DSS clients with application assistance for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), State of CT Health Coverage Program for Children & Adults (HUSKY), etc.

- Develop a Self-Sufficiency Center model and plan that is a comprehensive system of support services, which promotes, empowers, and nurtures families or family members toward self-sufficiency.

The HSI service delivery model is a coordinated, statewide social service delivery approach that serves customers more efficiently, identifies barriers and gaps in services and tracks outcomes to determine how customers are doing as a result of the services provided. The CAA will be required to utilize one of the four (4) existing systems used by the existing CAA's to capture and report the required data. While no other systems will be considered as acceptable, the successful Respondent may utilize a portion of the designated HSI funds to cover system costs.

Further, the Department, the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) and the current CAAs are working to improve statewide data processing system efforts to support the implementation and operation of ROMA, HSI and other programs administered by the CAA's, such as LIHEAP, through a Web-based Case Management System. The new CAA will be expected to join these efforts. The Web-based information system will be utilized by the CAA to maintain and track client level demographics, service and outcome data among the CAA's network and programs.

■ D. Program Activities

CSBG funds may be used to support activities that are designed to assist low-income individuals and families to become fully self-sufficient and to accomplish the following six (6) national goals:

Goal 1: Low-income people become more self-sufficient
Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people lives are improved
Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community
Goal 4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved
Goal 5: Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results
Goal 6: Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems

These can be attained by the following:

1. Strengthen community capabilities for planning and coordinating the use of a broad range of federal, state, local and private assistance resources designed to eliminate

poverty, so that these support systems can be used in a manner that is responsive to meet the needs and conditions of the communities within the catchment area.

2. Organize and directly or indirectly through contracted service providers, provide a broad range of services designed to address the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that such services may have a measurable and positive impact on addressing the

   causes of poverty in the community and may assist families and individuals toward the goal of achieving self-sufficiency.

3. Initiate and encourage the development and implementation of innovative and proven community-based approaches to attack the causes and effects of poverty and community breakdown.

4. Empower the residents of the communities within the catchment area to express the unique concerns and needs within their communities.

5. Promote and encourage maximum participation from the residents of the communities within the catchment area, including those served by programs supported through the CSBG program. Expand the community resource base of programs and services directed toward the elimination of poverty, to secure an enhanced provision of services for private religious, charitable and neighborhood-based organizations as well as citizens, business, labor and other professional groups capable of providing quality services for the poor.

A CAA is required to provide services in the catchment area that are designed to meet the needs of the target population.

Target Population Income Eligibility:

Services supported by CSBG funding shall be targeted to households within the catchment area that are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to determine income eligibility for all new clients, and shall on an annual basis, validate income eligibility on all active clients.

The CAA designated through this RFQ shall provide CSBG funded services to clients who have reported household incomes at, or below, 125% of the Federal Poverty Level Income guidelines. HSI services shall be supported equally through two (2) funding streams – Social Services Block Grant-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, (SSBG-TANF) and state funds. Income eligibility requirements for providing Client households with minor children HSI services supported by SSBG-TANF funds are 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to capture household income. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to provide HSI services supported by state funds to households within the catchment area regardless of reported household income and household composition.

CSBG and HSI services and program activities shall target the effects of poverty that positively impact the low-income populations. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall administer services and programs that are designed to:

a. Achieve self-sufficiency and solve problems that hinder the achievement of self-sufficiency.

b. Secure and retain meaningful employment.

c. Attain an adequate education with particular attention to improving literacy skills.

d. Improve client/family income management skills.

e. Obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment.

f. Obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants and/or other means to meet immediate and urgent family or individual needs. To provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of appropriate supplies and services, nutritious food products and related services as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among the poor.

g. Increase participation in the affairs of the community including the development of public and private grassroots partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, private foundations and other public and private partners to:

    i. Document best practices based on successful grassroots intervention in urban areas and develop methodologies for widespread replication.

    ii. Strengthen and improve relationships with local law enforcement agencies that may include participation in activities such as neighborhood or community policing efforts.

    iii. Develop programs that address the needs of children and adolescents in low-income communities.

h. If directed by the Department the CAA designated through this RFQ will coordinate employment and training activities with local workforce investment systems established under the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

i. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall coordinate with established community service support programs with related purposes to supplement the program services provided directly or indirectly through the CAA as set forth in the resultant contract. .

