



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

Foster Care Agencies

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: The Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Bethany Leas, Regional Director of Family Support Services

Address: 1405 Shady Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Telephone: 412-244-3066

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: amazingkids.org

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

Date Incorporated: January 31, 1998

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Proposal: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* DHS Solicitations Email Communication

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Wendy Pardee	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Bethany Leas	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Brian Furfari	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Financial Officer	John Jubas	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
MPER Contact*	Michelle Close	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

* [MPER](#) is DHS’s provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

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BOARD INFORMATION

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

List of Board of Directors is attached

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Jay Katarincic

Board Chairperson Address: Draper Triangle Ventures, [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: [REDACTED]

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) Melissa B. Eller, MPA, MA, NCC

Program Director

Family Design Resources, Inc.

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network prime contract

Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries in partnership

with Family Design Resources, Inc.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

2) Jennifer Ott

Beaver County Program Specialist

Beaver County CYS

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

3) [REDACTED]

Previous Foster/Adoptive Parents

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Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 2/10/2021

Amount Requested:

Per diem rates: Level 1 and 2 - \$68 per day; Level 3 and 4 - \$81 per day; TFC Level - \$109.82

Transportation Rate: \$15/15 min and mileage reimbursement

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.

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

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- 3 years of audited financial reports
- W-9
- Organizational Chart
- Implementation Timeline
- Line-item Budget, if desired

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.**

Founded in 1902, The Children's Institute has worked with children and families in southwestern Pennsylvania for nearly 120 years. Today, our expansive range of services include child welfare/social services, care coordination, educational programming; outpatient physical health, behavioral health, and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

Child welfare/social services are provided through our Family Support Services (Formerly known as Project STAR). Project STAR (Specialized Training for Adoption Readiness) - began as a collaboration with Three Rivers Adoption Council (TRAC) and Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families to provide adoption services to children with special needs. These initial adoption services have evolved through the years to include a continuum that spans a multitude of needs in the child welfare arena - thus creating the need for our name to better reflect the array of support that we can offer - Family Support Services. Family Support Services now offers a full continuum of services including:

- Care Coordination Services
- In-Home Family Services
- Infant Parent Empowerment Program
- Foster Care Services
- SWAN Services
- Visit Coaching

Last fiscal year, The Children's Institute provided services to over 3,100 clients across four counties. Our services aim to target family preservation/reunification and placement services. The foundation of all Family Support Services is the idea of permanency. Through our family preservation/reunification services, birth families are provided with the tools and information

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necessary to care for their children in their home. The goal is to ensure that each child safely remains or is reunified with his or her birth family. Sometimes families need extra support in order to stay together and to flourish. To do that, we offer information and training, help develop skills, and provide the understanding that our families need. We educate families about resources within themselves and their communities that contribute to the safety, permanency and well-being of their children.

Our visitation services are offered through Visit Coaching and the PACT Program (Parent and Children Together) - a visitation program specific to Beaver County. Using our expertise in best practice family visitation - we secured a contract for Visit Coaching in Allegheny County in 2016. The goals of both PACT and Visit Coaching are to offer a more frequent opportunity for visitation, and whenever possible, to hold visits in the most homelike setting. Since parental visitation is a primary predictor on reunification, the program works to maintain and strengthen the bond between parents and children.

The Children's Institute's foster care program is known for developing innovative trainings to prepare foster families in multi-faceted ways to ensure that the whole family is prepared for the journey of providing care for a youth in need. The Children's Institute was instrumental in creating a training (Sibling Training) to target the unique needs of the children already existing in a family structure during the home study process – a voice that is often overlooked but critical to success in placement stability. This training gained statewide recognition, with other agencies adopting the training to complement their family preparation. Most recently, the Northern American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) gained interest in this Sibling Training and another hands-on scenario-based training, Get Real. The Children's Institute has been asked to share these innovative strategies nationally in an upcoming NACAC publication.

All aspects of the family preparation process are created with our families in mind and have fueled each new innovative development. We regularly survey all of stakeholders and incorporate family experience feedback into our program improvement plans. Most recently through quality assurance calls and surveys with our families, we began recognizing a gap in the onboarding of new families. Quality assurance calls are completed regularly and focus on questions related to responsiveness from direct workers, and areas of development for staff and programming. Recently feedback was responded to by incorporating both our Intake Coordinator into our pre-service trainings to share a real-life picture of emergency foster care placement and process groups at the end of pre-service training to identify any knowledge gaps that incoming families may have so that our team can respond in a pro-active way. Overall, we are committed to constant evaluation and quality assurance of all our programs to ensure that we are responding appropriately to all stakeholder needs.

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.

Originally founded as a service to place children with delays and disabilities in family homes for adoption, The Children's Institute has grown into a broad-based service - placing children in need of stable nurturing environments in the most appropriate environment for each child. Through

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our history of working with Allegheny County's most vulnerable population of children, The Children's Institute has experience in providing services to a wide array of families. Last year in Allegheny County, our Civil Rights data demonstrated that almost 40% of clients served were from diverse backgrounds. As a result, we are very aware of the diverse needs of our clients and therefore strive to deliver services that are sensitive to the ages, ethnicities, and gender of the children and families we work with.

The Children's Institute addresses specific issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity expression. Our Regional Director of Family Support Services is a Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) trainer for the county, all Allegheny County staff have completed SOGIE training, and each new team member receives this training within the first 90 days of employment. In addition, The Children's Institute staff and supervisors are constantly seeking professional development opportunities and promoting internal dialogue among our diverse staff in the Allegheny County Family Support programs to enhance our understanding of culture and SOGIE issues.

As mentioned earlier, The Children's Institute has always been known for innovative foster parent training – back in 2014, it was recognized that conversations about culture and SOGIE were severely lacking in pre-certification training for foster parents. This gap led to the development of the Cultural Humility training that every foster parent is required to attend. We were leaders in the development of this training and continue to assess the efficacy of our training and pull in new and relevant information to remain current in our conversation. In addition, we have worked with our marketing team to define intentional strategies to be inclusive for any family to be welcomed into our foster care program – we are constantly assessing what our images depict and what our language communicates to ensure we are creating a welcoming and affirmative space for any family or youth that we may work with.

Regular supervision with all level of staffing is a priority at The Children's Institute. Supervision is critical to ensure that staff development needs related to cultural sensitivity and SOGIE understanding are being addressed with each case appropriately. Supervision is completed twice per month and development areas are documented monthly to ensure that these goals are met.

The awakening of conversations regarding social injustice, discrimination, and racism has caused our organization to reflect and identify where we have gaps in fostering a culture that is inclusive and diverse. Through an internal work group comprised of team volunteers we identified that our goals are:

- To commit to a long-term strategy that builds a culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion
- To review all facets of our hiring practices to ensure we eliminate any bias and enhance our ability to hire for greater diversity
- To review our performance evaluations, orientation process, training, etc. to ensure we have equity in supporting our team and positioning our team for career growth
- To review our policies and procedures to ensure we are culturally appropriate and eliminate any bias

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- To build leadership capacity to support our goals
- To enhance our understanding of bias, microaggressions, and how we interact with one another
- To celebrate and honor diversity
- To build an infrastructure that will position us for greater diversity in our leadership
- To review how we communicate internally and how we communicate externally and where we create obstacles to inclusion
- To review our programs to ensure that we are inclusive and culturally sensitive in how we deliver our services
- To broaden our reach for our services to truly reflect our community

We recognize that this is a long-term commitment and that we do not have the expertise in house to accomplish our goals successfully. We have partnered with The 1750 Group who has over 30 years of diversity, equity, and inclusion consultation and training. Our process includes an assessment of gaps through an online survey, focus group discussions, and dialogue with those change leaders in our organization who will champion our efforts. Our consultants will also conduct a thorough review of policies, procedures and practices by the end of the first quarter of 2021. Additionally, we will conduct diversity and inclusion training will occur for all team members starting in the second quarter of 2021. Upon the completion of these activities, we will then determine our next steps towards reaching our goals.

