

Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals Q&A
RFP for Family Foster Care Programs for Young People

January 12, 2016

80.) What is ACDHS timeline expectations of the provider to be at the Foster Care program capacity of 50 Young People?

Please see question #25.

79.) Can the One Time Enhanced Recruitment Funds be used by the provider to hire a Foster Care Family Recruiter and also utilized for advertising and other recruitment support activities? Or is the fund strictly to be used for advertising and recruitment support activities?

Proposers should propose what they feel is the best of the funds.

78.) Does the one time Recruitment funding spend down start when the contract begins and go 12 months?

Yes.

January 8, 2016

77.) As an attachment the Vendor Creation Form is required. If an agency is already a Vendor and already has a Vendor number does this form need completed and submitted with the proposal?

No.

January 5, 2016

76.) Specifically where do I find the budget template to submit my 3 year budget for the Foster Care RFP?

The budget template can be found on our Active Solicitation webpage:
[http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-\(RFP/RFQ/RFI\).aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-(RFP/RFQ/RFI).aspx)

The link to template is posted between the link to the Proposer's Conference Presentation and description of the RFP, under the heading "RFP for Family Foster Care Programs for Young People."

December 31, 2015

75.) On the indirect adm staff roster, do you have to list individual staff position/title or can you list by department? For example can you list finance and add costs or do you have to break out by finance positions and costs associated with each position?

Please list costs by staff position and title.

December 28, 2015

74.) It was stated at the Q&A that with the absence of a state budget this could be contingent on the county being funded as expected. Do you think the submission date or the award date is subject to change?

We do not intend to change the submission or award dates.

December 23, 2015

73.) What is ACDHS policy regarding provider reimbursement when the Foster Care Young Person or their Sibling is on a home pass or elopes from the program. Is the provider paid the per diem for those days?

The provider is paid the per diem when children and youth are absent from the program due to AWOL or home visits for up to 7 days. Exceptions are considered on a case by case basis.

Questions Asked at the Proposers' Conference on 12/18/15

72.) If providers have a new or different idea to support this initiative that is outside of the scope of this RFP, what is the mechanism to share it?

Please contact Adrienne Smith, Manager of CYF Provider Relations, by phone at: 412-350-5892 or by email at: Adrienne.smith@allegHENYcounty.us

71.) Will the County continue to run diligent recruitment? Or will this be transferred to the providers awarded?

Yes- the County's Diligent Recruitment grant from the Administration for Children and Families is authorized through 2018. Successful Proposers will be expected to actively participate in diligent recruitment related efforts.

70.) Do we need to put staff names in the staff roster for the indirects?

No.

69.) There is a formula error on the Direct Admin Expense worksheet- can it be corrected before the proposal is due?

Yes. A corrected version has been posted to the Active Solicitation webpage.

68.) Do you have an account definition on the line items listed in the budget?

No. If you have a specific question about a line item, please direct your question to DHSProposals@AlleghenyCounty.US.

67.) Are there any restrictions or parameters for joint proposals? If agencies wish to submit a joint proposal are the guidelines for these submissions: references, use of recruitment funds, contracting issues etc.?

For joint proposals, one agency should propose as the lead and the others would be working in partnership with the lead agency. The lead agency would submit one proposal that speaks to every question related to all partners. The lead agency should specify how it will guarantee the availability and quality of services that are delivered through relationships with partners.

66.) Great effort from AC, providers and the state went into the creation of a rate methodology for creation of foster care rates under Act 55. Was this process used? If not, why not? Are there points in time established for review of rates over time to make adjustments based on information on outcomes/success of initiatives and actual costs?

DHS used the cost report recommended by the Rate Methodology Task Force as a template for the budgeting in this solicitation. We wanted proposers to articulate costs in a way that was consistent with the budget review referenced in your question.

Providers are welcome to discuss rates with DHS throughout the life of the program. We will consider the question of whether to establish formal rate review periods.

