

RFP Response Form

Supervised Visitation Coaching and Visitation Space

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following questions. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 100 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 10 pages.

Organizational Experience (25 points)

1. Describe your experience in serving the target population.

Holy Family Institute (HFI) has been serving children and families since 1900. A particular focus of the congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth is maintaining a family perspective in all of our programs and services. Through the years HFI's services have been provided to birth or biological families, kinship families, foster families, and adoptive families to help them address major challenges, stabilize the family, and enhance family functioning.

Two offices, located in East Liberty and McKees Rocks, have enabled HFI's family clinicians to establish strong local ties to the families' natural social networks, community churches, civic groups, housing authorities, and other local community anchors.

Since 1987, Holy Family's Community-Based Family Support Services (in-home) program has provided supportive services to more than 8,000 families and 25,000 children. During that time more than 90% of the children were able to remain in their homes despite entering the program at risk of removal. Annual client satisfaction surveys reveal that 98% of families report a positive impact from our services, 90% of families are utilizing community support, and 76% had a reduction of their risk scores.

Since 1991, HFI has gained extensive experience in providing alternative and special education services to youth aged 6-18 who are living at home but at risk for, and/or presented with, delinquency, violence, substance use, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Disruptive Behavior Disorder. Often these youth face additional co-morbid challenges such as depression and involvement in the child welfare system. Our services to these students include supporting and collaborating with their families so that the student can return to their local school and remain at home when removal is a consideration.

HFI's drug and alcohol program has a state waiver and is uniquely designed to provide services in various settings, including clinics, the home, and at school. This program, as well as the Out Patient and Family Focused Solution Based mental health programs, operates out of the community offices to serves families often at risk for instability and child abuse or neglect.

2. Describe your experience providing family visitation or similar services.

HFI has been providing family preservation services in Allegheny County since 1987 through the Community-Based Family Support Services program. The focus of this program is to provide culturally responsive family services that improve parenting skills and help them address life challenges. The goals of the program are to enhance the parents' ability to create a safe, stable and nurturing home environment that promotes healthy child development; to prevent out-of-home

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placement of children when safety is possible for all family members; to reunify children in out-of-home placements with their families; and to provide, refer to, and coordinate services needed to achieve or maintain family safety, stability, independence and unity. When requested, counselors provide supervised visits in the family's home and in family support centers.

In 2012 HFI was the successful bidder for the Supervised Visit Coaching program in Armstrong County and continues to provide this service. The program has proven to be successful in helping families meet their goals and reduce the need for further governmental services. HFI provides similar Supervised Visit Coaching services in Indiana County on a smaller scale.

HFI's family counselors provide supervised, structured visits between parents and children not in the parents' custody. The visits take place at various times and days of the week (including weekends), and are scheduled to meet the needs of all involved. These visits occur at the parents' home, a relative's home, a family center, or at the Visit Coaching Home leased by HFI.

The Visit Coaching Home is located in Kittanning because it is convenient to a bus route and is central to Armstrong County. The home is near several support agencies that help families HFI currently assists, and is within walking distance of a park, playground and shopping options. A large back yard is used for interactive play.

The visit home has large multi-use spaces generously furnished with couches, chairs, lamps, pictures and furniture appropriate for children and infants, plus a TV and DVD player. We provide developmental and interactive toys and books for children of all ages, and a Pack N Play with toys for infant interaction. The kitchen is supplied with cookware, dinnerware, utensils, a stove and refrigerator for families to prepare meals, and for young adults to learn independent living skills. There is a full bathroom and a laundry room with a washer and dryer for use by staff, families and independent living clients.

3. Provide examples of your experience in tracking and measuring the impact of services on families.

Holy Family Institute's Risk, Compliance and Quality Officer tracks outcomes for all client-based and community programs. Specifically within our Community-Based Family Support Services we track the following outcomes:

- Parents/Caregivers will provide a stable and permanent home for their children as measured by the number of children residing with the family at discharge;
- Parents/Caregivers will provide a safe environment for their children as measured by the number of families where the identified risk score was reduced at discharge;
- Parents/Caregivers will enhance the child's well-being as measured by the number of families who achieve their goals and the number of families connected to community resources at discharge.