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.

The Children's Institute's mission – To heal. To teach. To empower. To amaze - reinforces the concepts of recovery and resilience. Our values further promote these concepts: *Compassion*: We provide a loving, caring family-centered environment for children with special needs, their families, and each other. We advocate for children and their families; *Integrity*: We are committed to organizational and financial accountability, transparency, respect for all, and ethical practices; *Excellence*: We will be the best at our work and provide the highest quality family-centered care and services to our children, constantly striving to improve; *Innovation*: We go above and beyond the norm and will be creative in providing services and solving problems; *Teamwork and Collaboration*: We seek to collaborate and partner in all that we do. We are a team where every person is needed to provide the quality care and services for which we are known. We work together and communicate effectively; and *Fun*: We will provide a positive and friendly environment.

Children and youth in foster care need strong organizations to help support dedicated families to help them heal. Our commitment to developing our approach is always on the forefront as evidenced by our trauma initiative which was initiated in 2019 – a strategic path to becoming a healing-centered organization. A cross-departmental work group has worked diligently over the past year to develop a trauma program which incorporates targeted milestones to be met during the next few years. Team members will be introduced to the various trauma tenets which will enhance their knowledge base related to strategies to cultivate a trauma-informed approach to our service delivery. By infusing a trauma-informed care approach into all aspects of our

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business, all team members and foster parents are provided opportunities to consider past trauma experiences and how they impact the experience of working with foster youth. All team members and foster parents have training plans that target areas for trauma-informed development in to ensure targeted learning opportunities occur to support the most vulnerable.

Beyond our focus on trauma, The Children's Institute offers a unique holistic array of services that complement the foster care program. Our services in child welfare, including Care Coordination, In-Home Family Services, SWAN Services and Visit Coaching, offer easy system collaboration and continuity to support all parties in the foster care journey seamlessly. In addition, our ability to tap into other service lines at The Children's Institute – Autism Services, Behavioral Health Services, Educational Services and our Physical Health Services, offer easy cross system collaboration and in-house consultative abilities to ensure all aspects of care are being considered for our children and youth. Our niche in the foster care world started with our ability to serve medically fragile children at our inception in 1985 and we continue to offer this unique specialty supported by our medical foster care credentialing. Our history and expertise in the area of medically complex care allow us to support medical foster care in a skillful way.

Safety is also one of the highest priorities at The Children's Institute. We are committed to protecting children and providing a safe environment for kids to learn and grow. The organization has assembled an internal committee responsible for examining our hiring practices, team member training, internal policies, and our physical spaces to ensure that they reflect best practices for the prevention of child maltreatment. Some current initiatives include the addition of child maltreatment specific questions to our pre-hire process, the development of behavior expectations for team members across the organization, and the implementation of video cameras and GPS units in all agency vehicles. Following the implementation of committee recommendations, there will be a mechanism for continuous monitoring and re-evaluation of our policies and practices to ensure the children and families we serve continue to be free from harm and encouraged to reach their full potential.

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).

The Children's Institute will maintain a minimum of 38 foster homes with a bed capacity of 40 over the course of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The breakdown of those 40 beds will be to provide homes for children from varying demographics and other characteristics. 30% (12 beds) will be provided for LGBTQ, teen, and therapeutic placements. 30% (12 beds) will be available for medically fragile placements. 40% (16 beds) will be provided for traditional foster care placements. Through targeted recruitment and training, the goal is to increase the total number of available beds, which meet the demographics and characteristics needed, to 55 during the 2022-2023 fiscal year and then to 70 in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Promoting Placement Stability (60 points)

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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.

Targeted populations of diverse and culturally humble families will include those who reside in City of Pittsburgh neighborhoods, families from diverse ethnic/religious/cultural backgrounds, and families who have experience with mental health and trauma care.

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

As an agency with satellite offices in diverse neighborhoods, The Children's Institute has the opportunity to utilize many community resources and reach a diverse population. Recruiters in urban areas are strategizing ways to engage with the community via chambers of commerce, community groups, churches, and small businesses, and to expand visibility and partnerships with our neighbors. Additionally, our team is comprised of individuals from racially, economically, and educationally diverse backgrounds. We can draw from several experiences that reflect the communities we serve.

Our resource parents are also a diverse group, with families representing the LGBTQ population, racial/ethnic/religious populations, and economic experiences. By using their experiences and engaging with them to recruit other families from diverse backgrounds, we expand our reach. Incentivizing their participation to bring in more families allows us to reach individuals we may not otherwise. Finally, our agency offers an array of services for children and families that allow us to work across teams and refer services that benefit the whole person - ultimately creating continuity in the care we deliver. Connections are established with local community groups such as the Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce.

The family recruiter attends local community events, city community meetings, and neighborhood association meetings where information can be provided for the purpose of connection with potential families. The Children's Institute foster care program flyers will be distributed in city neighborhoods to increase visibility at locations such as libraries, community centers, churches, small businesses, and restaurants. After families are recruited, the training curriculum for foster families focuses on cultural humility and attendance at process group is mandatory to ensure comprehension of materials presented.

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

There is currently one staff member dedicated to the role of family recruiter for Allegheny County. The foster care supervisor, five foster care specialists, and active foster families are utilized for recruitment within the agency. The Institutional Advancement department at The Children's Institute is developing wider social media use and platforms to provide more opportunity to connect with the community and diverse populations for recruitment purposes.

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

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The family recruiter supervisor completes an initial screening call with all families interested in fostering to ensure they understand the placement needs and are willing to accept placements over the age of five, emergency placements, and emergency respite placements. Clear communication with families occurs at initial contact and throughout the entirety of the certification process regarding the role of the birth family and importance of emergency placement. All families who wish to match with waiting children but lack experience are required to take emergency respite placements before matching can occur. The Children's Institute and Adoption Connections will work together in a respite collaboration to ensure that there are always families available to meet placement needs.

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

The customer service approach is incorporated through new hire staff training and by providing consistent supervision with team members who work directly with families and children. During the onboarding process, the foster care specialist is trained in all areas of service related to quality, compliance, and growth of the foster care program. Core competencies are developed to include knowledge of the role, effective time management, communication skills, accountability, and incorporation of a strength-based trauma aware approach. A supervision form is completed by the Supervisor each month and provided to the foster care specialist outlining action items, successes, and areas where improvement is needed. The Children's Institute has an established policy for employees that outlines the procedure when a concern is present. The problem reporting structure provides the employee the opportunity to seek guidance and report a grievance through the following this chain of command, the direct supervisor, the next level of management, human resources, the compliance officer, or executive staff member. All reports are promptly and appropriately investigated where necessary, and proper actions are taken to ensure compliance and reduce the risk of recurrence.

Foster families are provided with consistent and continuous engagement, communication, and support. Post-training questionnaires are reviewed so the agency can adjust services and approach taken based on the needs of the families. Multiple modes of communication and support are available to families to ensure individual needs are met. These modes of communication and support include but are not limited to virtual training, individual training, in person training, text, email, and phone calls.

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

The family recruiter and matching specialists facilitate and attend matching events consistently (during COVID attendance occurs virtually). By attending matching events CI staff can network with other providers, meet families from all agencies for matching purposes, and the children we serve are able to be presented to a larger audience in real time. Matching specialists work closely with the county when matching a child and facilitate the process by providing consistent communication, pre-placement visits, and processing visits with the family to identify any barriers and/or concerns to ensure success when placement occurs. The matching specialist works with the family to create a family flyer for presentation to county/agency workers at initial inquiry.

CI is referred by the SWAN placement unit of service when a child is placed into a resource or adoptive home for the purpose of creating a permanent home for the child. Placement services

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include all pre-placement activities required to get the child into an identified home. Placement shall have been determined to occur when the child is moved, a formal placement agreement is in place, and a report of intent has been filed with the appropriate court.

