

**Sarno, Pamela**

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**From:** Cynthia Eastman <cindy@lifeworksnow.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 17, 2014 10:12 AM  
**To:** Sarno, Pamela  
**Cc:** Angelo Farenga  
**Subject:** RFI 04-1405 Supervised Visitation Centers  
**Attachments:** SVRFI\_LTRofAPPLICATION 2014.pdf

Dear Ms. Sarno,  
Please find attached our Letter of Application for the above RFI.  
If possible, please send us an acknowledgement of your receipt of our application.  
Thank you for this opportunity.  
Sincerely,  
Cindy Eastman

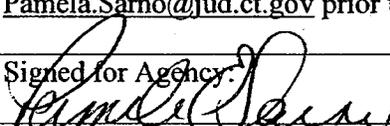
Cynthia Eastman, M.Ed.  
Litchfield Visitation Service  
Tel. 860-417-2023  
Fax 860-730-6225

**JUDICIAL BRANCH**

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT – PURCHASING SERVICES  
90 WASHINGTON STREET, 4th FLOOR  
HARTFORD, CT 06106  
(860) 706-5200 FAX: (860) 706-5099

**REQUEST FOR INTEREST**  
**INSTRUCTIONS**

Interested parties shall submit the information requested in this Request for Interest (RFI) within the timeframe established below. All information received as a result of this RFI shall remain the property of the Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut. We reserve the right to reject in whole or in part, any or all responses submitted. This RFI is strictly a solicitation of information and will not result in a contract with the Judicial Branch.

Issued by (Agency): <b>Judicial Branch - Purchasing Services</b>	Return Response Attention of: <b>Pamela Sarno</b>	RFI Number: <b>04-1405</b>
Agency Address & Telephone: <b>90 Washington Street, Hartford, CT 06106 – (860) 706-5200</b>		Date Issued: <b>05/19/2014</b>
Responses to be submitted: Via U.S. Mail (Address above), Facsimile (860-706-5099) or Email: <b>Pamela.Sarno@jud.ct.gov prior to: 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17, 2014</b>		Date Response Required: <b>06/17/2014</b>
Signed for Agency: 	Title: Buyer	Services Required: <b>July 1, 2014</b>

**ITEM/CATEGORY:**  
**SUPERVISED VISITATION**  
Statewide

- Request for Interest:
- Delivery Locations:
- Standards and Specifications (attached)
- Attachments 1 & 2
- Deadline for Written Questions: Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. (See Page 3)

Company Name Litchfield Visitation Service  
*An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer*

Judicial Branch  
90 Washington Street, 4th Floor  
Hartford CT 06106  
Attn: Pamela Sarno

June 16, 2014

Dear Mrs. Sarno,

I am pleased to offer this letter of interest in response to RFI #04-1405. I am confident that Litchfield Visitation Service has the experience and the qualified staff to provide a complete range of easily accessible and culturally sensitive services for children and families in Connecticut.

As a member of the Supervised Visitation Network this program complies with ethical and professional standards that have the safety of all participants as a precondition of providing services. As stated in the Network's Standards for Practice: "After safety, the well-being of the child is the paramount consideration at all stages and particularly in deciding the manner in which supervision is provided."

In addition to supervised visitation, a comprehensive range of services from transition monitoring up to pre-reunification support is offered during flexible hours that include evenings and weekends. We maintain a therapeutic setting that offers thorough safety measures and is staffed with trained and experienced professionals who support healthy relationships and maintain stability for children experiencing stressful changes in their primary relationships.

Litchfield Visitation Service comfortably manages parallel programs that add a level of security and structure for families who are not ready for less restrictive venues. Ongoing relationships with the Family Relations Units in Waterbury and Litchfield as well as attorneys and other mental health service providers in the community have been used to design current program practices and documentation for reporting family progress.

The core function of our service is aimed at providing safe opportunities for families to help their children assimilate the changes necessary to maintain parental contacts.

Sincerely,

Angelo M. Farenga MA, LPC, NCC

## **Questions**

**1. Describe in detail the expertise of your agency and the proposed staff who will conduct the service providing secure Supervised Visitation. Include the length of time your agency has provide secure supervised visitation services, the communities you serve and how your agency/center comports with the Supervise Visitation Network (SVN) Standards for Supervise Visitation Practice.**

Litchfield Visitation Service follows Supervised Visitation Network Standards in the provision of services outlined in this request. These guidelines cover all aspects of visitation services as described herein.

