

## RFP Response Form

### *Self-Care and Social Exposure Program for Children and youth involved in CYF*

#### 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 13 pages.

#### Organizational Experience (15 points)

##### **1. Describe your organization's experience in serving the target population.**

Ward Home has a rich history of serving at-risk youth since 1905. We have experience in serving youth from newborn to 21 years of age. We continued to serve newborns to eighteen year olds until 2002 in our foster care program. Prior, in 1997, Ward Home changed our residual program serving 13 to 18 years old to our current Supervised Independent Living (SIL) Program serving youth 16 to 21 years old. This change occurred when social services agencies were encouraged to become more community-oriented and we responded to an increasing number of teenagers who were unlikely to be adopted or reunited with their biological families. For the past twenty years, we have served at-risk youth in the target population of 16 to 21 year olds in our SIL Program, a community-based, residential program in apartment-style housing under 24 hour staff supervision. We also serve teen moms and, on a secondary level, along with the younger population of 1 to 5 year olds by serving their teen moms.

At Ward Home's three sites throughout Allegheny County, our homes are more than just temporary housing; they are safe, nurturing, home environments where the teens are encouraged to reach their individual goals and grow into successful, independent members of the community. The SIL Program teaches the teens vital life skills while living at our three sites in Allegheny County: our teen boys' site is located in East McKeesport, soon to be relocated to Swissvale; our teen girls' site is located in the Friendship neighborhood of Pittsburgh; and our teen moms' site is located in Wilkesburg.

Our program's success is due to our ability to effectively engage our teens and young adults by providing top-notch life skills training program; offering enrichment and educational programming; and evidence-based training of our staff. On the Ward Home's staff, our Mental Health Coordinator, Sara Weber-Striplin, oversees the emotional needs of our teens by providing individualized and group counseling for our teens supporting their mental health treatment facilitators. Sara also supports our direct staff in their teaching of life skills to our teens.

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In Fiscal Year 2015, our SIL Program served 66 teens. Prior to the redesign of Allegheny County's Independent Living (IL) Program, we also served 102 teens in our IL Program. For the past five years, Ward Home teens have participated in enrichment programming that has focused on community, cultural, and social experiences to engage in a range of social and skill-development activities. Each summer, our teens participate in an interactive summer enrichment program lead by our tutor. Our teens have benefited from opportunities to participate in a workforce development program to learn valuable soft skills necessary to get a job and keep it.

#### **2. Describe your organization's experience in providing programming that enhances the health and well-being of children and youth with or at risk for involvement with CYF.**

When a teen who is currently in the foster care system expresses interest in Ward Home, we determine their readiness to be successful in an independent living program through an extensive interview process and by their knowledge and application of basic and advanced life skills. An assessment program called the *Daniel Memorial* curriculum is used to design individual life skills lessons and establish unique teen-informed goals for every teen that enters our program. Lessons include personal appearance of: daily hygiene, hygiene products, washing clothes and makeup application. Our Life Skills Training Program is based on the *STEPS to Independent Living* curriculum to teach our teens learn how to take care of their personal appearance and well-being,

All teens in the SIL Program have individually designed goals and objectives and are also exposed to mentoring and enrichment programming in order to enhance their life skills development. Teens can remain in the SIL Program until their 21st birthday.

Our direct care staff is trained in evidence-based motivational Interviewing and trauma-informed care curricula that are proven effective based on rigorous evaluation and studies. These curricula focus on strengthening a teen's motivation to reach specific goals, such as securing stable employment or moving out on their own, as well as helping our teens recover from previous traumas, such as abuse, the death of a loved one, or being removed from their home at a young age. These curricula help teens change their negative behaviors, gain confidence, and develop trusting relationships at the same time enhancing their health and well-being.

Our teens and young adults learn to: pursue an education and earn a degree; find safe, affordable housing once they leave our program; explore and develop safe and healthy

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relationships; prepare for employment; manage their health, safety and well-being; and create opportunities that change their destiny.