■ E. Networking

CAAs are intended to be one of the main focal points for coordination and networking among agencies that address the problem of poverty in all of its forms. The Department expects the CAA designated through this RFQ, if not already a member of CAFCA, to join CAFCA and be an active participant in that organization's efforts to develop statewide solutions to common problems as well as meeting common state and federal recording keeping and reporting requirements.

■ F. Resources Available for Carrying Out the Mission of the Agency

CAAs are eligible entities under the CSBG Act, and as such are entitled to a share of the state's CSBG allocation. Each agency's share is determined by a formula negotiated between the

Department and the CAAs as a group. In Federal Fiscal Year 2015, the Greater Norwalk catchment's share of CSBG funding is $219,452.00. In Federal Fiscal Year 2016, the Greater Norwalk catchment's share of CSBG funding is $219,452.00**. Annual CSBG allocation is $219,452.00.**

In addition to CSBG funding, each CAA receives an allocation from the state's HSI program. For State Fiscal Year 2015, Greater Norwalk catchment's share of HSI funding is $255,546.00. Please note that these funds are one-time funding and all costs must be incurred no later than June 10, 2015.. For Federal Fiscal Year 2015, Greater Norwalk catchment's share of federal –

HSI funding is $87,279.00. For Federal Fiscal Year 2016, Greater Norwalk catchment's share of federal - HSI funding is $87,279.00. **Federal HSI funding is $87,279.00 annually.**

CAA's have considerable discretion as to how these funds will be spent. Federal and state cost standards, as well as guidance from United States Health and Human Services and the Department must be applied. These funds may be used for either administration or/and

program support, or for the provision of direct services. The CAA designated through this RFQ may also enter into a separate contract with the Department to administer the LIHEAP program in the Greater Norwalk catchment area. Finally, each CAA obtains funds through grants and contracts to administer specific programs. These programs fall into such categories as: linkages; activities aimed at promoting employment; childhood development; education; income management; housing; emergency services; nutrition and prevention and intervention for youth at risk.

■ G. Organizational Standards

On January 26, 2015, HHS issued Informational Memorandum, Transmittal No. 138. Transmittal No. 138 "*provides guidance and describes State and Federal roles and responsibilities for the establishment of organizational standards as a component for a larger performance management and accountability system for CSBG*." The Center of Excellence developed standards are organized in three thematic groups comprising nine categories and totals of 58 standards for private, nonprofit eligible entities and 50 for public entities. The organization standards can be found by utilizing this link:
http://www.communityactionpartnership.com/storage/cap/documents/im_138_csbg_organizational_standards_fy_2015.pdf

■ H. Program Reporting

All entities receiving CSBG/HSI funds are required to submit the following information and reports to DSS.

1. **Community Action Plan**: A Community Action Plan (CAP) with two (2) updates to the CAP. The CAP shall include a community-needs assessment for the community served. Note: The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to submit a CAP within three (3) months after the start of the contract, and by June 30th of every year thereafter.

2. **CSBG Management Information System Report**: For the annual federally mandated CSBG Management Information System (MIS) Report, the CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to electronically submit data to CAFCA no later than January 31st of each calendar year for the preceding federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30).

3. **CSBG/National Performance Indicators**: There are six (6) mandated goals for which CSBG entities are required to collect data and report outcomes. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to document and report the outcomes achieved on the following CSBG National Goals on a bi-annual and annual basis:

   Goal 1: Low-income people become more self-sufficient
   Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people lives are improved
   Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community
   Goal 4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved
   Goal 5: Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results

   Goal 6: Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems

4. **Annual Profile of Services Survey**. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to submit its Annual Profile of Services Survey to CAFCA, electronically, no later than June 30 of each year during the contract period. The Profile of Services

   Survey describes, among other things, services provided by the CAA and applicable funding sources.

