

Frequently Asked Questions

Human Services PQRs

Q1: *What is a PQR?*

A: PQR stands for Pre-Qualified Resource List of pre-qualified service providers. The primary objective of a PQR is to ensure fair, transparent and open access to qualified service providers so that Albertans can receive the services and supports they need. It is an opportunity for service providers to become qualified (be put on a resource list) for future contracting work.

The use of PQR lists is considered good business practice, and is also a requirement under the Government of Alberta's Treasury Board directive on sole-source procurement,

Q2: *What does this mean for service providers who contract with Human Services?*

A: Human Services intends to implement four new PQRs for the 2016/17 fiscal year for the following service categories:

- services to individuals with disabilities (DS)
- child and family services (CFS)
- transportation services
- specialized assessments & consultation with health professionals

Human Services' PQRs will require service providers to meet defined minimum requirements and to then identify which services they can provide, and in which geographic areas. Once established, PQRs provide a flexible foundation for procurement activities, including competitive Requests for Proposal (RFPs), limited competitions based on specific service requirements and, where required to ensure no interruption to critical services, sole-source arrangements.

Q3: *If I already have a contract under a Request for Proposals (RFP) do I need to get on the PQR list?*

A: Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting. Your contract under your RFP will continue until the RFP and associated contract expire, however future work would be directed to service providers on the PQR list. To ensure you are considered for future work along the lines of what you are currently doing, it is imperative that you respond to the PQR which best aligns with your service expertise.

The PQR is also an opportunity to diversify services or move services in a new direction. Since the PQRs are not restricted to single service baskets but contain a broad base of service offerings, Service providers will have an opportunity to expand on their current services to match their particular skill sets.

Q4: *Is getting on a PQR the only way I will be able to contract with Human Services?*

A: The best way to ensure you can contract with Human Services for the scope of work covered in the PQRs is to get on the PQR list. The PQR list is the starting point for a Region in determining who would best be able to provide the services required in a particular instance. However, the PQR is not exclusive. There may be instances where Human Services identifies a service need that is outside the scope of the PQR, required on an urgent basis, or that requires a specific skill set, in which case a separate RFP or sole-source arrangement may be justified.

Q5: *Is there a cap on how many service providers can be listed on a PQR?*

A: There is no cap to the number of services providers. Service providers are not being asked to compete for a limited number of spots for qualified resources. Any service provider that meets the minimum qualifications will get on the list.

Q6: *What if I am the only service provider providing services in my town/geographic area – do I still need to get on the PQR list?*

A: Yes, Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting.

Q7: *If there is a 'mom and pop' group home in a small community will they have to apply against the PQR?*

A: The choice will ultimately rest with the service provider. Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting.

Q8: *If currently more than 90% of Human Services contracts are sole sourced, what is the target for the future?*

A: There is no specific target. The primary objective of the PQR is to ensure fair, transparent and open access to qualified service providers so that Albertans can receive the services and supports they need.

Q9: *Does this mean all contracts going forward will be based on competitive procurement? Will there no longer be any sole-sourced contracts?*

A: Human Services will be shifting to more competitive procurement approaches in the future where it makes sense in the context of how best to meet the needs of Albertans. In some situations, sole sourcing will still continue for specific services if that is the only or best way of meeting the needs of clients.

Q10: *Compliance with Trade Agreements is cited as a catalyst for this shift; however, it's very clear that "social services" are exempt from competitive procurement. Can you explain this?*

A: Procurement of 'Health Services and Social Services' is noted as a Trade Exception under the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA). However, the NWPTA also makes it clear that these exceptions must not be used to avoid competitive procurement. In addition, our trade obligations state that, when sole sourcing is required, it must be based on merit and value, and, where feasible, vendors must be selected from an approved list. In other words, these trade exceptions are not intended as open license to sole source. This is evidenced by the rigorous process in place that requires all sole source contracts over \$10,000 to go through an internal contract review process, be approved by the Deputy Minister, and be publicly disclosed on a quarterly basis.