Ward Home teens' health and well-being are priorities that are addressed in our Health and Well-Being Enhancement Program. We reach out to various community partners (Adagio, 3E Now, Planned Parenthood, and the Pittsburgh Aids Task Force) to offer self-care workshops for our teens. Our partnerships with local foundations have enabled us to provide programming that focus on nutrition, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle. The Health and Well-Being Program has been crucial in improving the health of Ward Home at-risk teens and young adults. Many of our teens come from backgrounds where healthy living was either not possible or not prioritized. Our program has filled in the gaps by teaching teens healthy skills and values, such as nutritious cooking and the importance of physical exercise. Our goal is that these become lifelong skills, allowing our at-risk teens and young adults to go on to have happy and healthy adulthoods.

### **3. Describe your organization's experience in providing culturally-competent, linguistically appropriate and gender-responsive services.**

As an organization that serves a diverse population of foster teens (race, sex, and gender), Ward Home's staff's diversity allows unique opportunity for them to address our teens' individualized concerns. Our staff's ability to form close relationship with teens allows them to address cultural needs. In our CANS Assessment, Ward Home staff assesses our teens acculturation domain, language, cultural identity, cultural ritual, and cultural stresses. Our staff is trained to recognize, to be non-judgmental, and to be open-minded to focus on the individual needs of each teen. Many times we learn from our teens about cultural needs and in turn provide community resources and support.

Likewise, we provide linguistically appropriate responses depending on individual needs. We find that our staff's connection with our teens allows us to understand the best communication style to use.

Gender-responsive services for youth are those services whose content, delivery, and cultural orientation address their unique needs and characteristics. The goal of these services is to prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency and promote positive development of at-risk youth. Services encourage healthy attitudes, behaviors, and life styles, as well as promote responsible decision making and self-reliance.

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Examples of current gender-responsive services includes: Male and Female Domestic Violence curriculum from our partner, 3 E Now; Hair and Cosmetology Workshops for teen girls through Empire Beauty School, The Women's Shelter Victims of Abuse for teen girls, and programming for teen moms through Healthy Start.

#### Meeting Program Standards (70 points)

#### **4. Describe your organization's plan to provide Self-Care services and supplies.**

Ward Home will hire a Program coordinator to oversee the "My Best Self" program and ensure effective collaborations between service providers and the program. Initially, we will utilize the self-care service providers identified by the county to ensure participants are matched to a service provider in their geographic area. The Program coordinator will create and maintain active working relationships with the hair salons, barber shops, and beauty supply stores identified as well as researching additional prospects in areas that may need greater service coverage. This will be done through intensive marketing strategies by the Program coordinator. The Program coordinator will personally meet with shop and beauty supply owners to establish a positive relationship to benefit the needs of the youth. The Program coordinator will be trained to educate the owners on the prevalence of trauma with youth in care and the importance of assisting youth to look good as well as feel good so that we can help them create a new and improved self-image and possibly help heal some traumatic experiences when it comes to self-care.

Once we have reached agreements with the service providers, we will incorporate the use of an inclusive referral form to link the participants with the service requested. Referrals will be made by current placement providers, foster care case managers, CYF case workers, or other agencies. Once referred, each participant will be entered into a service database that will allow the program coordinator to keep track of services and products rendered to each active participant to ensure stipends are maintained within the limits provided in the program. The referral form will identify Client Information (Name, age, placement location, gender, race), Service Request Information (Cut, Braiding, Extensions, Relaxer/Perm, Wash/Blow-out, and Product requests (Shampoo, Conditioner, Hair Gel, Hair Grease, Hairbrush/comb) The program coordinator will then schedule an appointment for the service requested and notify the placement provider within 48 hours of the appointment time and location that is within reasonable distance

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from the client's current residence. Since Ward Home cannot predict or guarantee the availability of the shops' calendars, placement providers who make the referral on behalf of the youth will provide 3 preferable dates and times for the youth to receive the service requested.

