



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

Foster Care Agencies

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Auberle

Authorized Representative Name & Title: John P. Lydon, CEO

Address: 1101 Hartman Street, McKeesport PA 15132

Telephone: 412-673-5800

Email: auberledevelopment@aublerle.org

Website: www.auberle.org

Legal Status: For-Profit Corp. Nonprofit Corp. Sole Proprietor Partnership

Date Incorporated: 1952

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Proposal: NA

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* From the DHS Solicitations email list

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	John P. Lydon	██████████ ██████	██████████████████
Contract Processing Contact	Darla Poole	██████████ ██████	██████████████████
Chief Information Officer	Rodney Prystash	██████████	██████████████████
Chief Financial Officer	Jason Miller	██████████ ██████	██████████████████
MPER Contact*	Terri Suhre	██████████	██████████████████

* *MPER is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.*

BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Attached

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

1. [REDACTED] Foster Care Family

2. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Foster Care Family

3. Sarah Russo Hugh Lane -Executive Director [REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 2/10/2021

Amount Requested: \$3,476,317

CERTIFICATION

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA, and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred, or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- MWDBE documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- 3 years of audited financial reports
- W-9
- Organizational Chart
- Implementation Timeline
- Line-item Budget, if desired

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is **250** points. Your response to this section should not exceed 30 pages.

Organizational Experience and Capacity (30 points)

1. Describe your organization's demonstrated experience working with the following populations: children from birth up to their 21st birthday who are at-risk or involved with the child welfare system; prospective and current Foster Care parents; birth parents; and all other stakeholders in Foster Care (e.g., court system, DHS caseworkers, other provider agencies), or an equivalent. Include how the input of children, Foster Care parents and birth parents have been incorporated into this Proposal.

Auberle currently has about 25% of all non-kinship Foster Care placements and just about 50% of all teens in non-kinship care in Allegheny County. We have been providing Foster Care services since 1990 and have continuously adapted our programming to deliver what works best for children and their families. Part of our success can be attributed to our close relationship and open communication with Allegheny County DHS. We share our success and are quick to collaborate on solutions when things do not go well.

Auberle has vast experience working with children and families from birth beyond age 21. Our programming expertise has helped thousands of children and families in the child welfare system through foster care and creative programming. This includes not only the foster children, but birth families, other informal supports, system partners and other provider agencies.

Stop Now and Plan (SNAP®) is an evidence-based program that we operate and have woven into our foster care programming. We have great success with enrolled families with children ages 6 to 11 that exhibit externalizing anti-social behaviors. It is a program that, like Homebuilders and Foster Care, works with the entire family including siblings of all ages. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 100% of boys and 90% of girls positively discharged from the SNAP® program, exceeding the program standards in both cases. This means that their behaviors dramatically improved and the family relationships were significantly strengthened. The SNAP® team actively recruited Foster Care families with eligible children to participate. We had zero dropouts and the feedback from the foster parents was phenomenal. In fact, we had a Foster Care child and parent become "Foster Care Ambassadors" to encourage other families to participate in the program. This program will be available to foster care in FY 21-22 and beyond.

Auberle's extensive array of Behavioral Health programs has been invaluable to our foster care programming over the years. The Director of Behavioral Health and Therapists provide clinical guidance to the foster care team as needed and are critical partners in our foster care success. In our Behavioral Health Department we serve children up to age 21 and families, including those involved in child welfare and juvenile court. Many of the clients are foster children, biological families, and other natural supports. Our expertise is respected beyond our Outpatient services. We also offer Student Assistance Programming (SAP) and school-based mental health services

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

to several school districts including East Allegheny, Duquesne and Bethel park. The number of students that we screen and provide treatment to has increased every year that we have delivered the services, evidence of our ability to engage and grow participation through quality service.

Auberle also operates the highly successful and sought after 412 Youth Zone Program. It provides comprehensive services for youth that have aged out or are preparing to age out of the foster care system. Currently serving about 900 Allegheny County youth annually, the program has a 92% percent engagement rate. The staff meets each young person where they are and use a variety of engagement techniques depending on their specific needs. The program model has drawn national attention. The federal government has visited the 412 Youth Zone several times to learn more about how we provide these services, as has several states and counties. In 2020, we contracted with Crawford County Human Services to provide similar Independent Living Services for Foster Care youth and juvenile court involved young people living in Crawford County.

Once an agency that served hundreds of youth in congregate care, we now serve thousands of young people in their communities, helping them heal from trauma and achieve success in their lives. Our staff have decades of experience working with child welfare involved youth and advocating on their behalf.

Our strength is also in the partnerships we have cultivated through decades of doing this work. In addition to the partnership we have with DHS, we work with partners all over the County to connect families with the resources they need. Auberle was recognized as Agency of the Year in the entire United States by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities for our commitment to achieving high levels of measurable success with the people we serve. We received the Aramark Award for Organizational Leadership for being an organization that is a true change agent, one that elevates its staff and communities in leadership, manifesting itself in a more equitable approach to sustained community change resulting in measurable improvement in population health and well-being. The CEO of the Alliance said of Auberle, "The Alliance is proud to partner with our national corporate partner, Aramark, in honoring Auberle, an organization that embodies the very best of our field and network." The Pittsburgh Business Times honored Auberle with an Innovation Award for our impactful approaches and ability to partner with other sectors, especially the public sector, to benefit the people we serve.

Seeking feedback from the foster children in our care, their families and foster families is a critical component of our work. For example, we host foster care celebrations that include biological families and foster families together. We engage them in conversation to gather meaningful input o program operations.

We facilitate foster parent support group dinners. During that time, we recognize their successes and talk about what trainings, in practice, were most helpful to them. The Foster Care team goes over training logistics to find out if better accommodations could have been made to meet the needs of parents. It is also a critical time to find out if there were gaps in their training that we can focus on providing moving forward.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Auberle's CQI Associate reached out to families individually to get feedback on our services and our proposal. We understand that while Auberle operates a successful and large Foster Care program that there is always space for improvement and that DHS would not be engaging in this RFP process if that were not true for all providers. We see this proposal as an opportunity to reimagine all aspects of our programming, strengthening those that are working well and strategizing with families on opportunities for growth. It is a philosophy we adopt in all our service areas. We have incorporated that feedback into our proposal. Notable is that parents overwhelmingly appreciate our availability and 24 hours support. A theme among the more critical items was that more coordination around partners like Kidsvoice would be appreciated to assist Foster Care parents in understanding and then explaining the legalities of what is happening in foster care. We have taken that feedback into account immediately and have also incorporated it into our program design.

2. Describe your organization's demonstrated experience working with communities and populations that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, culture and SOGIE and reflective of the target population.

Auberle serves 4,000 individuals and families per year that represent all backgrounds, races, religions, cultures and SOGIE. We prioritize lived experience in our hiring practices and are very open-minded about how that is defined. Our job descriptions state education requirements OR relevant lived experience. The Director of our Foster Care Program and our Foster Care Recruiter Manager both have extensive lived experience with the foster care system. They both lean on that personal experience to connect with families and understand the real side of experiencing the foster care system, full of ups, downs and the unexpected. Pairing these experiences with their years of professional child welfare experience is essential to supporting our families with any issues they are working through.

Currently, 34 certified families reside in one of the 11 target communities where removals are highly concentrated. Our recruitment was intentional in these communities. We recruit effectively because our current and former Foster Care parents are tremendous ambassadors that help us recruit within their networks. We host "Recruitment is Everyone's Business" training to educate our prospective Foster Care parents on how to talk about foster care, what Auberle has to offer, and answers questions about the experience. Following this training, we do one-on-one sessions with our "ambassadors" to come up with individualized strategies to support our targeted recruitment.

18 Foster families have a personal connection to the LGBTQIA+ community either identifying themselves as or have a close connection to members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, 26 Foster families indicate that they are willing to foster a youth from the LGTQIA+ community and 42 of our Foster parents have been certified in Affirm.