Litchfield Visitation Service has been providing supervised visitation services in the Northwest Corner of Connecticut since January 2006 serving the judicial districts of Waterbury, Litchfield and Danbury. Referrals come directly from clients, from Guardians Ad Litem and from attorneys representing parents in need of services. In addition, LVS is currently in its sixth year providing supervised and therapeutic visitation through the CSSD Access and Visitation Grant. The current services are aimed at families who have demonstrated readiness for supervised visits in anticipation of engaging in an effective and healthy co-parenting plan. An office location at 27 Siemon Company Drive in Watertown is used for both intake meetings and visitation.

Both Angelo M. Farenga and Cynthia Eastman provide direct services in Supervised Visitation. Mr. Farenga also serves as program director and has additional responsibilities in clinical and professional oversight of services. Mrs. Eastman coordinates all aspects of visitation, and in addition, provides data collection/analysis and program development.

**2. Describe in detail your agency's qualifications, skills knowledge, training and cultural competency specific to providing services to families in need of supervised visitation.**

### **Mr. Angelo M. Farenga MA, LPC - Program Director**

Leadership of this program is grounded in the Program Director's 19 years of clinical and administrative experience working with children and families, community providers and state funded referral sources. The population served by the programs supervised at a major mental health clinic in Central Connecticut presented a complex set of mental health, substance abuse and legal challenges which involved multiple systems of care.

From September 2000 to July 2006, he provided clinical and administrative supervision of a Therapeutic Visitation Program serving 30 families in the process of reunification with their children. In this capacity he supervised clinical staff and case managers in increasing parenting skills, repairing damaged relationships and improving family interactions.

Responsibilities of the Program Director included providing written clinical observations and recommendations to inform the CPS and legal system in the process of permanency planning. He has been qualified as an expert witness on numerous occasions in order to testify in permanency planning court proceedings.

**Ms. Cynthia Eastman M. Ed.**

Ms. Eastman has extensive experience working with the educational and developmental needs of children and families in school settings. Her responsibilities for Litchfield Visitation Service include direct services to families as well as administrative and program development responsibilities.

Mrs. Eastman is a trainer for the Anti-Defamation League and has conducted trainings in cultural awareness and diversity across Connecticut since 2008. She also co-presented a workshop on cultural competency for the Supervised Visitation Network Annual conference in May 2009.

In the area of educational programming, Ms. Eastman has written, coordinated and administrated State Department of Education Interdistrict Grant programs for a Connecticut regional educational service center. These programs are provided for students aged 7 to 18 and address the racial, social and economic isolation needs in their school districts.

**3. Describe in detail the nature of the secure Supervised Visitation Services provided and attach the written policy, procedures and rules. Include the specific policies and procedures that address: 1) safety and security for all participants, 2) situations where there is a risk of violent behavior, highly conflicted interactions or situations involving family violence and 3) reasons for termination.**

**General Policy for Safety**

Litchfield Visitation Service seeks to provide safety for all participants by developing and implementing a safety plan with each family at intake. A Conditions of Participation Agreement is reviewed with and signed by both parents.

The Conditions of Participation clearly require a client's strict compliance in order to receive visitation services and are reviewed at intake with both parents and must be signed before visits can take place. These Conditions specify policies regarding unsafe behaviors, consequences of attending sessions under the influence of substances, the prohibition of threats and physical discipline and of dangerous objects or weapons. A copy of these conditions follows these questions.

Additional conditions and arrangements are implemented as needed to ensure the safety of all participants. The central criterion of safety in developing this plan is that there is a match between the capacity of available staff, the service being provided, and the needs of and the risk presented by the family.

In addition, as a result of the contract with the CSSD to provide supervised visitations through the Access and Visitation Program, a uniform policy that will include having visiting parents submit to a metal detecting wand will be implemented when approved by the State of CT legal services.

As no provider can unilaterally guarantee safety; adult clients remain responsible and accountable for their own actions.

### **Declining Unsafe Cases**

Litchfield Visitation Service will collaborate with the referral source and with other community professionals to implement a safe and secure plan of visitation for all referred families. When no viable plan is possible Litchfield Visitation must decline cases that threaten the safety of any of the participants.