Referral of the Placement Unit of Service allows the permanency specialist to address very specific issues and provide specific services that are not indicated in other units. As the child has already been placed, the permanency specialist can then focus on preserving the placement, addressing any barriers or difficulties within the family, and providing services to avoid disruption. Unlike in the CSR unit of service, the permanency specialist's focus will not be on matching and finding placement, but rather ensuring that the placement continues and moves towards Finalization. SWAN created the units of service to move from CSR to Placement to Finalization very intentionally as one unit builds upon the other.

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.

Support to foster parents is available at all times. A staff member and supervisor are on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support as needs and concerns rise. A monthly support group meeting is provided for all families. Foster care staff provide babysitting services during support group to ensure attendance can occur. A foster care specialist is immediately assigned to a foster family that has received a placement and a visit at the foster home occurs within 24 hours. The foster care supervisor reaches out to each family who receives a placement within 72 hours to offer assistance. When families need additional support during placement, the foster care supervisor and manager of family support services are available to support and assist. Families are connected to those who have had similar experiences for the purpose of peer support. At the conclusion of a placement, the foster care supervisor contacts each family to process successes, struggles, and areas the family expresses a desire for improvement or change. A foster family recognition dinner will occur annually where parents will be commended for their service and will be recognized for various milestones such as number of placements, extra efforts, and participating in the fostering connections mentorship program.

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 as a result of COVID-19 (e.g., videoconferencing, virtual visits).

Becoming a resource parent is an exciting journey! For new resource parents, navigating the system and placements can be a little daunting. For this reason, The Children's Institute has developed a formalized mentorship program - The Fostering Connections mentorship program will serve to support families who are newly certified as resource parents. Newly certified resource parents will be matched with a mentor family right before being certified. The mentees will complete a survey to identify how much and what kind of support they think they might need. The mentor family will have created a "family flyer" to outline how much and what kind

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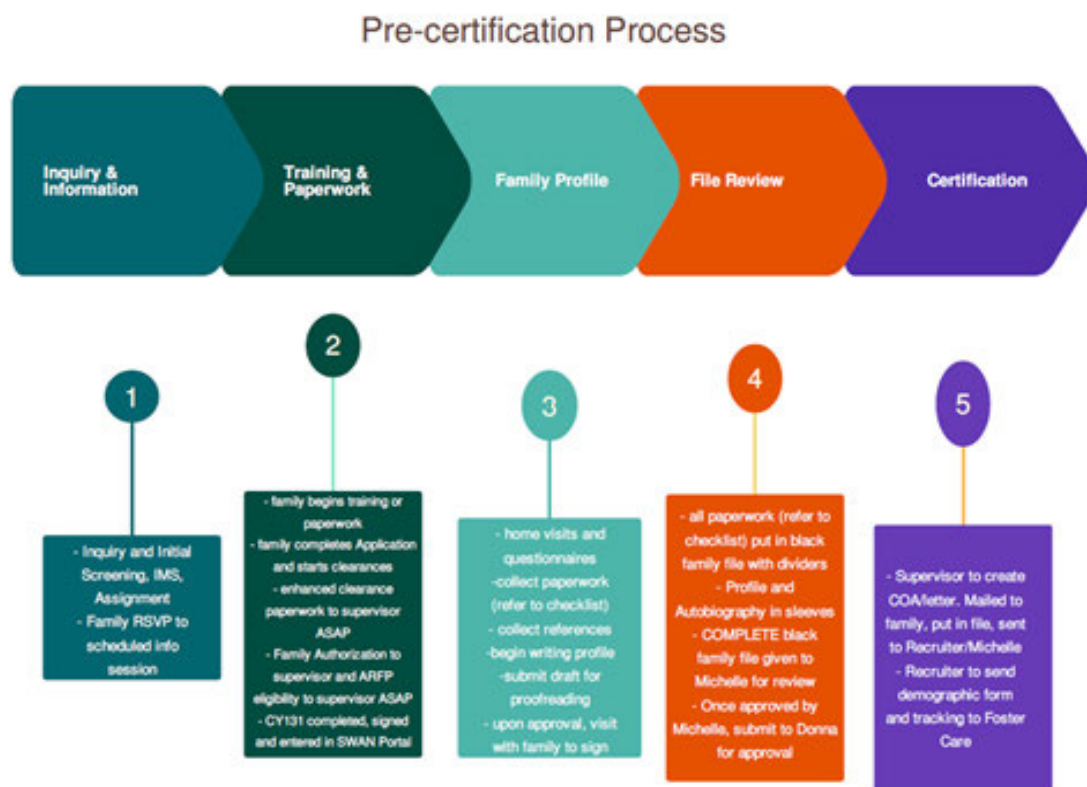
of support they can offer. Once matched, the family flyer will be shared with the mentee and the relationship will begin. Mentorship will be an expectation for each new family in our program that will take place for a period of 4 to 6 months at minimum – mentorship will be provided by phone calls, virtual interaction or in person meetings at whatever frequency makes sense for the mentorship pair. The Fostering Connections mentorship program will track qualitative data by conducting both pre/post assessments for both the mentor and mentee.

In order to maximize the peer support that our families will have, we plan to collaborate with Adoption Connection to connect our families. Together we aim to facilitate a resource parent support group. This support group may happen virtually or in person. If the group is in person, best efforts will be made to provide childcare with the utilization of staff or approved volunteers. Knowing that food brings people together, we will have the families share a meal together. The support system will be staff lead and topics will be adjusted to meet the needs of the participants. On occasion, a trainer will be provided which can assist families in getting the required yearly training hours. An additional benefit of this collaboration the potential opportunity to build respite connections since participants will all be foster or adoptive parents that have passed background checks and successfully completed the licensing and home study process. By making these connections, if a placement would disrupt in either agency, we could join forces to transfer the placement.

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.

Foster family certification is a three-month process. Each family works closely with their Recruiter to complete required training, mandated paperwork, the home study interview, and home inspection. The Children's Institute certification process includes a multi-level review of each family and all required documentation to assure preparedness, quality, and accuracy prior to certification. Family recruiters will be required to certify a minimum of 3-4 families during each quarter of the fiscal year who will be open to accepting one or more of the following types of placements: TFC, children over the age of 5, unplanned placements, emergency respites, teens, and sibling groups. A minimum of 12-16 new foster families will be certified annually.

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Promoting Well-Being (65 points)

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.

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Foster families receive comprehensive pre-service training which exceeds DHS requirements. Each training is designed to provide information and understanding of who the children and families are that we serve. An emphasis is placed on helping foster families to better understand how trauma affects children so parenting can be tailored to meet individual needs. The following trainings are required prior to certification:

Who are the Parents/Children: three-hour training with a primary goal of increasing awareness and to help resource families understand what the birth parents and children experience in the process. This includes covering court hearings, visitation, reunification, PA statistics, and bridging the gap.

Prudent Parenting, Parenting and Attachment: three-hour training that discusses prudent parenting laws for children in care, parenting styles including discipline vs punishment,

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developmental vs chronological ages and common issues seen in attachment. This training also addresses parenting teens and parenting through the lens of trauma.

Trauma Training: Grief, Loss, and Healing the Hurts: three-hour training that defines trauma, compassion fatigue, grief/loss, and how trauma affects the children in care. It discusses behaviors that may be displayed by a child who has experienced trauma and teaches families to look through a trauma informed lenses to best support our children.

Cultural Humility: three-hour training that's primary goal is to acknowledge the bias around LGBTQ, racial and ethical issues. This training takes foster parents through learning how to incorporate the child's identity into their daily life. Families will understand the difference between tolerance, acceptance, and an understanding of these issues to best meet the needs of the child.

Medical, Neurodiversity, Disability Needs: two-hour training that addresses the various medical needs that we commonly see from the children in care ranging from trauma to Autism and fetal alcohol syndrome.