Government of Alberta policy on sole-source procurement is publicly available at:

http://sole-source.dataservices.alberta.ca/web/procurement_policy.pdf

Q11: *My agency has been providing services to Human Services clients through sole sourced contracts for several years. I'm sure we can satisfactorily complete the PQR process and establish that we have the qualifications to serve our clients. I am concerned that we may not successfully compete to serve those clients when other service providers are more experienced at responding to RFPs. When does Human Services expect to move to competitive procurement off the PQR lists?*

A: The transition to more coordinated, transparent and competitive procurement across Human Services will take a phased approach over multiple years. The first step is to ensure that service providers who meet consistent standards of quality are identified and available to serve Human Services clients across our regions. Once established, these resource lists will provide a foundation for Human Services to procure new services while also maintaining a stable service delivery network for our clients. While our intention is to shift towards more open and competitive procurement approaches in the future, we recognize that sole sourcing will continue to be required in some cases. This will be based on careful consideration of a number of factors, including the specialized nature of services, potential risk to the client, requirement for client choice, or because there's only one qualified service provider.

Q12: *Does this mean a big, provincial or national service provider can come in and take over business from a smaller, local service provider?*

A: In order to meet Alberta's trade obligations, the PQR must be open to all potential service providers. Where it makes sense, some PQRs will include a requirement that a service provider must be willing and able to deliver services at a local level in Alberta. The focus of the PQR and any subsequent RFP or decision to contract will be based on the specific need identified by the Region and who can best meet that need. This will be done in compliance with the Treasury Board Directive, while taking into account the specific circumstances of the clients being served.

Q13: *Is the PQR about shutting out the small service providers and cost cutting to meet budget targets?*

A: Not at all. The shift to PQRs and competitive tendering aligns with common practice across the Government of Alberta, not just Human Services. It's about providing value for taxpayer dollars, while ensuring people who need help get the best services. PQRs are simply good business practice and help us demonstrate to Albertans our commitment to fair and transparent approaches to procurement. Human Services' PQR will create a list of potential service providers from which to draw upon to address particular client needs in the province.

Q14: *How does the PQR affect fee-for-service?*

A: The PQR is a screening tool that allows the Ministry to create a resource list for particular service scopes for particular regions. Once on the list, service providers may be contracted for particular work based on a Region's needs and requirements. The subsequent contract would outline the payment methods, e.g., block funding, fee for service, etc.

Q15: *Will there be additional funding for service providers to assist with the costs of complying with this new process?*

A: No. Human Services intends for the PQR process to be simple and easy to respond to. The proposed submission from service providers has been developed in a manner that is straightforward and not onerous. Comprehensive information and support will be provided to help service providers make the shift to this new process.

Q16: *Is there a plan to develop other PQRs for services that do not fall within the currently identified PQR service baskets, and if so, what are the timelines?*

A: Human Services is reviewing a broad range of services offered through third party service providers for Albertans and expects to develop a robust integrated service delivery network over time. This may include consolidation and integration of some services; shifts toward grants where appropriate, and additional services supported by prequalified resource lists where it makes sense. The process of aligning our contracting approaches is expected to take multiple years to unfold.

PQR Processes: Getting on the PQR List

Q1: *Does a service provider need to apply on each PQR for which we would like to be included?*

A: Yes. Service providers will need to apply on each PQR for which they wish to be considered for future contracting. Each particular PQR will require service providers to indicate the service delivery region(s) and service categories for which they wish to be considered qualified. Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting.

Q2: *How will I know which list I need to be on?*

A: When the PQRs are posted on Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) on January 4, 2016, review the "Opportunity Notice" on APC for each of the four PQRs. Where you see a potential fit, download the Bid Package(s) that relate to your service.

