



## Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request

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1. Fully describe the product(s) and/or service(s) being requested.

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) branch of the Department of Social Services (DSS) seeks consultation services to evaluate and address issues surrounding the bypass of reunification services-particularly the need for support and resources provided to parents impacted by bypass recommendations. The intent is to develop a single process for all bypass cases that a SW, parent and a team would follow that would lead to the recommendation of whether or not to offer services to a parent if bypass provisions apply. A need for additional more rigorous process will be evaluated for complex cases where services recommendation require a higher threshold of evidence to the court. The Youth Law Center (YLC), possesses the expertise and capacity to conduct research on the feasibility of offering services to families deemed bypass eligible. In collaboration with DSS, YLC will also support the development of quality assessments and court reports aimed at enhancing opportunities for family reunification. These services are critical to advancing trauma-informed, family-centered practices aligned with California law and federal standards.

2. Identify the selected vendor and contact person; include the address, phone number and e-mail address for each.

Youth Law Center  
832 Folsom Street, Suite 700  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
415-956-9022  
Kristin Moore, QPI Business & Growth Director - kmoore@qpiylc.org

3. What is the total cost of the acquisition? If an agreement, state the total cost of the initial term and the amounts for potential renewal terms.

The maximum compensation shall not exceed \$133,000, based on a fee-for-service arrangement. The initial term is effective upon execution through June 30, 2026, with compensation of \$113,000. An optional 12-month extension is included, with additional compensation of \$20,000.

4. Identify the unique qualities and/or capabilities of the service(s) and/or product(s) that qualify this as a Suspension of Competition acquisition.

The Youth Law Center (YLC) is a national organization with a strong record of collaboration with child welfare agencies, driven by their legislative advocacy and leadership in the Quality Parenting Initiative. Through close partnerships with caregivers, service providers, and public agencies, YLC is actively transforming systems to emphasize connection, continuity, and compassionate care. Their team of researchers brings extensive expertise in child welfare policy and procedure, particularly within the framework of California state law.

5. Identify from Administrative Policy #34 what circumstances constitute a Suspension of Competition.

- ☐ In an emergency when goods or services are immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, welfare, or safety, or for the protection of County property.
- ☐ When the contract is with a federal, state, or local governmental agency.
- ☐ When the department head, with the concurrence of the Purchasing Agent, finds that the cost of preparing and administering a competitive bidding process in a particular case will equal or exceed the estimated contract amount or \$5,000 whichever is more.
- ☐ When a contract provides only for payment of per diem and travel expenses and there is to be no payment for services rendered.
- ☐ When obtaining the services of expert witnesses for litigation or special counsel to assist the County.
- ☒ When in unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Supervisors or the Purchasing Agent/Purchasing Manager determines that the best interests of the County would be served by not securing competitive bids or issuing a request for proposal.

6. Explain why the unique qualities and/or capabilities described above are essential to your department.

YLC has a strong and proven record of collaboration with child welfare agencies and is currently partnering with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to enhance the quality of care and implement practice improvements. This established relationship facilitates smoother implementation and significantly increases the likelihood of lasting, sustainable change; an essential consideration for departments overseeing sensitive family systems. YLC's consultation team brings extensive expertise in California child welfare policy, offering critical support for both compliance and strategic planning. Nationally recognized for their leadership in reshaping child welfare systems, YLC prioritizes connection, continuity, and care; core values that align directly with the goals of our Department.

7. Provide a comprehensive explanation of the research done to verify that the recommended vendor is the only vendor with the unique qualities and/or capabilities stated above. Include a list of all other vendors contacted, what they were asked, and their responses.

The Department is seeking research and consultation on procedural changes specific to the bypass policy and ways to strengthen existing practice of assessment to determine whether or not to offer services to families.

Department was unable to find an organization that has practical child welfare practice experience as well as the knowledge of Child Welfare regulations, policy and laws to adequately advise the department on process improvement. This initiative will proceed via policy, practice and expert consultation focused on process design. The Youth Law Center has been selected for the consultation because its experts bring deep, interdisciplinary experience in child development, trauma-informed systems, foster care policy and the implementation of child welfare best practices. Their insights will help ensure that the bypass process is grounded in evidence about children's mental health and attachment, aligned with developmental science and structured so that procedural fairness, child well-being and operational consistency are prioritized. Other potential providers—including the National Center for Youth Law and the Child Welfare League of America—are recognized for their expertise in advocacy for youth involved in the child welfare system. While their credentials are well-established, these organizations were not deemed viable candidates for partnership due to their limited engagement with Fresno County-specific practices, policies, and stakeholder dynamics. Their lack of proximity and contextual familiarity would likely hinder their ability to address the Department's nuanced operational needs and priorities.

Moreover, the Department faces pressing timelines associated with the rollout of the California Automated Response and Engagement System (CARES), which demands an accelerated elevation of practice standards and alignment with new state protocols. In light of this urgency, it is imperative to engage a provider equipped to deliver targeted, informed, and context-sensitive support without delay. The selected provider must possess not only subject-matter expertise but also a deep understanding of local frameworks and the agility to respond to evolving implementation requirements.

tdilldine 10/8/2025 4:50:26 PM

Requested By:

Staff Analyst

Title

[\[✕ Sign\]](#) Double click!

**I approve this request to suspend competition for the service(s) and/or product(s) identified herein.**

martik 10/20/2025 4:27:43 PM

Department Head Signature

[\[✕ Sign\]](#) Double click!

rblackburn 10/21/2025 3:31:04 PM

Purchasing Manager Signature

[\[✕ Sign\]](#) Double click!