

Connecticut State Department of Education
Surrogate Parent Program
Request for Applications for Contracted Surrogate Parents for 2020-2021
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Surrogate-Parent-Program>

Request for Applications

The Connecticut State Department of Education Surrogate Parent Program is accepting applications from individuals with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to serve as a contracted Surrogate Parent during the 2020-2021 contract year (July 1-June 30).

The Surrogate Parent Program is a federally mandated program (34 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] § 300.519) that provides educational advocacy services for children and youth under the jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) (foster children) or an unaccompanied minor or homeless youth (34 CFR § 300.519[f]), who need or may need special education.

Connecticut General Statutes [CGS] § 10-94g currently requires for a surrogate to be appointed when:

1. a child may require special education, or a child who required special education no longer requires such education but requires or may require services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time;
2. the parent or guardian of such child cannot be identified;
3. the whereabouts of the parent cannot be discovered after reasonable efforts to locate the parent have been made;
4. such child is a ward of the state; or
5. such child is an unaccompanied and homeless youth.

It is the Surrogate Parent's role to ensure that the responsible school district offers an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances. *Endrew F. v. Douglas County Sch. Dist. RE-1*, 69 IDELR 174 (2017).

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

In order to serve in the role of Surrogate Parent an applicant must have extensive knowledge of and experience with:

- federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) law and regulations,
- state of Connecticut special education laws and regulations,
- the planning and placement team (PPT) process for the development and implementation of an individualized education program (IEP), and
- due process and procedural safeguards for parents and students.

Furthermore, the Surrogate Parent must have excellent communications skills necessary to establish professional relationships with school district educators and representatives of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and to facilitate student-centered conversations with while developing/revising an IEP. Additionally, the Surrogate Parent must possess excellent organizational skills in order to manage the caseload meeting schedules, confidential documents and contractually required reporting.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Ten (10) years of experience in special education or child advocacy law, special education administration or related services, or a combination of the aforementioned knowledge and personal and professional experience in advocating for students with disabilities.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

The Surrogate Parent is required by contract to perform the duties within the guidelines of the contract and the [Surrogate Parent Program Procedures Manual](#), including but not limited to the following description of duties:

- A. Represent a minimum of 10 cases of assigned foster children in the educational decision-making process and shall agree to travel up to 100 miles roundtrip from residence to provide services to an assigned child.
- B. Will not refuse assignments based on the location of the school in which the child attends (i.e., urban, suburban or rural setting) unless there are extenuating circumstances preapproved by the Surrogate Parent Program or there a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Conduct an average minimum of three (3) on-site meetings or visits per year for each of the assigned students, including Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings, face-to-face meetings or a visit with the student (such as a student observation), or participation in 504 meetings for students who previously were eligible for special education services;
- D. Participate in expulsion hearings, if an assigned student is facing expulsion;
- E. Participate in a due process mediation or hearing pursuant to the due process proceedings;
- F. Maintain accurate and up-to-date record in each student's file folder;
- G. Close and return files to CSDE in a timely manner when DCF guardianship status ends or student graduates;
- H. Provide semi-annual written updates by direct mail or e-mail of student's progress to the CSDE Surrogate Program Manager; and
- I. Participate in other duties and activities as reasonably requested by the CSDE Surrogate Program Manager.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Complete the [Application to Serve as a Contracted Surrogate Parent SP-100](#) and e-mail it to: surrogate.application@ct.gov along with the following documents:

- a cover letter,
- a resume that provides education and work history, and
- two recent letters of reference specific to the surrogate parent role including their contact information.

DEADLINE

A complete application with the documents listed above, including the letters of reference, must be emailed at the same time to surrogate.application@ct.gov **before 5 p.m. Friday, January 31, 2020**. Incomplete application packages will not be considered.

NOTICE OF SELECTION

Applicants will be informed by email if selected. Candidates recommended for a contract must submit to fingerprinting and background checks as required and will begin service effective July 1, 2020, for the 2020-2021 contract year.

NOTE: State of Connecticut retirees receiving a pension from the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) are not eligible to be contracted as a surrogate parent.

Surrogate Parent Webpage: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Surrogate-Parent-Program>