5. **Quarterly ROMA/HSI Report**. The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to submit a quarterly ROMA/HSI report to the Department's program representative. The report shall be generated from data collected through the resultant contractor's web - based information and case management system within fifteen (15) days of the end of each quarterly period. In addition to the system generated report, the resultant contractor shall submit a narrative summary discussing the report's details.

6. **Board of Director Meeting Materials.** The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to submit to the Department a copy of the board packet that is distributed to each board member, no later than seven (7) days after the date of the meeting. The board packet shall include, but may not be limited to, the minutes from the previous meeting and copies of all documents that were distributed at the meeting, including financial statements.

■ I. Tripartite Board / Advisory Requirement

Tripartite Board requirements are governed by federal and state regulations. Before DSS can designate any entity as the CAA for the Greater Norwalk catchment area, the entity must have established and be governed by a tripartite board of directors who are seated through a democratic selection process and must meet all of the legal requirements of federal and state CSBG law. Organizations responding to this RFQ must currently meet or be willing and able to restructure their board to meet the tripartite board requirement. The absence of a tripartite board or the inability to establish a tripartite board will prevent the organization from receiving CAA designation.

42 USC §9910 Tripartite Boards, requires the membership of the board to comply with the following:

- One-third (1/3) of the members of the board must be elected public officials, holding office on the date of selection, or their representatives.

- Not fewer than one-third (1/3) of the members of the board must be persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that these members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; and

    - Each representative of low-income individuals and families selected to represent a specific neighborhood within a community must reside in the neighborhood represented by the member.

- The remainder of the members must be officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests in the community served.

Section 17b-886 of the Connecticut General Statutes sets for the state requirements for the membership of the CAA's board.

Sec. 17b-886. Agency Board.

1. Each CAA shall administer its program through a community action board which shall consist of not more than fifty-one and not less than fifteen members and shall be so constituted that:

    a. One-third (1/3) of the members of the board are elected public officials currently holding office, or their designees, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public officials may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement.

    b. At least one-third (1/3) of the members of the board are persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representative of the poor in the area served.

    c. The remainder of the members of the board are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education or other major groups and interests in the community.

2. Each member of the board selected to represent a specific geographic area within a community shall reside in the area he/she represents.

In order to qualify as a CAA, Respondents must demonstrate that they presently meet or can establish a board that can meet the tripartite requirements. Any application which does not demonstrate the presence of or ability to establish the tripartite board will be considered non-responsive and the Respondent will be disqualified without further review. CAA designation shall be effective May 25, 2015 and will be ongoing, subject to continued compliance with Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901, et. seq.). Conditions for corrective action; termination and reduction of CSBG funding are outlined in Section 9915 of the CSBG Act.

J. Use of Funds

CSBG funds allow organizations to administer programs that identify, address, and eliminate the causes of poverty. CSBG funds can be used to provide direct assistance to low-income persons, and to assist with the costs of administering other federal, state, and local programs that provide assistance to the low-income. CSBG funds allow eligible entities to operate a vast array of programs aimed at identifying, ameliorating, and eliminating the causes of poverty and increasing the participation of low-income persons in the activities of their community so that they can assist in solving their own problems.

CSBG funds may not be used for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction or permanent improvement of any building or other facility.

CSBG funds cannot be used in the provision of services or the employment or assignment of personnel in a manner supporting or resulting in programs with any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or any political activity. This also prohibits any activity to provide voters or

prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with an election or any voter registration activity.

K. Fiscal Reports

The CAA designated through this RFQ shall be required to submit expenditure reports to DSS quarterly reflecting actual expenditures incurred, no later than 20 days after the end of each calendar quarter.

III. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. QUALIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Official Contact.** The Department has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFQ. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of the Department. Respondents, prospective Respondents, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other employee(s) (including appointed officials) of the Department or personnel under contract to the Department about this RFQ is strictly prohibited. Respondents or prospective Respondents who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

   Name: Crystal Redding, Contract Administration and Procurement
   Address: State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services
   55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105
   Phone: 860-424-5234
   E-Mail: Crystal.Redding@ct.gov

   Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.

2. **RFQ Information.** The RFQ, addenda to the RFQ and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or from the Internet at the following locations:

   Department's RFP Web Page http://www.ct.gov/dss/rfp

   State Contracting Portal http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=12

   It is strongly recommended that any Respondent or prospective Respondent interested in this procurement subscribe to receive e-mail alerts from the State Contracting Portal. Subscribers will receive a daily e-mail announcing procurements and addenda that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFQ.

   Printed copies of all documents are also available from the Official Contact upon request.

3. **Procurement Schedule.** See below. The Department may amend the schedule, as needed. Any change will be made by means of an addendum to this RFQ and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and the Department's RFP Web Page.

RFQ Released:	Tuesday, March 3, 2015
Bidders' Conference:	Location, Date and Time, TBD
Deadline for Questions:	Tuesday, March 17, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.
Answers Released (tentative):	Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.
Optional Letter of Intent Due:	Tuesday, March 31, 2015 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.
Qualifications Due:	**Tuesday, April 21, 2015, 2:00 p.m. E.S.T.**

4. **Bidders' Conference:** The Department will hold an optional Bidders' Conference. The purpose of the Bidders' Conference is to allow potential Respondents the opportunity to

ask clarifying questions pertaining to the requirements of the RFQ. A court reporter will capture and transcribe the conference and the questions raised at the conference will be

posted as an addendum to this RFQ. The date, time and location of the Bidders Conference will be posted as an addendum to this RFQ as soon as possible.

5. **Optional Letter of Intent.** Prospective Respondents are encouraged, but not required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI is non-binding and does not obligate the sender to submit qualifications. The LOI must be submitted to the Official Contact by e-mail by the deadline established in the Procurement Schedule. The LOI must clearly identify the sender, including name, postal address, telephone number, and e-mail address.

6. **Inquiry Procedures.** All questions regarding this RFQ or the procurement process must be submitted to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions received before the deadline will be answered. However, questions will not be answered when the source is unknown (i.e., nuisance or anonymous questions). Questions deemed unrelated to the RFQ or the procurement process will not be answered. At its discretion, the Department may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. The Department may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written addendum to this RFQ. If any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFQ, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the addendum and duly noted as such. The answers to questions will be released on the date established in the Procurement Schedule. Any and all amendments or addenda to this RFQ will be published on the State Contracting Portal and on the Department's RFP Web Page. At its discretion, the Department may distribute any amendments and addenda to this RFQ to prospective Respondents who submitted a Letter of Intent. **Qualifications must include a signed Addendum Acknowledgement, which will be placed at the end of any and all addenda to this RFQ.**

7. **Qualification Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of qualifications submitted in response to this RFQ.

   - **Due Date: April 21, 2015**
   - **Time: 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time**

   Faxed or e-mailed submissions will not be evaluated. The Department will not accept a postmark date as the basis for meeting the submission due date and time. Respondents should not interpret or otherwise construe receipt of a submission after the due date and time as acceptance of the submission, since the actual receipt of the submission is a clerical function. The Department suggests the Respondent use certified or registered mail, or a delivery service such as United Parcel Service (UPS) to deliver the submission. Allow extra time to comply with building security procedures for hand-delivered submissions.

   Hand-delivered submissions must be delivered to the lobby at the DSS, 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105-3730. Proceed to the security desk and the Official Contact or designee will be called to receive the submission and provide the Respondent or courier with a receipt. Visitor parking is available across the street from 55 Farmington Ave.

