



CHILD WELLNESS CONSULTANT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

ISSUED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS SERVICE ALLIANCE

Massachusetts Service Alliance

100 North Washington Street, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02114

www.mass-service.org

Child Wellness Consultant

Request for Qualifications

Aim: The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) seeks to engage a consultant (or consultant team) who can provide subject-matter expertise in the area of child wellness to support the development of AmeriCorps programming in Massachusetts in this area. We are specifically looking for expertise as it pertains to the following:

- Reducing and/or preventing child abuse;
- Improving outcomes for child victims of abuse; and
- Improving the outcomes for foster youth, including youth aging out of foster care.

MSA expects to do this work in several phases. First, a consultant will lead an asset mapping process to identify promising practices and leaders in the field. The consultant will then help MSA identify organizations that are interested in exploring AmeriCorps. Finally, the consultant will work with MSA and the applicant to develop a program design to respond to community needs in this area and apply for AmeriCorps support. MSA anticipates that the selected consultant would be part of a team supporting the development of an application to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to operate an AmeriCorps program. The application for such a program must be submitted in May 2018, so the majority of the work under this contract will occur by the end of May 2018; however, the contract may extend through September 2018.

Need: Over the last decade, the number of children living apart from their families in out-of-home care has increased 11% in Massachusetts (US Dept. Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau). According to a 2016 article in the Boston Globe on the shape of the foster care system in MA, "Statewide, the number of petitions filed by DCF to have children removed from their homes jumped by 38 percent, from 2,459 to 3,383, between 2011 and 2015." In addition, in 2014, there were 31,863 victims of abuse or neglect in Massachusetts, a rate of 22.9 per 1,000 children, increasing 56.9% from 2013 (US Dept. Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau). A report from the US Department of Health and Human Services showed that Massachusetts had the highest rate of child abuse and neglect in the country during fiscal 2014.

Background Information: The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) is a private, non-profit organization that serves as the state commission on service and volunteerism and our focus is on supporting the organizations that rely on corps members and volunteers to meet their mission. As a piece of that, MSA supports a statewide network of AmeriCorps programs that collectively engage approximately 1,400 AmeriCorps members in service to address a variety of needs in the Commonwealth.

[AmeriCorps](#) is a federal program administered by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS). In Massachusetts, over 2,000 AmeriCorps members serve the needs of the Commonwealth and more than 1,400 of those members serve through the twenty-five AmeriCorps programs supported by MSA. AmeriCorps is a powerful National Service program that matches the energy and passion of members with proper support and guidance to create meaningful change in communities.

To become an AmeriCorps program, organizations must meet high expectations with respect to both an evidence-based program design, including appropriate member roles; robust member training and support; strong performance measurement and evaluation systems; and excellent grants and financial management systems. AmeriCorps programming in response to child wellness, and specifically in the areas of supporting child victims of abuse and foster care youth, is not prevalent in the national AmeriCorps portfolio, so successful models are not immediately evident. As a result, MSA seeks to engage with a consultant with deep expertise in the child wellness field who can serve in an advisory capacity as we seek to develop responsive AmeriCorps programming.

Anticipated Scope of Services: MSA anticipates the scope of the consultant's services to include the following:

- Conduct a community asset mapping process to identify effective organizations and programs, networks of providers, resources offered by the state and philanthropic community, and a survey of current programs and gaps in services, with the goal of identifying key players and work that can be built upon and enhanced with AmeriCorps members.
- Conduct a literature review to identify promising evidence-based program models and practices to consider in program development.
- Advise program development efforts, specifically relating to roles that are appropriate for AmeriCorps members, who are typically not clinically trained, and the training and support needed to ensure that their efforts are effective at addressing child wellness issues.
 - **Note:** For consultants with direct experience working with non-profits and government entities around program development, MSA will look for you to provide direct program development support.
- Participate in regular meetings throughout the process to advise MSA staff and participating organizations in this process and serve as a subject matter expert.

The organization(s) identified by MSA, with input from the consultant, will need to submit an AmeriCorps application to the Corporation for National and Community Service in May 2018. In order to meet this deadline, MSA must ensure that the selected consultant is confident in his/her ability to meet these deliverables within the specified time frame.

Selection Process: Candidates are asked to submit the information described below. Upon review of written qualifications, MSA will interview qualified candidates as well as check references. Following the selection process, MSA staff will work in consultation with the consultant selected to develop the final work plan for this project.

Contract Size/Timing: This contract will be billed based on an hourly rate, not to exceed \$20,000 by September 30, 2018, and MSA would like the work to begin as soon as possible in November/December 2017.

The funds used to support this contract are federal; therefore, any administrative costs charged against this contract are limited to the 5% allowable.

Requirements: To be successful in this project, in addition to strong expertise and knowledge of the child wellness field (i.e., family support/parenting education, child welfare) in Massachusetts, MSA feels that familiarity with non-profits, AmeriCorps, and CNCS funding would be a benefit. The ability to meet face to face with the staff of MSA and potential applicant organizations is highly preferred.

Submissions

To facilitate the review process, submissions should include:

1. **Experience of the Consulting Organization/Individual:** Provide a description of your prior experience and qualifications to provide services in line with what's described above, being sure to address your overall reputation, service capabilities and quality as it relates to this project.
2. **Project Team (Key Staff):** Provide a list of all staff involved in this project, being sure to provide a brief resume and outline the credentials and experience for each person on your team, specifically addressing demonstrated ability to conduct community asset mapping, deliver effective technical assistance, create strong and productive relationships with clients, experience with AmeriCorps and/or national service, and any specific issue areas you feel most able to support (i.e., child abuse prevention, parenting education, supporting youth in foster care, etc.) if applicable. Please note that substitutions to this team can only be made with MSA approval.
3. **References:** Provide the name and contact information for at least three (3) references familiar with the quality of your work of a similar nature.
4. **Project Understanding:** Provide your general understanding of our needs and a basic framework for how you would approach working with MSA staff, including a proposed timeline that supports the development of an AmeriCorps application ready for submission by May 2018 and completes this project by September 30, 2018. Identify any potential challenges or special concerns that may be encountered and how you might propose to deal with them.
5. **Other Supporting Data:** Include any other information you feel to be relevant to the selection of you/your firm or the makeup of the project team.
6. **Fee Structure:** Describe your fee structure for this type of a project. Please note that any administrative costs charged against this contract are limited to 5%.

Deadline: MSA is operating under a tight timeframe. Proposals should be submitted via email as soon as possible to bmcguinness@mass-service.org and will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with preference given to those received by Monday, November 27th.

Please submit your qualifications via email: bmcguinness@mass-service.org.

Questions: MSA is happy to answer any questions you may have about this RFQ. Please reach out to Beth McGuinness with questions at 617-542-2544, ext.217 or bmcguinness@mass-service.org.