

**Washington State Department
of Children, Youth, and Families**

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR

***Piloting Culturally Responsive Prevention Services and
Supports for Reducing Entries into Out-of-Home Care among
Black/African American Children***

This RFI is for informational purposes only and is not intended to result in a contract or agreement with any respondent. This RFI is not a Request for Proposals, Bids, or Applications. DCYF is seeking community insight and information to inform business, functional, operational, and technical requirements before considering the publishing of a solicitation.

I. Overview

A. RFI Overview

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) aims to better support Black/African American children and families as part of the agency's larger goal to build a more equitable prevention service and support system for children, youth, and families. To address this, DCYF has begun to expand its array of prevention services and supports by including those that are more culturally responsive. The agency plans to pilot a set of investments intended to help prevent entries into out-of-home care. In the coming months, the agency hopes to launch a funding opportunity for culturally responsive services that keep Black/African American children safe and supported at home with their families, especially in communities where we see the highest numbers of Black/ African American children entering out-of-home care.

In advance of that, this Request for Information (RFI) seeks to gather information about 1) culturally specific and culturally responsive prevention services and supports that meet the needs of Black/ African American children and families in Washington State, and 2) what it takes to expand and deliver those services effectively. DCYF may use this information to inform future procurements as the agency works to continue expanding its prevention services and supports.

On behalf of everyone at DCYF, the Division for Partnership, Prevention, and Services appreciates the time, energy, and effort you put into your responses.

B. RFI Submission Details and Timeline

Please submit your responses regarding this RFI, via e-mail to Rachel.Denney@dcyf.wa.gov by **September 22, 2023**.

Please review the RFI timeline below. Dates may be modified or amended by DCYF, which will post an amendment to this RFI notifying prospective respondents of any change.

RFI Released	August 18, 2023
Deadline for questions	September 15, 2023
DCYF posts responses to questions	September 19, 2023
Responses Due	September 22, 2023

II. Background information: DCYF's current context and plans for the future

A. Background Information:

DCYF aims to better support Black/African American children and families as part of the agency's larger goal to build a more equitable prevention service and support system for children, youth, and families. Black/African American families experience among the worst child welfare outcomes in Washington state. An analysis of intakes in 2019 found that Black/African American children are 70% more likely to be placed in out-of-home care in comparison to White children¹. To address this racial disproportionality, DCYF has begun to expand its array of prevention services and supports by including those that are more culturally responsive with a focus on communities with the highest numbers of Black/African American children entering out-of-home care.

Between 2021-2022, DCYF spoke to various service providers, community-based organizations, frontline caseworkers, staff members, and families with lived experience to learn about the barriers that Black/African American families face in accessing supports and services within the community. DCYF heard about the following:

Challenges faced by service recipients:

- Insufficient fatherhood, adolescent mentorship, basic needs (e.g., housing and childcare), and parent navigator supports;
- Service recipients often do not trust providers;
- Inaccessibility of services (especially in rural areas)

Challenges faced by service providers:

- Barriers to participate in Washington's procurement and contracting processes;
- Inadequate funding for the delivery of high-quality services;
- Insufficient support to service providers once contracted

The community's feedback about the opportunities and shortcomings of DCYF's existing approach to serving Black/African American families has informed our work on this RFI and may be used to inform future procurements for culturally responsive prevention services and supports.

B. Goals of this RFI:

The agency envisions a child-and family-serving system where families are supported in a variety of ways before they are in crisis. By offering a wider range of prevention services and supports through diverse service providers, DCYF aims to expand and elevate service access and quality to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. The agency expects to see a decrease in reports of maltreatment, a decrease in the number of children removed from their families, and a decrease in the time it takes for a child to be reunified (or to achieve other permanency goals) with their families.

¹ <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/CWRacialDisparityIndices2019.pdf>

In the coming months, the agency hopes to launch a funding opportunity for culturally responsive services that help keep Black/African American children safe and supported at home with their families with a focus on communities where we see the highest numbers of Black/African American children entering out-of-home care. In advance of procuring for those pilot services and supports, DCYF hopes to learn from service providers, experts, families, those with lived experience, and other community-based organizations through submission of this RFI.

Your responses to this RFI will help DCYF to better:

- Identify services and supports – including both community-based and evidence-based models – that would effectively meet the needs of Black/African American families living in Washington State.
- Understand service providers' current capacity and the associated costs of delivering these services and supports in order to develop a comprehensive rate and payment structure.
- Inform the development of a pilot program for expanding prevention services and supports, consisting of culturally responsive services, to reduce out-of-home placements for Black/African American children.