- Q3:** *My agency works across divisions serving youth who are transitioning to adulthood. If I provide services to both Child and Family Services(CFS) and Disability Services (DS) do I need to complete a PQR package for both areas?*
- A:** Yes, if you are currently offering services to DS and CFS clients you will need to apply for and become qualified on each PQR in order to be considered for future contracting work.
- Q4:** *Why is the Child and Family Services (CFS) PQR different from the Disability Services (DS) PQR? This is confusing for service providers that support both programs.*
- A:** The CFS and DS PQRs are different because they address different service scopes and, as a result, different requirements and obligations such as legislative and policy requirements. For example, the referral confirmation approach in DS is distinct from the fee for service and Outcomes-Based Service Delivery models of CFS. Both PQRs, however, have the same basic information, form and general obligations. The contracts for both have been aligned as much as possible to ensure a consistent Human Services approach and the submissions forms for both are based on the same template.
- Q5:** *How many times do I have to apply?*
- A:** Once a PQR List is established, it is expected that service providers will remain on it for multiple years. The PQR list will remain active unless services are added and/or requirements change.
- Q6:** *If a service provider delivers services across the province do they have to apply in multiple regions?*
- A:** Yes, the service provider must specifically identify each region of Alberta where they are interested in providing services. This does not mean a separate submission must be made for each region. Each PQR will allow the service provider to indicate which services and in which regions they'd like to be considered for future work.
- Q7:** *Do I need to check off the regions where I want to provide services or will I be able to provide services for other regions from within my home region if I haven't checked them off?*
- A:** You need to check off every region where you want to be considered for future work. If you have not identified an interest in a given region you will not be pre-qualified to serve in that region, and will not receive statements of work or competitive solicitation requests for that region.
- Q8:** *If an organization has specific departments that serve HS clients, does it need to identify which department does each service?*
- A:** No, it is enough to identify services delivered by the agency and in which regions those services can be provided.

Q9: *We are a research centre within a public institution and currently have an agreement with Human Services. The agreement is between the Minister of Human Services and the Board of Governors because all research agreements are signed by a representative of the Governors. Who needs to register for the PQR? If the Board of Governors registered, they may not forward any notices to interested parties because of the size of the organization and not knowing who to send them to. Could our centre apply and then the agreement would still be signed by the Board of Governors?*

A: With each PQR that Human Services is establishing, we expect only one submission from the legal entity that pre-qualifies to provide services for us. Organizations can identify a different contact person for the PQR in addition to the authorized official who signs the Master Agreement with Human Services. Once the PQR is established, Human Services will notify the contact persons identified to represent their respective organizations. As a contact person for your organization, I encourage you to review the PQRs when they are posted on APC and complete the submission process.

It is important to note that the PQRs only apply to the services identified in each PQR. If you currently monitor APC to identify research opportunities, please continue since some opportunities may fall outside of the scope of the PQRs.

Q10: *Will a vendor submission form or proposal be required?*

A: Yes, a vendor submission form will be required to respond to the PQR. Human Services intends for it to be user friendly; straight forward and easy to complete. The submission form will be posted, as part of the PQR, on Alberta Purchasing Connection on January 4, 2016.

Q11: *How and who will evaluate the submissions? Will service providers have access to their scoring sheet?*

A: A team of Human Services staff will be responsible for evaluating the submissions based on the mandatory requirements outlined in the PQR. If a service provider meets all the mandatory requirements, they will become a Qualified Service Provider under that particular PQR. Working documents created by the evaluation teams will remain confidential as indicated in the PQR. Service providers who do not get on the list will be provided feedback after their unsuccessful attempt and are encouraged to try again on the next submission window for that PQR.

Q12: *What if I have questions about the PQR after the open question period has closed?*

A: The Opportunity Notice and the Bid Package posted on APC as part of the PQR may answer your questions. Review them carefully and submit any further questions that are not addressed in the package to the Response Contact identified on the Opportunity Notice. Questions and answers will be updated on APC. When the open question period has passed, questions will not be addressed.

Q13: *I have been reviewing the APC to understand the bid process. I represent an agency that has a contract until March of 2017. Am I correct that I only have to register on the APC and complete our profile at this time and do not have to download a bid package in January 2016 or would it be prudent to download the bid package and commence the process in January 2016?*

A: You need to download the bid package in January 2016 in order to commence the process to pre-qualify for future work. Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting. Your current contract under your RFP will continue until the RFP and associated contract expire, however future work would be directed to service providers on the PQR list.

