

Request for Information



State of Alaska
Department of Health
Division of Behavioral Health

Date Issued: 10/20/2023

1623-053 POSITIVE INDIAN PARENTING

Introduction:

The Alaska Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health is seeking letters of interest from qualified parties capable of and interested in providing a training institute for the National Indian Child Welfare Association's training, Positive Indian Parenting (PIP), as well as the coordination of mini-grants to agencies desiring to conduct PIP. PIP contains eight (8) areas geared toward helping parents and families learn and integrate traditional teachings and practices into their daily lives. The funding for this program is focused on building resilience through the opioid and stimulant use disorder epidemics.

Background Information:

In Alaska, families grapple with the profound impact of loved ones wrestling with physical and emotional anguish, often turning to substances as a means of coping. Over the past five years, the scourge of drug overdose fatalities has surged by a staggering 62%, reaching a grim 33.5 per 100,000 of the population in 2022. This alarming trend exacts a heavy toll on Alaskan families, including those of Alaska Native and American Indian descent, as existing care systems fall short of being adequately effective and culturally sensitive in supporting families battling substance misuse. These inadequacies only exacerbate the anguish experienced by these families.

Alaska witnesses a stark disparity in the termination of parental rights between Indigenous parents and their white counterparts, with Indigenous parents being five times more likely to face this devastating outcome¹. From 2004 to 2015, a harrowing 38.7% of Medicaid-enrolled infants suffering from Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome were placed under protective custody by the Office of Children's Services (OCS) within 28 days of birth. In 2015-2016, among infants admitted to the Neonatal Abstinence Evaluation Support Treatment (NEST) Unit at Alaska Regional Hospital, 50% were discharged into OCS custody; 24% underwent OCS reviews with safety plans prior to parental discharge; 20% were subject to OCS notifications without further action; and 6% received no OCS referral².

These disruptions in the family unit, coupled with deficiencies in addressing substance use disorder, underscore the urgent need for resources that bolster resilience within Alaska Native and American

¹ Wildeman, C., Edwards, F. R., & Wakefield, S. (2020). The Cumulative Prevalence of Termination of Parental Rights for U.S. Children, 2000-2016. *Child maltreatment*, 25(1), 32-42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559519848499>

² Singleton, R., Slaunwhite, A., Herrick, M., Hirschfeld, M., Brunner, L., Hallas, C., Truit, S., Hanson, S., Young, M., & Rider, E. (2019). Research and policy priorities for addressing prenatal exposure to opioids in Alaska. *International journal of circumpolar health*, 78(1), 1599275.

Indian families. One such resource is the National Indian Child Welfare Association's (NICWA) Positive Indian Parenting Program (PIP), which can be seamlessly integrated to guide families through the legal complexities related to substance misuse. PIP comprises eight (8) invaluable sessions:

1. Traditional Parenting
2. Lessons from the Storyteller
3. Insights from the Cradleboard
4. Harmonious Child Rearing
5. Traditional Behavior Management
6. Wisdom from Mother Nature
7. Praise in Traditional Parenting
8. Choices in Parenting

By incorporating PIP into the array of existing family programs, Alaska has a powerful tool at its disposal to mitigate the adverse effects of the ongoing epidemic of substance use disorder.

Scope of Work

NICWA's PIP program is a strategy to build resiliency across Alaska Native and American Indian families. Through State Opioid Response funding, the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) seeks to procure a vendor who will conduct a training institute across Alaska to enhance the number of entities who teach PIP to their clients. DBH desires a vendor who will facilitate this support by coordinating mini-grants for agencies and their family clientele to take this training.

For the training institute, the vendor will offer trainings to at least three Alaska agencies that serve families affected by opioid and/or stimulant use disorder. *Affected* is defined by having a family member who has struggled with either of these use disorders. These trainings must be in person. The vendor will need to work with local organizations, including tribal councils, tribal state entities, and tribal health organizations to better understand common practices and teachings to blend in with the PIP curriculum. The vendor will also need to work with NICWA to understand the needs of their agency to ensure fidelity of the PIP program. This includes bringing NICWA trainers and facilitators to Alaska to conduct the training.