#### **1) Safety and security for all participants**

Safety and Security concerns will be assessed with each family at intake. Appropriate measures will be developed and implemented to provide for safe and stress free contact between children and their visiting parent. The safety of all participants will be the first priority of all decisions regarding the provision of these services. Prior contacts with local police are in place to facilitate accessing emergency responders if such situations arise in the context of family visitations. Staff is trained in the use of emergency procedures, which include physically removing children from the presence of threats, alerting support staff and calling 911.

In addition, parents are informed that they must comply with pre-arranged timing of arrival and departure as a condition of participation. This allows the child to transition more smoothly between activities and also ensures that the custodial parent has left the premises before the visiting parent has completed his or her post visit debriefing with program staff.

#### **2) Situations where there is a risk of violent behavior, highly conflicted interactions or situations involving family violence**

Special arrangements (in addition to the above) to manage potentially unsafe situations are developed with each family at the time of intake in response to the level of risk presented.

Visitation supervisors will be equipped with a safety plan, including emergency numbers for Police, Emergency Mental Health Services, and emergency contacts for custodial parent. During visits supervisors will have a cell phone available at all times. In the case of a threat to self or others a safety planning intervention will take place involving outside support systems: police, mental health crisis intervention team and family members.

Staff is trained to remove the child/ren from the physical location when threats are made indicating the possibility of harm to any participant. The threatening participant will be escorted to a separate area, assessed for the potential of harm to self or others and provided with services appropriate to the need. If applicable any other individuals at risk will be notified.

#### **3) Reasons for termination**

Reasons for terminating visits may include:

- Safety concerns or other case issues that cannot be effectively managed by the provider.
- Excessive demand on the provider's resources.
- The parent's failure to comply with the conditions or rules for participation in the program.
- Threat of or actual violence or abuse.

If a child refuses to visit with the non-custodial party in such a way or for such a period of time that it raises concerns that continuation of services may be detrimental to the child's safety and emotional wellbeing, then the supervisor will suspend services pending resolution of the issue.

A meeting or phone consultation will be arranged with involved representatives (GAL, Attorneys for the parents, other providers) to decide the best course of action in these circumstances.

**4. Describe in detail the formal screening (verified criminal record, motor vehicle record check and DCF abuse and neglect information) utilized for all employees, including administrators, managers, supervisors and staff as part of the hiring process and continued employment.**

It is LVS policy to submit both part-time and full-time staff employment applications, including administrators, to the Department of Public Safety and DCF for clearance. It is expected that all applicants will meet the general and special qualifications, skills, knowledge, training and education required to provide direct visitation services. In addition, it is expected that staff will meet the following criteria:

- Maintain a neutral role
- Have no conflict of interest
- Have no conviction of child molestation, child abuse, or other crimes relating to children
- Have no conviction of a violent crime and/or on probation or parole during the last five years
- Have had no civil or criminal restraining order issued against him or her within the last five years
- Have no current or past court order in which the provider is the person being supervised

In general, the goal of LVS is to conduct a review of each new employee during the sixth month of employment, after the first year of service and annually thereafter.

**5. Describe the physical layout of the secure Supervised Visitation Center/Agency. Provide detail regarding the features of your agency/center employs to protect the safety and security of participants including but not limited to the building premises or other arrangements that keep parents separate. Provide a detailed floor plan in the response, copy of the lease agreement if applicable and any other programs/services co-located in the building.**