Child Development: one-hour training which guides resource families through typical child development. This training gives parents an understanding of what is typical so that they can identify when behaviors or development are atypical.

Resources: one-hour training walking potential resource parents through the many community, county, and state resources, both informal and formal, that are available to them. Resources also touch upon systemic processes and procedures.

Car Seats Training: two-hour training that involves hands on practice in installing car seats and all relevant laws.

The Sibling Training: day-long training for the children of families going through the certification process with a main goal of teaching children to empathize with the children who may be placed in their home. This is done through various games and activities that teach them about foster care, the behaviors they may see, and what may lead a child to being placed in their home.

What to Expect When Expecting a Placement: three-hour training that goes over the emergency placement process, how to prepare for a placement call and the shelter care hearing. The facilitator also discusses the core process and relevant laws.

The Process Groups: three, one-hour, mandatory groups offered throughout the training series to help families process the topics covered so far through a trauma informed lens.

Mandated Reporter Training: three-hour training offered through the University of Pittsburgh which covers Pennsylvania's mandated reporting laws.

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CPR certification: three-hour hands-on skills training which prepares foster parents to respond to breathing and cardiac emergencies. It also teaches the skills and knowledge needed to provide care for victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

Get Real Training – four-hour interactive training that provides real life scenario training that allows foster parents to practice trauma-informed responses to difficult behaviors. This training teaches foster parents about setting up realistic expectations, how to deal with typical teen behavior, dealing with unforeseen circumstances in placement, how build support, and be sustained through the challenges of being a new foster parent.

After certification, families are required to complete 15 hours of training annually. An individual training plan is developed for each family with their assigned Foster Care Specialist. Each family is required to have 10 hours of formal training and 5 hours can be self-study. Three hours of the 15 must include trauma informed care. With the support of the Foster Care Specialist, the family collaborates to develop a training plan centered around the individual needs of the family, needs of children placed in the home, and how future placements will display trauma in differing ways than what the family has experienced.

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.

Within 72 hours of placement the assigned Foster Care Specialist will schedule a meeting to connect the birth family and the foster parents. Discussion during the meeting will include pertinent information regarding the child such as likes and dislikes, medical concerns, allergies, and any other pertinent information which will assist in providing for the well-being and appropriate care of the child. The meeting can be virtual, in person, or by phone taking into consideration what the biological parents would prefer. The Foster Care Specialist will use pre/post meetings with each party to ensure each is prepared. Ongoing meetings will be scheduled throughout the life of the case as needed or when requested by the parties involved.

During the entirety of the placement a communication book will be passed between the biological family and foster parents to share information regarding care of the child. Foster parents are provided with training and resources to support bridging the gap and understanding the importance of how this positively impacts the child. Biological parents are invited to all child related appointments. The Foster Care Specialist attends initial appointments with the foster parents to bridge the gap in developing a positive rapport with the biological family.

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.

The Children’s Institute will implement the Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Model based on success of the model historically being used in post-permanency services. TBRI is an

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attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI uses a three-tiered approach to create healing relationships for children and youth. First, Empowering Principles aim to address physical needs - these basic unmet needs are often overlooked and with proper attention can begin to build a solid foundation to move to the next stage in the relationship. The next phase - Connecting Principles - focuses on attachment needs and then the Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, the heartbeat of TBRI is connection. This model is proven to be effective for many children that have had other failed interventions. This model is rooted in trauma-based responsiveness – creating healing spaces within family homes for kids that have moved through the system with severed attachments.

Traditional parenting techniques are often ineffective to children and youth with disrupted attachments. Improving the quality of caregiving and creating caregiver sensitivity can lead to behavior change and more secure attachments – ultimately resulting in more placement stability. Most often placements breakdown because of the day-to-day behavior and caregiver response cycle – the TBRI model will ensure that both staff and foster parents are equipped to build a stronger sense of self-awareness and empathy to ensure that reactions become responsive in a healing way.

Additionally, Safe Crisis Management (SCM) training will be implemented for all foster care staff and foster families. SCM is a comprehensive training program focused on preventing and managing crisis events and improving safety in agencies and schools. Safe Crisis Management utilizes a trauma-sensitive approach with emphasis on building positive relationships with individuals. The training is designed to assist staff with responding to the needs of all individuals and particularly with the needs of the most challenging.

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

Once the TFC families are identified and trained – they will be available to take older youth TFC appropriate placements. Within the first 30 days of placement a family plan and an individualized service plan incorporating the TBRI principles will be established. The family plan will include specific developmental milestones that allow for tangible transfer of learning of each principle. Additional training requirements in the TBRI model throughout the life of the placement will also be assigned to the family based on the unique needs of the child placed in their home. Progress on the family plan will be evaluated at each home visit to ensure continued development in the healing relationship.

Our goal is to ensure a holistic TFC model is employed. In order to effectively do this – it is critical that the youth experience is captured. We plan to develop group experiences supported by our Behavioral Health team for youth that are not connected with another therapeutic resource. According to the American Psychological Association, the most effective groups have a common identity and a sense of shared purpose. Our Youth TFC groups would aim to align with the TBRI principles that the families are working through to ensure that the youth have a

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safe space to share the emotions that will accompany developing connections. The versatility of the therapeutic modes that already exist within the Behavioral Health team would give these groups flexibility to meet styles of any youth – using art, music or meditation to draw out and enhance the youth expression.

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

The philosophy of TBRI clearly aligns with our organization’s trauma initiative making this model a good fit. We currently have a TBRI certified clinician on staff that can assist with both staff and foster parent preparation immediately. We also plan to have one additional person on the foster care team become TBRI certified in the 21/22 year – choosing the soonest available training opportunity. These trained staff will offer continued training and support to both staff and families throughout the life of a TFC placement.

As mentioned above, having a skilled Behavioral Health team allows us to easily begin youth groups as the need arises. We anticipate these being smaller, focused groups so beginning these groups will likely be relatively easy once we have enough youth that are able to participate.

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

Having an already credentialed staff member affords us an opportunity to have existing seasoned families participate in TBRI training starting in July 2021. TBRI and SCM groups will be offered monthly to prepare families to provide TFC. This approach would allow our initial TFC families to be equipped with training and real placement experience which is critical for success. Initially the number of families will be based upon current families that are willing and able to shift to TFC level. We anticipate that our initial number of families will be under 30% but will use targeted recruitment and involve a TBRI credentialed staff member to assist in the initial recruitment conversations as appropriate, to ensure a seamless TFC certification and understanding of expectations – aiming to reach the 30 – 50% goal within the first year.

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

Onboarding and ongoing training assure staff will be successfully prepared to complete assessments for children in foster care. All staff complete Allegheny County mandated assessments (CANS, ISPS, progress reports, educational screens, etc.) within required timeframes. Initial and annual training required for assessment completion is documented on a training form which is maintained by each employee and CI for compliance purposes. The monthly supervision form includes a training category where training topics, timely completion, comprehension of material presented, and total hours completed are documented. The supervisor consistently reviews and approves child assessments in KIDS for quality and completion within mandated timeframes. Case analysis and workflow review are included in every supervision form to support completion child assessments through the lens of quality and compliance.

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

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

The Children’s Institute ensures that best practice standards are met in our foster program by meeting with children alone to solicit feedback on their experience at least twice per month. This can happen during a home visit, during a transport or any other appropriate place. This feedback is reviewed at supervision sessions and any family development needs that may arise from these conversations are addressed in the family’s training development plan. Additionally, as our TFC models rules out, the group experiences we will offer that will be focused on youth voices will also be used as a tool to strengthen our families and program.

Quality assurance calls are also conducted regularly with all families in our programs – including both foster families and birth parents. These calls are completed randomly by supervisory staff in our foster care program and aim to solicit the family experience and identify any areas that we may be able to improve our service delivery. In addition, family surveys are sent out annually by using Microsoft forms and this cumulative information is shared with the foster care team to inform training and development areas that are thematic in the survey results. In an effort to promote engagement and enthusiasm in the team - the positive feedback is highlighted to tangibly show the staff the positive performance indicators as well.