Our current stats show that we have 40 Foster Care homes where at least one of the parents within the home is black. In addition, 61% of current Foster Care clients are black or multiracial. Recognizing the institutionalized racism that puts more children of color into care in the first place, we are successful in helping those children return home or become adopted. 73%

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

of black and multiracial children return home or are adopted. Those outcomes are the two highest discharge reasons for those two demographic groups.

All senior leaders at Auberle participate in the DHS session on racial inequality in the child welfare system. We have had DHS present to our Board of Directors on these issues to enforce that improving diversity, equity and inclusion starts at the top. In 2020 our staff have created a Challenging Conversation for Change group to highlight DEI and to support each other as we process the trauma of chronic, systemic racism on staff and clients.

Auberle is currently partnering with Vibrant Pittsburgh on staff training for attracting, hiring, and retaining diverse staff. All staff at the 412 Youth Zone are participating in Yoga Roots programming and we hope to extend that to the rest of the agency. We incorporate cultural humility through Sanctuary, using Motivational Interviewing, and recognizing that success is defined by those we serve not by staff. We challenge staff to regularly use self-reflection to confront cultural biases in one-on-one supervisions and caseload reviews. Due to our long history of involvement in child welfare work, our staff have experience and sensitivity in responding to the needs of LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with substance use disorders or mental health concerns, those with intellectual disabilities, specialized medical needs, and limited English proficiency.

3. Provide clear reasoning why your organization feels it is a strong candidate for this opportunity and how Foster Care fits well within your organization's mission.

Auberle has been providing Foster Care services for 30 years and is the County's largest non-kinship provider. We have decades of experience providing family-centered services in partnership with child welfare through programs like Homebuilders® and SNAP®. We work daily with multi-system involved young people through juvenile and adult probation, mental health, and drug and alcohol services. Auberle's Employment Institute helps 500 people annually that are involved in multiple systems with multiple barriers to achieve stability and safety. It requires a deep well of knowledge, experience and understanding of trauma to have the kind of success that Auberle has had with families since 1952. All of these services are an integral support to the foster care program and many foster children, birth families and foster families have benefitted from this array of services.

Auberle's service philosophy is strengths-based, believing that families are the experts in their own lives. We are committed to trauma-informed care in service delivery and in staff supervision. This is an expectation in our field, but we train other providers on trauma-informed care every month. In the Spring of 2020 when the pandemic first started to unfold, we offered an additional four trauma trainings. We believe that people can change, and recovery is real. We give preference to hiring individuals with lived experience including recovery and prior system involvement.

As a Foster Care provider, we are known for the deep level of support we offer to Foster Care families to keep placements intact. We offer support groups, daily/weekly contact as needed, feedback opportunities, peer connections, ongoing training, and we operationalize the belief that all children deserve a home. During COVID-19 we demonstrated these commitments by

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

delivering care packages to Foster Care homes, creating virtual play groups and hosting virtual sibling support groups. Our support groups were such an asset throughout COVID-19 that we were asked by ACCYF to open the support groups up to external Foster parents to provide them a space to connect and feel part of a community.

4. Provide the number of homes and total bed capacity you anticipate being able to maintain at any given time. Be specific about the number of homes you anticipate being best equipped to care for different child demographics and other characteristics (e.g., infants, teenagers, Therapeutic Foster Care, LGBTQIA+ individuals).

Our capacity is for 240 beds and the breakdown for the specific characteristics is as follows:

65 for infants

85 for ages 3-11

45 for ages 12-14

40 for teens 15-18

5 for 18+

80 of the total will be Therapeutic Foster Care homes and 50 total will be LGBTQIA+ friendly.

5. Describe your plan for *recruitment* of diverse, culturally humble Foster Care families who will provide high-quality and trauma-informed care and safety for children. Please include:

- a. Specifics about which populations you will target.

As most Foster Care agencies will tell you, many people conjure images of newborns and infants when they think about fostering. People struggling with infertility or who have hopes for adoption can become attracted to the potential of becoming a Foster Care parent. Our focus with these families is to educate them on the realities and expectations of foster care. We work with them to understand the full foster care picture and how it fits into the greater child welfare system. We ensure they understand the importance of frequent and meaningful visits with biological family to the wellbeing of the young person. The premise that they are co-parents with biological families is emphasized early and often.

We also focus our support around preparing Foster Care parents for the grief and loss that they will likely experience. It is important to be open about that with parents so that we can help them prepare, process that loss and set realistic expectations. It also builds trust and adds to our ability to retain Foster Care parents. Siblings in Foster Care homes can also experience the trauma of repeated broken attachments with Foster Care children in their home.

Pre-service training is also offered for youth becoming siblings to youth in foster care. The goal of this training is to educate youth about what foster care is, what it is going to look and feel like for them, and what coping skills they can use throughout the process. This training uses our therapeutic challenge ropes course, designed to build trust, expand personal boundaries, increase trust and independence, improve communication, and learn appropriate social boundaries - all

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

things required to be a good Foster Care sibling. We have also worked with our Behavioral Health team to develop a support group for youth who are acting as a Foster sibling. This group is a mix of both biological or adopted children of the Foster families who are provided a safe, nonjudgmental place to express and work through the emotions fostering has brought to them. We have found the focus of support to these youth has helped lessen the burden on our Foster parents, positively impacting recruitment, retention, and expanding the populations they are willing to foster.

Auberle has been partnering with DHS since 2016 on Teen Foster Care. We have had the opportunity to use the expertise of Michael Sanders who contracted with ACCYF to provide guidance around recruitment for teens. We let data drive our recruitment plan and use removal data and focusing on the neighborhoods with the most removals. We focus on getting to neighborhoods and communities and building trust so that connections can be made more organically with potential teen Foster Care parents. An essential and effective part of Foster Care recruitment is to help young people explore their natural supports. We help them think about who “shows up for them” in every area of their life. Helping them explore those circles of support can often lead to a loving Foster Care home.

We find that after a year or two of fostering younger youth, people become more open to fostering teens. By then, parents have more confidence and have trainings on a wide range of topics under their belt. They also have that time to grow their own support system and have personally experienced the level of support that they will receive from Auberle staff. We use our customer service approach and various avenues of support to build their confidence and assure them that we will be with them every step of the journey. It is really about relationship building and earning trust. Conveniently, the same things required to be a good parent to a teen.

Currently, 20% of Auberle Foster families identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our biggest tool for recruitment of LGBTQIA+ homes is through attending events sponsored by or celebrating this community. We participate in Pittsburgh’s PRIDE event every year and it is often one of our largest recruitment events. Participating in these events have helped us to strengthen our relationships with the youth and Foster parents who belong to this community because they see us showing up, participating, and being allies/accomplices. Word of mouth is one of the best tools for Foster parent recruitment and when current Foster parents see you supporting them, the community, and feel the truth in your connection they are much more likely to recommend you to a friend.

The most success we have had in the recruitment of therapeutic foster care is by tapping into professional networks, especially those that work with children and youth. We have several Foster parents who work as nurses or doctors, therapists, psychiatrists, child welfare, etc. These professions often have an extensive background with trauma-informed care. We also look

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

internally to Auberle staff in other programs and have found successful Foster homes for some of our highest need young people. We find that identifying peer support is vital in opening people's minds to what they are capable of. We have implemented the use of "pods" where Foster parents are grouped together geographically to provide peer led support.

- b. The strategies you will use to ensure your Foster Care families are diverse and culturally humble.

Auberle recruits in the neighborhoods with the highest concentration of child welfare removals. We do this by connecting with churches and community leaders. As a faith-based agency we have connections to churches in every Allegheny County neighborhood. We are active in the McKeesport ministerium which is a great resource especially considering that the City of McKeesport is a high concentration area.

We are partnering with the Thorton Family Initiative to recruit families from diverse neighborhoods. They are currently one of Auberle's premiere foster families and understand reflect the diversity needed in foster care programming.