65.) How will the process of supporting youth who want to re-enter care after they have been discharged be addressed? We have had 3 youth return over the past year and the process has been difficult to maneuver.

DHS does not intend to change the current process.

64.) Do you anticipate a need for more FFSB teams? Will the CYF caseworker retain role of safety assessment for visitation with the FFSB team: How will role clarification be maintained among the team, FC provider, FFSB team, and caseworker?

We recognize that we need to do some further planning to clarify roles around the FFSB process. This is something we intend to do in the coming months, with voice from the Successful Proposer.

63.) If a teen parent has a dependent child with significant medical or behavioral/developmental problems, will there be any consideration given to increase the PAT level?

The Successful Proposer would follow the current process for appealing PAT level and submit a written request to CYF Provider Relations, detailing exactly what the child requires that extends beyond current services. CYF Provider Relations would convene a meeting to discuss what is

needed and the amount of money it would take to meet the need; we would do everything possible to support the family.

62.) Is there a rate for non dependent infants?

If the infant is placed in the same foster home with the parent in the Family Foster Care Program for Young People, the provider would receive payment at PAT level 1 for that infant and the foster parent would need to receive a stipend for the care of the infant of not less than \$21/day.

61.) Can multiple agencies collaborate?

Please see question #67.

60.) What happens to foster care agencies who are not accepted?

If agencies who do not succeed in obtaining a contract under this solicitation continue in their contractual relationship with Allegheny County DHS, they may still serve children who are outside of the target population for this program.

59.) If an agency is successful and is awarded this contract, does that exclude the agency from being awarded future FC contracts?

No.

58.) Can we submit more than one letter of recommendation?

Please see page 47 of the RFP; references should be listed as follows:

1. Include name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for a professional agency that partners with you around family foster care programs.
2. Contact information for three (3) Young People that have been served by your existing child welfare program
3. Contact information for three (3) foster families that are active with your family foster care program (if you do not currently operate a family foster care program, skip this question)

If providers wish to submit additional references, they may do so; however only the references listed above will be scored.

57.) If a provider does not receive this contract and they have a few or many foster homes that take teens, will that provider be asked to move those teen homes to the new provider? Will referrals to these teen homes in losing agency stop?

It is not our intention to move teens from their current placement. Over time, and depending on the pace of start-up for the Teen Family Foster Care program, referrals of teens to providers who do not win this solicitation will stop. DHS has not established a firm date at which all referrals will go to the Teen Family Foster Care providers. CYF will work with each Successful

Proposer to develop a responsible start-up timeframe that will include increased referrals at a pace congruent with the pace of foster home development.

56.) Are the contracts year to year? If yes, will the plan be for the contract to be for multiple years?

The contract will be for a term of one year with the option to renew in years two and three.

55.) How will this affect currently waiting or placed families with teens? Would they need to transfer agencies?

See Question #57.

54.) What occurs if homes or beds dip below 50 or 75?

If programs experience problems in achieving the agreed upon pace of start-up for foster home development, or if at a future point they are unable to maintain the volume of foster homes specified in the contract, they will engage in a process of dialogue and corrective action with our monitoring unit around addressing the issue. Failure to establish and maintain the volume of foster homes specified in the contract would be taken seriously as a violation of a contractual obligation; however, DHS would want to work with struggling providers to correct the problem proactively as a first response.

53.) What level of choice will families have for placement (i.e. 12-16 year olds instead of 12-18 year olds? 0-18 year olds? No D&A issues)?

Individual families can have choice in the type of youth they want to work with. The Successful Proposer must have an array of families able to support the needs of the full spectrum of young people, as described in the RFP. Ultimately, your ability to maintain a program that can thrive on the rate depends on your ability to maintain appropriate homes.

52.) What level of matching for placement/just an open bed?