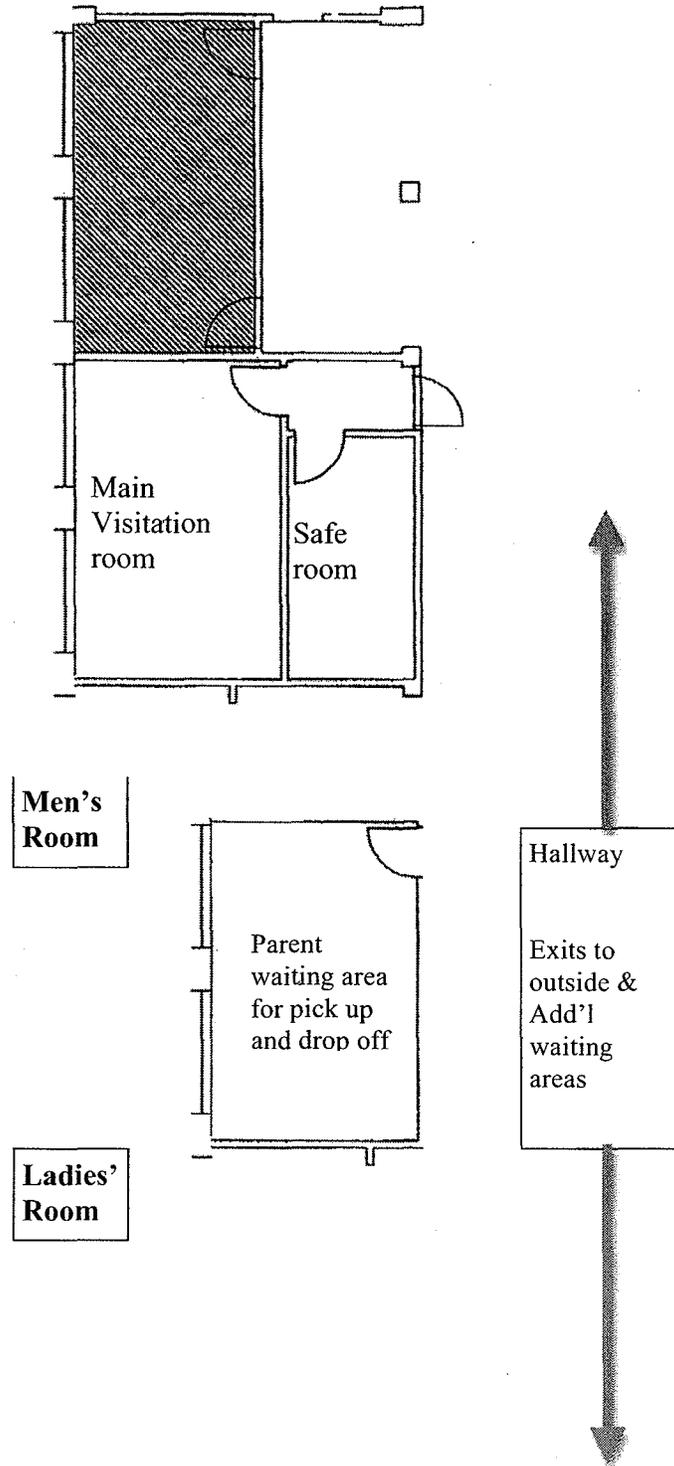
Supervised Visitation services will be provided at 27 Siemon Company Drive in Watertown CT. This handicap accessible building offers on site parking, multiple entrances and exits, alarmed entry system and flexible room arrangements that can be used by families with varying number of participants.

Parents' arrival and departures are kept separate; the visiting parent is secured in the visitation room before a residential parent comes into the building. In most cases a separate lounge area is utilized for the arrival and departure of the residential parents, and there are other locations in the building that are available for additional, more secluded waiting areas.

The visitation room is fully supplied with board games, arts and crafts and an assortment of developmentally appropriate toys and books. These items are provided to allow for a full range of family activities. Restrooms are easily accessible. This address is located a block off of a state road and is within a short distance of major highways (Rts. 8 and I-84). Hourly bus service is available from the city of Waterbury.

LVS shares its space with Lifeworks, a mental health provider. Lifeworks provides counseling and therapy to families, children and couples in the Greater Waterbury and Litchfield County area.

## Litchfield Visitation Service floor plan



**6. Specify the staff training required prior to individuals being assigned to a secure Supervised visitation caseload. In addition, outline the continuing training and education associated with your secure Supervised Visitation agency/center.**

Litchfield Visitation Service staff is trained according to Supervised Visitation Network guidelines in the areas of expertise below. LVS staff makes every effort to pursue continuing education and professional training opportunities through the CSSD and other mental health and diversity organizations with which the staff is associated. Full-time staff is expected to attend at least three outside trainings each year although more is encouraged and supported.

