



Request for Proposal: Child Welfare Qualitative Research Study for Understanding Neglect and Emotional Abuse in South Carolina

This is a request for proposals (RFP) issued by Children's Trust of South Carolina (Children's Trust) for a child welfare qualitative research study. This RFP is requesting submissions from qualified individuals and organizations to conduct a qualitative review of child welfare cases (secondary data analysis) in South Carolina. This RFP is for partnering with Children's Trust to plan and conduct the study, perform the analyses, and disseminate the results.

Children's Trust is the state's largest network of community-based organizations working for the prevention of child abuse, neglect, and injuries. Children's Trust's mission is to strengthen families and lead communities to prevent child abuse, neglect, and injuries in South Carolina. Our vision is that South Carolina is strong – every child, every family, every community.

All proposals will be treated with the highest confidence and will be used internally in our decision-making process. Proposals should not be more than five pages (including any appendices and references), double spaced, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. All proposals are to be submitted via email to mstrompolis@scchildren.org no later than January 25th, 2018 at 5pm. A decision will be made as promptly as possible with implementation preparations to begin immediately and data collection to begin February 2018. Questions may be submitted via email to mstrompolis@scchildren.org.

Description of Proposed Child Welfare Qualitative Research Study

The work of Children's Trust is guided by the Protective Factors Framework, a guide to increase family strengths and reduce the likelihood of child maltreatment, and the socio-ecological model, a model for understanding personal and environmental influences on behavior. These guiding models and frameworks are supplemented with the best available data on child maltreatment to inform decision-making on prevention efforts at multiple levels.

In South Carolina, neglect is the most common type of child maltreatment and emotional abuse is one of the most commonly reported adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). A wealth of research on child maltreatment and ACEs has been conducted at the national level, and has provided important information to guide practice and policy efforts. Less, however, has been done at the state level, which may be particularly important given the various definitions of child maltreatment and other system-level influences on child maltreatment and ACEs. Thus, empirical examinations of child maltreatment and ACEs with state-level data are necessary to effectively inform prevention and intervention efforts.

This study seeks to employ qualitative research methods to examine the underlying factors and causes of neglect and emotional abuse in South Carolina. Qualitative methods will be used to examine case records of founded cases and cases referred to community-based prevention services from the South Carolina Department of Social Services. The information will be used to create a written report and oral presentation that describes and synthesizes the driving influences, contextual factors, and potential causes of neglect and emotional abuse. The proposed project is not to exceed \$175,000, with indirect costs not to exceed 18%, and budgets should reflect an 11-month research plan from February to December of 2018.

Description of Expertise and Experience of Individual or Organization

Children's Trust seeks to partner with an individual or organization to conduct the proposed study. The individual or organization will work directly with the director of research and evaluation at Children's Trust to complete the proposed study. Children's Trust's required and preferred expertise and experience include:

Required:

- PhD in social work or similar field,
- Three years experience conducting child welfare research,
- Receipt of or Principal Investigator for child welfare research grants from a foundation(s),
- Experience partnering with a child maltreatment prevention nonprofit organization,
- Three years experience partnering with the South Carolina Department of Social Services Child Welfare Division,
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) human subjects research certification, and
- Approval of proposed study by organization's institutional review board (or similar entity; can be completed after the contract is awarded).

Preferred:

- Child maltreatment prevention research experience,
- Child maltreatment clinical service provision experience, and
- Child welfare prevention policy experience.

Description of Required Infrastructure for Proposed Child Welfare Qualitative Research Study

The proposed study will require a high-degree of data protection processes and protocols. To decrease the need for South Carolina Department of Social Services staff time and resources, identified data will be received for this proposed study. While the identified data will be de-identified for analysis and reporting, ensuring proper handling and storage of the data will be extremely important. The infrastructure requirements include (but are not limited to):

- Only authorized access to physical offices, files, and data and signed non-disclosure agreements by authorized personnel.
- All offices protected by cipher locks.
- All physical documents never leave possession of authorized personnel and are secured in lock box in transit.
- All physical transit routes are documented and deviation is minimalized.

- All access to resources to be logged and data/documents do not leave central office (note: project lead may check out documents).
- All storage devices encrypted and include passphrase.
- All electronic communication via encrypted transmission channels.
- Metadata of document status updated at all stages.
- All data is scrubbed (low level format and zero replacement/cross-cut shredding) after it is no longer deemed necessary to the project or at project end.
- Project computers are not networked.
- Data/documents are backed up onto multiple disks.
- Original documents remain at official source locations.

Individuals and organizations providing a proposal must include the following information:

- A statement regarding the ability to provide the above service and required and recommended expertise and experience,
- A complete pricing overview (not to exceed \$175,000 with indirect costs not to exceed 18%),
- Any conflicts of interest,
- Names and contact information of not less than three research partnerships in the field of child welfare (references to other non-profits and prevention research preferred), and
- Any contractual terms your organization will require.

Terms & Conditions

Individuals and organizations providing a proposal agree to the following terms and conditions:

- Successful bidder will not release records or information related to Children’s Trust unless an application for public information is submitted and approved by Children’s Trust Board of Directors.
- Children’s Trust reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to request clarification of any proposal, to waive informalities or irregularities; and to award a contract not based solely on the lowest cost.
- Pricing included in your proposal must be valid for at least 60 days and may not be modified, withdrawn or canceled.
- Children’s Trust will not pay for receipt of any information requested herein, nor is it liable for any costs incurred by the participant in responding to this request. All proposals submitted become the property of Children’s Trust; they will not be returned.
- None of the information released either verbally or in writing shall be deemed binding to Children’s Trust in any manner.
- All proposals or offers must be signed by a duly appointed officer or agent of your company.