As is currently the case, the extent of the matching process depends on the circumstances surrounding the placement of each young person. The Successful Proposer will be expected to accept youth for placement on both an emergency/shelter and planned basis, in scenarios where there is adequate time for matching as well as in scenarios where there is not.

51.) Will there be any consideration for providers who wish to focus on particular need group (i.e. specify geography, LBGT, young parents) to provide less than 75 beds to start and to expand based on demand? We are concerned about having larged unused capacity and having families drop out.

No. The expectation is that the required minimum of 50 homes would be able to meet the full range of needs of young people as listed in the RFP. Providers wishing to provide services to a subset of the target population are encouraged to establish relationships with other providers and participate in a joint proposal.

50.) Can you clarify training agencies as part of submission requirements or do we need to show contracts with individuals who will provide the training as part of submission or are we required to set the training with specific organizations?

Regarding training for foster parents, Question 3 on page 45 outlines what we are asking for: "Briefly describe how you will carry out the foster parent training that is required as described in the Scope of Services. Include details about who will provide the required training. For any training that will be outsourced or provided via collaboration with other organizations, please attach the relevant service agreements."

49.) Can the 75 bed capacity be achieved through a collaborative proposal of more than on licensed agency led by one organization as primary contractor with another organization as a subcontractor?

Please see question # 67.

48.) Do you have info on the current rate of movement in foster care that is the result of foster care of families requesting removals of youth who are pleased with them?

We do not have this information.

47.) County contract start dates for history on page 42 of RFP. Is it acceptable to note the earliest date our agency/the county has on record?

Yes.

46.) Pg. 39 of the RFP references infant/child- if the child is non-dependent will they still receive a PAT level?

Please see Question #62.

45.) For young people over 14, do they have the right to exclude their parents from all medical (physical) appointments/permissions? The RFP references behavioral on pg. 21?

Providers are expected to provide family foster care in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local statutes and regulations. Providers should familiarize themselves with applicable laws in preparation for providing services. The RFP mentions that for minors over age 14, the Young Person's consent is required for their family of origin and/or foster parents to participate in behavioral health treatment. PA law grants minors age 14 and over the right to consent to mental health services, as well as the right to confidentiality of their mental health records. This law applies only to mental health services. Also note that minors of any age have the right to consent to drug and alcohol treatment services and the right to confidentiality of these treatment records. Other laws govern physical healthcare, reproductive health, and other matters; providers should also have an understanding of these areas of law.

44.) Will there be changes to service logs in KIDS to accommodate the details requested throughout the RFP?

If any changes are made to service logs, DHS will discuss the need for and shape of changes in partnership with the Successful Proposers.

43.) Pg. 16 RFP #3 (b) - if foster families are supervising visits how would you like the successful proposer to document the logs?

We will determine this in partnership with the Successful Proposers.

42.) We currently have "Marketing Reports" to discuss all recruitment/certification activity of families. Will this be ok for RFP pg. 28 or will we now be required to do an additional report?

DHS has a report format to track foster home development, but we are less interested in our format and more interested in the information it contains. As long as a provider submits a report containing the information required, we can be flexible on the format.

41.) How are the above reports to be submitted to the county?

The reports will be submitted via email to a designee to-be-determined by the county.

40.) RFP pg. 28 c- We utilize a SWAN approved home study format. Will we be permitted to continue utilizing this format?

Our intention is to do this work together on the homestudy content and format that will be required by Allegheny County. Over time and in partnership with providers, this format may change.

39.) RFP Pg. 33 A (1) or pg. 29- Home Study updates- do they need to be in a narrative format or can we use our re-evaluation process?

They must be in narrative format.

38.) What is the process for submitting training curricula?

The training curricula must be put in writing. We intend to work out a process and protocol for this within the next few months.

37.) How many proposers will be selected?

The number of proposers to be selected has not been determined.

36.) How will it be determined which teens aren't included due to MH or safety? Will these children be included in treatment foster care proposal?

