

**State of Connecticut
Department of Social Services**

Request for Information

for

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Program

RFI Released: February 23, 2012

Deadline for Questions: March 8, 2012, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Answers Released (tentative): March 15, 2012

Submissions Due: March 29, 2012, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Issued by:

**State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106
Telephone: 860-424-5661
TDD: 1-800-842-4524**

I. INTRODUCTION AND DEADLINES FOR QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (“DSS” or “Department”) is seeking information from private provider organizations and municipalities concerning alternative methodologies to accomplish a regional approach to service delivery for the five (5) Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) [core categories of services](#) [case management, counseling (therapeutic), family planning, legal services, and protective services for adults], which are embedded in this section as a hyperlink. The target population is “vulnerable or at-risk” individuals and families with special emphasis on serving those groups that are less able than others to care for themselves (for example, children with special health care needs, youth, and elderly). “Vulnerable or at-risk” individuals and families are those that exhibit one or more of the following conditions (*in no particular order*):

- A. Economically disadvantaged (unemployed, under-employed or low-income);
- B. Physically, mentally, neurologically or developmentally disabled;
- C. Abused or neglected (for example, sexual assault victims or abused or exploited children or elderly);
- D. In need of language translation and culture-based awareness assistance or technical immigration assistance;
- E. In need of drug or alcohol abuse services;
- F. In need of family planning services;
- G. In need of mental health support services (for example, distressed families or individuals who may be at risk of institutionalization);
- H. In need of supportive services to remain in the community; or
- I. In need of shelter assistance.

Prospective clients must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A. **SSBG**: a person whose income is at or below 150% of the [Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#), which are embedded in this section as a hyperlink.
- B. **SSBG-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (SSBG-TANF)**: a family with at least one child under 18 years of age, and whose income is at or below 200% of the [Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](#), which are embedded in this section as a hyperlink.
- C. **State Administered General Assistance (SAGA) Case Management**: a recipient of SAGA Cash and/or Medicaid for Low-Income Adults and unable to work for medical or other prescribed reasons, in addition to the SSBG income eligibility requirements.

The Department has identified five (5) distinct SSBG catchment areas. [A list of the towns included in each catchment area](#) is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.

This RFI outlines the information being sought and includes guidelines for the content and format of submissions.

All questions must be e-mailed to:

linda.burns@ct.gov

Questions must be received **no later than March 8, 2012, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.**

Answers to questions will be posted as an addendum to this RFI on the [State Contracting Portal](#), which is embedded as a hyperlink, and on the [Department's RFP Web Page](#), which is embedded as a hyperlink, by March 15, 2012.

Submissions in response to this RFI must be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Office Word format and e-mailed to:

linda.burns@ct.gov

To be reviewed by the Department, submissions must be received **no later than March 29, 2012, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time**. Late submissions will not be considered.

II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department of Social Services provides a broad range of services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, families, and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance, and independent living. It administers more than 90 legislatively authorized programs and one third of the State budget. By statute, it is the State agency responsible for administering a number of programs under federal legislation including the Rehabilitation Act, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the Older Americans Act, and the Social Security Act. The Department is also designated as a public housing agency for the purpose of administering the Section 8 program under the federal Housing Act.

The Department is headed by the Commissioner of Social Services and there are two Deputy Commissioners -- a Deputy Commissioner for Programs and a Deputy Commissioner for Health Services, Finance, and Administration. There is a regional administrator responsible for each of three service regions. By statute, there is a statewide advisory council to the Commissioner and each region must have a regional advisory council.

The Department administers most of its programs through 12 offices located in the three service regions, with central office support located in Hartford. In addition, many services funded by the Department are available through community-based agencies including the 156 senior centers throughout Connecticut. The Department has out-stationed employees at hospitals to expedite Medicaid applications and funds Healthy Start sites, which can accept applications for Medicaid for pregnant women and young children. Many of the services provided by the Department are available via mail or telephone call.