- 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**

Foster care data is entered into KIDS within time frames specified by Allegheny County. Every case is assigned to a foster care specialist immediately upon placement. As contact with families and children occurs, the team member who had direct contact completes the subsequent data entry within 24 hours of occurrence. All other required documentation (CANS, progress reports, individual service plans, etc.) is completed by the assigned foster care specialist within designated time frames. The supervisor is responsible for review of documentation for accuracy, quality, and compliance. This is achieved through consistently monitoring documentation completed in KIDS and approving or returning for revisions in a timely manner. Formal supervision is scheduled at least twice per month with each foster care specialist for case and documentation review. Should the need for improvement be evidenced, the supervisor outlines specific information within the monthly supervision document and sets a deadline for

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completion. The supervisor keeps all completed supervision forms for performance review and a copy is provided to the foster care specialist to ensure timely correction and follow up.

The Children's Institute also tracks data related to each child in foster care on a quarterly basis through an electronic documentation system and reports annually on the following:

- Children Served Without a Safety Incident
- Truancy and Arrests Incidents
- EPSDT
- Placement Stability
- Resource Family Involvement in Case Planning and Implementation
- Birth Family Involvement in Case Planning and Implementation

Additionally, outcomes related to the TFC levels of care involving TBRI and SCM will be implemented into data collection.

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.

See Attachment - "Question Number 15"

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.

Recruiting and retaining dedicated and talented professionals remains critical to the mission of The Children's Institute's commitment to the highest quality of care. It is recognized that the quality of services is predicated upon the expertise and commitment of our team members. This objective will require considerable investments in ensuring that The Children's Institute remains an employer of choice for staff, offering competitive wages and benefits, along with opportunities to develop new skill sets as well as share in achieving positive outcomes for children, youth, and their families. Recruitment strategies include open houses, employee reference initiatives, and posting of available positions. Retention strategies include ongoing professional development opportunities, such as tuition reimbursement and an organization-wide employee appreciation program.

Our retention strategies are multi-faceted and consistently examine various areas such as: compensation, benefits, on-boarding, employee recognition, performance management, employee wellness/self-care, and training/development opportunities. An atmosphere of transparency is created in all our locations and assists employees with understanding decision making that leads to change, encourages staff members to ask for assistance and challenge change that is implemented if they feel that the quality of services for families is in any way diminished due to a change that was implemented. Additionally, various team member activities and events (yoga, ice-cream socials, food trucks and raffles for sports tickets, musicals or local

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festivals) are also provided to all employees free of charge to increase morale. Specifically, for Family Support Services, there is financial assistance to help staff pay for social work and counseling licensure. Additionally, Family Support Service's small size enables close administrative supervision and support for staff. The current Family Support Services staff possesses a tremendous amount of training and experience, which will be employed to mentor new staff. We believe that the larger departmental resources of The Children's Institute combined with an intimate, personalized daily approach will help in the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

As previously mentioned, another retention strategy is an initiative to become a trauma-informed organization. A cross-departmental work group has worked diligently over the past year to develop a trauma program which incorporates targeted milestones to be met during the next two years. The Children's Institutes team members will be introduced the various trauma tenets which will enhance their knowledge base related to strategies to cultivate a trauma-informed approach to our service delivery. This will also reinforce our efforts to develop a trauma-sensitive work environment for our team members – which ultimately supports our team member retention efforts.

The Children's Institute Foster Care program focuses on teamwork in their day-to-day operations. Foster care staff consistently work together to support one another through struggles, for casework consultation, to provide additional support as needed, and to share successes and strategizes. Foster Care Team Talk lunches occur weekly (via ZOOM during Covid) where lunch is eaten together for the purpose of building rapport and to promote a positive team environment. Foster care communicates via group text to share information and so assistance can be located quickly when needed.

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.

CI defines training as a systematic process through which an organization's employees gain knowledge and develop skills by instruction and practical activities that result in improved corporate performance. Therefore, a formalized training program is implemented and there is also training that occurs in an informal way across departments trends in the data. Formalized training on cultural competency occurs for all new employees involved in family services. This formal training provides guidance for new staff on addressing cultural insensitivity or discriminatory actions or speech in a manner that is culturally accepted from the organization. Outside training from community agencies also occurs within specific departments.

All new staff hired by The Children's Institute are required to be trained in the following areas: History, mission and values of the organization; Culture of Gratitude; Environment of Care include Emergency Response; Diversity Training; Infection Control; Compliance; Risk Management; Compassion Fatigue Training; and other organization protocols.

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Through Allegheny County, foster care staff receive the following required trainings: CPR/First Aid, CSEC, Prudent Parenting, Introduction to SOGIE, Mandated Reporter, and CANS. In addition to this all-new hire foster care staff are required to attend the Children’s Institute Foster Family pre-certification trainings which includes Cultural Humility.

In an effort for all staff to be trauma informed and trauma aware, The Children’s Institute Trauma Initiative has been implemented for all staff. All employees will receive trauma training following this timeline:

Phase I: Trauma Aware Training completed in 2020

Phase II: Trauma Sensitive Training will occur in 2021

Phase III: Trauma Informed Training will occur in 2022

Phase IV: Healing Centered Training will occur in 2023

The Children’s Institute plans to send two team members to Safe Crisis Management (SCM) train the trainer certification training. Once completed all Family Support Services staff will be trained in the SCM model and will have annual refreshers moving forward.

Training and development for each team member is monitored through bi-weekly formal supervision meeting and documented with the supervision form below:

I. Supervision – Foster Care Specialist Quality, Compliance, and Growth Focused <i>(Name and Date)</i>				
Role Responsibilities	YES	NO	NI	Examples to Support/Plan for Improvement
Provide home visits, additional contacts, and transportation as needed (meeting or exceeding all stakeholder requirements) (Q,C,G)				
Demonstrate proficiency in the CI training model to develop and enhance foster parents/kinship parents’ skill level. Focus with families to include trauma informed care and cultural humility (Q,C,G)				

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Complete ISPs, CANS, all other indicated assessments, and secure priority documentation by due date (Q, C)				
Utilize CI documents and the KIDS electronic system to complete all required documentation and supervisory notification (C)				
Complete all contact notes within 24 hours (inclusive of specific reference to environment safety assessment and progress related to ISP goals if applicable) (Q,C)				
Attend and actively participate in two scheduled individual supervisions and one team meeting per month) (Q,C)				
Assume on-call responsibilities as scheduled and respond to all calls/inquiries and share relevant updates with Placement Coordinator, Supervisor, and Manager (Q,C)				
Participate in internal audit process of family and child files (Q,G)				
Establish and maintain positive rapport with CI team members, foster families, County/CYF personnel, and other stakeholders (Q,G)				
Represent as a CI ambassador for children and families				

II. Supervision – Foster Care Specialist

Required Skills	Meets Expectations	Needs Improvement	Examples to Support/Plan for Improvement
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Knowledge of Role			
Time Management			
Communication			
Accountability			
Strength-based/trauma aware approach			

III. Supervisory Session Details		
Topic	Discussion Highlights	Action Items
<i>Quality, Compliance, Growth focused</i>		<i>Follow up – Who Will Do What by When?</i>
Caseload review - successes/stressors (Q, C)		
Workflow review (C)		
Incident review (Q, C)		
Training review, 40 hours annually. Annual training to include trauma informed care, cultural humility, safe crisis management, TBRI, and prudent parenting (Q,C)		

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Supervisory support (Q, C)		
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18. Describe your plan for hiring racially and culturally diverse staff.

The Children’s Institute has adopted strategies for hiring quality, racially diverse staff. These strategies are listed below.

