

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

RFP # 2026-003VF: Staff Training and Education

Questions submitted via email and at the Informational Meeting on February 5, 2026

1. Defining Success & Priority Needs

One year into this contract, what would make you say: “This training partnership was a success”?

This training partnership will be seen as a success when data supports that benchmarks are met.

What staff challenges feel most urgent right now — burnout, turnover, safety incidents, morale, customer conflict, or supervision gaps?

The trainings outlined in the RFP outline the most significant challenges staff are currently facing.

2. Organizational Culture, Trauma-Informed Practice & Equity

How is ECDSS currently operationalizing trauma-informed principles internally (safety, trust, empowerment), and where do you want training to further strengthen that culture?

Trauma-informed principles are embedded in overall operations throughout DSS. Train the trainer programs are sought to provide training through a solution focused, trauma informed care lens.

What would meaningful racial equity progress look like in staff training outcomes — and are there disparities in staff experience or advancement that you want this contract to help address?

Qualitative and quantitative indicators showing measurable growth in equity-related competencies.

3. Delivery at Scale & Workforce Sustainability

With approximately 1,400 employees receiving trainings ranging from half-day to multi-day sessions, what has historically been most difficult — scheduling, engagement, consistency, or transfer-to-practice?

Historically putting acquired skills into practice has been the most challenging.

How important is internal capacity-building versus external delivery, and would ECDSS like the vendor to focus on developing internal trainers over time?

The sought focus for this contract is on external delivery.

4. Leadership Development & Succession Planning

What leadership bench gaps are you most concerned about as retirements increase, and what competencies should succession-focused training build first?

Emotional intelligence and leadership skills are key components needed for successful succession planning.

5. Evaluation & Staffing Structure

What level of evaluation rigor are you expecting — satisfaction surveys only, or demonstrated behavior change and job performance outcomes?

The evaluation methodology and instruments are to be identified by the proposer.

Do you anticipate maintaining the current trainer/manager staffing structure, or are you open to alternative models that still meet training volume and competency goals?

It is not required to maintain the current staffing pattern.

6. Budget Parameters

Is there a budget ceiling or expected range for this project that proposers should be aware of as we develop a realistic staffing and delivery plan?

Budget components are outline in the Compensation section of the RFP.

7. Can you confirm whether Erie County requires applicants to cap indirect/administrative charges to the award at 15%, regardless of the institution's federally negotiated rate?

Yes, administrative charges are limited to 15%.

8. Can you please confirm the reimbursement rate and cost share percentage requirement for 2027 RFP for educational institutions?

The reimbursement rate is 70% of the total award amount and 30% cost sharing.

9. If indirect recovery is restricted at 15%, can unrecovered indirect costs be applied toward our cost share contribution?

No, unrecovered indirect costs be applied toward our cost share contribution.

10. What is the capacity?

We are seeking a provider to provide training and educational services to all DSS staff, currently approximately 1,400 staff.