Transportation will be an essential key in ensuring that all participants' self-care needs are met. Ward Home will seek the assistance of all placement providers to meet the transportation needs. Currently transportation for self-care needs are handled by providers, CYF employees, and or foster parents. The program coordinator will work with the placement providers to make appointments during times when it is most convenient for meeting transportation needs. In addition to working with providers and case workers to meet transportation needs, Ward Home will hire a part-time case aid to assist with transportation needs (please refer to the transportation budget). This part-time case aid will be available to assist with transportation needs 24 hours a week. The role of the transportation case aid will include but will not be limited to pick-up and delivery of hair care products, assistance with getting out marketing materials, and transportation to and from hair appointments in the event that placement providers are not available due to an emergency or conflict.

Ward Home will act as a fiduciary for payment with all hair salons, barber shops, and beauty supply stores. At no time will funds be given directly to a youth, foster parent, or any other placement provider for supplies or services rendered. This process will eliminate the possibility of misappropriation of program funds. Ward Home has had preliminary discussions with potential service providers and vendors who have expressed a willingness to adopt an invoice payment system.

Ward Home will assist in providing supplies for on-going self-care to all active participants. This will be managed through the referral process. Placement providers making a referral on behalf of youth will identify the need for hair care products and or supplies. This info will be entered into our service database and supplies will be ordered from one of several beauty supply stores on our list. The products will then be delivered to the youth via our case aid or program coordinator or by US mail.

- 5. Provide examples of the Self-Care workshops your organization plans to offer, how they will accomplish Program goals and why your organization chose these activities.**

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Ward Home plans to offer quarterly one day self-care workshop events to youth and caregivers as part of the core delivery of “My Best Self”. Centrally located workshop events will feature topics targeted to age focused groups. Interactive workshop programming will include topics on, but not limited to:

- Hygiene & Skin Care
- Appropriate dress
- Maintenance of clothing
- Hair grooming
- Hand health& nail care
- Facial hair grooming and shaving
- Dental hygiene
- Young woman’s health needs
- Dining etiquette
- Social & conversation etiquette
- Putting manners to work

Ward Home’s “My Best Self” program plans to partner with community stakeholders as a primary source in providing self-care workshops to the population served. Our vision for the partnership would include the community stakeholder(s) as workshop facilitator during quarterly one day workshop events. Ward Home plans to bring intimate knowledge of the needs of the youth served by CYF to the partnership, the structure and marketing of an established program, as well as other supportive resources to planning and executing our Self-Care workshops.

In addition to the wealth of educational knowledge provided by community partners, Ward Home plans to utilize the “Looking Good for Success” curriculum by Village Northwest Unlimited as a supplement to quarterly workshops and will offer the curriculum as support resources to interested placement providers. This curriculum takes a common sense approach to teaching hygiene and good grooming skills. It can be adjusted for all age groups and is written in simplicity to educate the disabled population. “Looking Good For Success” is designed to make learning fun and engages learners hands on. The Juvenile Justice Department in California has been successfully implementing “Looking Good for Success” for several years with their youth population in care. We believe this is a great indicator of the curriculum’s level of appropriateness for the youth in CYF care.

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Through light, age-appropriate discussion and hands-on activities, our participants will learn valuable, real life skills in grooming and hygiene, as well as integral insights on etiquette. Example activities might include: matching up an appropriate outfit from a sample closet, supervised clothes ironing, or making practice “phone calls” to exercise proper etiquette.

**6. Provide examples of the social exposure activities your organization plans to offer, how they will accomplish Program goals and why your organization chose these activities.**

The “My Best Self” social experience component will offer both targeted topic based social opportunities, as well as general social experience opportunities. Topic based social opportunities will provide a platform on which to apply skills learned in workshop events. We believe that providing these opportunities is crucial to supporting our participants in their education through our program. We have identified these activities as appropriate or adaptable to the target age groups: elementary school, middle school and high school plus.