The data gathered at discharge on families served provide us with information that quantitatively measures the impact our services have on families. For example, the data collected between 7/1/14 and 6/30/15 yielded the following results: 516 children were discharged from the Community Based Family Support program and 512 (99%) remained with a family; 224 families were discharged where risk scores were assessed, and 207 (92%) reduced their risk scores; 224 discharged families established goal plans, and 177 (79%) successfully achieved them; and 213 (95%) of the 224

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discharged families were connected to community resources. Holy Family also administers client satisfaction surveys to qualitatively assess the impact our services have on families.

Regarding the measurement of the success of our Supervised Visit Coaching program in Armstrong County, 73 families have been discharged from the program and 65 (89%) have successfully met their visitation goals. Twenty-three of these families were referred to Holy Family through the Child Welfare system, of which 17 (74%) were successfully reunited. The longest treatment time prior to a successful reunification was 13 months, the shortest was one month, and the average is 4.8 months.

Fifty of the families we discharged were originally referred by Armstrong County Court. All but two families successfully completed their court-ordered visitation plans. Of these 50 court ordered families, 46 (92%) were discharged without being brought to the attention of the Armstrong Children and Youth Agency, meaning they required no further assistance. Additionally, after being evaluated by the Agency, none of the remaining four families resulted in open cases, meaning no dependency issues were established. This is notable because Visit Coaching was being utilized with the Court Custody Cases as a way to prevent these families from entering the Child Welfare system.

4. Describe your experience providing culturally-competent, linguistically appropriate, and gender-responsive services.

Holy Family Institute staff members respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures. In keeping with our family perspective philosophy, all HFI employees are expected to respond in a manner that affirms the worth and preserves the dignity of individuals, families and communities. Cultural competence is important in our service and is critical to our success in service provision. We acknowledge culture's profound effect on meaningful service delivery and outcomes.

HFI recognizes the need to understand a family's ethnic and cultural value system. Staff members receive on-going training and supervision related to developing plans that are culturally responsive. Assessment of families includes understanding the cultural variables associated with the family's supervision of children, discipline, male/female relationships, decision making, as well as varying expectations for children based on age, gender or birth order. This approach is intended to mitigate ethnocentric models of intervention, service, and treatment. HFI currently employs bi-lingual staff in the community bases program (Asian) and in past years we have employed Haitian, Hispanic, and Asian staff members as needed, many of whom continue to work at HFI. HFI strives to hire staff members, recruit volunteers and board members who represent the culture of the clients served.

In the past, we have utilized interns that have been transgender, and of all ethnicities. In all of HFI programs we have experience with economic differences, ethnic, urban, rural, and suburban challenges. We have utilized interpreters when necessary to assist in supporting families. Holy Family has held training conducted by Chatham University regarding serving and advocating for LGBTQIA youth.

5. Describe your experience with fulfilling health and human services contracts.

Holy Family Institute was founded in 1900 and has been fulfilling contractual obligations with local municipalities for over 50 years. Our ability to respond to human services needs and meet the terms of our agreements is evidenced by contracts with 27 different Pennsylvania counties since 2000. The treatment model and funding sources for care has changed along with our mission in the last 15

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years, and our reach is now localized in Western Pennsylvania. We have active contracts with Allegheny County for Community Based Family Support Services; Armstrong County for In-Home Services, Independent Living, Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, Safe Child Visitation, and SafeCare; and Indiana County for In-Home Services, Family Group Decision Making, and Safe Child Visitation and SafeCare.

We have active service contracts with 15 school districts to provide services to students in need of alternative and specialized learning assistance. We are fulfilling child and family service contracts with United Way and mental health contracts with Community Care Behavioral Health Organization and an energy assistance contract with Duquesne Light. We also have active referral contracts with all major commercial insurance carriers, and recently fulfilled two federal contracts with the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Meeting Visitation Coaching Standards (30 points)

6. Describe the model of supervised visitation coaching you plan to use and how the model is successful in creating quality, healthy visits between parents and children.

Holy Family Institute uses the Visit Coaching model developed by Marty Beyer, Ph.D. We began using the model in Armstrong County in 2012, and we will use the same model in Allegheny County. Holy Family has two staff members qualified to provide Visit Coaching training. After initial training in conjunction with a successful contract with Allegheny County, the staff in Armstrong County will be available for ongoing consultation.