We hire people of color and those with lived experience so that they can endorse the program, help address concerns and build trust and credibility. People that are willing to share their experience with their network of friends, family, and faith communities through word of mouth have been most successful for us. Screening of foster care also includes exploration of personal bias, cultural humility and attitudes about power and privilege.

Traditional methods of advertising like social and mass media, billboards, and promotion of foster care at Voices Carry, our annual fundraising event with average attendance of 500 people, are used as recruitment tools. Every year we create new promotional videos that are shared with our supporters and we publicize on Auberle's website. In 2020 we started a partnership with iHeart Media to help craft compelling messages and to target the highest need zip codes. Interestingly, our contact at iHeart Media reached out to us because of his positive experience as a Foster Care parent with Auberle (and then adopted his son through our Foster Care program!).

Even when we have enough placements, our recruiting efforts continue. This ensures that appropriate matches are consistently available and that there is a reserve of respite and emergency respite homes. We follow-up with families that drop out of the process for any reason to troubleshoot barriers and to discuss other lower commitment options like respite. We work to dispel myths like "teens are hard to place" and that people "don't want teens" as it reinforces negative assumptions and can have damaging effects on the efforts to recruit. We emphasize the positive impact of fostering sibling groups and normalize the idea of fostering more than one child. We talk to families about helping with home supplies and helping them make accommodations to be able to take on more than one young person at a time.

- c. The recruitment staffing strategy, specific roles and number of staff involved in the recruitment of Foster Care families.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Auberle has two full-time Foster Care recruiters but we train all Foster Care staff in recruitment techniques. Additionally, our Intake Coordinator and the Development/Marketing team play an active role in supporting recruitment. Recently, the Foster Care and Development teams have financially invested in a Foster Care recruitment campaign with iHeart Media targeting high need zip codes and priority demographics. We also have team recruitment days where we deploy the entire team to target communities equipped with print materials. They provide materials to local businesses begin to build relationships. At times, this has also led to local media reaching out to do stories on our program.

Since word of mouth is our most successful recruitment source, we also provide training to current Foster Care parents called “Recruitment is Everyone’s Business.” One-on-one meetings are held with Foster parents who live in target areas, have a specialized skill (Spanish speaking/experience with autism/knows ASL), or are simply interested in helping us recruit. We use these opportunities to do micro marketing. Connecting to prospective Foster Care parents this way is advantageous because it creates a support network that can be accessed throughout their experience as a Foster parent.

- d. The specific recruitment strategies you will use for Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and Emergency Respite Homes.

A common theme in our proposal is hyper-responsiveness to our families. This becomes even more essential in our efforts to recruit emergency placement, respite, and emergency respite homes. We certify every family with the expectation that they will provide emergency shelter care. In rare occasions (9 currently) we have Foster Care parents that want to be respite only. Veteran Foster Care parents are a great source for these specialized homes as well. They may no longer feel they can offer a long-term placement but want to remain invested. We also recruit “empty nesters” through targeted Facebook ads, print media and bulletin boards. College and University parents’ groups are also a great resource for this type of placement. As stated previously, we use our Foster Care parents as recruiters, tapping into their support networks to identify people who may be the right fit. At times, prospective Foster Care parents are interested but hesitant to take the step to become a long-term Foster Care parent. Our staff do a great job of working with those parents to address their concerns and often speak to them about respite, emergency, or emergency respite to ease them into fostering.

- e. How you will incorporate a “customer service” approach.

An important aspect of diligent recruitment is a customer service philosophy, which Auberle has fully embraced. Respect, empathy, and care is the foundation of a customer service approach and are values that we reinforce with our staff during training and ongoing supervision. We maintain that approach in every interaction with biological and Foster Care parents. What is most important is how the families perceive our services, not how we grade ourselves. To that end, we provide regular opportunities for parents and young people to provide feedback and work to clearly demonstrate ways that the feedback is being used. Using customer service in child

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

welfare is supported by trauma-informed values and is something that must be reinforced daily so that it becomes the culture.

We see ourselves as partners or team members with biological and Foster Care parents, ACCYF and other providers in the children's lives. Auberle staff makes responsiveness and availability a top priority. During home studies we invite prospective parents to be partners with us and we offer help with minor and fixable home improvements like beds and medical equipment. Our Foster Care recruiters have decades of collective experience providing family-oriented service so they can speak honestly to prospective parents about what they may experience. Recruitment, orientation, pre-service and training events are family-friendly including food, assistance with paperwork if needed, regular updates, language translation, childcare and alternative learning options for families.

- f. How you include matching events and preplacement visits in your approach.

Auberle is one of the few remaining congregate care providers. We work diligently to identify young people that can transition out of our congregate care programming and move to a family. We host matching events for prospective parents, young people, and other providers in the child's life. This includes family activities, recreational opportunities, low pressure social situations where children and families can meet. These experiences allow our families to ask questions and to get a firsthand experience with the young people in care needing a family environment. These meetings allow all stakeholders in the child's life to meet in a casual environment putting all parties at ease. Creativity is also used when planning matching events. For example, oftentimes, young people have nowhere to go for a holiday like Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter. We consistently identify Auberle foster families for the young people to go to. We have also identified Auberle foster families for young people in OTHER congregate care facilities to go to. Holidays afford a great opportunity for prospective families to host a young person living in a congregate care facility. On several occasions, these meetings lead to either Foster Care placement or adoption.

Repeat respite options are used when needed. This strategy helps the young person to feel more comfortable. In cases where the Foster Care home is not pre-adoptive, we strategically provide respite care with a family who is interested in adoption. It is also our practice to have the Intake Coordinator attend all child options meetings to learn about the youths' needs so recommendations can be made regarding families that may be a good fit.

Promoting Placement Stability (60 points)

6. Describe specific efforts you will take and approaches you will use to *retain* Foster parents, including Foster Care parents who have Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and/or Emergency Respite Homes. Include how support will be available to Foster Care parents 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In our last round of Council on Accreditation recertification, the reviewers noted that "The staff members are committed to the mission and vision of the organization as they provide client-focused, compassionate, and affirming services. Of note is the partnership with Persad leading to

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

better support for LGBTQ youth and the incorporation of Sanctuary. The Foster parents are well prepared to provide trauma-informed and inclusive care. The strategies addressing Foster parent needs, including incentives for training, monthly Sanctuary Support Groups, and training development plans were particularly impressive.” We included this quote because it highlights our effectiveness at retaining Foster parents. We are attentive and provide ongoing support and training that is customized to their needs. If there is something we do not offer in-house, we are able to call upon our partners to help.

In addition to our current strategies, we propose using Together Facing the Challenge® (TFTC) model for foster care created by Duke University. We also explored the CORE Teen Curriculum developed by the Spaulding Institute. Consultation calls for both models were conducted and both models will fit nicely into Auberle’s current practices, enhancing, and bringing fidelity to our efforts. We are eager to learn the counties perspective on the models and are open to both – although we selected TFTC® as the model in this proposal.

We will continue to offer ongoing support through weekly check-ins with staff and peer supports. Both opportunities are now being offered virtually. In addition, Auberle is in the final stages of hiring a Placement Stability Specialist. This position will be trained in the strategies employed in the SNAP and Homebuilders programs. A primary task for the Placement Stability Specialist will be to meet with new placement families once per week to help quickly address any issues that may arise. Any Foster Care family that has a child ages 6 to 11 are encouraged to enroll in SNAP programming as well. At the conclusion of the six-week session, the family is provided a warm hand-off to a case manager. The Placement Stability Specialist will then be able to re-engage with families to ensure implementation of what they have learned as needed. In addition to the Placement Stability Specialist, a case manager is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Again, we have learned that Foster Care staff must be creative in their approaches. Our team takes great care to get to know the parents by actively listening to their needs and strengths. Sometimes this can mean respecting when Foster parents need a break but continuing to connect with them through communication. Even if a parent is open to taking more challenging placements, we are sensitive to provide a balance to avoid burn-out. Auberle’s staff are intentional about making sure Foster Care parents see the successes including small or incremental positive changes. It is this type of encouragement that keeps Foster parents energized and fulfilled.