Our intention is to establish a therapeutic foster care program later in 2016. The process for determining if a young person is the best fit will be developed in partnership with the Successful Proposers.

35.) What will happen with the recruitment work group and its efforts?

Please see question #71.

34.) What will happen if 50+ homes aren't recruited and certified?

Please see question #54.

33.) What if we feel like we don't have a match (for valid reasons) yet we are obligated to accept referrals?

In partnership with the Successful Proposer, we will work out a process for resolving this issue.

32.) Can you talk about the allowance expectations? Who should be paying it? Parents, providers, or employed youth?

In keeping with the "normalcy" principle recently established in federal law, the goal would be for the foster parent to pass the allowance through to the young person, but this could vary depending on the circumstances of the young person.

31.) Will teens currently in care remain with the current provider or will they need to transfer?

Please see Question #57.

30.) Will rate for teens with child depend on if the child (infant) is dependent?

No.

29.) Can shelter homes remain shelter only and not be expected to convert teens long term?

We would discourage the establishment and maintenance of shelter-only homes. Our strong preference is "first placement last placement." If a provider has a clinical rationale to the contrary please articulate it in your submission.

28.) Will the teens currently in placement with the provider count towards the 50 homes?

The teens would not, but the homes would.

27.) What is the county stance on homes where currently more than 2 teens are placed?

We want to work toward making sure that there are not more than 2 unrelated teens in a home. If a Successful Proposer is working with some situations in which there are currently more than 2 unrelated teens in one placement, we will examine the viability of these situations and the impact on each young person on a case-by-case basis during the start-up period.

26.) What happens when a youth ages into teen category?

We do not intend to move children as a result of their age alone.

December 22, 2015

25.) Providers will be awarded the contract for older youth foster care placements. How will the county handle existing older child foster care placements for those youth who have been in placement with providers not awarded the contract? Will the youth be transitioned to the providers awarded the contract? If so, what is the time frame?

The pace at which youth begin to be served by the Teen Family Foster Care providers will depend on the pace at which the Teen Family Foster Care providers establish a sizable pool of foster families who are prepared to serve teens. There is no plan for a hard and fast date by which all teens in placement will be served by the new program. Rather, CYF will work with each Teen Family Foster Care provider to develop a responsible start-up timeframe that will include increased referrals at a pace congruent with the pace of foster home development.

24.) Will the short term emergency placement incentive rate carry over to the older youth emergency placements?

Yes.

23.) The RFP outlines expectations that the assigned provider would review the ClientView record on each Young Person to determine prior history with behavioral health and other services. This function in KIDS is not currently available to foster care providers. When is the anticipated date for this function to be available to foster care providers?

Provider access to Client Vue is expected to roll out in phases throughout 2016.

22.) Page 11 outlines the responsibility for the successful provider to develop the IL transition plan. The provider is expected to work in conjunction with the DHS IL staff, who is responsible for completing the IL assessment on the youth. Presently, foster care providers are not provided access to the IL assessment in KIDS. Providers currently caring for older youth experience a major barrier securing the youth's IL assessment. To support the responsibility of providers to complete the IL Transition plan, will providers have access to the IL plan in KIDS?

Our intention is to grant Successful Proposers access to the IL plan in KIDS; that access does not currently exist and will need to be programmed in 2016.

21.) Page 13 states that the county will implement Family Focus Solution Based services for youth in care for 90 days or more. It is not clear if Family Focus can be the only service or are there other alternatives that can be utilized? If there are other alternatives, what are some of the alternatives?

Our intention is to rely heavily on Family Focused Solution Based services. However, this service may not be the best fit for the needs of particular families and alternatives can be explored based on family need.

20.) Page 16 and attachment K outlines a Guide to Clothing Inventory. Clarification on the guide is being requested. Is it correct to assume that the guide is a tool to use to ensure

sufficient clothing and is not to replace the clothing inventory field in KIDS. Request for clothing allotments are to be made through the IDs Clothing inventory field.