Submissions shall not be considered received by the Department until they are in the hands of the Official Contact or another representative of Contract Administration and Procurement designated by the Official Contact. At the discretion of the Department, late submissions may be destroyed or retained for pick up by the submitters.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

1. One (1) original of **Appendix A**, **the Qualification Submission**.
2. One (1) hard copy of Appendix A
3. One (1) disk, (no flash drive) of Appendix A

<u>Hyperlinks</u> referenced within Appendix A <u>are not acceptable</u>.

Respondents shall also provide one (1) electronic copy via e-mail to the Official Contact with CSBG/HSI RFQ_030315 in the subject line.

*Noteworthy: Flash drives are not acceptable.

The original submission shall carry original signatures and be clearly marked on the cover as "Original." Unsigned submissions will not be evaluated. The original submission and each conforming copy of the submission shall be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Evaluation Team. **The electronic copies of the submission shall be compatible with Microsoft Office Word except for the Budget, which may be compatible with Microsoft Office Excel.** For the electronic copy, only the required appendices and forms may be scanned and submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF) or similar file format.

7. **Multiple Qualifications.** The submission of multiple qualifications is not an option with this procurement.

8. **Claim of Exemption from Disclosure.** Respondents are advised that all materials associated with this request, procurement or contract are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 1-200 et seq. (FOIA). Although there are exemptions in the FOIA, they are permissive and not required. If a Respondent believes that certain information or documents or portions of documents required by this request, procurement, or contract is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA, the Respondent must mark such information or documents or portions of documents as EXEMPT. In Section X of its submission, the Respondent must indicate the documents or pages where the information labeled EXEMPT is located in the proposal.

   For information or documents so referenced, the Respondent must provide a detailed explanation of the basis for the claim of exemption. Specifically, the Respondent must cite to the FOIA exemption that it is asserting as the basis for claim that the marked material is exempt. In addition, the Respondent must apply the language of the statutory exemption to the information or documents or portions of documents that the

   Respondent is seeking to protect from disclosure. For example, if a Respondent marks a document as a trade secret, the Respondent must parse the definition in section 1-210(b)(5)(A) and show how all of the factors are met. Notwithstanding this requirement, DSS shall ultimately decide whether such information or documents are exempt from disclosure under the FOIA.

9. **Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement**. Respondents must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the past three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists

when a relationship exists between the Respondent and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal

matter if an Respondent tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for its personal or corporate benefit. The Department will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the Respondent over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, an Respondent must affirm such in the disclosure statement: *"[name of Respondent] has no current business relationship (within the past three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

■ B. APPLICATION FORMAT

1. **Required Outline.** All qualifications must follow the required outline presented in **Appendix A** – CSBH/HSI Qualification Submission. Qualifications that fail to follow the required outline will be deemed, at the discretion of the Department, non-responsive and not evaluated.

2. **Cover Sheet.** The **Cover Sheet** is Page 1 of the application. Respondents must complete and submit the Cover Sheet form, which is embedded in **Appendix A** – CSBH/HSI Qualification Submission

3. **Table of Contents.** All qualifications must include a Table of Contents that conforms to the required application outline. (See **Appendix A** – CSBH/HSI Qualification Submission).

4. **Executive Summary.** Qualifications must include a high-level summary, not exceeding one (1) single-sided page, of the main proposal. The Executive Summary shall include evidence that the Respondent is:

   a. Geographically located in, contiguous to, or in reasonable proximity to the Greater Norwalk County catchment area;
   b. Currently providing a broad range of services designed to eliminate the causes of poverty and foster self-sufficiency in the Greater Norwalk County catchment area, consistent with the needs identified by a community-needs assessment; and
   c. Existence of or ability to establish a Board of Directors or Town Council, if necessary, that complies with the tripartite board requirement or tripartite board/advisory requirement for public organizations.

   The Department will not evaluate qualifications from organizations that do not meet these minimum qualifications.

5. **Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices and Forms identified in Appendix A are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices and Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance or replace any requirement of this RFQ. Failure to abide by these instructions will result in disqualification. If any of the required Appendices and Forms identified in Appendix A are not compatible with Microsoft Office Word or Microsoft Office Excel, they must be scanned and submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF) or similar file format.