When parents are working through certification process, we have an exercise where we have them write a letter to themselves talking about their “why”, what drives their fostering journey. We keep these letters in their file and when we see the Foster parent struggling to remember their “why” we mail these letters to them to help keep their purpose alive. Lastly, we try to use

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

different “love languages” in our approach to Foster parent retention. Some parents need words of affirmation through personalized thank you notes or shout outs on social media/newsletter, while others may prefer quality time like planning (virtual) get togethers, appreciation dinners and support groups, it is gestures like these that meaningfully promote retention.

7. Please describe a plan for facilitating peer supports for Foster Care parents. This may include strategies, a specific model (such as the Mockingbird Model) or informal mechanisms, and be based on common challenges, geography, or something else.
 - a. Where you see fit, include innovative solutions that have arisen because of COVID-19 (e.g., videoconferencing, virtual visits).

We will be using the Mockingbird Bird Model plus continuing the use of informal mechanisms that have historically worked well for us based on feedback from Foster Care parents. The Mockingbird Model was chosen by our team because we will be able to smoothly transition our current “pod” approach to the “Hub” concept.

As we recruit, we actively group our Foster homes geographically and make sure there is at least 1 respite parent and an experienced Foster parent in proximity. We refer to these groupings as “pods”. The pods are helpful during orientation because we facilitate conversations between new and veteran Foster Care parents about placement preparation and local resources. Pods often arrange playdates which is beneficial to the children while also providing a sense of connection and peer support. During the pandemic, these social engagements have been moved to a virtual format. In addition to their natural supports, the pods provide another layer of support. Our staff also coordinate respite care within the pods so that it takes on the feel of a visit to an extended family member. While it is not a groundbreaking concept, we regularly and frequently hold recreational events for our families to help them bond. We have become more creative with this during the pandemic but during normal times, we organize family pod outings.

8. Describe your process and timeline for Foster Care Home approval. If your anticipated timeline will routinely take more than three months for approval from receipt of application, please explain.

Within 72 hours of initial contact, we have a face-to-face meeting. Our onboarding and certification process is designed to be completed in one month. We offer all pre-service trainings every month so families can easily reschedule if conflicts arise. Auberle staff are experienced in tailoring training to overcome barriers, including doing in-home one-on-one trainings when needed. Our team also offers a full complement of trainings offered monthly to make them easily accessible to families. Foster care development plans are re-visited at each re-certification.

Promoting Well-Being (65 points)

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

9. Provide a detailed pre-service and ongoing training plan for Foster Care parents that emphasizes cultural humility and includes all required and relevant topic areas.

Auberle's four-part pre-service trainings are offered every month. The training includes: Pre-service 1, Pre-service 2, "Welcome to Oz" and CPR/First Aid.

Pre-service 1 includes: Introduction to Foster Parenting, Building Bridges/Act 101/Triad Relationships, Working with Youth's Families and System Collaboration, Who are the Parents, Reasonable and Prudent Parenting, and the Agency and the System. Specifically for teens, we offer Understanding Teens and Being a Trauma-Informed Parent of a Teen.

Pre-serve 2 includes: Child Development, Attachment and Bonding, Trauma, Grief/Loss/Separation, Behaviors and Discipline, and Sexual Abuse Training for Foster parents.

"Welcome to Oz" is an eight hour trainings that includes: Understanding Trauma, Being a Trauma-Informed Parent, The Wicked Witch (addressing self-doubt and self-care), The Tin Man (trauma's impact on experiencing emotion and attachments), The Lion (understanding stress and PTSD), The Scarecrow (trauma's impact on memory and thinking) , The Twister (behavior, communication, and crisis management), and The Ruby Slippers/The Wizard (resources, building a toolkit, unconscious trauma and development of the traumatized brain).

To ensure that our trainings demonstrate cultural humility, our staff remain flexible to hear from families about what is important to *them*. We learn about children, youth, parents, family members and other supportive individuals such as members of their ethnic or cultural community. We remain mindful that family members are often in better positions than staff to offer suggestions and solutions that meet their needs and make sense within their cultural context.

We support our Foster Care families to embrace the cultural differences between themselves and their Foster Care children, challenging the common notions of family. We challenge parents to look inside themselves and explore personal biases, emphasizing that we all have them and that acknowledging them is key to growth.

Our matching events and pre-service and ongoing trainings include ways for children to be able to express what is most meaningful to them around birthdays, holidays, and spirituality. When Foster Care parents discover disconnects between hygiene, eating, or communication habits, we challenge them to explore potential cultural differences. It is important that we offer reminders that doing things differently is not inherently wrong and that taking a culturally humble lens creates a deeper level of ease and understanding in the home.

10. Describe your plan to facilitate co-parenting between birth parents and Foster Care parents, including how you will connect these people as early on as possible after a new placement is established.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Auberle has a strong commitment to building positive relationships between families of origin and Foster parents. Starting with their initial engagement with foster care and throughout the placement process, it is made clear to Foster families that they are entering a coparenting relationship between their family and the young person's natural family. Using a trauma-informed approach, Auberle's use of documentation such as visitation schedules for Foster children and trauma-informed policies and trainings clearly display a commitment to effectively engaging families.

Co-parenting is addressed first in pre-service training and continues using Auberle's "Building Bridges" curriculum. The goals of the curriculum are to increase involvement of birth parents and Foster parents through advocacy for improved policies and practices that benefit families and children, identify strategies to help birth parents and Foster parents work together to facilitate reunification and prevent re-entry, increase the capacity of Foster parents to be able to partner with birth parents, and building understanding around Permanency Goals and Act 101 and help to understand the birth parents' grief process. It is through this training that birth parents and Foster parents can break down barriers and hesitations while promoting unity in parenting centered on the wellbeing of the young person in care.

Actively and successfully engaging birth parents immediately upon placement of the child in their home is a necessary precursor to successful involvement and helps promote successful reunification and other permanency plan efforts. Icebreaker meetings are held within the first week of a placement to introduce the families to each other, understand the family culture, routine, structure, as well as specific things to know about the young person and to open the door for communication between caregivers. These meetings show the young person that the parents are on the same team and doing their best to set up rules and routine that feels familiar to the young person. Ice breaker meetings help the biological parents to feel connection to the placement and feel secure in that placement option for their child. Holding this meeting is essential to building a collaborative relationship between birth parents and Foster parents while also reducing the trauma youth experiences due to placement.

Once the young person has been placed, a focus on fostering the relationship between the youth's families is accomplished through a variety of means. When doctor's appointments occur, it is encouraged that both sets of parents are included in scheduling and attending. Foster parents are encouraged to transport the young person to and from visits to help make these visits as natural as possible. Auberle provides assistance in facilitating supervised visits inside or outside of their home. Regular phone calls between the Foster and biological parents are encouraged to assist in the maintenance of a collaborative relationship that benefits the young person. Ultimately, we want our Foster families and biological families to be reassured that we are here to support them in every way and that their children are being well cared for with reunification as the primary goal.

Many of our Foster families have built relationships with youth's biological family resulting in the Foster family becoming part of the extended family after reunification has been achieved. In some cases, the youth continue to visit their Foster parents and the Foster parents are seen as a resource often leading to holiday visits, sleepovers, and babysitting assistance for the biological parents. Current Foster parents often speak at trainings and events around the idea of building

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

these open relationships and share how this has looked in their lives through various placements. This relationship strengthens not only the support system for the young people but also builds a community support for the biological parents so they can be successful post-reunification.

11. Provide a detailed plan for establishing and sustaining Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) homes. Please include:
 - a. The standards of the specific model you intend to use and why you chose it.

