NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Q&A

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Division of Family and Community Partnerships

2026 RFP My First Place – Transitional Living Program

A non-mandatory conference was held on **July 21, 2026.**

Written questions related to the *content* of this Request for Proposal (RFP) were due on **July 24, 2026**.

Written *technical* questions about forms, documents, and format may be emailed at any time up to the due date to dcf.askrfp@dcf.nj.gov.

All responses to the RFP must be submitted ONLINE.

To submit online, respondent must **first** complete and submit an Authorized Representative (AOR) registration form.

Click here to access the AOR Registration Form.

AOR Registration forms must be received by **August 19, 2026**.

All responses must be received by **August 26, 2026** (by 12:00 NOON.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Joint Proposals and Counties Served

1. **How many awards are being given per county? Specifically, Burlington?**
   Answer: The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) intends to award one My First Place (MFP) contract per county in each of the three regions/counties.

2. **If organizations are partnering on this RFP, do both organizations have to submit their documents or only the lead organization?**

Answer: Joint proposals may be submitted, but a lead agency must be identified; if selected, DCF's contract will be with the lead agency. The lead agency will submit the 25 documents. The lead agency needs to apply. In the application, the lead agency must explain the agreement between the lead agency and the sub-agency, division of labor, and how funding would be used by the two agencies.

Existing Supervised Transitional Living Programs (STLP)/Transitional Living Programs(TLP)/Future Planning

3. **Can you clarify whether the MFP program is intended to add another housing option to the existing STLP/TLP/PSH continuum, or whether it is intended to replace or reduce existing programs—and specifically, are the 15 Passaic County slots new capacity or replacement capacity?**
   Answer: MFP is intended to add to the existing STLP/TLP housing options in counties where transitional living programs did not previously exist, such as Cumberland County. In counties where programming did exist, such as Burlington and Passaic counties, MFP will replace the existing programs. The MFP intervention currently operates in Middlesex, Somerset, and Union counties. MFP will continue to operate in those three counties and, through this RFP, expand to Burlington, Cumberland, and Passaic counties. The 15 new slots in Passaic County will replace the current DCF-funded 10 slots.

4. **Page 1, Section I.A – Relationship to Existing Programs:**
   Please clarify how implementation of the MFP model in Passaic County is intended to affect existing DCF-funded transitional living, supportive housing, and other housing programs serving the same or similar population. Does DCF anticipate reducing, terminating, rebidding, or otherwise modifying existing programs or contracts as a result of this initiative? If so, please describe the anticipated transition process and timeline.
   Answer: DCF is in communication with current programs that are impacted by the new MFP opportunity.

   DCF will work alongside each impacted program to develop a transition plan for youth and timeline for winddown of operations, not to exceed December 31, 2026. There are various factors that may impact the transition plan which include but are not limited to: RFP award date and notification, agency staff notification, agency staff attrition, and the plans for each individual youth's transition.

5. **Page 1, Section I.A – Continuity of Care:**
   If implementation of MFP results in the reduction or discontinuation of an existing DCF-funded housing program, what provisions will DCF require to ensure continuity of housing and services for youth currently enrolled

in those programs? Will currently enrolled youth be eligible or prioritized for transition into MFP?
Answer: The current MFP RFP sustains and, in some cases, increases the existing TLP/STLP level of service. DCF will ensure the continuity of housing for youth who are currently enrolled in TLP/STLP programs within the counties impacted by the current RFP, including, but not limited to prioritization to any of DCF's current or newly funded housing opportunities.

6. **How many existing TLP/STLP beds are being impacted by this initiative across all three counties?**
Answer: There are 29 existing TLP/STLPs beds in Passaic and Burlington that are impacted by this initiative. Prior to this RFP, there were no existing TLP beds in Cumberland County.

7. **Existing programs have just renewed their contracts through June 30, 2027--is the idea that the existing contracts will end at that time? Will we need to transition current residents by that time?**
Answer: DCF is in contact with current programs impacted by this RFP. Programs that are impacted will have ample time to plan for any necessary transitioning of youth from programs.

8. **Have there been discussions with provider agencies about this modernization effort? I don't recall being invited to any such discussions.**
Answer: DCF has shared information about the MFP pilot intervention/program model with its transitional living partner network on several occasions, including, but not limited to, at Quarterly Networking Event meetings.