Q14: *Do we need to be accredited prior to qualifying for the PQR?*

A: Any required qualifications will be clearly stated in each PQR.

Currently, if you are awarded Child and Family Service (CFS) work through an agreement, the requirement is that the organization attains accreditation through one of the CFS approved bodies within 18 to 24 months of commencing services.

If you are awarded work with Disability Services (DS) through an agreement, the requirement is that the organization be accredited by an accreditation body approved by the Minister of Human Services or any subsequent Minister with jurisdiction over the accreditation of Service Providers under the *Persons with Developmental Disabilities Services Act*, and will provide evidence of accreditation to the Minister upon reasonable request. If the service provider has applied for but not yet obtained the required accreditation, the service provider will notify Human Services and a temporary exemption from accreditation may be granted for a specified period of time.

Q15: *We've heard that an agency should be registered with an association such as ALIGN Association of Community Services, or the Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta. Would there be any others that would be beneficial so that we can have more of a chance to get on the PQR?*

A: If your agency is applying on the Child and Family Services (CFS) PQR, ALIGN Association of Community Services, is the organization that represents agencies and individuals that provide services to children and families in Alberta. Membership is not a condition of contracting with Human Services although contracted service providers must seek accreditation within 18 to 24 months of commencing services.

Service Providers are encouraged to review the PQR package that will be posted on Alberta Purchasing Connection in January 2016 as it will describe the information you need to provide in order to pre-qualify on the PQR. Any service provider that meets the minimum qualifications will get on the list.

PQR Processes: After the PQR list is compiled

Q1: *Will the PQR lists be public? What is the website where they will be housed?*

A: Yes, we intend to make the lists available to the public. We are considering how this can best be accomplished.

Q2: *Who maintains the current Resource Lists?*

A: Human Services Corporate Procurement Office will house the current Resource Lists.

Q3: *Is the re-opening and ability to use the list going to be tied to fiscal year?*

A: We expect to re-open the lists annually. Through the initial transition period, Human Services will retain the right to open and re-open the list at intermittent times to ensure we have access to qualified service providers when and where we need them.

Q4: *Can service providers ask to be taken off the list?*

A: Yes, service providers can ask to be taken off a list at any time. They would need to pre-qualify on a subsequent open period if they wanted to be put back on.

Q5: *What is the process of being removed from a PQR listing? What if a service provider delivers inadequate service? Should they remain on the list when they cannot or should not be providing services?*

A: Qualifying on the PQR establishes that the service provider has the minimum qualifications to be considered to deliver a service. Ongoing performance is managed through the Master Agreement with Human Services and through the actual delivery of the contract.

Q6: *How will service providers know when amendments to PQRs or re-opening of PQR occur?*

A: If you are already pre-qualified on a list, then you will be advised by Human Services when new opportunities for delivering the service arise. You will also be notified in advance of an upcoming open period for that particular PQR. If you are not pre-qualified on a list and are interested in Human Services work, monitor APC or use the tools built into that system to flag relevant opportunities when they arise, including upcoming PQR open periods. It's a good practice for service providers to monitor APC on a regular basis to search for opportunities from Human Services, other ministries and other purchasers.

Q7: *I understand that getting on the PQR lists is the first step in getting on a list of pre-qualified service providers. What are the next steps in the process and when will they happen?*

A: The PQR lists are expected to be established for April 1, 2016. There may be a brief period of transition before we are ready to contract from these lists. We expect to use them for all in-scope contracts in 2016-17.

Q8: *Will Notices of Proposed Procurement (NPPs) be sent out to qualified vendors or will vendors need to watch the Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) website for opportunities?*

A: When a service need is identified, a service request will be distributed to service providers on the relevant approved resource list. This can take the form of a competitive Request for Proposals sent to all qualified service providers, a limited solicitation, a NPP to help assess capacity/interest for specific work, or a sole source arrangement where required. Opportunities that are within the scope of a particular PQR will only be distributed to that resource list and will not be posted on Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC).