Safety for all participants, Provisions of service to parents and children with mental health and developmental issues or other physical or emotional impairment,	Child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse
Mandatory child abuse reporting,	Parent introduction/re introduction, Parenting skills
Professional boundaries	Assertiveness training and conflict resolution, How and when to intervene during visits or exchanges to maintain the safety of all participants
Basic stages of child development	Observation of parent/child interactions
Confidentiality, and maintaining neutrality	Preparation of factual observation notes and reports
Effects of separation and divorce on children and families	Substance abuse
Cultural sensitivity and diversity	Relevant laws regarding child custody and visitation and child protection
Family violence, including domestic violence and the effects of domestic violence on children	Conflict of Interest
Family violence, including domestic violence and the effects of domestic violence on children Grief and loss associated with parental separation and removal from the home due to child abuse and neglect	

7. This letter serves to affirm Litchfield Visitation Service's commitment to adhere to the protocols for safety and security as outlined in the Supervised Visitation Network's Standards for Supervised Visitation Practice. LVS complies with SVN policies and procedures regarding 1) safety and security 2) situations involving risk of violent behaviors and 3) reasons for termination. The current safety and security protocols in place were developed using the SVN's Standards and we are committed to their review and revision on a regular basis.

This letter also affirms our policy to share each of these protocols with prospective and current clients and review these protocols during our service with the clients as needed.

**8. Agency Name: Litchfield Visitation Service**  
**Contact Name: Angelo M. Farenga, Cynthia Eastman**  
**Business Address: PO Box 186 Watertown, CT 06795**  
**Telephone Number: 860-417-2005, 860-417-2023**  
**Fax Number: 860-730-6225**  
**Email Address: cindy@lifeworksnow.org**  
**Website address: <http://lifeworksnow.org/home>**  
**Hours of Operation: Mon-Sat 8am - 8pm**  
**Fees: \$75-\$125/ hour**  
**Service Locations: 27 Siemon Company Drive Ste. 310W Watertown, CT 06795**

**LITCHFIELD VISITATION SERVICE (LVS)  
SUPERVISED VISITATION/EXCHANGE AGREEMENT**

**CONDITIONS of PARTICIPATION POLICIES**

I/we agree to these contact guidelines so that the health and safety of the participants is respected and relationships between all parties have the opportunity to grow for all involved.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, **visiting/residential parent (circle one) agree to the following conditions in order to participate in visitation with my child(ren).**

- 1) All parties agree to arrive punctually for the start and end of visits. **Visitation commitments must be kept unless there is an emergency to justify cancellation.** Twenty-four hour notice is expected when canceling or rescheduling visits.
- 2) All parties involved will follow visitation program arrangements for arrival/departure that are necessary to support the safety/comfort of the visitation for the child(ren) and for all involved parties.
  - Parents are individually responsible for avoiding contact when arriving and departing and for respecting relevant protective/restraining orders.
  - The visiting parent is responsible for helping children transition back to the custodial parent in a timely manner and to provide adequate opportunity to manage the children's behavioral reactions at the end of visitation.
- 3) Appropriate authorization will be required before bringing any additional visitors.
- 4) Parents will not bring any weapons or dangerous instruments to the visitation place.
- 5) All parties involved agree to attend all appointments drug and alcohol free. Visits will be discontinued if a parent demonstrates impaired functioning or parenting judgment.
- 6) Parent will leave all communication and recording devices turned off during visitation. A camera/phone **may** be allowed for pictures for personal use only (No social media/online purposes) and only at staff's discretion after consent of both parents.
- 7) Parent may not make any threat of violence or threaten to violate a court order during a visit or during transitions before and after the visit.
- 8) Parent may not make negative comments to a visiting child about the non-visiting parent or his/her partner or other family members during visits or arrival/departure exchanges. Communication in English between parent and children must be audible and observable by the Supervisor at all times.
- 9) Parent may not physically discipline, or threaten to physically discipline children.
- 10) Neither parent shall ask a child to deliver messages to the other parent during visitation.
- 11) Children and all their activities will be supervised by program staff at all times and will be held in the **LVS** office.
- 12) The visiting parent agrees to bring gifts or presents only by prior planning with the supervising staff. Any gifts given to a child during a visit must leave with the child/ren. Gifts brought to a visit

without prior arrangement cannot be given to the child(ren) and will remain in the visiting parent's vehicle or out of the visitation area.

**AGREEMENT**

I have read and reviewed with staff these conditions and expectations. I understand that LVS reserves the right to revise and/or change policies at any time or modify rules on a case-by-case basis. My signature below indicates I understand and agree to follow these conditions. I understand that if I do not comply with these rules, the visitation or exchanges may be suspended or terminated. (A copy of these guidelines can be provided upon request.)

**Parent signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of provider:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_