6. **Style Requirements.** The submission must conform to the following specifications:

Font Size:	Minimum of 11-point	Font Type:	Arial or Tahoma
Margins:	All margins shall be one inch (1")	Line Spacing:	Single-spaced

7. **Pagination.** All pages, from the Cover Sheet through the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered consecutively in the footer.

8. **Packaging and Labeling Requirements.** All submissions shall be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages and be addressed to the Official Contact. The Legal Name and Address of the Respondent shall appear in the upper left corner of the envelope or package. The RFQ name shall be clearly displayed on the envelope or package: **CSBG/HSI RFQ_030315**

   Any received submission that does not conform to these packaging or labeling instructions will be opened as general mail. Such a submission may be accepted by the Department as a clerical function, but it will not be evaluated. At the discretion of the Department, such a submission may be destroyed or retained for pick-up by the submitters.

■ C. EVALUATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

1. **Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of the Department to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of qualifications received in response to this RFQ. When evaluating qualifications, negotiating with successful Respondents, and offering the right to negotiate a contract, the Department will conform to the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85) and the Department's written procedures for POS procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217).

2. **Evaluation Team.** An Evaluation Team will be designated to evaluate qualifications submitted in response to this RFQ. The contents of all submitted qualifications, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Evaluation Team. Only qualifications found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Qualifications that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Attempts by any Respondent (or representative of any Respondent) to contact or influence any member of the Evaluation Team may result in disqualification of the application.

3. **Minimum Submission Requirements.** All qualifications must comply with the requirements specified in this RFQ. To be eligible for evaluation, (a) the Respondent must submit the requisite letter of intent by the prescribed due date; (b) the application must be received by the Department on or before the due date and time; (c) the submission must meet the Application Format requirements; (d) the submission must follow the required Application Outline; and (e) the submission must be complete. The failure to submit a letter of intent or to submit an application that fails to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed. Any application that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFQ will be rejected.

4. **Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Qualifications meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Evaluation Team will use to evaluate the technical merits of the qualifications. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate qualifications. The criteria are weighted according to their relative importance. The weights are confidential.

As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Requirements, the Evaluation Team will consider the Respondent's demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10)

5. **Respondent Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of qualifications, the Evaluation Team will submit the rankings of all qualifications to the Department head. The final selection of a successful Respondent is at the discretion of the Department head. Any Respondent selected will be so notified and offered an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Department. Such negotiations may, but will not

   automatically, result in a contract. All unsuccessful Respondents will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Department's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and Respondent selection process.

6. **Debriefing.** After receiving notification from the Department, any Respondent may contact the Official Contact and request a Debriefing of the procurement process and its application. If Respondents still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with the Department to discuss the procurement process. The Department shall schedule and conduct Debriefing meetings that have been properly requested, within fifteen (15) days of the Department's receipt of a request. The Debriefing meeting must not include or allow any information concerning other qualifications, nor should the identity of the evaluators be released. The Debriefing process shall not be used to change, alter, or modify the outcome of a competitive procurement. More detailed information about requesting a Debriefing may be obtained from the Official Contact.

7. **Appeal Process.** Any time after the submission due date, but **not later than thirty (30) days** after the Department notifies Respondents about the outcome of the competitive procurement, Respondents may submit an Appeal. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the thirty (30) days. Respondents may appeal any aspect of the competitive procurement; however, such Appeal must be in writing and must set forth facts or evidence in sufficient and convincing detail for the Department to determine whether during any aspect of the competitive procurement there was a failure to comply with the State's statutes, regulations or standards concerning competitive procurement or the provisions of the RFQ. Any such Appeal must be submitted to the Agency Head with a copy to the Official Contact. The Respondent must include the basis for the Appeal and the remedy requested. The filing of an Appeal shall not be deemed sufficient reason to delay, suspend, cancel or terminate the procurement process or execution of a contract. More detailed information about filing an Appeal may be obtained from the Official Contact.