DHS will be examining this functionality in KIDS with Successful Providers as part of the program start-up.

19.) Page 16 talks about visitation. It is outlined that the expectation is for the provider to arrange visits with parents who are incarcerated. Some parents can be placed in facilities across the state. It would be an extraordinary expense for providers to handle prison visits in these circumstances. What will be the expectations and reimbursement for these expenses from the county to providers?

It is the expectations that the provider will transport to visits with parent incarcerated. Any extraordinary cost will be evaluated on an individual basis. Providers would submit a request to CYF Provider Relations to initiate consideration of extraordinary cost.

18.) Page 17 offers the use of a Teaming meeting when visitation can be complicated by extra circular activities. What is the expected time frame for the teaming meetings to be scheduled?

We expect to develop these types of expectations with Selected Proposers following the award decisions.

17.) Page 17 outlines the expectations for providers to complete a Discharge Summary. This paragraph does not match with the current KIDS practices. The Discharge Summary field in KIDS does not contain the domains outlined under the expectations for providers. Will providers have to complete the KIDS Discharge Summary and then complete paper discharge summary and forward or will KIDS be updated to expand the Discharge Summary to match the outlined expectations for providers.

DHS will be examining KIDS functionality in this area with participation of Successful Proposers as part of the start-up of the program.

16.) Page 21 outlines that vision screens should occur no less than once every 2 year; regulatory requirements for foster care providers are that vision screens occur at least annually.

The RFP indicates minimum requirements – any regulations exceeding those requirements should be complied with.

15.) Page 22 outlines the expectation that DHS 501 form is completed and forwarded to enrollment within 24 hours of placement. For placements that may occur over the weekends and holidays, the 24 hours expectations may not be met. Is it acceptable for the awarded providers to meet this requirement within 1 business day from placement?

Yes, submission within 24 hours/1 business day is acceptable.

14.) Page 27 bus passes. The county presently has a process in place for issuing bus passes for youth. Based on the wording in the proposal, clarification is being sought. Will the county

continue the current bus pass process, as it works fine and is very efficient or will the process be changed? On the same note, if the provider is responsible for covering the cost of bus passes, is there any consideration to limiting the provider expense to a bus pass to 1 zone?

Page 27 is amended and should read:

“4. Assessing, along with the Young Person’s Team, a Young Person’s need for a bus pass once the Young Person is age 14 by:

- a. Ensuring that Young People who attend City of Pittsburgh schools receive a bus pass and the assist the Young Person in obtaining that pass
- b. Working with the CYF caseworker to develop a plan to obtain bus passes for the youth to meet transportation needs, in accordance with DHS’s existing bus pass distribution program.”

13.) Page 28 speaks to foster family recruitment report that is to be submitted to DHS. Is there currently a format for the recruitment report?

DHS has a report format to track foster home development, but we are less interested in our format and more interested in the information it contains. As long as a provider submits a report containing the information required, we can be flexible on the format.

12.) Page 29 outlines the requirement that a copy of the providers training be submitted to DHS for approval. If the provider is currently part of the older child initiative and collaboration, does the initial orientation training need to be submitted? The requirement does not outline who at DHS will be responsible for approving curricula and the anticipated turn around for approving?

The training curricula must be put in writing. We intend to work out a process and protocol for this within the next few months.

11.) Page 36 outlines staffing. The recommended staffing ratio is 1/12. Can you provide information on how this ratio was established? From a provider experience the ratio is high. Based on the case management responsibilities outlined, a ratio of 1/9 is recommended, based on current experiences with appointments, court, and visitations. If the staffing pattern were to remain 1/12 than it is recommended that additional staffing of a PT case aide, to help with transportation be approved.

The staffing ratio of 1:12 is a minimum ratio. Providers are permitted flexibility in staffing the program through a combination of caseworker, case aide, and other positions as they see fit, as long as the caseworker: child ratio does not exceed 1:12.