After extensive research and a video conference with the developers, Auberle has decided that the Together Facing the Challenge® (TFTC) model will be used to establish and sustain TFC homes. This model is one that we believe will be effective not only for Auberle’s Foster Care program, but for the entire Allegheny County system of foster care – if the county chooses to implement it broadly. TFTC® is applicable with children aged 5 – 18.

The model was developed by Duke University’s Services Effectiveness Research Program in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. It is based on 9 years of research and builds upon three primary researched-based factors for success in foster care: supportive relationships between staff and Foster parents, effective use of behavior management strategies by Foster parents, and supportive and involved relationships between Foster parents and the youth in their care.

The TFTC® train the trainer model clearly aligns with our current style of training using internal staff that the Foster Care parents build relationships with and trust to carry out high quality, collaborative foster care services. The current Auberle training and the TFTC® curriculum teach staff and parents how trauma impacts the child’s attitudes, capabilities, and behaviors in the home. They use the analogy of the “invisible suitcase”, helping Foster parents understand how to create a psychologically and emotionally safe space that is sensitive to the contents of their invisible suitcase. A Train-the-Trainer Manual for agency staff and a Foster Parent Manual present core concepts relevant to building relationships, understanding, and managing behavior, self-care, and planning for the child’s future.

Follow-up consultation with TFTC® trainers is a critical component of this comprehensive model. The structured consultative session format begins at the close of the initial 3-day train-the-trainer workshop and continues for a minimum of 12 months. The goal of this consultation element is to teach, support, and coach agency trainers as they work with their agency staff and Foster families, offering a forum for ongoing dialogue with agency trainers to process issues around implementation of the various skills and techniques of TFTC®. These regularly scheduled conferences help to prevent potential implementation problems from becoming insurmountable barriers. It gives Foster Care parents practical tips to help them feel safe through nurturing strengths, demonstrating that they are protected from harm, affection, and understanding their triggers. The curriculum challenges Foster Care parents not to take the child’s behavior at face value but to consider the underlying trauma.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

We chose this model because it is evidence based, has strong foundation in trauma-sensitivity, and its alignment with our current support and training practices. Consultation with KidsPeace confirmed the effectiveness of the model and their satisfaction with the developers.

In our research, we also learned about the CORE Teen Program. This model also shows great promise for older youth in foster care. We ultimately selected TFTC® because the age range is broader. If selected to be a provider, we are open to discussing our model choice. The pricing and training process for each model is very similar.

- b. How you will implement the model, including specifics about the development and use of treatment plans at the client level.

The potential of this model is far reaching. We believe every foster care agency and county caseworkers alike, could benefit from this curriculum. It will create a shared language and culture around foster care services. The implementation could be similar to that of the Homebuilders® Model with two agencies being trained simultaneously (Auberle and Pressley Ridge) as well as county personnel. The KIDS system could be updated to include screens and modules for the TFTC® model to capture the treatment plan domains building upon the CANS Assessment.

- c. How your organizational capacity and infrastructure will be able meet all model standards and train and support Foster Care parents.

Auberle has demonstrated capacity to adopt and effectively implement research-based programs. As an accredited agency with the Council on Accreditation (COA) we have a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program that lays the foundation for this implementation. We have operated the Stop Now and Plan® (SNAP®) Model for over a decade and the Homebuilders® Model for nearly 5 years. Both are intensive, research-based models that are operated with high fidelity. Our Outpatient/Behavioral Health Department facilitates several research-based models including Abuse Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AFCBT®) which is directly aligned with TFTC®. We will implement TFTC® with the same high fidelity and meet all model standards. The Auberle Foster Care program has several current trainers, and we propose creating an additional position to ensure effective training and clinical support for the families.

- d. Your proposed process and timeline to establish between 30% and 50% of your Foster Care homes as TFC settings.

We discussed a timeline with the TFTC® trainers. If they are given notice of the contract award in March, they could have us scheduled to begin training as early as July. The developers can train 30 people at a time in-person and 20 virtually. They strongly recommend all families be trained in the model, whether they plan to accept TFTC® placements or not, to build a community of support and shared language. Based upon this recommendation, the Auberle Foster Care program plans to have 42 staff and nearly 120 families trained. We project having everyone trained by December 2021. We expect at least 30% of those trained to accept TFTC® placements. Those families identified as being willing to take TFC placements will receive the

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

training first. The first cohort should be prepared for TFTC® placements, or placement conversions for the young people already on our roster, in August 2021. Subsequent cohorts will be trained ongoing.

12. Describe your plan to ensure timely completion of assessments for children in Foster Care through staff training, supervision, and quality assurance.

Auberle Case Managers complete an extensive on-boarding training consisting of classroom instruction, job shadowing, and on the job supervision that ensures a complete understanding of the requirements around timely and correct completion of assessments as well as their documentation.

Safety assessments are documented while being completed and a summary is then emailed to the young person's team. This allows leadership to have immediate access and serve as proof of completion until the assessments are documented in KIDS. Upon completion, the assessment results are added to the tracking sheet. The tracking sheet is sent out once of month informing the team of what safety assessments have been completed and allowing for prompt follow-up on any that may be outstanding.

Individual Service Plans are completed within 30 days of intake and every 6 months the young person is in care. A progress report is completed monthly and serves as a goal setting meeting for each youth. Case Managers are responsible for planning these meetings and completing these reports. Placement Service Managers maintain a tracking sheet that is sent out monthly showing each Case Manager the status of their reports. This ensures that all Case Managers are aware of upcoming due dates, alerts them of any outstanding assessments for young people on their case load, and provides the Manager with the status of their reports.

CANS assessments are completed within 30 days of placement and every 6 months on an ongoing basis. Staff are trained through Allegheny County CYF. ACCYF sends out a monthly tracking sheet notifying Auberle of the status of all assessments ensuring timely completion and approval of assessments.

Quality assurance is a top priority when it comes to the execution and tracking of assessments. On a biweekly basis, Case Managers bring a file to their supervision meeting where the correctness of the completion is assessed, and the Case Manager is coached around what is done well or needs added when completing the next assessment. It is also one of the responsibilities of the leadership of Auberle's Placement Services Team conduct a monthly inspection of a random sample of files. Additional efforts to ensure quality are made through Case Managers being trained to peer review files and having administrative assistants conduct routine inspections of files. Auberle also has a Continuous Quality Improvement Associate on staff who arranges quarterly mock inspections of a random sample of files.

Building a High-Quality and Consistent System (15 points)

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

13. Describe your organization's plan to regularly collect feedback from Foster Care children, parents, and families and how you will incorporate it into your Foster Care program and ensure continuous quality improvements. Please include:

- a. How you will collect feedback from children in Foster Care and use it to inform your practice.

Auberle engages youth voice in all aspects of its programming, from the beginning of a new program's development and throughout its facilitation. Foster care is the same, we encourage youth voice through informal conversations with Case Managers as well as through focus groups and surveys. We review feedback as a team and find ways to incorporate it ensuring that changes are then communicated back to the youth.

Auberle's 412 Youth Zone is a great example of our dedication to promoting the voices of youth in care. Participants of the 412 Youth Zone meet regularly as part of ACDHS's Systems Improvement Through Youth (SITY) Advisory Council. Because of recent focus groups with our youth and ACDHS, we changed our assessment and goal planning process. We learned that youth were generally not invested in a systems approach to goal planning. As a result, the goal setting process is now more organic and fluid with no formal structure being used.

When we gain valuable feedback, like that around the goal planning process, we disseminate that information across the agency and apply changes where it is most applicable. Feedback is also solicited based on the youths' experience working with Auberle Case Managers. An example of feedback received from our youth is that they do not expect responses within 24-hours, but they want to know that they can talk to someone outside 9am to 5pm. Youth also expressed that they understand that some things may take time, but regular status updates are appreciated. They like to know that the work is being done and that we have not forgotten. It is valuable feedback like this that guides the way we screen, interview and train new staff. Whenever possible, we build peer support positions into our programs to create another line of connection and communication with young people.

- b. How you will get Foster Care family input to evaluate what supports are needed, and how this feedback will inform changes to practices.

