

Table 32: Firm Reference Form

FIRM REFERENCE FORM	
CONTRACTOR NAME:	
PART 1 – REFERENCE'S INFORMATION	
THIS INFORMATION SHOULD MATCH THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ATTACHMENT 8 – FIRM MANDATORY QUALIFICATIONS .	
Customer/Client Reference Name:	James Cheatham
Customer/Client Reference Title:	Director, OITS Family and Community Services
Agency, Department, Organization or Company where staff member performed:	Florida Department of Children and Families
Project Title on which staff member performed:	Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
Reference Phone Number:	850-879-5573
Reference E-mail Address:	james.cheatham@myflfamilies.com

Instruction for References: The Contractor staff above has listed you as a reference and is requesting for you to complete this Firm Reference Form. Please provide your comments and the appropriate rating based on your experience with the proposed staff.

- Step 1:** Complete Columns 1-2 in Part 2 by marking "yes" or "no" and providing an explanation if needed.
- Step 2:** Complete Part 3 and provide your performance ratings.
- Step 3:** At the bottom of the page, print your name, your company's name, then sign and date.
- Step 4:** Return the completed, signed Staff Reference Form to Contractor.

PART 2 – THE REFERENCE MUST COMPLETE THIS TABLE.	
COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
Did the Contractor provide you with a copy of the completed Attachment 8 – Firm Mandatory Qualifications ?	Did this Firm perform the services described in Attachment 8 – Firm Mandatory Qualifications , including the functions as described and the time period provided on the project(s) that lists you as a contact?
☒ Yes ☐ No	☒ Yes ☐ No (If "No" checked, explain here.)
PART 3 – THE REFERENCE MUST COMPLETE THIS TABLE.	
THE REFERENCE SHALL COMPLETE PERFORMANCE AND ABILITIES STATEMENTS FOR THE PROPOSED FIRM AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING.	
Performance and Ability Statements	
1. Describe the services provided: The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) serves more than 782,000 children in 67 counties. The DCF's mission is to protect vulnerable children, promote strong families, and help families recover and become resilient. Recognizing the paramount significance of every child, IBM is committed to DCF's mission and continually delivers solutions prioritizing child well-being and future development. Since August 2012, IBM has provided Maintenance and Operations, Development, and Project delivery	

services to the DCF Child Welfare System. At the beginning of the contract, DCF was running on a system originally transferred from the State of Wisconsin. The infrastructure was outdated and inefficient. Workers faced a multitude of workarounds for completing tasks in a system that wasn't built for them. During our 12-year partnership with DCF, we migrated the DCF Child Welfare System and infrastructure from the State Data Center to AWS Cloud without disruption to system availability. Because of our initial success, IBM won a bid to also take over DCF Child Welfare System database administration in 2018.

We operate under a fixed-price contract of 40,000 hours per year, equally divided between M&O and Enhancement Development. The technical components include the Florida Safe Families Network Web Application (FSFN), Data Warehouse, Data Mart, Reporting, and Databases. Our project management framework is aligned closely with FL DCF on strategic planning, prioritizing enhancements and resolving defects before code is moved to a production environment.

The Maintenance and Operations Support team works diligently to address user issues identified during routine application use. They conduct thorough analysis to ensure the application functions optimally and provide prompt resolutions.

The Enhancement team plays a pivotal role in implementing updates to existing functionalities and introducing new requirements, driven by new federal and state mandates, user feedback, and agency requirements. This includes updating existing features, integrating new requirements, migration from on-prem servers to AWS Cloud architecture, code conversion from Mainframe COBOL to Java Spring Batch, and in addition, ensuring compliance with evolving regulations.

IBM's comprehensive support has been instrumental in maintaining and enhancing the Department's critical applications, ensuring they remain efficient, compliant, and user-friendly.

2. Did the Contractor produce deliverable reviews that met both the project specifications and the agency's expectations? Please describe briefly.

Yes, the contractor has worked on developing and transitioning various applications from legacy systems to the Cloud platform.

One major enhancement achieved was the migration of the application from On Prem servers to Cloud architecture using AWS. Another major enhancement was the migration of 2 Financial and 1 Medicaid Eligibility applications from COBOL to Java Spring Boot.

The 2 financial applications calculated the age of the children and the services being provided and generated the payments to providers, and recoup in case of overpayment.

The Medicaid Eligibility program extracts data from the Agency's main applications and sends this to the FLORIDA system for determining Medicaid Eligibility for children in care. In addition to these major enhancements, the contractor has completed quarterly enhancement for additional update on application's logic or to add newly approved changes to the application.

3. If there were changes in the project, did the Contractor adapt to those changes and work through issues during all stages of the Project?

Indeed, IBM has demonstrated exceptional adaptability and proficiency in managing substantial alterations to the project, consistently delivering high-quality services without disruption.

One example was the recent migration of part of the application from a Java architecture to a Salesforce application. The agency was able to migrate two of the application's modules within the time estimated. Using the Agile methodology has allowed the team to rapidly change gears when needed and focus on the changes needed to help the agency.

Another example was the sudden change of the Department's Secretary. This change required the team to implement an application change in order to update the new Secretary's name on all Child Welfare documents. This change required quick prioritization of the work and the team worked swiftly to implement the change.

4. Was communication between the Contractor and your organization's staff open, timely, complete and effective? Please briefly summarize.

Yes, the collaboration between IBM and the Department has been characterized by exemplary communication. The exchanges have consistently been open, punctual, comprehensive, and impactful, thereby facilitating well-informed decision-making processes.

The delivery methodology implemented for our enhancement team prescribes to have a daily standup, at the same time, to review the progress and identify any impediments that needs immediate attention.

Parallely, our maintenance and operations team have standup three times a week to review tickets submitted by users, prioritize the backlog, plan their development, and schedule implementation.

Lastly, once a week, the management teams from both agency and contractor meet to review the progress of the work, deployment schedules, and high-risk items previously identified.

5. Were any subcontractors used by this Contractor? If so, for what purpose/major tasks? How well did the Contractor manage its subcontractors and did your organization ever have to mediate?

IBM is the only contractor providing the service.

6. Was the Project a success? The project has been a success. The migration from On-Prem servers to AWS architecture and migration of the COBOL applications to Java Spring allowed the department to modernize their systems and open the path to move away from a monolithic architecture. Lastly, the development of MuleSoft APIs allowed the Department to connect their legacy application with the new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Application allowing for bi-directional data transfer and the timely completion of federal reporting. Lastly, the initial contract was signed in 2012/2013 for a 5-year support which has been extended in 3 occasions, and it is currently active until June 2026.
7. Would you rehire/recommend this Contractor? If not, why not? Yes. IBM is a valued partner in the Department's mission. The IBM team has proven to be action-oriented, collaborative, and a valued source of reliable and knowledgeable subject matter experts.
8. Optional Comments: IBM continues to be a valued partner with the Department, and we look forward to a continued partnership.
On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rate this Contractor's overall performance? 9

By signing this form, the Reference is certifying that all information provided on this form is correct.

James Cheatham

Florida Department of Children and Families

Name of Reference (print)

Name of Company Reference (print)

James B. Cheatham

10/15/2025

Signature of Reference

Date