10.) Page 39 speaks to rates. Please clarification for teen mothers if a child either nondependent or dependent accompanies a teen the rate for the child is a PAT 1?

Yes.

9.) \$75.00 is the established rate for the day to day care. It is the assumption of the provider (from completing the IVE packets), when the rate was calculated that the cost of transportation to maintaining educational stability was not calculated as part of the rate. Based on this assumption, transportation to maintain educational stability becomes an

extraordinary expense to the provider. The extraordinary expense incurred from the provider can place a financial hardship on the provider to cover the cost. Is the county willing to explore using the service log field in KIDS to help offset this financial hardship to provider? The service log can be set up to have a standard mileage reimbursement rate to cover mileage and staff cost.

Providers are expected to recruit and license foster parents in the neighborhoods identified in the RFP so that there is a decrease in placements of youth outside of their school district of origin and thus, a decrease in need for school transportation. When a youth is living with a foster family outside of the school district of origin, providers are expected to work collaboratively with CYF and the school district to arrange for the school district to cover the cost of transportation, or to make use of public transportation where possible. As a last resort CYF intends to make its case aides available for transportation to/from the regular school day. The provider and foster parent are responsible for all other transportation needs including but not limited to ordinary activities (sports, clubs, etc.), therapies and medical appointments, transportation to court and visits, etc., noting that as appropriate youth can use public transportation to/from these activities as well.

8.) The proposal outlines specialized funds that will be available to offset certain expenses. Will the reimbursement to providers for expenses covered by the specialized funds be payable as concrete goods?

No.

7.) Page 40 takes about the recruitment fund. The recruitment fund is available only for the first year of the proposal. In regards to foster parent recruitment, research shows that it takes 12-18 months from a potential foster parent to hear about foster parenting to follow through with making application. Based on this research, the effectiveness of the recruitment will not be realized until the end of year 2 and into year 3. The expectations of foster parent recruitment are not spelled out in the proposal, is there any expectations that can be shared?

The specialized recruitment fund is a one-time start up fund and providers are expected to maintain recruitment efforts sufficient to meet the contractual obligation to provide a pool of foster parents such that the program can care for 75 teens/siblings/children of teens at any one time. DHS is managing a County-wide recruitment campaign that Teen Family Foster Care providers can participate in at no additional cost.

6.) Page 46 outlines the requirement to submit resumes for positions for the proposal. What information or qualifications are being gleaned from the resumes? In cases when there are current vacancies, are there other requirements for submitting resumes?

As outlined on page 46, proposers should submit job descriptions for all direct care positions that are planned to participate in the Family Foster Care Program for Young People as well as resumes for staff intended for those positions, when known.

5.) Does the staff ratio requirement of 1:12, not to exceed 1:15 apply to all 75 of the minimum program bed size or just the "Young People" 50 minimum bed portion of the program? And if

the 1:12 ratio applies only to those 50 Young people beds then what, if any, is the staffing requirement for the 25 siblings and infants portion of the service?

It applies to all 75 children.

4.) What is the average PAT rate for siblings and infants within the Allegheny County DHS Foster Care Programs?

We do not currently collect data specifically related to the PAT rates of siblings of teens in care.

3.) Do they want us to attach our agency budgets or actuals for the two most recent fiscal years?

Please submit actuals for the two most recent fiscal years.

2.) They say this section should be no more than 5 pages – the 990 alone is 20+ pages. Are they not factoring that into the total of 5? Or does the 5 page limit only apply to the Budget Narrative?

The 5 page limit only applies to the budget narrative.

1.) Our audit in accordance with federal, state and county requirements (aka our federal awards audit and county agreed upon procedures) will not be completed by the submission due date. Should we include our prior year one instead or include our most recent “standard” financial statement audit prior year audit

Please include your prior year audit.