After using Dr. Beyer's Visit Coaching model for nearly four years, Holy Family Institute is convinced of its efficacy. When implemented correctly, the Visit Coaching model creates quality, healthy visits between parents and their children. Our counselors work with the parents early on to identify and reach an agreement about their child's needs and begin discussing strategies and activities that they can use during the visit to meet the child's needs. Once the family members convene for the Visit Coaching session, parents are encouraged to play with their child and they may be coached through role playing on how to give the child their full attention. Parents are encouraged to make the visit fun, and engaging. Counselors identify and build upon the parents' strengths in response to their child's reactions and needs, and guide the parents with suggestions to improve their skills.

Parents are reminded before and during the visit how they plan to meet the needs of their child. Counselors assist parents in coping with their own feelings as they relate to seeing their child and their child's reactions both positive and negative. The Coach will use a supervised visit checklist which assigns fidelity to the Visit Coaching model. This checklist will be used as a guide to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each visit.

7. Describe your experience with staff participating as a team to assist with family planning.

Holy Family Staff members take pride in establishing productive relationships with families; the extended family; and with the family's neighbors, friends, and other natural support systems. We understand how important it is to be respectful and to enlist the wants, needs, ideas, and solutions so that the family is fully engaged in the decision making process. As a Sanctuary® organization we adhere to the commitments of non-violence, emotional intelligence, social learning open communication, social responsibility, democracy/shared governance, and growth and change. We

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ask, “What happened? “ Rather than, “What is wrong?” Utilizing a trauma informed approach and Sanctuary® tools has helped us build meaningful and trusting relationships – an essential ingredient for working in teams and with families.

Holy Family staff members are trained in conferencing and teaming and are included in the sessions conducted by Allegheny county CYF. Counselors see the family as part of the team and refrain from giving excessive directives. Family counselors also participate in permanency planning meetings and family group decision making meetings. These meetings focus on respect for the individual, engaging the family in creating solutions, linking families to appropriate services, making suggestions, and offering support where appropriate.

8. Describe your quality improvement system, how you monitor and evaluate services and your experience using data and research to support practice.

Quality improvement is a cornerstone of Holy Family’s service process and monitored at three levels: the program level with the Risk, Quality, and Compliance (RQC) Department, the Quality Improvement Committee, and the Risk, Quality, and Compliance board committee.

All programs within the organization have identified key data-driven, client-centric, service level outcomes. These outcomes are then tracked and reported back to the Quality Improvement Committee on a quarterly basis. At the close of each quarter the committee, with the assistance of the RQC Officer, analyzes and benchmarks results with relation to research-driven best practices and standards, as well as past organizational performance.

Improvement opportunities are likewise identified and strategic improvement plans are formulated for areas where metrics and data show room for growth in order to tactically develop opportunity areas while continuously improving the level of service we provide to clients and the community. Results are monitored for control on a quarterly basis by the committee and throughout the quarter and the year by program directors and the RQC Manager. Under this structure, our strengths and opportunities as they relate to quality are continually capitalized upon through data collection, monitoring, analysis, and ultimately through data informed decision making.

Finally, on a quarterly basis, after the Quality Improvement Committee completes its quarterly review and makes recommendations, the RQC Board Committee meets to transparently discuss findings and provide an additional level of oversight with regard to the monitoring of service level outcomes. The RQC committee then reports to the Board of Directors at their quarterly meetings. In this sense, quality improvement is something for which all levels of the organization are active and accountable.

9. Describe your strategy for recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Holy Family offers competitive salaries with benefits and flexible hours, incentives and on-going professional development. We are also a faith-based organization, the value of which is immeasurable for some who choose to make the human services ministry their professional vocation. We also conduct anonymous employee satisfaction surveys, and this year introduced a ‘stay’ survey designed to identify opportunities and create a feedback loop between employees and supervisors.

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The retention rate of all staff within the Community Based Family Support Program over the past three years was approximately 80%. Retention of supervisors in this program was 100% during that time, and the average tenure of the program supervisors is 15 years with HFI. The average length of employment with HFI for non-supervisory staff is nine years. There are four supervisors and 32 staff in our community programs.

10. Describe your commitment to meeting the needs of families, regardless of day, location and frequency of visit.

Staff members in Holy Family's community programs currently work flexible hours and days—including evenings and weekends—to meet the needs of those we serve in Allegheny, Armstrong, and Indiana Counties. Every visit coach in Armstrong County has evening and at least one Saturday or Sunday visit in their case load. All visits are scheduled when the child and parent are available. We advocate for families to have the time and frequency needed to maintain their bond with their children. This is common for families with multiple children, and especially with newborns.