- Prioritizing a culturally diverse hiring process-this is a current goal in the CI Strategic Plan Vision 2023)
- Being aware of language used in job descriptions
- Removing un-intended biases used in job ads and when screening potential applicants
- Implementing various table-top scenarios that may be influenced by race or culture variables during supervision activities
- Incentive programs for current employees to bring in known and quality talent
- Utilizing social media opportunities for job postings

Additionally, by incorporating a behavioral interviewing process, leaders follow standardized measures of gathering information to screen and select new employees. The behavioral based interviewing process is based on discovering how the interviewee acted in a specific employment-related situation. The logic is that how this candidate behaved in the past will predict how they will behave in the future- past performance predicts future performance.

The Children’s Institute creates an atmosphere that highlights and promotes acceptance of community and cultural diversity. By hiring unique, diverse professionals we have had the opportunity to draw from the staff member’s previous experience and diverse cultural customs to formally and informally train other staff members on how to handle diversity with families that they serve.

In consideration of the current national conversation regarding social injustice, discrimination, and racism – The Children’s Institute has taken an inward look and is intentionally identifying where we as an organization have gaps in fostering a culture that is inclusive and diverse. Our initial goals are to assess our current environment - most likely through a cultural assessment; to foster safe discussions with our team members to begin to create a foundation for trust and understanding and inform our goals; to ensure that our approach is not a “one and done” but that we build a culture that supports our goals. These goals are imperative for CI to build diversity in our teams, so to more equitably represent the racial demographic of our clients enrolled and served via our programs.

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.**

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Service Name	Service Description	Contracting Entity	Contract Amount	Start Date of Contract
Care Coordination, Foster Care, In-Home Family Services, Visit Coaching	<p>Care Coordination: Flexible and comprehensive services designed to meet the needs of children and the entire family with a holistic approach to care.</p> <p>Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.</p> <p>In-home Family Services: in-person family support program supported by family planning is focused on 8 different life domains.</p> <p>Visit Coaching: Rapid reunification program for parents and children to address the needs associated with visitation.</p>	Allegheny County	\$1,240,805.36	7/1/2020
In-Home Family Services and PACT	<p>In-home Family Services: in-person family support program supported by family planning is focused on 8 different life domains.</p> <p>PACT: Rapid reunification program for parents and children to address the needs associated with visitation.</p>	Beaver County	\$936,495.00	7/1/2020
Care Coordination, Infant-Parent Empowerment Program	<p>Care Coordination: Flexible and comprehensive services designed to meet the needs of children and the entire family with a holistic approach to care.</p> <p>Infant-Parent Empowerment Program: 6-month specialized service provides in-person parenting sessions using an EBP, teaches empowerment and utilization of community and natural supports, and focuses on mental/emotional wellness.</p>	Butler County	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically	Crawford County	No cap	7/1/2020

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	complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.			
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.	Cumberland County	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.	Erie County	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.	Fayette County	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.	Lancaster County	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements can be referred through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe. CRR programming also in development phase.	Northampton County	\$70,000	7/1/2020
Adoption Services	Adoption: Services provided through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Including Child Profile, Child Preparation, Child Specific Recruitment, Family Profile, Finalization, Older Child Matching Initiative, PACA, Placement and Post-Permanency.	SWAN-Diakon	No cap	7/1/2020
Foster Care	Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe.	Texas	No cap	12/1/2020

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<p>Care Coordination, Foster Care, and In-Home Family Services</p>	<p>Care Coordination: Flexible and comprehensive services designed to meet the needs of children and the entire family with a holistic approach to care</p> <p>Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe</p> <p>In-home Family Services: in-person family support program supported by family planning focused on 8 different life domains</p>	<p>Washington County</p>	<p>No cap</p>	<p>7/1/2020</p>
<p>Foster Care and In-Home Family Services and In-Home Family Counseling Services</p>	<p>Foster Care: placements through emergency placement or family matching. Program specializes in medically complex children ranging from mild health issues to severe</p> <p>In-home Family Services: in-person family support program supported by family planning focused on 8 different life domains</p> <p>In-Home Family Counseling Services: The counseling component of In-Home Family Services works to promote family stability and independent functioning, while facilitating behavior change and healthy decision making.</p> <p>Infant Parent Empowerment Program: Infant-Parent Empowerment Program: 6-month specialized service provides in-person parenting sessions using an EBP, teaches empowerment and utilization of community and natural supports, and focuses on mental/emotional wellness.</p>	<p>Westmoreland County</p>	<p>No cap</p>	<p>7/1/2020</p>

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.

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Anticipated challenges include recruiting families at a high volume who will be able to meet the vast needs of Allegheny County. However, The Children's Institute has begun the process of adjusting recruiting strategies through marketing on social media and by providing extensive screening calls with perspective families for the purpose of ensuring those who complete the process are open to accepting placements into their homes that meet the age range and needs of children coming into care. Also, utilizing staff that are not fully case loaded to assist in the recruitment and certification process will be helpful to a more expedited process.

After adjusting services in an evolutionary fashion during the COVID-19 crisis, we have learned significant lessons on how we can quickly adapt to provide service without interruption in the most unideal circumstances. By drawing from our past challenges, we are confident in knowing that we can pivot and recalibrate to ensure that we are keeping children and youth safe, supporting foster parents and have continuous monitoring of team members to assess vicarious trauma. This experience has taught us just how valuable the blend of services and the collaborative nature of organization truly is. Throughout the crisis, we have never had to worry about capacity issues to ensure all clients in each county and program were served. We continue to focus on methods to cross-train our staff so that our staffing patterns are not impacted in any program with the ability to quickly move a team member from one program to another seamlessly. All of these lessons learned position us to be innovative and flexible in any challenge we face moving forward.

- 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.**

The Children's Institute currently provides foster care services for Allegheny and surrounding counties. The present staffing pattern supports an increase in child placement totals without needing to hire to effectively sustain growth achieved. We have learned how to pivot and recalibrate when challenges are present to ensure the continued safety and well-being of children and families served. This has been evidenced through the continuity of care and continuation of services that has been present throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Several levels of leadership within The Children's Institute have foster care administrative experience and our organization is actively investing time and funds into innovative staff training to ensure our children and families are always supported effectively.

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**

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

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.

Operating Expenses

Staffing (Salary and Benefits)	Budget
Program Staff	\$ 267,894
Supervisory Staff	\$ 36,196
Subtotal	\$ 304,090

Program Expenses	Budget
Family Payments [Per Diem]	\$ 408,800
Ongoing Training	\$ 5,800
Recruitment/Retention	\$ 17,500
Subtotal	\$ 432,100

Indirect Expenses	Budget
Support Services	\$ 360,084
Subtotal	\$ 360,084

Total Operating Expenses **\$1,096,274**

Start Up Expenses

	Budget
TBRI Training	\$ 2,500
SafeCrisis Training	\$ 5,000
General Training	\$ 5,000
Supplies	\$ 1,000
Subtotal	\$ 13,500

Total Start-Up Expenses **\$ 13,500**

Rates Requested

Level	Family Payment	Rate
Pat level 1 and 2	\$25.00	\$ 68.00
Pat level 3 and 4	\$30.00	\$ 81.00
TFC	\$32.50	\$109.82

Transportation Reimbursement	Rate
Travel, Transport, Supervised Visitation	\$15/15 min plus federal mileage rate

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

The budget includes both direct and indirect expenses that we anticipate are needed to successfully implement TFC additions and sustain the foster care program. Startup costs for the program include training expenses for Safe Crisis Management and Trust Based Relational Intervention Training for the TFC level of service. We plan to train two staff in the Safe Crisis Management curriculum and one in Trust Based Relational Intervention Training to assist in staff and foster parent training. We have also included additional training money for any other training needs that will enhance the program model.