There are two entities attached to the Department for administrative purposes only. They are the Child Day Care Council and the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services. The Bureau of Rehabilitative Services is comprised of the former DSS Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; Board of Education and Services for the Blind; Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired; and portions of the Workers' Compensation Commission and Department of Motor Vehicles.

Department Mission

The Connecticut Department of Social Services provides a continuum of core services to:

- Meet basic needs of food, shelter, economic support, and health care

- Promote and support the choice to live with dignity in one's own home and community
- Promote and support the achievement of economic viability in the workforce

We gain strength from our diverse environment to promote equal access to all Department programs and services.

Department Vision

The Connecticut Department of Social Services is people working together to support individuals and families to reach their full potential and live better lives. We do this with humanity and integrity.

III. SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (SSBG) PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The SSBG program is authorized by the Social Security Act, Title XX, as amended.

The purpose of SSBG funds is to enable each state to furnish social services best suited to meet the needs of individuals residing within the state. The Department transfers a portion of the State's SSBG allotment to SSBG-TANF services. The Department submits its Social Services Block Grant Allocation Plan annually to the Connecticut Legislature for review and approval prior to submission to HHS. A copy of the [SSBG Allocation Plan for Federal Fiscal Year \(FFY\) 2011-2012](#) is embedded in this section as a hyperlink.

Services funded by the SSBG are directed toward one or more of five (5) goals: a.) achieving or maintaining economic self-support to prevent, reduce or eliminate dependency; b.) achieving or maintaining self-sufficiency, including reduction or prevention of dependency; c.) preventing or remedying neglect, abuse or exploitation of children and adults unable to protect their own interests, or preserving, rehabilitating or reuniting families; d.) preventing or reducing inappropriate institutional care by providing for community-based care, home care or other forms of less intensive care; and/or e.) securing referral or admission for institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate, or providing services to individuals not in institutions.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Responses to this RFI should be limited to five (5) single-sided pages that describe a comprehensive, innovative, streamlined regional service delivery system, through partnerships and collaborations, for providing the five (5) SSBG core categories of services to the target population that is cost-effective to the State of Connecticut. Said description should include:

- A. Evidence-based practices;
- B. Efficiencies to eliminate duplication of services;
- C. Contract consolidation including participation/experience with consolidation efforts, best practices, methods of communicating with community and regional partners;
- D. Results Based Accountability (RBA) specific to social services programs, including practices, principles, measurable client outcome measures, assessment, design, redesign, and evaluation to ensure that client needs are addressed;
- E. Strengths-based and client-centered case management; and

- F. Any other information, suggestions, and discussion that would be informative and appropriate regarding a regional SSBG service delivery system.

At a later date, the information obtained from this RFI may be used by the Department to create a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) services.

V. DISCLAIMER

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a procurement request. Responding to this RFI will not enhance any organization's or municipality's chances of receiving future work from the Department. Similarly, not responding to this RFI will not be a detriment to any organization or municipality when competing for future work. Responses to this RFI are not an offer and cannot be accepted to form a binding contract. This RFI should not be considered an opportunity to "market" to the Department or to any entity for the State of Connecticut.

All responses to this RFI will become the property of the State of Connecticut. Responses to the RFI will not be returned. In addition, the Department will not be providing feedback regarding the quality or suitability of the respondent's submission to any subsequent RFP. The Department may, however, contact individual respondents for clarification of information contained in the response to this RFI.

Due regard will be given for protection of proprietary information contained in all responses received; however, respondents should be aware that all materials associated with the RFI are subject to the terms of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (§1-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes) and all rules, regulations, and interpretations resulting therefrom. It will not be sufficient for respondents to merely state in general terms that the response is proprietary in nature and, therefore, not subject to release to third parties. Any response that makes such a general or overarching claim may not be reviewed. Those particular sentences, paragraphs, pages or sections that a respondent believes to be exempt from disclosure under FOIA must be specifically identified as such.

Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.