Regular communication between staff and Foster families allows for feedback to be provided in an organic and ongoing fashion. As stated previously, we survey parents after every training to find out more about what they want. Our staff often provide customized and one-on-one training support to parents. This enables specific trainings to be provided even if a small number of parents are making the request. During team meetings, Case Managers, Case Aids, Recruiters, and Intake Coordinators talk about the needs of each family. From those conversations, additional supports and training topics are added. Our CQI Associate creates surveys and conducts phone calls with Foster Care parents to solicit feedback including areas for improvement. Our staff meets around that feedback to devise a plan to address it and to

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

ensure that the parent feels they have been heard. When needed, we bring in one of our numerous partner agencies to help us address feedback that is beyond our internal capacity to address.

14. Describe your process and plan for tracking, entering, and reporting data in a timely and accurate manner. Be specific about which staff will be required to perform the data entry, how they will be supervised, monitored, and supported and where data entry fits into the overall business process.

Auberle's Case Managers are responsible for most data entry with assistance from the CQI Associate. Data is then checked for accuracy by two Placement Services Managers. Case Aides are charged with entering visit logs and their supervisor reviews them for accuracy and timeliness on a regular, ongoing basis. In addition to KIDS and MPER, we also utilize an Electronic Health Records System to track our Foster Care parents. We have a dedicated staff person that maintains this data who is supervised by our Foster Care Recruiter Manager. We also use SharePoint to easily communicate our current openings with ACCYS. The Intake Coordinator maintains that data.

Data is at the center of everything that Auberle does. We use data to both identify areas in need of improvement and to implement improvement plans. Our broad-based, organization-wide process includes our Board of Directors, staff, clients, and stakeholders. Scorecards are compiled, analyzed, and used to create Opportunity for Improvement Plans. Annual goals and objectives are developed for every program and require approval from the CEO. Progress toward those goals is tracked and compiled monthly. We continuously seek ways to measure our outcomes – not just outputs. Identifying lead and lag indicators for critical child welfare functions is imperative. When we have a negative discharge, we carefully examine what prevented this child or family from succeeding.

Staffing and Staff Training (40 points)

15. Attach an organizational chart that reflects the positions, including responsibilities and current or desired qualifications, of all staff members involved with all components of operating Foster Care. The attachment is not included in the page count.

Attached

16. Describe your plan and strategy for recruiting any additional staff needed for Foster Care, or how current staff meets all needs, including the staff who will support TFC homes. Describe past successes using this strategy.

Auberle will take a multi-pronged approach to hiring the additional staff needed to support our Foster Care program. Collaboration with unsuccessful agencies will occur immediately to consult compassionately with their Foster Care staff that are being displaced. We will enhance our internal referral program and incentives. Staff and Foster parents receive a “finder's bonus”

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

when they successfully refer an employee or Foster parent. This opportunity will be thoroughly marketed with our staff and the level of bonus will be increased to generate a pipeline of candidates that are familiar with our mission through a friend or family member.

Our use of digital platforms will also be enhanced in service to our goal of increased recruitment. Auberle's SEO techniques will be enhanced to ensure that our postings are easily found on large, aggregate job search engines. Partnerships with community organizations will be established to help create a talent pipeline of ready to work candidates. Through a recent partnership with iHeart Media, social media as the platform for our mission awareness campaign that will also include the promotion of career opportunities.

In an effort to build an internal talent pipeline, Auberle has recently established the "Rising Stars Academy" to assist employees in the development leadership skills. Every department has identified staff with leadership and advancement potential to participate in the initiative with a focus on diversity in every cohort. All new positions are posted internally, providing opportunity for our current staff.

17. Provide a detailed staff training plan that emphasizes cultural humility and ensures that staff are trained in relevant topic areas, including the changes you will make to the existing training program to meet requirements.

Auberle new hires participate in a comprehensive month long on-boarding training process. It includes topics such as HIPAA, CPR/FA, Comprehensive Crisis Management, Sanctuary, CPS Law, Cultural Competency, Reasonable and Prudent parenting, SOGIE, Child Abuse, Safety, Quality Improvement, etc. All staff in foster care follow the training requirements for placement services meeting the more extensive 3800 regulations of congregate care in addition to the 3700 regulations of foster care. Auberle is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). The COA Standards generally exceed all government regulations and county contract requirements. As a member of the National Alliance for Strong Families, Family Focused Treatment Association and the PA Family Support Association, we have access to the best trainings and national conferences that highlight best practices and new findings. We encourage staff to attend their conferences and participate in webinars. We belong locally to the MVPC and several community-based collaborative work groups that offer training on relevant topics. Our foster team participates in all county trainings including CANS and will participate in additional trainings as they become available. Auberle has two in-house trainers for SOGIE, one in-house trainer for CSEC, and worked well in the past with ACCYF to create trainings around topics of Working with Teens & Coparenting that Auberle continues to use/teach as part of our staff development. We are going to add Treatment Foster Care training for staff as required by the model. Our FP leadership team has been trained in Racial equity by Joyce James through ACCYF partnership. We are currently developing a create a diversity program & series of trainings to offer to staff.

18. Describe your plan for hiring racially and culturally diverse staff.

Auberle has recently developed a partnership with Vibrant Pittsburgh. Vibrant Pittsburgh's mission is to build a thriving and inclusive Pittsburgh region by attracting, retaining, and

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

elevating a diversity of talent. Vibrant Pittsburgh addresses one of the greatest challenges facing the Pittsburgh region, its aging population and workforce, in three ways:

Welcome and Retain - Work with employers, colleges, universities, and diverse community groups to organize, promote and implement efforts designed to welcome and retain more diverse talent.

Data and Education - Serve as the region's central resource, spokesperson, and convener on workforce diversity and inclusion issues.

Talent Attraction - Conduct targeted talent attraction efforts at diverse national conventions, cultural festivals, and career fairs using traditional and digital marketing tactics.

We are very proud of this partnership and have actively worked with and posted positions with Vibrant Pittsburgh for the last fiscal year. The CEO attended the most recent board retreat and presented to our Board of Directors on the topic of, "Why DEI?" During her presentation, she emphasized that diversity, equity, and inclusion helps every employee feel able to show up each day without fear of being their true selves. It fosters more engagement, productivity, and innovation that contributes to increased success in delivering on our mission.

All open positions can be found on aggregate sites, including sites that target different minority groups such as diversity-jobs.com and NWOTT.org. Additionally, we have launched a grassroots effort to promote positions among community leaders and influencers who have strong voices in minority communities. Continued efforts are being made to create talent pipelines through sources dedicated to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and the National Panhellenic Council (NPHC) alum. The National Pan-Hellenic Council is a collaborative umbrella organization composed of historically African American Greek-lettered fraternities and sororities.

Auberle's new HR Manager has vast experience in diversity planning and will be working to create a diversity plan for Auberle. Currently 59% of our staff identify as a person of color. Our mission is to increase that percentage over the next two years. We are offering more and new training about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Our managers recently received training in "The Power of Empathy: Building Cultures of Inclusion and Trust". Our 412 Youth Zone staff are participating diversity training through Yoga Roots.

Organizational Capacity and Implementation Challenges (30 points)

19. Complete the following chart of services your organization currently provides in contract with DHS and/or other PA counties. You may add additional lines to the chart, as needed.