Q9: *Would the PQR automatically select appropriate vendors and invite to submit for RFP?*

A: Once finalized, the PQR list provides a list of approved service providers who will receive notice about new procurements and contract opportunities, which may include sole source arrangements, where required (see Q8 above).

Q10: When will service providers know if they have been successful pre-qualifying on the PQR?

A: We anticipate that PQR lists will be finalized and service providers informed of the result in March 2016.

When a Service Provider does not get on the PQR list

Q1: *There is no other service provider in this area that provides the service I provide. What will happen if I don't get on the PQR?*

A: Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting. The minimum qualifications to get on the PQR will not be onerous and the process is not labor intensive. If a service provider is not successful they will be notified of the reason. Regional contract personnel will work with the service provider to develop a plan for addressing the qualification gap.

Q2: *What will happen if the service provider does not get on a pre-qualified list and has an Albertan that relies on HS Contracted Services? What type of transitioning will need to occur?*

A: In the unlikely event that a service provider is not successful at getting on the PQR list and not able to correct the gap to become qualified, regional contracting personnel will work with the service provider to identify client impacts and develop a plan to transition the client to an alternative service provider with the least possible disruption.

Q3: *What happens if a service provider does not make the deadline to respond to the PQR?*

A: Once posted in early January, the opportunity notice on APC will identify critical information including any mandatory requirements, the time and date of the closing deadline, who to contact with questions, and where to send the completed submission. It is the responsibility of the service provider to ensure that Human Services receives the completed proposal at the specified location before the closing time and date of the PQR. Late submissions cannot be considered. If a service provider missed the submission window, they are encouraged to apply on the next open submission period.

Q4: *Is there an appeal process if not found qualified for any reason?*

A: No, there is no formal appeal process for the PQR. If an agency does not qualify they will be notified and provided with an explanation that may assist them to qualify in the next open period.

Q5: *If you are unsuccessful with the first round of the PQR, will feedback be provided as to why you did not make it?*

A: Yes, service providers who do not get on the list will be provided feedback after their unsuccessful attempt and are encouraged to try again on the next submission window for that PQR. Service providers are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the terms of the PQRs they are applying for to ensure they understand the terms and obligations.

Q6: *What happens to a service provider that is in operation that does not meet the PQR qualifications? Are they given notice or are they given a timeframe by which to comply with the qualifications?*

A: Service providers currently under contract will be permitted to finish their contract. Your contract under your RFP will continue until the RFP and associated contract expire, however future work would be directed to service providers on the PQR list. Service providers who do not get on the list will be provided feedback after their unsuccessful attempt and are encouraged to try again on the next submission window for that PQR.

I am not currently a service provider for Human Services

Q1: *I am not currently a service provider with Human Services but I'd like to be – how do I go about getting a contract?*

A: The PQR is your opportunity to be eligible for future competitive procurements. Human Services strongly encourages all service providers to apply for and get on the PQR list, to guarantee they will be considered a qualified resource for future contracting.

Q2: *If I work for a service provider but want to provide services off-hours (e.g. psychological services), can I apply to get on the PQR list?*

A: Yes. The PQR is open to anyone who meets the mandatory requirements outlined in the PQR.

Q3: *What if a client currently receiving services by a service provider on the PQR list says they want to go to someone not on the PQR list?*

A: If the service provider of choice is not on the PQR list, they will be encouraged to apply on the next submission window.

The PQR is not exclusive. There may be instances where Human Services identifies a service need that is outside the scope of the PQR, required on an urgent basis, or that requires specific skill sets, in which case a separate RFP or sole-source arrangement may be justified.

Alberta Purchasing Connection

Q1: *How will the initial process be advertised? Will Human Services notify service providers by email?*

A: Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) is the primary communication vehicle for vendors accessing opportunities from the Government of Alberta. Service providers are encouraged to become familiar with APC now. The PQRs will be posted on APC in early January.

www.purchasingconnection.ca

Current contracted service providers received a PQR communique in November 2015 which is also posted on our website, along with other helpful information.

humanservices.alberta.ca/contracts-and-procurement.