The vendor will coordinate mini-grants for Alaska agencies interested in implementing the curriculum for families. Those who received the PIP training from the vendor will qualify for these mini-grants. The vendor will need to demonstrate methods of deliverable accountability and fiscal management of the program and supporting mini-grant recipients.

Deliverables

1. Purchase PIP curriculum from NICWA within first six (6) months.
2. Coordinate two (2) in-person trainings for PIP "Train the Trainer" instruction, to at least three (3) different Alaska agencies, to occur within the first eight (8) months.
3. Conduct outreach and dissemination of information for potential participants and coordinate the registration for training within the first six (6) months.
4. Secure venue for trainings.
5. Coordinate travel and cover the costs as needed for participants and trainers.

6. Establish incentives through four (4) organizational grants for participants to provide PIP to families. Covering costs for implementation will include curriculum, childcare, venue costs, and materials.
7. Provide certification to participants at end of the training.
8. Provide ongoing technical assistance for participants.
9. Conduct program evaluation through an internal or external evaluator.
10. Submit monthly reporting and as needed to DBH for reporting out to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Reporting must include progress of project, challenges, successes, number of participants, and program evaluation results.

Preferred Minimum Experience

The vendor will have:

1. at least one (1) year of experience teaching PIP;
2. at least three (3) years of facilitating family-related trainings;
3. a working relationship with NICWA;
4. three (3) years of experience in coordinating mini-grants for other entities; and
5. one (1) year of experience coordinating external evaluators for program evaluation.

The vendor will reside in Alaska.

Budget

The Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health has a maximum budget of \$320,000 to utilize in support of this contract.

Contract period: the length of this contract will be approximately nine (9) months with an optional renewal of one (1) year.

Questions

1. What experience do you have with the Positive Indian Parenting program?
2. What infrastructure exists within your agency to develop a training institute?
3. How will you ensure that your agency's training institute is sustainable past the end of this contract?
4. What is the most appropriate timeline for your agency to develop the training institute, implement it, hold trainings, and coordinate the mini-grants?
5. What do you believe the challenges will be in conducting this work?
6. What are the opportunities for this work?

Response Information:

How to Participate

Interested applicants/firms who believe they can provide the services described above should indicate their interest by submitting an electronic response with the following information:

1. Company name.

2. Contact information (email) for the individual(s) who should be notified if DOH releases a solicitation.
3. A summary that clearly describes your company's capabilities and experience related to providing the services described in this RFI. (See *Scope of Work* and *Deliverables*.)
4. A summary that clearly describes how the applicant/firm meets or exceeds the preferred minimum experience above. (See *Preferred Minimum Experience*.)
5. A statement confirming that the company anticipates the project deliverables, as shown above, are reasonably within the estimated budget provided. (See *Deliverables*.) Or, if not, why?
6. Provide narrative statements in response to the questions listed above. (See *Questions*.)
7. A summary of any concerns regarding the project as described, and what potential obstacles should be anticipated.

Submission Instructions

Applicants/firms must submit their response as a .pdf file, sent via email, on or before November 3, 2023, 2:30 pm, prevailing Alaska time. The response should be attached to the email with "Positive Indian Parenting" included as the subject line of the email to the following:

Anneliese Zlitni

Procurement Specialist

Alaska Department of Health

anneliese.zlitni@alaska.gov

It is the responsibility of the interested party to follow up with the procurement specialist) shown above to ensure that the response was received prior to the time and date specified in this this RFI.

Important Notice:

This RFI does not extend any rights to prospective vendors or obligate the State to conduct a solicitation or purchase any goods or services. Nor will the State be financially responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of any response for the requested information. This RFI is issued for the sole purpose of obtaining information as described in this notice. However, the information obtained from this request may be used to prepare a purchase, contract, or solicitation in the future.