Visitation Location (15 points)

11. Describe your plan for developing a safe and secure space, in a home-like setting, for multiple, simultaneous visits when they cannot occur in the family home.

Holy Family Institute owns several homes on Allegheny Avenue adjacent to our main campus and will dedicate one home for Visit Coaching but others are available as necessary. Like the Armstrong County Visit Home, the designated home on Allegheny Avenue provides warmth and flexible space for shared activities and private time for both children and adults. Furnishings are comfortable and durable. There is a deck and fenced yard that allows for safe outdoor activities and conversation. The home is decorated and designed to help all who enter feel welcomed. Furniture can be grouped to create niches. Design elements include area rugs, plants, large throw pillows, framed prints, etc. Parents and children will be encouraged to create artifacts or bring something from home that can be hung and placed in the visit home in order to personalize it for the children. There is a kitchen and dining area as well as a laundry.

A home security system keeps the space secure when not in use, but also provides alerts when doors are opened and can be used to alert local police, fire and EMS responders in case of an emergency when counselors and families are in the home.

12. Describe your plan for offering geographically diverse visitation space, easily accessible to public transportation.

Holy Family Institute's homes on Allegheny Avenue are easily accessible from western Allegheny County, the north side, north hills, west end, and south side of Pittsburgh via Ohio River Boulevard and Port Authority bus route #14 Ohio Valley. Many suburbs adjacent to I-79 are within a short drive of the main campus, which is also convenient to Washington and Beaver County residents.

Holy Family will quickly find and lease a home in an appropriate complementary geographic location. The leased visit home will be furnished and equipped similar to the Visit Homes in Armstrong County and on Allegheny Avenue.

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Regarding location, our recommendation is to wait until all contracts are awarded so that Providers can coordinate their locations in a way that optimizes access to those needing services. In addition, many Holy Family community programs maintain relationships with several churches and community centers that may be willing to host visits at their locations if they have appropriate home-like spaces – or if such a space can be created.

Addressing Implementation Challenges (10 points)

13. Describe your understanding of the challenges inherent in implementing Coached Supervised Visitation and how you plan to address those challenges.

The most significant challenges we encounter with Visit Coaching in Armstrong County include the initial parenting meeting, transportation, and cancellations or no-shows.

The initial meeting between a child's birth parents and the child's foster parents or care givers takes place prior to the first meeting involving the child. Our experienced staff often report discord between the participants at these initial meetings, but the criticality of the meeting can't be underestimated. This is an important meeting for building trust around the needs and care of the child. Holy Family's trained counselors use a teaming and conferencing approach to address the challenges common to this initial meeting, including identifying specific plans for the family. It is important for this meeting to be successful as it often sets the tone for the Visit Coaching session.

Holy Family Institute is a Sanctuary[®] certified organization and all staff members use a trauma-informed approach and its tools. Sanctuary is both a clinical and organizational intervention that serves to guide staff, children, and families to share the same values and language. Should any meeting appear to have the potential for becoming violent, the Sanctuary[®] approach has proven to reduce physical aggression and promote a safe, nonviolent atmosphere for everyone in the family. In addition, each counselor has a mobile phone and the home security systems will be equipped with personal emergency response activation devices that counselors keep on their person.

Transportation in Allegheny County should be less of an issue than in Armstrong County given a more robust public transportation network, and the Department's desire for a geographically diverse network of meeting spaces. When transportation does become an issue, Holy Family Institute is equipped with drivers and vehicles to facilitate visits with advanced planning.

Cancellations by family members are a concern in all treatment settings. HFI will conduct reminder phone calls, text messages, and emails two – three days before a scheduled session to help mitigate cancellations. In addition, HFI will offer small rewards of gift cards or similar items to family members who need extra encouragement to keep their appointments. It is difficult for all parties when parents cancel or do not attend scheduled visits.

Through relationship building and working with family strengths we can limit these disruptions. Holding meetings in family homes or other comfortable settings that create a welcoming atmosphere can mitigate issues that prevent visits from taking place; making transportation available while being flexible with meeting days and times will also reduce cancellations.