9. **When MFP was introduced in Middlesex, Somerset and Union, existing STLP and TLP programs continued alongside it. This sounds different. Do I understand that correctly?**
Answer: When MFP was introduced in Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties, existing STLP and TLP programs did not continue.

10. **Will this expand to Newark or other counties in NJ?**
Answer: The MFP intervention currently exists in Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties. With this RFP, it will expand to Burlington, Cumberland and Passaic counties. DCF cannot make any assurances about future expansion at this time.

11. **Is this part of a statewide plan to convert all existing programs to MFP?**
Answer: DCF cannot make any assurances about future expansion at this time.

Housing Model and Unit Requirements

12. Can transitional shelters be a source for renting from landlords under the MFP guidelines?

Answer: Transitional shelters are not an appropriate housing model for youth participating in the MFP program.

Housing should reflect a permanent home rather than a temporary living arrangement. Stable housing allows youth to establish routines, build meaningful relationships within their communities, and develop a sense of belonging and ownership in their environment. These experiences are critical to supporting their overall well-being and successful transition to adulthood.

13. Can you explain Scattered Sites?

Answer: Scattered site refers to housing located separately across different neighborhoods, instead of gathered all in one place.

14. Pages 1–2, Section I.A – Scattered-Site Housing:
The RFP states that scattered-site housing is "strongly recommended." Please clarify whether scattered-site housing is a mandatory model-fidelity requirement or a preference. May a respondent propose a combination of scattered-site apartments and provider-owned or provider-controlled housing where such an arrangement advances youth choice, housing stability, safety, or cost-effectiveness?

Answer: The preferred housing model for the MFP program is scattered-site housing, whether that is provider-owned or not. The intent is to diversify the housing portfolio and promote participant integration within the community, while avoiding the concentration of youth in the same housing complexes or buildings. Respondents are encouraged to maximize the use of scattered-site units whenever possible to support housing choice, independence, and community inclusion**.**

15. My organization owns one house and rents 2 more houses for our transitional housing units. Each house has 4 beds total, but each youth has their own room. Does this disqualify us from eligibility since we have more than 2 youth in one unit?

Answer: Four-bedroom houses are not aligned with the MFP program model or its guiding principles. The MFP program is designed to house no more than two youth per housing unit or apartment. This approach promotes safety, stability, privacy, and independent living skills development. Housing more than two youth within a single unit can create increased risks when conflicts arise between participants or when program rules and agreements are violated. Therefore, respondents should propose housing arrangements that limit occupancy to no more than two youth per unit in accordance with the program model.

16. **Pages 1–2, Section I.A – Housing Commitments:**
    Please clarify the level of housing commitment required at the time of proposal. Must specific apartments sufficient to house all 15 Passaic County youth already be identified and committed, or are letters of commitment from property owners demonstrating sufficient anticipated unit availability acceptable, with specific units secured following award?
    Answer: Section I A; Section III B 4: Respondents must demonstrate partnerships with property owners willing to lease available units to the target population. Respondents must identify apartments for the designated number of youth to be served in a county. Letters of commitment demonstrating assurance from housing partners to lease units to the provider and reflect partnerships that support scattered site housing is acceptable.

17. **Pages 2 and 12, Sections I.A and II.C.8 – Vacancies and Turnover:**
    If an apartment remains temporarily vacant following a youth's exit while a replacement referral is identified, eligibility is confirmed, and placement is arranged, will rent, utilities, and other ongoing housing costs during the vacancy remain allowable contract expenses? Additionally, will the provider be held responsible for temporary census shortfalls resulting from the normal referral, eligibility, and placement process?
    Answer: Yes. DCF will work with providers to ensure census is kept at a reasonable percentage as transitions occur.

18. **Pages 1–2 and 12, Sections I.A and II.C.8 – Provider-Owned or Provider-Controlled Housing: If provider-owned or provider-controlled housing is permitted as part of the MFP housing model, please clarify how allowable housing costs for such units would be determined and reimbursed. Would DCF permit reimbursement based on fair market rent, actual operating costs, or another approved methodology?**
    Answer: Section I B: Applicants should submit proposed budgets and narratives that include a justification and detailed summary of expenditures, including provider-controlled housing costs.