Q2: *Do I need to be registered with Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC)?*

A: You can browse APC as a guest but you must register with Alberta Purchasing Connection to respond to the PQR. It is a simple process. HS encourages you to register as a Vendor today in anticipation of our posting.

Q3: *If you are on Alberta Purchasing Connection is there a specialized form used to become a service provider for Children and Family Services(CFS)?*

A: On January 4, 2016, Human Services will post the 4 PQR packages on Alberta Purchasing Connection, including the PQR for CFS services. Each package will contain the information and forms required to pre-qualify as a service provider.

Q4: *I've never done this before, where do I start?*

A: Start now by "Googling" APC and familiarize yourselves with the website so that you can download the PQR "bid package" when it becomes available in early January.

Transportation Services PQR

Q1: *What does the Transportation PQR entail?*

A: The Transportation PQR applies to service providers that provide point-to-point transportation services when no other service expectations are required. When transportation is one element of a broader service offering (e.g. including intervention supervision, psychological, physical, or emotional support) the service provider would not have to apply to this specific PQR but may need to apply to another PQR.

Q2: *I am wondering if you can provide more details on the transportation services component of the post on the APC system this morning? Specifically the number of transports; type of transports:- any specifications on types of vehicles (ie. disabled transports); location of transports.*

A: The detailed request for information will be posted on APC on January 4, 2016.

Specialized Assessments & Consultation with Health Professionals PQR

Q1: *Within the realm of “specialized assessments” how will potential clients know that a particular agency/psychologist is on the list? Are they allowed to know? Are they allowed to request a specific agency/psychologist or would their worker make that decision? How do workers make that decision – is it fair?*

A: Being on a resource list does not make an agency/psychologist available for direct and immediate services to a client. The PQR list allows the Human Services Region to identify service providers who meet the mandatory requirements for and have indicated an interest in providing particular services to their clients. Prior to accessing services for their clients, the Region will be expected to consider the specific service need; review any ongoing contracts for service that may already be in place; review the qualification list and then make a service request in order to secure service for their clients.

Q2: *Will contracts for Alberta Works specialized assessments be included in the Specialized Assessment PQR?*

A: Yes, The Specialized Assessments PQR will serve all of Human Services, and therefore will include specialized assessments for Alberta Works clients. Current contracts with Alberta works will continue but service providers should get on the PQR for new work or for work in regions where they are not currently contracted but wish to be considered for future work.

Q3: *If you qualify as a provider of neuropsychological assessment on the Specialized Assessment PQR, do you have to apply on other PQRs where this service may be included?*

A: The scope of services in each PQR varies. Service providers are encouraged to review each PQR relevant to their work and submit under any PQR where they see their services identified.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Q1: *Does the DS PQR address multi-disciplinary teams? Does a team need to apply or can one professional apply? (IE Occupational Therapist, Speech Language Pathologist)?*

A: Individuals and teams of professionals can respond to a PQR. The Specialized Assessment and Consultation with Health Professionals PQR addresses contract services related to health professional participating on the FSCD Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and contracting for specialized assessments and/or interventions completed by multidisciplinary teams. Individual health professionals are contracted with for participation on the FSCD Multi-Disciplinary Team and teams may be contracted with for multi-disciplinary team assessments/interventions.

Sub-Contracting

Q1: *If a service provider holds a contract for services and also subcontracts, who needs to be on the PQR list?*

A: Service providers are expected to manage their contract in accordance with their legal agreement with Human Services. This includes provisions for subcontracting which identify the contractor's responsibilities and obligations. While it is not necessary for a subcontractor to be pre-qualified on a Human Services PQR, the contracted service provider must ensure the subcontractor is qualified to perform the duties of the service.

If a subcontractor wishes to be considered independently for future work with Human Services, they need to get on the list.

