



**SEIU**Healthcare®  
United for Quality Care

## **Request for Information**

**Date of release: November 7, 2018**

**UPDATED with Extension: November 30, 2018**

### **Introduction and Purpose:**

SEIU District 1199 New England (“the Union”) is soliciting information to gauge the interest and cost associated with contracting with an entity to administer and maintain a substitute pool to be accessed by family child care providers under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement with the State of Rhode Island to coordinate the usage of approved substitutes to help family child care providers utilize their earned sick time, as well as approved professional development activities. Wages/reimbursement for substitute pool providers are not included in this request.

### **Background:**

The State of Rhode Island – Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts with approximately 500 family child care providers to provide child care services in their homes to children from families eligible for DHS’ Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The providers are reimbursed a weekly rate for each child depending on the child’s age and hours in care.

Many of these providers, who are licensed by the State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), have approved assistants who work with them on a regular or intermittent basis, depending on the number of children they have enrolled at a given time. They also have approved emergency assistants, who work in the event of any emergency. These assistants are approved by DCYF and are attached to an individual providers’ license.

Under a recently-approved state law and the terms of the parties’ collective bargaining agreement, these providers are credited with paid sick time according to the following schedule:

- July 1, 2018 – 24 hours of sick time
- January 1, 2019 – 32 hours of sick time
- January 1, 2020 – 40 hours of sick time
- On January 1 of each year thereafter – 40 hours of sick time

As of 7/1/18, when a provider uses her paid sick time, the State of RI reimburses her assistant or emergency assistant directly for providing coverage during the hours in question, which can be utilized in 2 hour increments. Up to 40 hours of unused sick time can carry over from year-to-year, up to a maximum “bank” of 80 total hours. Utilization of sick time is tracked manually by the State and the provider, and payments are made after an assistant has submitted a W-2 to the state, and then the provider submits a signed document regarding the hours used on a given day.

However, not all licensed providers have approved assistants attached to their licenses, and for those that do, additional assistants can be both challenging to recruit and retain, given the limited work hours that may be available depending on a provider's enrollment. For this purpose, the parties agreed to establish a pool of DCYF-approved substitutes to be shared among the providers and to serve as "an additional resource to enable providers to discharge sick time."

The collective bargaining agreement calls for a joint committee between the State and the Union that will:

*ensure that protocols for this substitute pool operate in conformance with all relevant DCYF regulations, and ensure that providers retain the right to determine whether or not to utilize an approved substitute from this pool or their own State-approved assistant and/or emergency assistant. The DCYF-approved, on-call substitute pool shall be the responsibility of the Union or designee, as it relates to the day-to-day operations of the pool, subject to the committee's qualifications requirement and DCYF licensing.*

Beginning January 1, 2019, the Union and the State will be engaged in economic negotiations over the cost and operations of a substitute pool to launch on of July 1, 2019. As of July 1, 2019, approved assistants and substitutes from this pool can also be utilized to enable a provider to pursue approved and documented professional development or college courses when substitute coverage is needed, subject to budgeting and approval of a Joint Training Fund Committee.

### **Information Sought:**

SEIU District 1199NE is seeking information on a cost estimate for the development of a bilingual (English & Spanish), mobile-friendly and secure technology (app/website) that can:

- Verify that participating providers and substitutes are approved in order to use the technology
- Enable approved assistants and substitutes to offer their availability to work
- Enable approved providers to find substitutes to work in their programs for both planned and emergency events and "hire" them for a shift
- Ensure privacy and security
- Assist approved providers in tracking their utilization of their approved sick time hours and/or any approved usage for professional development time
- Support text message-based notifications and enable users to make basic updates via text message

The cost estimate should also include the cost of:

- Administration and analytics
- Customer service and troubleshooting: The preferred customer service approach involves providing the Union with training, materials, support, and the appropriate technological interface needed to be able to deliver most basic customer service connected to the technology, as well as direct assistance by the Respondent to address more complicated technical issues.
- Recruitment of substitutes: The Union seeks assistance with marketing and lead generation to identify potential substitutes, which will then be shared with the Union (or

its designee) for follow-up, selection, and on-boarding. We estimate that during the initial recruitment period, we will need 75-100 serious leads who have filled out an initial application, and that on an ongoing basis, we will need approximately 15-20 new serious leads each month. Although the substitute pool will be officially administered by the Union (or its designee), the substitutes will need to be approved by DCYF, so the recruitment process will need to be integrated into the DCYF's approval process (which is still TBD.)

Although the technology will not be responsible for reimbursing the substitutes, the Union is also seeking information on the estimated cost of using the technology to facilitate the transmission of necessary paperwork or information to the State agency responsible for making payment to the substitutes, in order to facilitate timely payment and to track the utilization of sick time hours.

The Union is also seeking information on the estimated additional cost of including a feedback/rating/recommendations feature.

Lastly, the Union is seeking information on the entity's experience and demonstrated commitment around:

- Ensuring design is accessible to people with low technological literacy
- Ensuring technology is bilingual and seamless
- Working with home-based child care populations or other similar workforces
- Working with diverse populations
- Working with unions or in the context of collective bargaining agreements
- Marketing/recruitment of participants looking for work
- Working with government agencies, interfacing with government data systems, and verifying training, approval, and/or licensure
- Using co-design and user-centered design processes
- Stakeholder input and evaluation
- Ensuring data security and privacy
- Partnering with unions to support union-based customer service

## Next Steps

Questions may be sent to Chas Walker at [cwalker@seiu1199ne.org](mailto:cwalker@seiu1199ne.org). Responses should be sent to Chas Walker at [cwalker@seiu1199ne.org](mailto:cwalker@seiu1199ne.org) by **Friday, December 28, 2018.**

Following a review of the responses it receives, SEIU District 1199NE may request additional information from some or all respondents, or may proceed to notifying the preferred respondent and beginning to negotiate a contract in conformance with the timelines laid out above.