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Service Name	Service Description	Contracting Entity	Contract Amount	Start Date of Contract
412 Youth Zone	Comprehensive case management with drop in services for youth aging out of the foster care system or homeless youth ages 16-23	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$3,888,215	2016
Crawford County Independent Living	Drop in center that provides comprehensive case management of youth aging out of the foster care system or homeless youth ages 16-23	Crawford County Children & Youth Services	\$364,050	2020
Homebuilders	Intensive family intervention program focused on stabilizing the family in crisis and preserving the family unit Targets youth ages 0-17 at imminent risk of being removed from the home	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$503,000	2015
Stop Now and Plan (SNAP)	Evidence-based cognitive behavioral model that provides a framework for teaching children ages 6-11 struggling with behaviour issues, and their parents, effective emotional regulation, self-control and problem-solving skills	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$450,000	2007
My Best Self	Ensures that foster youth ages 12-21 have access to hair care services and products and have the opportunity to participate in social skills workshops	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$400,000	2017
At Home Rapid Re-Housing	The At Home program provides case management and rental assistance for youth in transition	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$124,731	2017
Family Emergency Shelter	Provides "housing first" shelter to parents with children Includes case management and resource coordination	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$422,777	2018
YHDP HOPE	Mobile Diversion to prevent homelessness for older youth in transition It provides case management and short-term financial assistance	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$242,803	2020
YHDP Peace of Home	Rapid rehousing for youth in transition including rental assistance and case management	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$408,572	2020
Outpatient Behavioral Health	Outpatient Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol services	CCBHO and Beacon	Fee for service	2004
Student Assistant Program (SAP)	Prevention and resource connection in a school setting	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	\$30,000	2017
Mobile Intervention for Young Adults (MIYA)	24-hour crisis response and case management program for young people in the community with a serious emotional or behavioral disorder	Allegheny County Department of Human Services & CCBHO	\$514,464	2020
Foster Care Program	Provides a safe and secure home environment for children and youth who cannot live with their birth families currently Includes the option of emergency foster/shelter care beds	Allegheny County Department of Human Services Westmoreland County Department of Human Services	Per Diem Funded	1990
Ward Home Supervised Independent Living Program	Community-based, residential program that serves youth ages 16-20 who have grown up in the foster care system	Allegheny County Department of Human Services Armstrong County CYS Erie County CYS Lancaster County CYS Lawrence County CYS Perry County CYS Westmoreland County CYS	Per Diem Funded	1997
Hartman Male Shelter	Shelter stabilization and detention diversion program for males ages 12-20	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Per Diem Funded	2008

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

20. Describe the challenges that your organization has experienced in the past and/or that you anticipate with fulfilling the Foster Care Scope of Services, as described in the RFP, and how you will mitigate those challenges.

Any agency that operates a large Foster Care program will likely agree that recruitment of Foster Care parents is the ongoing challenge. Auberle always aims to have more placements available than youth to allow for appropriate matching, respite, and emergency options. We are mitigating these challenges every day by implementing a multi-dimensional recruitment marketing plan across social media, traditional media, and face-to-face channels. We have purchased advertisements to play before movies at local movie theaters, advertised on pizza boxes in shops within target communities and secured space in church bulletins. We have recently invested in a contract with iHeart Media for a marketing campaign that will include social media, streaming and radio spots. As stated previously, happy Foster Care parents are our greatest recruiters, so we will continue to invest in training and support for them.

21. Provide a plan for implementation that clearly identifies your organization's strengths and challenges to implementing the Scope of Services, including the changes your organization will need to make (in terms of staffing, training, structure, Board of Directors, etc.) to deliver the services described. Attach a timeline for implementation that includes benchmarks and anticipated completion dates, clearly showing what can be in place by July 2021 and what will require more time to implement. The attachment is not included in the page count.

Attached

Financial Management and Budget (10 points, not included in page count)

22. Provide a detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining Foster Care, including the suggested Maintenance Rate for TFC homes for the selected model and whether that amount varies based on the age of the child in care. You may provide the line-item budget as an attachment (e.g., Excel file) or in the space below.

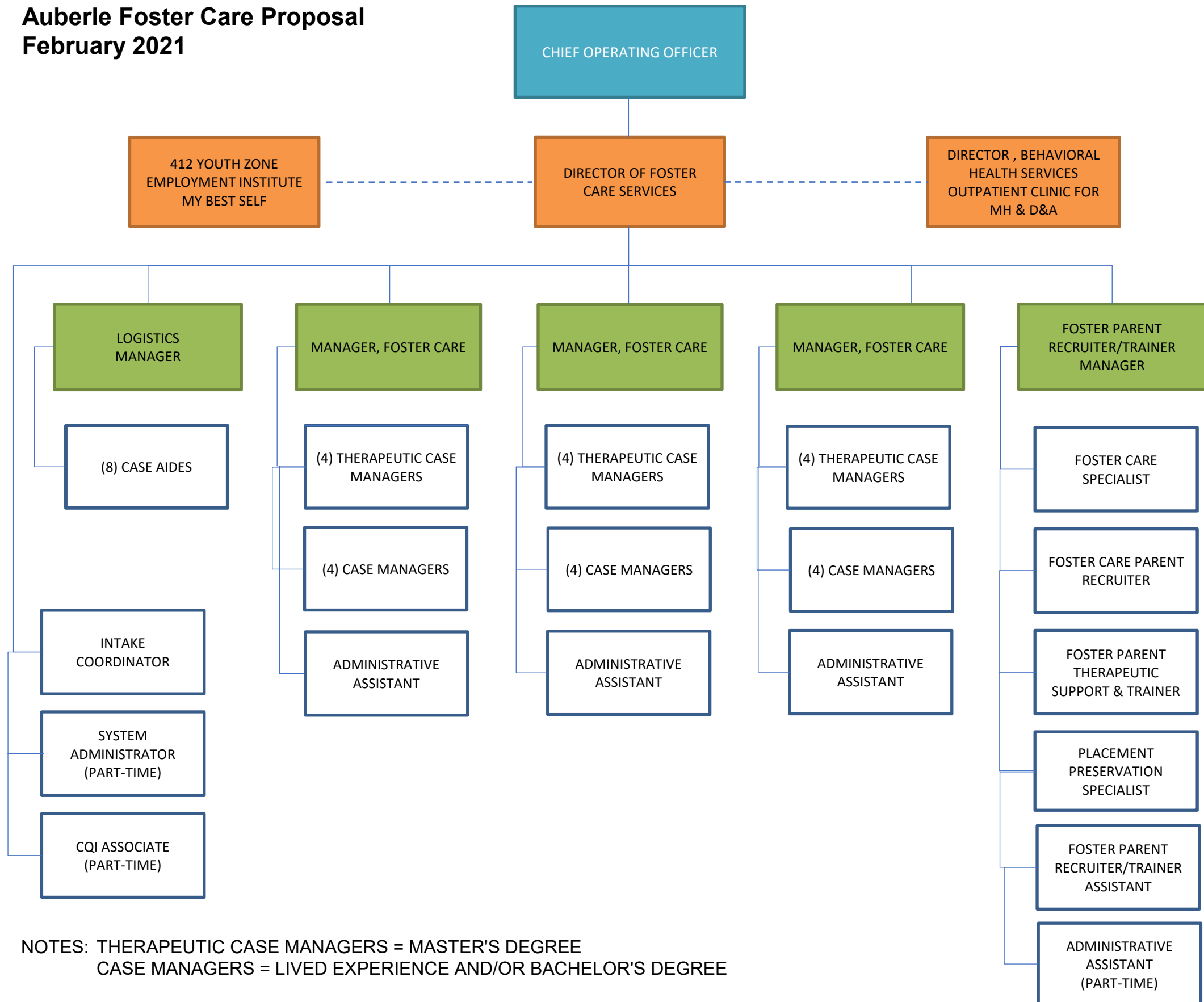
Attached

23. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget.

The Narrative is detailed within the Budget Document and Attached

Auberle Foster Care Proposal

February 2021



Auberle

Foster Care Implementation Timeline

Provide a plan for implementation that clearly identifies your organization's strengths and challenges to implementing the Scope of Services, including the changes your organization will need to make (in terms of staffing, training, structure, Board of Directors, etc.) to deliver the services described. Attach a timeline for implementation that includes benchmarks and anticipated completion dates, clearly showing what can be in place by July 2021 and what will require more time to implement.