An example of a topic targeted social experience activity would be the “My Best Selfie” Photo Shoot Day. Our participants would be asked to use their skills learned from workshops to put together an appropriate and clean selection of clothes and have their photo taken by a volunteer photographer. Participants can choose from a couple different set ups in the park and receive digital copies. Additionally, this opportunity promotes self-esteem and provides the normalcy of having professional portraits taken as a child or young adult.

Another example would be partnering with non–profit provider of used clothing, such as Free Store Wilkinsburg/Free Store Braddock or Goodwill, to offer a shopping day for our participants. Kids and teens will be encouraged and/or assisted in selecting an appropriate outfit using hard skills taught in the clothing selection and care workshop. Some prompts might include “select an outfit that is appropriate for a dinner at someone’s home” or “select an outfit that you could wear to both an interview and a court hearing”.

A social opportunity Ward Home would love to explore as an activity is holding a group play date for elementary and middle school participants. Participants who completed the social etiquette workshop would be allowed to invite a friend who is not in the program to accompany them to the Pittsburgh Zoo or the Museum. The outing would

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allow the kids to use etiquette and manners in extending an invitation and engaging a friend in a group activity. As an added bonus, the outing might serve as a rare opportunity to promote the normalcy that at-risk kids might not typically have to invite a friend to an activity. This experience is a potential self-esteem booster to any child or family to whom that might apply. Another version of this play date outing might include the use of a Buddy System to pair up older and younger participants for an informal mentorship.

Less structured social opportunities also have value in the fabric of the “My Best Self” program. In partnering with Tickets For Kids, City Parks, and Allegheny County Parks office, Ward Home plans to offer fun and stimulating social opportunities for “My Best Self” participants to engage with peer groups while being exposed to new cultural experiences. Ward Home imagines offering the opportunity to go to the movies, concerts in the park, group bicycling and swimming. Such leisure activities will promote program engagement and serve as incentives for participation in the workshops.

#### **7. Describe your organization’s plan to market the program.**

Ward Home’s “My Best Self” marketing plan to guardians, caseworkers, judges, foster families and congregate care and group home facilities may include:

- The “My Best Self” program coordinator will perform in person, telephone, and email outreach to foster families, caseworkers, members of Kids Voice and CASA, group homes and congregate care, 412 Youth Zone, and other key stakeholders that will be in touch with youth in need of these services.
- a brochure that will focus on an overview of the program, program goals, participation requirements, transportation information, and participating providers that will be distributed to our target audience via mail, email, social media, workshops and classes, etc.
- A flyer will be posted at the DHS offices, Family Court, the 412 Youth Zone, and other locations where our target audience may be in attendance. It will also be posted at all workshop locations and possibly service provider locations.
- An annual newsletter summarizing the success of the program.
- Email communication with participants



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- Social media

Ward Home's "My Best Self" marketing plan to service providers such as beauty salons and beauty and haircare supply stores may include:

- Service providers will be identified in four geographic areas of Allegheny County through outreach by the "My Best Self" Program Coordinator.

- The Program Coordinator will schedule meetings with these providers to explain the benefits and requirements of the "My Best Self" Program.

- The "My Best Self" marketing materials will promote the service providers.

- Service Providers willing to donate time/services will be featured on social media, an annual newsletter, and possibly featured in publicity about the program.

#### **8. Describe your organization's plan to facilitate partnerships with service providers and to coordinate their services with children and youth, their guardians and caseworkers.**

Ward Home plans to establish partnerships with service providers by first making contact via phone. Once a phone conversation has occurred and the service provider shows an interest in becoming a partner, then the program coordinator will set up a face to face contact. During this time, the service provider will receive a more detailed review of the "My Best Self" Program and establish the logistics of scheduling appointments and payment structure. The "My Best Self" Coordinator will maintain contact with service providers on a monthly basis via email, surveys, face to face visits, and/or phone calls.

