

Seeking Qualified Individuals

Interested in listening to a child tell their story so you can make a recommendation on whether or not they can receive services in their family or if they need to be placed in a residential facility?

Have experience with identifying strengths and needs of children?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) is seeking individuals to join a pool of qualified individuals (QIs) to conduct qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) assessments. The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) created this new role to add an objective and independent perspective to QRTP placement decisions. Department staff would like to contract with:

- Individuals who have specialized knowledge of and lived experience within the African American, Native American communities and communities of color
- Individuals who have specialized knowledge of and lived experience in the LGBTQ and disability communities
- Individuals who are employees or volunteers of community agencies
- Community elders and community members.

You don't need to be a professional; training and certification will be provided. The department is offering up to 20 contracts statewide. The initial contract is for \$5,000 but it can be renewed each year for \$5,000.

Information meeting is scheduled on Nov. 30, 2022 to learn more about this opportunity. Contact ffpsa.qualifiedindividual.DHS@state.mn.us to register for this informational session.

Who is a qualified individual?

Qualified individuals are integral to implementing changes to how placement decisions are made for children who may need residential treatment. When out-of-home placement is necessary, FFPSA supports placement in family foster homes, when appropriate; and establishes restrictions on when children are placed in residential treatment facilities. [Family First Prevention Services Act fact sheet, DHS-3771 \(PDF\)](#).

FFPSA requires an assessment by a qualified individual before placing children in residential facilities licensed as qualified residential treatment programs (QRTP) effective Sept. 30, 2021.

A qualified individual is a trained, culturally competent professional or licensed clinician, who is qualified to conduct QRTP assessments approved by the department's commissioner. [Minn. Stat., section [260C.007, subd. 26c](#)] A culturally competent QI is one who understands and can be utilized for child/youth to benefit their culture

when providing services. A provider may be culturally competent because they are the same cultural or ethnic group as child/youth, or they developed knowledge and skills through training and experience to provide services to culturally diverse clients. [\[Minn. Stat., section 256B.0943\]](#)

When the Indian Child Welfare Act applies, county agencies must contact child's tribe immediately so the tribe has the option to designate a QI. [\[25 U.S. Code, ICWA, chapter 21, sections 1901 to 1963; Minn. Stat., section 260C.007, subd. 26c, as amended by 2021 session law, Chapter 30, article 10, section 26\]](#)

A QI must not be employed by the responsible social service agency, and/or connected to/or affiliated with any placement setting in which agency has placed children.

What does a qualified individual do?

Qualified individuals complete assessments to determine which setting provides a child in foster care with the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment to meet their needs. Assessments occur when a county or tribal social service agency recommends placement in a qualified residential treatment program, conducted in consultation with child's family and permanency team. Contacts with child, family and permanency team members are intended to be conducted virtually (video or phone call) but may be in person meetings, if necessary. To accommodate families, a QI will need to complete a QRTP assessment during non-traditional hours, such as evenings and weekends.

The QRTP assessment process includes:

- Interviewing child and parent(s)
- Collaborating with family and permanency team members, including child's parents, and may include extended family members, teachers, therapist, and/or others who are a resource to child's family
- Completing the MN Brief Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment tool (CANS), documenting assessment findings and recommendation on the QRTP assessment form, and
- Providing completed QRTP assessment to the responsible county or tribal social service agency.

Qualified individuals must:

- Assess child's needs and strengths, using the CANS
- Determine whether child's needs can be met by their family members or through placement in a family foster home; if not, determine which residential setting would provide child with the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment
- Develop a list of short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals for child, and
- Work with child's family and permanency team using culturally competent practices.

Each assessment will take 12-18 hours to complete, at \$30/hour, up to the annual maximum of \$5,000 per contract. Contracts will include payment for completed assessments, training, and other associated meetings.

What are requirements to be a qualified individual?

The following are requirements for QIs:

- Have access to computer and internet.
- Be available to complete an assessment during non-traditional hours (evenings and weekends) to accommodate families.
- Are **NOT** affiliated with a child welfare placing agency or residential treatment program; involved in making decisions regarding a child/youth involved in the child welfare system, which includes being a foster parent or guardian ad litem; these affiliations disqualifies individuals from being a QI.
- Not have convictions to the following crimes: Murder, felony level assault, any assault crime against a minor, kidnapping, criminal sexual conduct, manslaughter, arson, prostitution-related crime, and soliciting children to engage in sexual conduct, malicious punishment of a child, neglect or endangerment of a child, controlled substance crime in first degree, or controlled substance crime in second degree.

Steps to be a qualified individual

Take the following steps to be designated as a qualified individual:

1. Submission of QI Interest Inventory and a reference letter, as follows:
 - a. Reference letter from someone who knows you and recommends that you can meet with children and their families to complete assessments. Examples include colleagues, family, friends, pastor, neighbors, etc.)
 - b. If a reference letter is not included, application will be considered incomplete.
2. Department staff will select individuals based on interest, experience, specialized knowledge of communities and culture, and confirmation that all mandatory requirements can be met, including:
 - a. Inventory responses should demonstrate individual's capacity to meet responsibilities of a QI.
 - b. Department staff will continue to accept applications, on a rolling basis, as long as funding is available.
3. Selected individuals will be notified and provided instructions on how to complete a background check through the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
4. If background study meets requirements, applicant will be provided instructions and information about the contract process.
 - a. Applicants will have an opportunity to review all responsibilities, including data privacy requirements, prior to signing the contract.
5. Contracted QIs will enroll in and complete the Qualified Individual training to be eligible for qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) assessment referrals

For information, email questions to: ffpsa.qualifiedindividual.dhs@state.mn.us.