**Introduction to Requests for Proposals and Contracts**

Updated October 6, 2017

Section 18A.4 of Session Law 2013-360 provides:

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| The Office of Indigent Defense Services shall issue a request for proposals from private law firms or not-for-profit legal representation organizations for the provision of all classes of legal cases for indigent clients in all judicial districts. The Office of Indigent Defense Services shall report on the issuance of this request for proposals to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations by October 1, 2013. In cases where the proposed contract can provide representation services more efficiently than current costs and ensure that the quality of representation is sufficient to meet applicable constitutional and statutory standards, the Office of Indigent Defense Services shall use private assigned counsel funds to enter into contracts for this purpose. In selecting contracts, the Office of Indigent Defense Services shall consider the cost-effectiveness of the proposed contract. Disputes regarding the ability of the potential contractor to provide effective representation for clients served by the contract shall be determined by the senior resident superior court judge for the district. |

A "request for proposals" is a technical term, and you will often see "RFP" as the abbreviation. A RFP is a document generated by an agency seeking bids for goods or services. The purpose of a RFP is to inform interested vendors of the technical requirements of receiving a contract and to solicit proposals/offers that meet those requirements. In this case, IDS will issue RFPs and interested attorneys, law firms, or non-profits will respond by submitting offers.

The process is somewhat formal. For instance, offers must be received by a certain date and opened at the same time, and will be reviewed according to criteria set out in the RFP. In this case, IDS will issue a series of RFPs seeking offers from attorneys, law firms, and non-profits that are interested in providing indigent representation on a contractual basis. Given the scope of the task of issuing RFPs and reviewing offers for the provision of all class of legal cases for indigent clients in all judicial districts, IDS plans to stagger the issuance of RFPs geographically and by case type.

The RFPs will set out the requirements that proposals must meet to be considered, including the nature of the representation to be provided, qualification standards, and the compensation system, and will provide a date by which offers must be received. Once the offers are received and evaluated, contracts will be entered into with attorneys, law firms, and non-profits that submitted offers that were accepted. It is premature to send in offers until a RFP has been issued in your county or district. IDS, of course, does not yet know how much of the work currently done by private counsel appointed on a case-by-case basis will shift to work being done under contracts generated through the RFP process.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the IDS Contract Administrator.

CONTRACT RFP PROCESS

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