

# Louisiana Believes

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Request for Proposals:  
Educational Training and Direct Support to  
Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities

May 4, 2020

# Agenda

This pre-proposal conference is offered to give potential proposers a high-level overview of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

- Background
- Overview of RFP Sections
- Next Steps

This presentation is for informational purposes only and does not constitute part of the RFP. Please note that during this time no questions will be asked or answered. All questions should be directed to [rfp\\_ide@la.gov](mailto:rfp_ide@la.gov) by May 11, 2020.



# Background and Purpose of RFP

# Background of Family Support in Louisiana

All students in Louisiana deserve an education that allows them to grow and thrive, and that prepares them for postsecondary success including college, career and independent living. The Department recognizes that those closest to children - families and teachers - are best positioned to help students achieve high expectations.

The Department has developed a series of resources for families of students with disabilities, including the [Family Support Toolbox](#) and [guidance and information](#) on topics including specific disabilities, IEPs, and special education rights and policies.

In addition to these resources, families need easy, transparent access to information, services, and support to advocate effectively for the needs of their child. Families all across Louisiana share this need for accessible, high-quality support.

# Family Support Survey Results

In order to better understand the need for family support, the Department released a family support survey earlier this year. The survey received more than 700 responses from families of children and youth with disabilities across the state. Families were asked about two types of support: direct family support and family training.

- **95%** of families said it was important or very important for the Department to continue to offer both direct family support and family training.

Survey results identified opportunities to improve the structure and quality of supports available to families across Louisiana. The Department is committed to improving support for families of children and youth with disabilities across Louisiana.

# Family Support Survey Results

Louisiana families need more direct family support, training and information.

- Approximately **60%** of Louisiana families surveyed reported that they had *not* received direct family support or training on special education issues.
- Of those who received direct support, **half** said that support was delivered in-person, but **75%** of families said they desired in-person support.

Louisiana families need the ability to request and receive training on specific topics relevant to the needs of their children and youth with disabilities.

- Over **200** family respondents expressed need for additional support on a range of topics including transition, dyslexia, behavioral issues, working with schools, and rights under IDEA.

# Family Support Survey Results

Louisiana families want more responsive, flexible options for receiving family support. These options can benefit busy families who want support ‘on the go’ and families in rural parts of the state.

- Approximately **44%** of families said they were interested in receiving text support.
- A **quarter** of families said they were interested in online live chat support.

Louisiana families need a regional delivery structure that ensures all families, including families in areas with limited access points, have equitable access to high-quality in-person and virtual family support, training and information.

# Purpose of RFP

The Department released an RFP for Educational Training and Direct Support to Families of Children and Youth with Disabilities to ensure that children and youth with disabilities and their families are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to access high-quality education in Louisiana.

Through the RFP process, the Department aims to obtain competitive proposals from qualified proposers who are interested in providing educational family support services.

As a result of the RFP, the Department desires to contract with one organization to provide support to students with disabilities and their families through:

1. Developing and delivering family trainings on key topics in special education
2. Providing direct support and technical assistance to families of children and youth with disabilities, as defined under IDEA



# Key Shifts

The RFP reflects key shifts to more effectively support families of children and youth with disabilities across Louisiana.

- Proposers have **more funds** for direct support and training by focusing the RFP on what families need the most.
- Proposers define a **regional structure** to ensure that families in all Louisiana parishes have **equitable access to in-person and virtual direct support**.
- Proposers must include a strategy to **get input from families ‘up front’**, develop training, support and information to reflect their needs, and **continually evaluate and improve family support**.
- Proposers must include **resiliency plans** to continue support to families of children and youth with disabilities during extended school facility closures.
- Proposers must include more **responsive, flexible** ways of engaging and supporting families.

The background of the slide is a watercolor-style illustration. It features a central white area that tapers towards the top and bottom, creating a sense of depth. This white area is surrounded by various shades of blue, from light sky blue to deep, dark teal. The colors are blended together with soft, irregular edges, giving it a painterly, artistic feel. The overall composition is balanced and clean.

# Overview of RFP

# Budget Amount

The Department is maintaining the commitment to support to families of children and youth with disabilities. The budget amount for the contract awarded from this RFP is estimated to be \$1,530,000 (\$510,000 per year for three years).

The Department has rebalanced the deliverables in the contract that will be awarded from this RFP to provide more direct family support.

- About 21% of family respondents stated they had received direct in-person support, but about 75% said they desired that type of support. Current contract holders expressed the same need.
- The Department removed the required element of current contracts that did not directly support families.

As stated in Attachment IV: Cost Proposal, proposers should budget 40% of the total annual cost for Family Trainings and 60% of the total annual cost for Direct Family Support.

# Qualifications for Proposers

## **Mandatory Qualifications.** Prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals:

- The Proposer must be a Louisiana-based organization.
- The Proposer must be able to demonstrate extensive expertise of federal (IDEA) and state law and policy supporting children and youth with disabilities.
- The Proposer must be able to demonstrate a strategy, structure, and ability to service all families of children and youth with disabilities under IDEA with equitable support across all Louisiana parishes.
- The Proposer must have experience providing information and training to adults.

## **Desirable Qualifications.** Prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals:

- The Proposer should have demonstrated experience providing support and information on the education of children and youth with disabilities across life domains.
- The Proposer should have qualified staff with deep expertise in understanding key topics in special education, including but not limited to, IDEA.