8. **Contest of Solicitation or Award.** Pursuant to Section 4e-36 of the Connecticut General Statutes, "Any bidder or proposer on a state contract may contest the solicitation or award of a contract to a subcommittee of the State Contracting Standards Board…" More detailed information is available on the State Contracting Standards Board web site at http://www.ct.gov/scsb/site/default.asp.

9. **Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFQ is subject to the Department's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the Office of the Attorney General.

IV. MANDATORY PROVISIONS

■ A. STANDARD CONTRACT, PARTS I AND II

By submitting an application in response to this RFQ, the Respondent implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State's "standard contract":

Part I of the standard contract is maintained by the Department and will include the scope of services, contract performance, budget, reports, and program-specific provisions of any resulting contract.

Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the contract. The latest revision of **Part II Mandatory Terms and Conditions** is provided as a hyperlink. Included in Part II of the standard contract is the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice (pursuant to C.G.S. § 9-612(g) (2)) advising executive branch State contractors and prospective State contractors of the ban on campaign contributions and solicitations.

Part I of the standard contract may be amended by means of a written instrument signed by the Department, the selected Respondent (contractor), and, if required, the Attorney General's Office. Part II of the standard contract may be amended only in consultation with, and with the approval of, the Office of Policy and Management and the Attorney General's office.

■ B. ASSURANCES

By submitting an application in response to this RFQ, an Respondent implicitly gives the following assurances:

1. **Collusion.** The Respondent represents and warrants that it did not participate in any part of the RFQ development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFQ prior to its issuance. The Respondent further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the Respondent's application. The Respondent also represents and warrants that the submitted application is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.

2. **State Officials and Employees.** The Respondent certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFQ. The State may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the Respondent, contractor, or its agents or employees.

3. **Competitors.** The Respondent assures that the submitted application is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate application in response to this RFQ. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Respondent to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, an application for the purpose of restricting competition. The Respondent further assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the Respondent knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.

4. **Validity of Application.** The Respondent certifies that the application represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFQ and any amendments or addenda hereto. The submission shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, the Department may include the application, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful Respondent.

5. **Press Releases.** The Respondent agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the Department for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFQ or any resulting contract.

■ C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting an application in response to this RFQ, an Respondent implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

1. **Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.

2. **Preparation Expenses.** The State shall not assume any liability for expenses incurred by an Respondent in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any application submitted in response to this RFQ.

3. **Exclusion of Taxes.** The State is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Respondents are liable for any other applicable taxes.

4. **Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.

5. **Changes to Application.** No additions or changes to the original application will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, the Department may request and authorize Respondents to submit written clarification of their qualifications, in a manner or format prescribed by the Department, and at the Respondent's expense.

6. **Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline for submission of qualifications, unless specifically requested. An Respondent may be asked to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in an application. Any such demonstration, interview, or oral presentation will be at a time selected and in a place provided by the Department. At its sole discretion, the Department may limit the number of Respondents invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per Respondent.

7. **Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested, an Respondent must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFQ. At its sole discretion, the Department may also check or contact any reference provided by the Respondent.

8. **RFQ Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFQ nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or confer any rights on any Respondent

   unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the Respondent and the State and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the Respondent or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful Respondent is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the Department and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

■ D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

By submitting an application in response to this RFQ, an Respondent implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

1. **Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFQ shall ultimately be determined by the State.

2. **Amending or Canceling RFQ.** The State reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFQ on any date and at any time, if the State deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in its best interests.

3. **No Acceptable Qualifications.** In the event that no acceptable qualifications are submitted in response to this RFQ, the Department may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.

4. **Offer and Rejection of Qualifications.** The Department reserves the right to offer in part, and/or to reject any and all qualifications in whole or in part, for misrepresentation or if the application limits or modifies any of the terms, conditions, or specifications of this RFQ. The Department may waive minor technical defects, irregularities, or omissions, if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. The Department reserves the right to reject the application of any Respondent who submits an application after the submission due date and time.