Staffing Model and Census Requirements

19. **Do partners have to use their funds to find staff?**
    Answer: Section I B: The first proposed budget will detail anticipated expenditures from the date the contract is effective on January 1, 2027 through June 30, 2027. This proposed budget shall include the one-time startup costs and anticipated operating costs as listed by county in the available funding FY27 table on page 2 of the RFP. The second proposed budget shall detail anticipated expenditures for the twelve-month period from July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2028

20. **Page 16, Section II.D.5 (On-call staffing): The RFP requires staff to be accessible 24/7. Can DCF clarify whether this requirement can be met through core program staff rotating on-call coverage, or whether a dedicated after-hours answering/crisis service is expected?**
Answer: Having staff be accessible by phone when offices are closed is acceptable accessibility.

21. **Page 11, Section II.C.6 (Referral Process): Can DCF clarify the how a specific youth is assigned or referred to the county-awarded provider, through the Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) Local Office, the Adolescent Housing Hub, or another mechanism? Is there an expected or guaranteed referral volume, or should the provider anticipate needing to conduct its own outreach to fill and maintain the awarded slots?**
Answer: Youth will be primarily identified by the CP&P Local Offices initially. Local Continuums of Care (CoC) and advocates are also able to make referrals in conjunction with the community provider partner. Youth may also self-refer to MFP. The Adolescent Housing Hub or other mechanisms may be used to obtain referrals, including provider outreach.

22. **Page 16, Section II.D.9 – Staffing:**
For Passaic County's level of service of 15 youth, are a 1.0 FTE Program Manager/Director and 1.0 FTE Housing Specialist required, or may respondents propose fractional or shared staffing consistent with the RFP's provision permitting alternative staffing ratios based on the designated level of service? The RFP expressly recognizes that the standard staffing model was developed around a larger census.
Answer: Yes. Respondents may propose fractional or shared staffing arrangements based on the needs of their organization and the designated level of service. However, any alternative staffing structure must ensure that youth receive high-quality MFP programming and that all program components are delivered with fidelity to the MFP model.

    The proposed staffing plan should demonstrate sufficient capacity to provide effective program oversight, housing support, participant engagement, crisis response, education and employment coaching, and case coordination. Regardless of staffing configuration, the respondent will be responsible for meeting all program requirements and achieving the intended outcomes for participating youth.

23. **Page 11, Section II.C – Census and Referral Responsibility:**
Please clarify whether the required level of service of 15 youth represents a point-in-time census that must be maintained at all times. If so, given that DCF confirms eligibility and CP&P is anticipated to be a primary referral source, will providers be held responsible for census shortfalls resulting from insufficient referrals, eligibility determinations, or delays outside the provider's control?

Answer: It is the expectation that providers achieve and maintain full census or close to it consistently. DCF will support providers to achieve and maintain this goal.

Funding Flexibility and Budget

24. **Pages 12–13, Section II.C.8 – Housing Financial Risk:**
Because the awardee is required to serve as master-lessor and cover housing and utility costs, please clarify whether contract funds may be used for rent during vacancies, security deposits, tenant-caused damages, landlord claims, relocation expenses, and other unavoidable housing costs associated with maintaining scattered-site units.
Answer: Yes. The agency may use contract funds to support one-time expenses that are in service to the model and sustaining housing.

25. **Is there a cap on how much client assistance each youth can receive?**
Answer: No, however the agency should consider their budget and the number of youth in the program, all of whom could need support in any given budget year.

26. **Are security deposits an allowable expense?**
Answer: Yes.

27. **Are security deposits and furniture considered start-up costs, or must they be included within the six-month operating budget?**
Answer: Yes, security deposits and furniture may be considered start-up costs.

28. **Can unspent start-up costs roll over to the six-month budget?**
Answer: Yes, start-up funding may be rolled into the six-month budget.

29. **Page 12, Section II.C.8 (Secure Housing): The RFP states that when employed, youth are expected to pay 30% of their earned income toward rent, and that these funds are returned to the youth upon exit from the program. Can DCF clarify how these funds should be tracked and reported, given that this does not correspond to any of the cost categories on the Proposed Budget Form?**
Answer: DCF will work with the grantees to monitor this data using existing data collections and reporting pathways.

30. **Page 18, Section II.D.13 (Data Collection Systems): The RFP notes that adaptations to existing Electronic Health Record systems may be required to meet the expectations of the model developer, First Place for Youth. Are these adaptation costs included within the "model implementation fees" that DCF pays directly, or should providers budget**

for these costs themselves (e.g., under Consultants & Professional Fees or Equipment on the Proposed Budget Form)?
Answer: Section II B 13: Yes. Model implementation fees will be paid by DCF. The grantee/provider is expected to collect and report on individual-level program data, including, but not limited to, participant demographics, outcomes, fidelity metrics, and other performance metrics.