Public Sector Organizations

Q1: *Will municipalities and other government agencies that contract with Human Services be expected to get on the list?*

A: All service providers including municipalities, public organizations and agencies who wish to be considered for future contract work should respond to the specific PQR in order to pre-qualify to offer that service. If the service delivered by the public body is funded through grant based programming (e.g. FCSS) and not within the scope of the PQR, there is no requirement to get on the list.

Indigenous (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) Communities and Organizations

Q1: *If a Delegated First Nations Agency (DFNA) is providing services off reserve, do they need to be on the PQR??*

A: No, DFNA funding is a Federal matter and therefore not part of a Government of Alberta PQR. However, a DFNA that also offers services under contract with the Government of Alberta, would need to apply on the PQR in order to continue to be considered for those contracted services in the future.

Q2: *If funding comes from the Federal Government for the First Nation, do we have to apply on the PQR?*

A: If Human Services (HS) and the First Nation are writing a separate contract, for example a language and cultural program delivered off reserve, then that service provider must be on the PQR to be eligible for a contract with HS, since the funds for that program would come directly from the province.

Q3: *Indigenous Elders – If Child and Family Services has contracted an elder to do any work, is the Elder exempt from the PQR?*

A: Yes they are exempt from the list for work traditionally provided by an Elder

Q4: *What definition is being used to determine when someone is an Elder?*

A: Defining who is and is not an Elder is a local decision that will likely involve individuals from the community and local Human Services staff. The criteria used to determine elders will vary throughout the Province.

Q5: *What if that Elder also does assessments?*

A: The decision of about involving an Elder in any assessment activities will be determined at the local level by community members and HS staff and will vary throughout the Province.

Services outside the scope of January 2016, Human Services PQRs

Q1: *Are there services currently offered by Human Services that will not be included in the upcoming PQR process.*

A: Yes. Human Services is responsible for a broad range of services for Albertans. Shifting to more open and transparent procurement will take a phased approach. This first phase involves the implementation of four provincial PQRs:

- services to individuals with disabilities
- child and family services
- transportation services
- specialized assessments & consultation with health professionals

Some services fall outside of the scope of these PQRs, including services which are funded by grants, services provided by DFNAs (which operate under a Federal funding model), services provided by indigenous Elders, and other specific exceptions referenced in each PQR.

There may be instances where Human Services identifies a service need that is outside the scope of the PQR, required on an urgent basis, or that requires a specific skill set, in which case a separate RFP or sole-source arrangement may be justified.

- Q2:** *Our organization has been an approved or qualified vendor for Alberta Education contracts/tenders for many years. Will this existing qualification approval suffice for Human Services or is a separate approval needed for HS and other departments?*
- A:** The services in Alberta Education; criteria for a vendor to provide those services for that ministry; and the processes for becoming a qualified vendor are different than those for Human Services. To become a qualified vendor for Human Services, we require all proponents to go through the Human Services PQR process.
- Q3:** *In the Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) and Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) programs there are Family Managed Agreements which are currently sole sourced contracts. How will these be addressed by Human Services in the future, since this is a means of contracting for services?*
- A:** Family Managed Agreements support choice by providing funding directly to families of individuals with disabilities to select the service providers that they feel can best meet the needs of the individual. Only service providers with whom Human Services contracts directly for services need to get on the PQR list. Because the contractual relationship in the case of Family Managed Agreements is between Human Services and the family member, the service provider who is ultimately selected by the family member is not required to become a qualified resource under the PQR list. If, however, the same service provider wishes to be considered for future work that involves a contractual relationship with Human Services, they must be on the PQR list.
- Q4:** *If a service provider identifies a gap in service in the community, is there a process whereby the service provider can submit a proposal for Human Services? Could the gap be included in a future PQR?*
- A:** The service provider may discuss their observations with local Human Services staff. There are processes in place to consider unique and innovative unsolicited proposals that align with our business plan while also respecting our trade obligations. If a proposal is considered, procedures relating to sole source contracting would be followed and/or a potential procurement process could be initiated. If Human Services determines a need to include this service going forward, it may be added to the appropriate PQR at the next open period.