Funding for recruitment and retention is intentionally focused on in the budget to increase the number of families and to increase our ability to incentivize retention strategies. We have included incentive money broken up by to the age level - this money will afford incentive payments to current families that assist in recruitment of new foster families. The payments will be provided once the recruited family accepts a placement. In addition, money for social media advertising, yard signs, branded giveaways and other creative advertising strategies has been included. For our investment in retention of families, money to support the Fostering Connections program and a recognition event for the families is recognized in this budget.

Our goal for the first year of the program implementation is to have the ability to serve 40 children or youth. This is supported by our staffing pattern of 4 direct staff – averaging 10 cases per worker. Because we will need additional support to recruit and certify families quickly and build the additional program enhancements, we will need staff that are not fully case loaded to assist in the ramp up of these activities until we achieve our goal census.

The per diem reimbursement rates are broken down by three levels (Pat 1 & 2; Pat 3 & 4; and TFC level). *These rates are lower than our state approved rates at each level.*

The Children's Institute will provide it's two visitation experiences per child per month as contracted. We are requesting mileage reimbursement for any activity related to any visitation and school transportation beyond the two visitations per month. This includes travel, transportation and time spent on supervised visitation billed in 15-minute increments plus mileage.

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2020-2021

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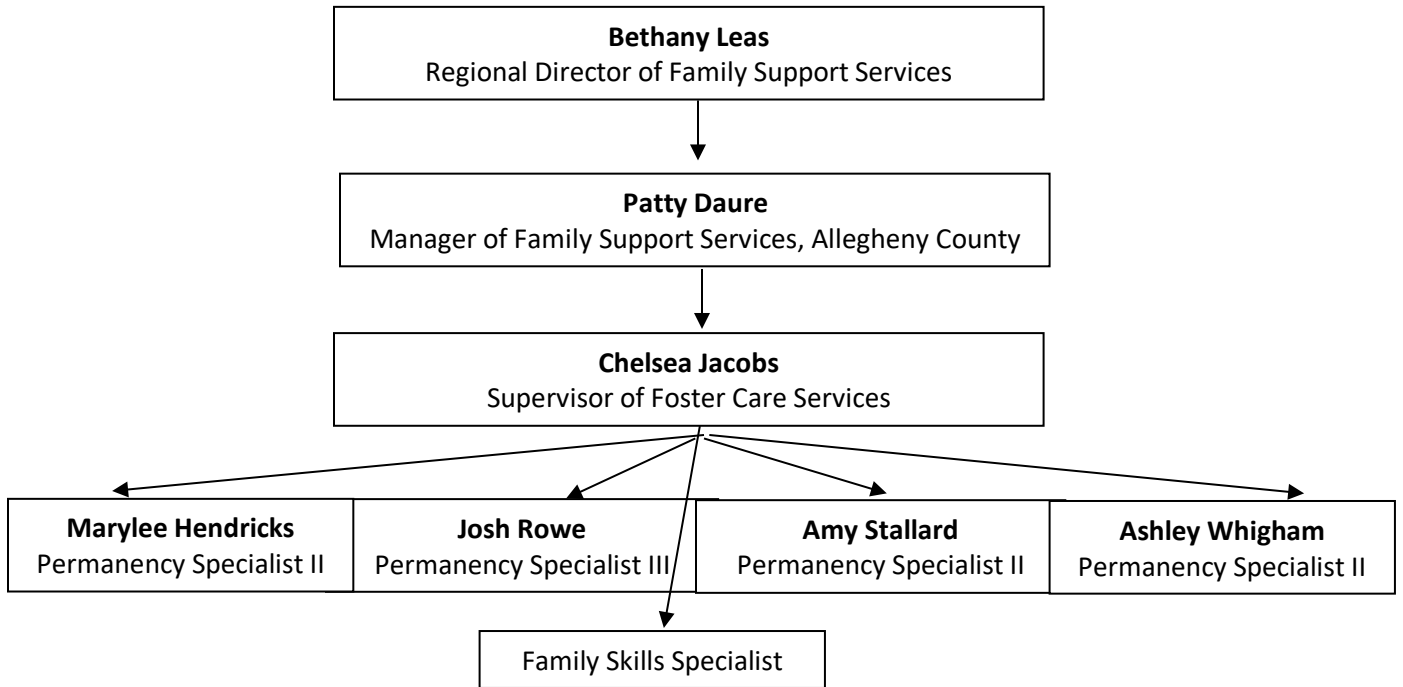
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Foster Care Organizational Chart



Responsibilities and Qualifications

Positions	Responsibilities	Qualifications
All Foster Care Positions		<p>SKILLS REQUIRED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic computer skills • Excellent verbal and written communication skills • Excellent organizational skills • Ability to manage conflict • Ability to relate well to individuals with challenging personalities • Ability to relate well to individuals with disabilities • Ability to adapt to schedule changes <p>ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act 33/34 Clearances • FBI Clearance • Valid, current driver's license and personal automobile liability insurance with a minimum of \$300,000 combined single limit coverage • Approval to verify driving history at the time of authorization and annually; approval to verify insurance coverage at the time of authorization and semi-annually • Reliable automobile with current inspection • Ability to meet physical and mental requirements of the job
Regional Director	<p><u>Leadership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as a liaison to other child welfare organizations, best practice/accrediting agencies, licensing bodies, payors, and other key contacts and individuals in the child welfare community • Monitors local trends, needs, and programs and develops programs in accordance with the strategic plan and in conjunction with senior leadership • Positions CI as a leader in the child welfare field, regionally and nationally by participating in opportunities to advance the field • Accepts accountability for fiscal management of the child and family service line. Ensures fiscal goals for programs are at the forefront and adjusts practices to achieve fiscal goals. • Develops a budget in collaboration with assigned managers and provides oversight of the budget to monitor fiscal goals; including productivity and other organizational key performance indicators • Oversees the physical space of assigned county offices and works collaboratively with senior leadership, plant operations, and 	<p>EDUCATION: Master's degree in Social Work or relevant Human Services field required.</p> <p>EXPERIENCE: Minimum five plus years of experience as a supervisor and/or manager in the Human Services field required. Experience working with diverse populations and/or people with disabilities preferred.</p> <p>SKILLS REQUIRED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to effectively manage multiple tasks • Knowledge of and ability to implement program specific evaluation and assessment tools • Knowledge of billing, budgetary and fiscal management • Knowledge of and ability to manage contracts • Strong leadership and management skills

	<p>assigned managers to ensure regulatory and safety standards are met</p> <p><u>Quality and Compliance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the development of a Standard Operating Model (SOM) for each service offered within Family Support Services to maintain consistency across counties in: the onboarding and development of team members; the delivery of evidence-based or approved, contracted services; the monitoring of staffing patterns and client formulas; internal auditing procedures; and documentation and reporting procedures in IMS • Ensures compliance with PA CODE regulated services (Foster Care and Adoptions Services) in collaboration with Manager to support external audit activities • Collaborate with Compliance and Accounting Managers related to county contract development and review • Leads communication with regulatory entities and payors to seek guidance and clarification on best practices • Further develop and define tele-services to meet the needs of clients (platform selection, interactive resources) • Monitors client satisfaction - concerns and suggestions for improvement <p><u>Supervision and Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises management team to ensure efficient and quality operations and adherence to SOM • Approves employment (hiring/salary), performance improvement, and discharge decisions based on organizational policies. • Oversees training and development of team members in collaboration with managers • Facilitates regular meetings with the family support services management team to discuss services, policies, procedures and training • Empowers the family support services management team members to take responsibility for their role and goals, teaching accountability and providing regular feedback • Completes performance reviews for all assigned team members • Models behavior and practices in a manner that creates a positive work environment 	
<p>Manager of Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with Family Support Services leadership team, Vice President, HR on all aspects of the hiring process including, but not 	<p>EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Social Work or relevant Human Service field required. Master's degree preferred</p>