31. **Page 25, Section III.B.1 (Proposed Budget Forms): The Proposed Budget Form includes a "General & Administrative" cost category. Is there maximum allowable percentage of the total budget that may be allocated to this category, or may actual General & Administrative costs be entered without a specified cap?**
Answer: The de minimis rate of 15% should be the cap for General and Administrative (G&A) costs allocated in the proposed budget for this program.

32. **Page 19 of the RFP mentions 3 assessment tools the Youth Advocate will use and 3 assessment tools the Employment and Education Specialist will use. Will the provider agency be responsible for the cost of these assessment tools? Is there an estimated cost that should be included in the budget to cover these assessment tools?**
Answer: Section II B 13: No. Model implementation fees will be paid by DCF. This includes the cost of training, coaching, consultation and all the required assessment tools.

33. **Page 14 of the RFP talks about the MFP training and coaching curriculum. Is there a provider cost for this MFP training and coaching curriculum? If so, what is the estimated cost that should be included in the program budget for this curriculum?**
Answer: Section II B 13: No. Model implementation fees will be paid by DCF. This includes the cost of training, coaching, and consultation.

34. **Are providers responsible for paying all staff to provide specific services that are outlined in the packet.**
Answer: The grantee will be awarded operational funds to implement the program, including staff salaries.

35. **Pages 2–3, Section I.B – Funding and Housing Costs:**
Please confirm whether the stated operating award is expected to cover all rental costs, utilities, internet, staffing, administration, transportation assistance, specific assistance, insurance, and other operating expenses. Are any separate DCF resources, rental subsidies, vouchers, CP&P funds, or other housing assistance available to supplement the contract award?
Answer: DCF will provide the funding amount listed in the RFP. No additional or separate resources, rental subsidies, nor vouchers will be provided.

Supporting Documents Requirements

36. Q. Are providers supposed to show evidence of secured housing for youth? If so, is there a specific form to use?
Answer: Section III B 4: Two letters of commitment demonstrating assurance from housing partners to lease units to the provider and reflect housing partnerships that support scattered site housing throughout the community are required.

37. Section B. Additional Documents Requested to be Submitted in Support of This Response, Page 26 - Are we allowed to submit more than 2 letters of commitment?
Answer: Yes. See Question 36 regarding letters of commitment. The minimum amount to be submitted is two.

38. Are we allowed to submit resumes and job descriptions of program staff?
Answer: Resumes and job descriptions should be submitted to DCF only upon request.

Implementation Timeline

39. Page 26, Section III.B.3 – Implementation Timeline:
Please clarify when the 90-day implementation requirement begins—upon notice of award, contract execution, or the January 1, 2027, contract effective date. Must all 15 Passaic County youth be housed and receiving full services within that 90-day period, or is phased enrollment and housing occupancy permitted?
Answer: Section I E: The awardee should be fully staffed within 90 days of contract award. The contract award occurs after the notice of award and appeals process is complete. Extensions may be available by way of written request to DCF. The implementation plan requires the provider to be fully staffed within 90 days of contract award and calls for a phased-in approach for youth to be enrolled and housed after the provider is fully staffed.

Eligibility and Referral Requirements

40. Page 13, Section II.C.11 – Length of Stay and Age Eligibility:
The RFP recommends a program duration of 36 months and states that youth must be under age 21 at enrollment but may remain in the program beyond age 21. Please clarify whether there is a maximum age or maximum duration of participation. For example, may a youth who enrolls shortly before age 21 remain in the program for the full 36-month period?

Answer: Youth must be under 21 years of age at enrollment but may remain in the program beyond age 21. The RFP outlines a program duration of 36 months.

Outcomes

41. **Page 20, Section II.E.2 – Performance Outcomes:**
Please clarify how the stated long-term performance targets will be calculated, particularly for youth who enter the program having already obtained a high school diploma or GED, youth for whom postsecondary education or employment is not an appropriate immediate goal, and youth who exit before completing the recommended program duration. Will such circumstances be reflected through exclusions or adjusted denominators when measuring provider performance?
Answer: Long term outcomes will be measured in partnership with the model developer, First Place for Youth and evaluation partners. Additional details about the long-term outcomes evaluation will be made available post implementation, when the intervention is ready for long-term evaluation.