5. **Sole Property of the State.** All qualifications submitted in response to this RFQ are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract offered as a result of this RFQ shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFQ or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.

6. **Contract Negotiation.** The Department reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFQ. The Department further reserves the right to contract with one or more Respondent(s) for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, the Department may seek Best and Final Offers (BFOs) on cost from Respondents. The Department may set parameters on any BFOs received.

7. **Clerical Errors in Offer.** The State reserves the right to correct inaccurate offers resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the offering of the right to negotiate a contract already made to an Respondent and subsequently offering the right to negotiate a contract to another Respondent. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial Respondent is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the Respondent.

8. **Key Personnel.** When the State is the sole funder of a purchased service, the State reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. The State also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. The State further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the Respondent's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by the State.

■ E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

By submitting an application in response to this RFQ, the Respondent implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. **Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Respondents are generally advised not to include in their qualifications any confidential information. If the Respondent indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFQ in Section I.C.12 above, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The Respondent has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While an Respondent may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.

2. **Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** Connecticut statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to ensure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons. Detailed information is available on CHRO's web site at Contract Compliance.
IMPORTANT NOTE: The Respondent must upload the Workplace Analysis Affirmative Action Report into the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on-line data vault, called BizNet, prior to submitting an application in response to this RFP. More information about uploading standard contract documents is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.

3. **Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81.** Qualifications for State contracts with a value of $50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, excluding leases and licensing agreements of any value, shall require a consulting agreement affidavit attesting to whether any consulting agreement has been entered into in connection with the application. As used herein "consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of

solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information or (C) any other similar activity related to such contract. Consulting agreement does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of C.G.S. Chapter 10 as of the date such affidavit is submitted in accordance with the provisions of C.G.S. § 4a-81. The Consulting Agreement Affidavit (OPM Ethics Form 5) is available on OPM's website at OPM: Ethics Forms
IMPORTANT NOTE: The Respondent must upload the Consulting Agreement Affidavit (OPM Ethics Form 5) into the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on-line data vault, called BizNet, prior to submitting an application in response to this RFQ. More information about uploading standard contract documents is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.

4. **Limitation on Use of Appropriated Funds to Influence Certain Federal Contracting and Financial Transactions, 31 USC § 1352. A responsive submission shall include** a Certification Regarding Lobbying form, which is embedded in this section as a hyperlink, attesting to the fact that none of the funds appropriated by any Act may be expended by the recipient of a federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the: (A) awarding of any federal contract; (B) making of any federal grant; (C) making of any federal loan; (D) entering into of any cooperative agreement; or (E) extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

5. **Gift and Campaign Contributions, C.G.S. §§ 4-250 and 4-252(c); Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Orders No. 1, Para. 8 and No. 7C, Para. 10; C.G.S. § 9-612(g)(2). If an Respondent is offered** an opportunity to negotiate a contract with an anticipated value of $50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, the Respondent must fully disclose any gifts or lawful contributions made to campaigns of candidates for statewide public office or the General Assembly. Municipalities and Connecticut State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The gift and campaign contributions certification (OPM Ethics Form 1) is available on OPM's website at OPM: Ethics Forms
IMPORTANT NOTE: The selected Respondent must upload the Gift and Campaign Contributions Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1) into the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on-line data vault, called BizNet, prior to contract execution. More information about uploading standard contract documents is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.

6. **Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. §§ 4a-60(a)(1) and 4a-60a(a)(1). If an Respondent is offered an opportunity** to negotiate a contract, the Respondent must provide the State with *written representation* or *documentation* that certifies the Respondent complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. A nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and Connecticut State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The nondiscrimination certification forms are available on OPM's website at OPM: Nondiscrimination Certification
IMPORTANT NOTE: The selected Respondent must upload the Nondiscrimination Certification into the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on-line data vault, called BizNet, prior to contract execution. More information about uploading standard contract documents is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.