Caseworkers, youth, and caregivers will be made aware of partnerships with service providers through marketing materials, social media pages, and the coordination efforts of the "My Best Self" Program staff. The Program Coordinator will link participants with service providers based on the youth's geographical location. The Program Coordinator will set up the appointment and ensure that transportation has been established for the youth. After each hair appointment, the caregivers and youth will be asked to complete a survey that will measure their overall experience of the service provider/stylist, the salon/barber shop, scheduling of the appointment, and their appearance pre & post visit. Each time a survey is completed by a caregiver or youth, the youth's name will be

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entered into a raffle to receive \$25 worth of hair care products. This raffle will take place monthly. Youth will have additional opportunities to receive incentives by attending the quarterly “My Best Self” Workshops. The workshops will be significant in providing self-care education to youth and caregivers. (Refer to question 5 for more details on workshops)

In the event that a problem does occur during a scheduled hair appointment, the program coordinator will follow the agency’s grievance policy and procedure to ensure that the issue is handled effectively and in a timely manner.

**9. Describe your organization’s plan to staff the Program. Provide your organization’s strategy for recruiting and retaining qualified staff.**

Ward Home will recruit a program coordinator to oversee all aspects of the program including recruitment and supervision of a transportation case aid, identifying service partners and vendors, negotiating rates and service agreements, maintaining good relationships with all service partners, vendors, provider partners, caseworkers and guardians, incorporating an effective service scheduling strategy, incorporating an effective transportation strategy, coordinating and supervising workshops and social outings.

We will require that this individual have a Bachelor’s degree in social services, communications, or business with 3-5 years’ experience in the social services field. An individual with an AA degree will be considered if the experience level is adequate to accommodate the responsibilities of the position. The position will require flexible hours including evenings and Saturdays to accommodate the needs of the program.

Our recruitment efforts will include job postings on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Craig’s List. We will post the position with Nonprofit Talent, PCCYFS (Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services) and utilize social media and the Ward Home Facebook page to advertise.

The Program Coordinator will be supervised by our Program Director who has 15 years of social service and supervisory experience. Our Program Director is skilled in understanding the needs and challenges facing the population served by the program as well as motivating and supervising program staff.

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Ward Home offers a comprehensive benefits package including covering 90% of the cost of single medical coverage and 50% of family coverage, a pension plan, competitive leave time benefits, tuition reimbursement and training opportunities.

In addition to a competitive benefits package, Ward Home incorporates a culture of inclusive decision making, respect for all staff, and an understanding of work-life balance. We offer consistent supervision and observation to develop staff and we incorporate an annual appraisal system that ties performance outcomes to a merit based salary increase.

#### **10. Describe the challenges inherent in implementing the Program and how your organizations plans to address those challenges.**

- Transportation- Challenges in ensuring all youth can attend appointments, workshops and social outings. We will work with current placement providers to cooperative as much as possible with transportation needs. If a youth misses two scheduled appointments, that youth will be disqualified for services for the following quarter. In emergency situations, and in addition to “My Best Self “ program staff, we will call on additional Ward Home staff to assist in transportation needs.
- Attendance at workshops –Workshops will be fun and engaging and we will provide topic- related, gender specific gifts through a lottery system at each workshop. Additional incentives will be provided as budget allows.
- Supplies distribution- The logistics of distributing supplies is a concern. We will maintain common items in inventory and distribute via case aid delivery, or mail order.
- Limitation of service providers – We will make every effort to contract with enough service providers to ensure appointment availability to all interested participants.

Financial Management and Budget (15 points, not included in page count)

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11. Provide evidence of your organization's financial health by attaching its most recent audit or other financial documentation.- *Audit Attached*
12. Attach a detailed start-up budget and annualized budget that clearly supports the Program and the implementation plan.- *Per RFP questions, no start up budget is allowed. Annualized budget attached. A separate transportation budget is also attached.*
13. Provide a budget narrative that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing the Program. – *Attached.*

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Please submit the following attachments with your Proposal. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Cover Page
- MWDBE Participation Statement or Waiver Statement
- W-9
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited Financial Report
- Audited Financial Report
- Start-up and annualized budget

### **CERTIFICATION**

Please read the below statement and check the box to indicate agreement with its content.

X By submitting this proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are my work and that all responses are true and accurate.