Pregnant and Parenting Youth

42. **Page 10, Section II.B – Parenting Youth: For pregnant or parenting youth participating in the program, please clarify how their children are treated for purposes of the required level of service, apartment size, rental and utility costs, furnishings, and specific assistance. Are reasonable additional housing and related costs associated with accommodating a participant's child or children allowable contract expenses?**
Answer: Pregnant or parenting youth are considered one household. Reasonable accommodation and related costs may be approved at DCF's discretion.

43. **Can a parenting youth with a child under six be housed in a one-bedroom unit, or are parenting youth required to be placed in two-bedroom units?**
Answer: A parenting youth with a child under six can be housed in a one-bedroom unit. DCF will work with the grantee to ensure the unit size aligns with the household's size and any special needs considerations. Reasonable accommodation costs may be approved at DCF's discretion.

Leasing and Operations

44. **When will the Landlord know if the tenant's rent will be renewed? If not, what (happens) is the next step for the tenant?**
Answer: Because the grantee/provider is the master-lessor, the provider is responsible managing apartment leases, including renewal.

45. **Who is the legal leaseholder—the participant, provider, or both?**
Answer: The grantee/provider is the master-lessor and legal leaseholder.

46. **Is rent paid directly to the landlord or reimbursed?**
Answer: Since the grantee/provider is the master-lessor, the provider is responsible for paying rent. The provider is also required to cover basic utilities as part of the program's operational cost.

47. **Are utilities expected to be included, or are they paid separately?**
Answer: The expectations related to utility payment, and its inclusion in the rent payment, should be outlined in the lease agreement between the grantee/provider and the landlord partner.

48. **Who is responsible for paying for damages that may occur while the tenant is renting the apartment?**
Answer: Because the grantee/provider is the master-lessor, they are legally responsible for the unit and lease terms, including managing damages.

    The RFP outlines that the Housing Specialist is responsible for supporting lease review, move-in, unit inspections and move-out support. The RFP also requires the provider to communicate program expectations with young adults at enrollment, while engaging young adults throughout their program involvement.

49. **Is renter's insurance required?**
Answer: No. MFP does not require renters' insurance as part of the model, but awarded funds for renters' insurance may be a permissible cost for youth in housing units.

50. **Most Landlords recommend tenants to have renters' insurance. Who is responsible for renters' insurance? The agency or the State.**
Answer: MFP does not require renters' insurance as part of the model, but awarded funds for renters' insurance may be a permissible cost for youth in housing units.

51. **Suppose the tenant leaves before the lease is up, are there expectations of the provider or the State?**
Answer: The expectation is for the grantee/provider to support the young adult in moving on from the intervention and partner with DCF's Office of Housing and CP&P local office to identify another eligible young adult to back-fill the vacancy.

52. **Are damages beyond normal wear covered by the program?**
Answer: Since the grantee/provider is the master-lessor, they are responsible for managing damages in partnership with the landlord partner.

53. Is there a minimum or maximum lease term?
Answer: No.

54. If a participant exits early, is the provider responsible for filling the vacancy?
Answer: When a young adult moves on or exits from the MFP intervention, DCF's Office of Housing and CP&P local office will identify another eligible young adult to back-fill the vacancy.

55. What happens if a participant is terminated from the program?
Answer: If a participant is terminated from the MFP program, the provider should make every reasonable effort to ensure the youth is connected to appropriate alternative housing, services, and supports. Program termination should be considered a last resort and should occur only after efforts to address concerns through engagement, support, safety planning, and corrective action have been exhausted.

MFP recognizes that youth may experience challenges, setbacks, or conflicts as part of their transition to adulthood. Whenever possible, providers should work collaboratively with youth to resolve issues and maintain housing stability. Any termination must be handled in accordance with the contract requirements and applicable housing regulations.

The goal is to promote accountability while maintaining opportunities for youth to reengage with services and continue working toward long-term housing stability and independence.

56. What housing quality standards or inspections are required?
Answer: Housing units provided as part of the MFP intervention do not require housing quality standards inspections. Units being leveraged to support the MPF intervention must have a certificate of occupancy and pass all other municipally required inspections.

57. What documentation must landlords provide?
Answer: Section III B 4: Two letters of commitment demonstrating assurance from housing partners to lease units to the provider and reflect housing partnerships that support scattered site housing throughout the community must be submitted.