III. Anticipated scope of work for the pilot

To design this potential expansion of prevention services and supports, the agency is eager to hear from service providers, experts, families, those with lived experience, and other community-based organizations. DCYF is looking to learn about community-based services – including models that are community-based and evidence-based – that related to (but are not limited to) the following areas:

- **Service navigation, including peer navigators:** Community members shared that families involved in the child welfare system often struggle to navigate various services and could benefit from the support of navigators.
- **Flexible basic needs support:** DCYF heard that often these families face a variety of pressing economic needs such as housing, food costs, etc.
- **Child and respite care:** Community members shared that families often need more child and respite care related services.
- **Fatherhood support:** DCYF heard that fathers, particularly incarcerated fathers, need additional support to re-connect and engage with their families.
- **Adolescent mentorship:** Community members working with youth shared that adolescents are in particular need of more mentorship and guidance supports.
- **Culturally responsive parenting services:** DCYF heard that families need more diverse and culturally responsive parenting services that meet their needs. For example, Strong African American Families, Chicago Black Parenting services, etc.
- **Other supports:** Includes other services that can reduce entries into out of home care for Black/African American children.

IV. RFI Questions

Note to respondents:

- You may respond to some or all the questions below. Responses to all questions are encouraged but not required. Your response can be brief (a few sentences) or longer (a few paragraphs).
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- This RFI does not commit DCYF to publishing a solicitation or awarding a contract. The issuance of a solicitation, as a result of information gathered from these responses, is solely at the discretion of DCYF. Should a solicitation be issued, it will be open to qualified vendors, irrespective of whether those vendors chose to submit a response to this RFI. This RFI is not a pre-qualification process.

A. Contact Information:

1. Your name:
2. Name of contact person [if different than the person above]:
3. Contact person's telephone number:
4. Contact person's email address:
5. Are you a parent or individual with lived experience with the child welfare system?
 - a. Yes
 - i. If desired, please share additional context here:
 - b. No
6. Are you responding on behalf of your organization?
 - a. Yes
 - i. Organization name:
 - ii. Organization address:
 - b. No

B. Questions for all respondents

1. In your view, what services and supports in Washington are most supportive for Black/African American children, youth, and families? Please include information about who the service/support serves; goals and objectives; and how, when, and where it was developed.
(Note: If you are describing a service or support that doesn't currently exist, please specify)
2. What could DCYF do to better support proximate providers in winning contracts for **culturally specific** and **culturally responsive** services?

“Culturally specific” refers to interventions that are developed by and tailored for specific races, ethnicities, and other minority subgroups to address disparities in service access, engagement, and outcomes.

“Culturally responsive” refers to interventions which adapt language or content to the cultural norms of specific groups.

3. What other opportunities, challenges, issues, or factors should DCYF consider when making future investments in services or supports to reduce out-of-home placements for Black/African American families?

4. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about delivering services and supports to better serve Black/African American families in Washington?

C. Questions for organizations/service providers

Please respond to these questions if you are sharing information about an existing service or support:

1. What types of services or supports does your organization offer? (Select all that apply)
 - a. Service navigators, including peer navigators
 - b. Flexible basic needs support
 - c. Child and respite care
 - d. Fatherhood support
 - e. Adolescent mentorship
 - f. Culturally responsive parenting services
 - g. Other supports:

2. What kind of service or support are you recommending?
Note: If you are submitting information about more than one type of model, select all that apply and specify which is which in your responses below)
 - a. Homegrown service model/ Community-based service model
 - b. Evidence based service model
 - c. Other supports:

3. Tell us about this service or support. Please include information about who it serves; goals and objectives; and how, when, and where it was developed.

4. How is this service or support delivered?
 - a. Navigation

- b. Class or group-based service
 - c. Individualized service
 - d. Other:
5. What is the frequency with which this service or support is delivered?
- a. Weekly
 - b. Monthly
 - c. Quarterly
 - d. Other:
6. In your estimation, how much money will it cost to provide this service annually and how many families would your organization be able to serve in one year?
7. Are there additional anticipated start-up costs? If so, what would they be?
8. What rate would be necessary to support the effective delivery of this service?
9. You may provide estimated cost information in whatever format makes sense for you. If helpful, use the table below to consider the kinds of costs to include. Alternatively, you can share your anticipated cost in a “per family total” or “per family day” rate.

Type of cost	Estimated overall cost for the program
Start-up costs (e.g., planning, training or licensing fees for new program model)	
Direct costs to serve families (e.g., transportation, cash assistance)	
Indirect costs to support an effective organization (e.g., facilities, staff, functions shared across your org.)	