***Summary of Request***

The Maricopa Family Support Alliance is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct a Needs Assessment. This assessment will look at the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support (Standards) and seek to address:

* the level of engagement and support for the Standards in the family support community; and
* the propriety and capacity to expand the Standards statewide and how doing so will be done in a way that results in sustainability for the Standards.

The ideal candidate will have experience with and/or knowledge of family support services along with established relationships in the family support community. While not required, specific experience with, and certification in, the Standards is desirable.

***Maricopa Family Support Alliance & Standards History***

Created through the support of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust in 2011, the Maricopa Family Support Alliance (MFSA) was formed to better connect family support providers in furtherance of better serving families.

Established with a vision of, “families prospering in supportive communities;” and driven by the mission, “to coordinate and grow a network of family support agencies and organizations dedicated to increasing the opportunities for families to be successful,” the MFSA is a connected, engaged collaborative.

Led by a Steering Committee of member representatives, the MFSA has always worked to be responsive to member interest. Not long after MFSA’s establishment, an opportunity arose to train a newly created course piloted and formalized in California that worked hand-in-hand with the Five Protective Factors. This resulting training – Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support – was first hosted by the MFSA in Maricopa County in 2013. The vision for the Standards is that “implementation will help ensure families are supported and strengthened through quality practice.” Designed to be used by a variety of stakeholders in the family support field – including providers, government and parents – the Standards were embraced as a tool to not only improve practice, but also provide a common foundation and language for Maricopa County family support providers.

Since the first training in 2013, Arizona has certified over 400 individuals in the Standards as a member of the now National Family Support Network[[1]](#endnote-1) (NFSN) through the efforts of the MFSA and specifically a dedicated team of trained and talented Standards trainers.

In addition to implementing the Standards in Arizona, representatives of the MFSA have been engaged with the NFSN (the organization that is responsible for administering and providing training and support around the Standards nationwide), providing leadership at the national level. Of the five current certified Standards trainers, one is a member of the Steering Committee of the MFSA as well as the Steering Committee of the NFSN and serves to co-facilitate the national calls hosted by the NFSN regarding training. Another trainer and MFSA member also joins the monthly member call hosted by the NFSN and all Arizona trainers join a quarterly trainer’s call. Finally, Arizona has hosted two national summits on behalf of the National Family Support Network, most recently in the fall of 2017.

However, as with any evolving network, the MFSA is attuned to member needs and how those change over time. After a robust start, the enrollment for Standards training, and newly rolled-out Re-certification training has dwindled, resulting in classes that are not near capacity.

Additionally, through survey work and engagement, MFSA members have expressed the primary value they draw from membership is the shared resources and opportunity to connect that is provided through the MFSA’s All Member meetings. As a result, the MFSA is seeing its community role evolve to more of a convener, and less of a trainer or resource provider.

***Expected Deliverables & Key Activities***

In determining the most appropriate progression of the Standards training in Maricopa County and statewide, the MFSA is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct a Needs Assessment resulting in final recommendations. It has become clear that the MFSA is not the ideal home for the training; however, the Alliance still wishes to provide a clear map for the Standards training going forward. Ultimately, the MFSA wants to ensure that if, and where, the Standards find a home, it is sustainable.

Fundamentally, the consultant’s resulting report will need to answer four key questions:

1. Do family service providers in Arizona believe the Standards to be foundationally important in their work with families?
2. If there is consensus that providers believe the Standards are critical to their work, is there desire and corresponding support to expand the provision of the training statewide in a sustainable way?
3. If the answer is “yes” to the first two foundational questions, what specific organizations could potentially take the Standards forward without the Maricopa Family Support Alliance?
4. Finally, what specific planning and steps need to be put in place for the Standards to fully transition away from the MFSA?

It is expected the consultant will develop and execute a plan that includes statewide stakeholder engagement and assesses current provider perceptions. The resulting report should answer the key questions as well as provide insight as to whether the Standards are complimentary or duplicative to existing training. If appropriate, the final report must also include detail around transition planning, – including a transition and budget framework – as well as final recommendations.

***Timeline***

It is expected a consultant will be hired by July 1, 2018. As a result, all deliverables must be complete and provided in final format to the MFSA no later than January 7, 2019. If at any time during the study it appears timelines need to be adjusted, the consultant is responsible for reaching out to the Steering Committee and advising of issues and requested deadline modification.

The consultant should also build into his/her submitted plan periodic check-ins with the Steering Committee for feedback and guidance. Entire project budget cannot exceed $10k.

***Please Submit***

Interested professionals are asked to submit:

* a detailed plan outlining the specific actions and deliverables necessary to fully answer the key questions;
* project budget and detailed timeline; and
* key staff and detailed bios for each individual.

Please provide all requested materials electronically to Kristin Borns at kdborns@gmail.com *no later than May 25, 2018.*

1. Visit <https://www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/> to learn more about the history and specifics of the Standards training. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)