# Proposal Response Format

Proposals should follow this format and order:

- Cover Letter
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Company Background and Experience
- Approach and Methodology
  - Description of Organization Background
  - Model for Developing and Delivering Family Trainings
  - Model for Providing Direct Support and Technical Assistance
  - Regional Structure for Statewide Access and Support
  - Feedback and Evaluation Strategy
- Proposed Staff Qualifications
- Veteran and Hudson Initiative Programs Participation
- Cost Proposal (see Attachment IV: Sample Cost Proposal)
- Certification Statement (see Attachment I: Certification Statement)

# Goals and Objectives

The Proposer selected (referred to as “contractor”) will be expected to provide both family trainings and direct family support.

- **Family Trainings:** The contractor will develop and deliver unique, high-quality family trainings, using adult-based learning strategies, to inform families of students with disabilities about key topics in special education. The contractor will offer both web-based and in-person trainings to families in all parishes across Louisiana.
- **Direct Family Support:** The contractor will provide direct support and technical assistance on key topics in special education in to families of students with disabilities. Direct family support will consist of in-person, teleconference, text, and virtual support.

# Family Trainings

The contractor must develop unique, high-quality trainings, on key topics in special education, for families of children and youth with disabilities across Louisiana.

<b>Multi-Part Training Series</b>	<b>Stand-Alone Trainings</b>
Minimum 3 series per year. Each series must include at least 3 sessions.	Minimum 10 sessions per year.
First session must be in person. Remaining sessions may be online and/or in person.	At least 5 sessions must be in person.

The contractor must submit a family training calendar to the Department for approval at the start of each contract year. The contractor must deliver web-based and in-person trainings consistently and in response to demand from families.

# Family Trainings

- All family trainings should equip families of children and youth with disabilities with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate key special education topics and processes. Trainings should align with the Department's family support tools and support families in collaborating with school personnel.
- Multi-part training series should cover a range of special education topics, such as a child's right to a free and appropriate education under IDEA and navigating transition to postsecondary opportunities. Training topics must be developed in consultation with the Department, and the Department must approve all topics.
- Stand-alone training sessions should address topics on which families request additional training and support. These topics must be supported by documentation of family need. The Department must approve all topics.
- All trainings must be accessible and engaging to families of children and youth with disabilities. Trainings should utilize evidence-based adult learning strategies and must use clear language that avoids jargon and explains legal terms.



# Family Trainings

- The contractor must develop detailed plans for the delivery of training sessions during emergencies that cause extended school closures. In these situations, family trainings should address relevant special education issues such as navigating distance learning and rights to special education services during school closure. The contractor may deliver multi-part and stand-alone training sessions using a combination of in-person and online delivery during extended school closures.
- The contractor must continually evaluate and improve family trainings and measure and report progress to the Department.
- The contractor must use a regional delivery structure that ensures families across Louisiana have equitable access to high-quality in-person and virtual family training.

# Direct Family Support

The contractor will support children and youth with disabilities and their families in accessing direct support and technical assistance in navigating key special education issues. The contractor will provide direct family support through:

- In-Person Technical Assistance
- In-Person Peer-to-Peer Support
- Teleconference
- Email Helpbox
- Text Messaging

The Department has included requirements for online live chat and text message support in order to provide more responsive and flexible support to families.

# Direct Family Support

- The contractor must use a regional delivery structure that ensures families of children and youth with disabilities in every Louisiana parish have equitable access to high-quality in-person and virtual support.
- Direct family support should assist families in navigating key special education topics and processes, such as IEP meetings and evaluation. This support should aid families in utilizing the Department's family support tools and equip them to effectively collaborate with school personnel.
- The contractor must develop detailed plans for the delivery of direct family support during emergencies that cause extended school closures. In these situations, direct family support should address relevant special education issues such as distance learning and remote delivery of related services. The contractor may provide any combination of in-person, teleconference, email, and text message support during extended school closures.
- Throughout the delivery of direct family support, the contractor must continually evaluate and improve family support and measure and report progress to the Department.

# Regional Delivery Structure for Equitable Support

No matter where they live in Louisiana, every family of a child or youth with a disability deserves access to the same level of high-quality direct support and training. Results from the Family Support Survey identified the need for

- increased access to in-person family trainings and direct family support, and
- consistently high-quality support, no matter the region.

The RFP includes a mandatory requirement that the contractor demonstrates a strategy, structure, and ability to serve all families of children and youth with disabilities under IDEA with equitable support across all Louisiana parishes.

The contractor should develop and utilize regional delivery structures to ensure equitable access to support for families across Louisiana. If the contractor uses subcontractors, those subcontractors must have physical presence in their regions to deliver in-person support.

# Next Steps

Event	Date
RFP advertised in newspapers and post to LaPac	April 22, 2020
Pre-proposal conference	May 4, 2020 11:00am - 12:00pm CDT
Deadline for receipt of written inquiries to <a href="mailto:rfp_ide@la.gov">rfp_ide@la.gov</a>	May 11, 2020
Answers to written inquiries posted on <a href="#">LaPAC</a>	May 26, 2020
Deadline for receipt of proposals	June 8, 2020 at 2:00pm CDT
Notice of Intent to award announcement, on or about	June 22, 2020
Contract execution, on or about	October 1, 2020