March & April 2021

*Award Notification – if this occurs at the beginning of the month:

1. Meet with county leaders to finalize programming details and solicit input for the program development.
2. Post new positions immediately and market through all avenues described in question #16 and #17 of the response narrative.
3. Write Program Description (for IVE and AC County contract) and submit for approval to AC leaders.
4. Write Position Descriptions for new positions and update current ones with new responsibilities including treatment foster care elements.
5. Begin preparing IVE package for submission to the state.
6. Execute contract for training and consultation with Duke University. Create training schedule.
7. Begin promoting program changes to all stakeholders including staff, foster parents, the agency and community.
8. Begin creating program space in the Main building for the team.
9. Begin creating visitation space in Main building, doubling current capacity.
10. Order needed foster family supplies.
11. Order technology and communications for staff.
12. Begin upgrading client information system, Qualifacts, to accommodate new foster care program structure and treatment foster care elements.
13. Fine tune the Recruitment Plan and begin implementing it.

*If notification happens in late March, then many of these steps will be pushed to April.

April 2021

1. Staff Interviews begin and continue through completion.
2. Meetings with “unsuccessful proposer” families and staff begin. Transition decisions are made in tandem with agency leaders on family and staff roles.
3. Client records from “unsuccessful proposers” are reviewed and information gaps are filled in as necessary.

4. Teaming & Conferencing meetings are scheduled for all children and families being transferred over to Auberle.
5. IVE Package is submitted to the state for approval.
6. Update current program policies, procedures and forms as needed to reflect new responsibilities.
7. Create Treatment Foster Care policies, procedures, and forms for the “Together Facing the Challenges” implementation with fidelity.
8. Foster Parent manual is updated.
9. Review Council on Accreditation (COA) treatment foster care standards and implement as required.
10. Begin onboarding staff and families from “unsuccessful proposers”.
11. Program physical space and visitation space work continues.
12. Client Management system upgrade is completed and data entry begins in new modules.

May 2021

1. Interviews continue and employment offers are made to external candidates and “unsuccessful proposers” candidates.
2. New staff are oriented and onboarded to the agency and the program.
3. Program and visitation space is completed.
4. Receive notification on the IVE submission and make adjustments, if necessary.
5. Program physical space and visitation space work is concluded.
6. Foster care program sets goals and objectives – success measures for FY 21-22.
7. Program Scorecard is developed

June 2021

1. Training begins with Duke University.
2. New staff continue to be oriented and onboarded to the agency and the program.
3. MPER is updated to reflect new program status.
4. Budget is uploaded into MPER.

July 2021

1. Training Cohorts continue for staff and foster parents.
2. New staff continue to be oriented and onboarded to the agency and the program.

Proposed Foster Care Budget

FY 21-22

Budget Narrative**FAMILY FOSTER CARE****FY21 Budget****Expenses****Personnel**

Wages & Salaries	2,234,850.00	Includes all positions reflected on the org chart
Wages & Salaries Overtime & Crisis	25,000.00	Includes PTO OT and for on-call crisis situations and staff to respond to foster homes in person
Benefits	451,970.00	Includes comprehensive coverages at 20%
Purchased Personnel - TFC Developers	80,800.00	The TFC training is 3 days long. Duke can train 30 people in person and 20 virtually at one time. The trainer prefers traveling here (8 hour drive) and lodging. Hopefully the COVID situation will continue to wane. Auberle has physical space large enough for this training to be face to face. We anticipate 8 face to face cohorts at approximately \$10,000 each. Also factored in food and refreshments.
Staff & FP Development	15,000.00	<u>Includes required/mandated trainings and for participation in State and National Conferences to obtain the latest research and best practices.</u>

Total Personnel

2,807,620.00**Operating**

Rent/Utilities	21,220.00	Rent 2,880 square feet at \$4.25 = \$12,240.00 & Utilities 2,880 square feet at \$2.30 = \$6,624.00 Allowing for utility rate increases
Building Repairs	2,500.00	Allows for needed repairs to office and visitation space
FP Onboarding & Trg Expenses	55,000.00	Includes curriculum(s), participation in conferences and mandatory trainings for approximately 300+ foster parents (ideally 150 families)
Office	15,200.00	Includes consumable and non consumable supplies for the office space - estimated from current programming budget YTD
Janitorial	6,000.00	Cleaning services based on the square footage
Program Supplies	25,000.00	Includes consumable and non consumable supplies for foster parents and foster children - estimated from current programming budget YTD
Communications / IT	75,000.00	Includes ongoing required technology upgrades and access to communications •Ideal (IT / Connectivity) 50 staff @ 1,500.00 per staff
Qualifacts Client Management System Expense	16,080.00	Includes Client Management system use, maintenance and upgrades for 50 staff. Accommodates program evolution and building screens by System Administrator
Travel	58,100.00	Include reimbursement to employees and use of agency vehicles during the pandemic - so it's lower than anticipated in a "normal" world.
Equipment Rental & Repairs	10,760.00	Includes leasing two large copier/scanners and several table top versions. Copier lease is \$4,380.00 per machine per year.
Memberships & Dues	4,000.00	Includes FFTA, Family Support Alliance and National Foster Parent Association
Support to FP's & FC	14,000.00	Includes replacement of supplies such as car seats, diapers, formula, baby gates, first aid kits, etc...
Total Operating	302,860.00	
Overhead	41,491	Includes Admin @10%, Operations @ 3.1% and Insurance at .6% = 13.7%
Total Expenses	3,151,972.00	

Foster Care Start-Up Budget
FY 21-22

Budget Narrative

FP Recruitment	62,000 00	Engagement
Staff Recruitment & On-Team Space Preparation	42,000 00	Includes Advertising Fees, Vibrant Pittsburgh Engagement, Onboarding & Orientation Training
Visitation Space Preparation	91,000 00	Includes creating a team space in the main building with swipe locks, security cameras, painting, AC's, Flooring
Furnishings	44,000 00	Includes creating 4 visit rooms swipe locks, security cameras, painting, AC units and Floor covering replacement
Technology & Communications	19,500 00	Furnishings for 25 staff cubes, desks, chairs etc Includes visitation couches, chairs, cribs, high chairs, etc
TFC Program Supplies	30,765 00	15-Laptops at \$1,500 00 each (Surface Pro's) / 15 Cell Phones at \$551 00 each
Communications / IT	10,000 00	Includes baby gates, door alarms, cameras, etc For in foster homes
Qualifacts Client Management	9,000 00	Includes wiring the spaces for Wifi
	16,080 00	Includes "screen builds" and user sets ups
Total Start Up	324,345.00	

AUBERLE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS PROFILES
 January 2021

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	EMPLOYER	TERM EXPIRES
George Basara	General Counsel, EVP, HR Director – S&T Bank	11/2022
Dr. Leo Bidula	Retired Rheumatologist	11/2022
John Ciccolella	SVP/Western PA Market Manager – Bank of America	11/2024
Robert Coury (Chair)	Head of Benefits, Advisory & Compliance – North America – Willis Towers Watson	11/2024
Austin Davis	Representative, 35 th District – PA House of Representatives	11/2021
David DeJong, Ph.D.	Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Professor of Economics – University of Pittsburgh	11/2022
Dr. Sundeep Ekbote	Chief of Emergency Services – Monongahela Valley Hospital	11/2021
James Harris	Superintendent – Woodland Hills School District	11/2022
Dawndra Jones	VP, Patient Care Svcs., Chief Nursing Officer – UPMC McKeesport & UPMC East	11/2022
Lauren Lloyd (Vice-Chair)	Vice President, Human Resources – UPMC	11/2024
Holly Miller (Secretary/Treasurer)	SVP, Enterprise Audit & Compliance – Highmark Health	11/2021
Dr. Michael Tranovich	Retired: Orthopedic Surgeon	11/2024
Shemariah Waggoner	President – Emery Consulting Services LLC	11/2024
Falon Weidman	Graduate Student	5/2021
Bishop David Zubik	Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh	NA

Auberle Organizational Chart

as of 11/09/20