<p>Support Services</p>	<p>limited to posting open positions, screening resumes, interviewing candidates and completing the tasks outlined in the CI hiring procedure to ensure that all steps are completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provision of orientation and training for new direct service team members • Provides supervision and consistent support to identified team members and maintains documentation of supervision activities (inclusive of 1:1 supervision, team meetings, and observations) • Completes 6 month and annual performance appraisals for assigned team members • Responds to requests to support any unusual or crisis incidents that impact assigned service areas • Monitors team member caseloads and makes effort to maintain balance in assignments • Monitors team member productivity/service delivery • Ensures that staffing patterns meet the needs of assigned service areas and approves team members schedule requests accordingly • Reviews and approves assigned team member business related expenses • Ensures compliance with all state licensure requirements, regulations, and county contractual obligations • Actively supports internal and external auditing activities • Evaluates programs/services on an ongoing basis in order to develop methods of continuous quality improvement • Maintains open communication with supervisor related to assigned services' needs and successes; personnel matters and compliance issues • Participates in professional development and maintains current knowledge of service trends related to child welfare initiatives • Develops and maintains collaborative relationships with referral sources and other external stakeholders • Represents as a CI ambassador at relevant external meetings and events to support assigned program area marketing and growth initiatives • Participates in "on call" rotation – to provide 24/7 responsive support to assigned service lines • Participates in work groups to develop annual budget packages 	<p>EXPERIENCE: Minimum of five years' experience in Human/Child Welfare Services required. Three years of supervisory experience in Human/Child Welfare Service required. Experience working with diverse populations and/or people with disabilities preferred.</p> <p>SKILLS REQUIRED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to effectively manage multiple tasks • Expertise in child welfare and behavioral health policies, regulations and treatment trends • Knowledge of and ability to implement program specific evaluation and assessment tools • Understanding of billing, budgetary and fiscal management issues
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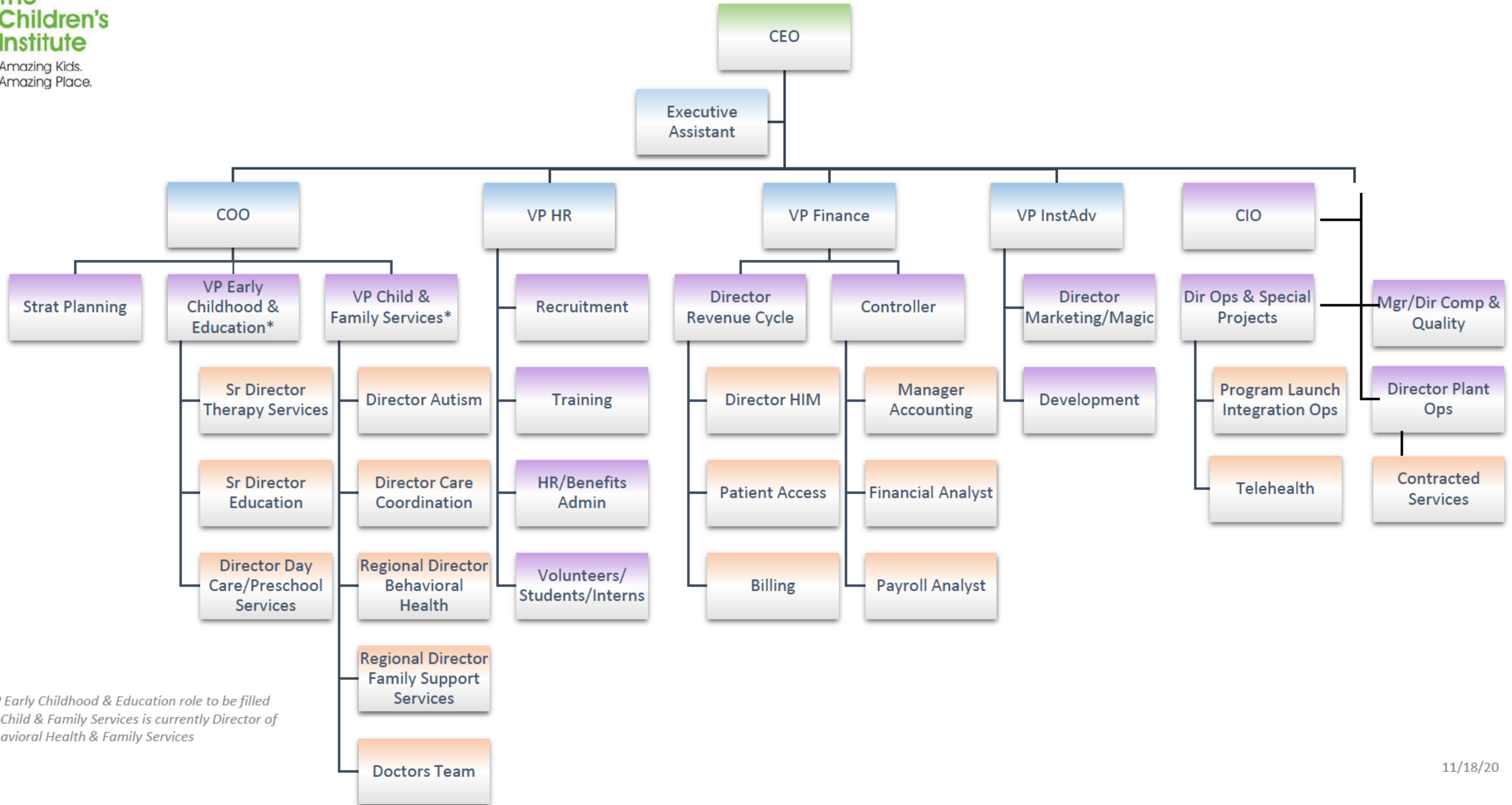
	<p>with Directors, Accounting Department, and COO-VP of Operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively addresses billing issues or processes pertaining to assigned services with the identified Accounting Department team member(s) • Identifies opportunities for staff development and continuing education in conjunction with the Director. • Provides field learning experiences for bachelor and graduate-level students 	
<p>Foster Care Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigns cases and develops schedules and calendars, in cooperation with Manager of Placement Services • Provides casework supervision for designated foster care staff. • Assists staff with crisis management as needed • Participates in "on call" rotation • Retains all responsibility of a Permanency Specialist III with a limited caseload specifically related to working with families • Monitors assigned staff to ensure appropriate documentation and billing procedures are maintained. • Tracks weekly staff productivity to assure caseloads are balanced. • Collaborates with Executive Director, HR Department and program Manager on all aspects of the hiring process including but not limited to, screening resumes, interviewing candidates and completing the tasks outlined in the CI hiring procedure to ensure that all steps are completed. • Maintain/Track all staff caseloads, including case openings and case closure dates. • Reviews logs, Billing Alerts, Expenses, and Affinity Registrations • Assists with training new staff in the foster care program. • Completes six month and/or annual performance evaluations for foster care staff supervised. • Maintains professional competence and skills through continuing education and supervision • Attends and contributes to relevant Project STAR staff and team meetings. • Assist in responsibility for all phases of Resource Family education, certification and re-certification process. • Assists with monitoring and reporting foster care program outcomes 	<p>EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in social work or related Human Service Field required. Masters preferred.</p> <p>EXPERIENCE: Minimum of three years experience in Human Services required. Experience working with diverse populations and/or people with disabilities preferred. Supervisory experience preferred.</p> <p>SKILLS REQUIRED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to effectively manage multiple tasks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies opportunities for staff development and continuing education in conjunction with the Manager. • Assists with identifying and investigating opportunities for growth and program development • Assist with pre-service education curriculum development and implementation • Train pre-service and in-service trainings for families • Assist with developing and revising all forms and/or policies specific to foster care program • Participation in CI committees as deemed appropriate • Assists with coverage of any and all programmatic services that pertain to Project STAR services, which includes but not limited to, Adoption, Foster Care, IFS, Visit Coaching and TTT. • Performs other duties as assigned. 	
Family Skills Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with Permanency Specialist to coordinate family appointments and travel arrangements • Collaborates with Permanency Specialists to conduct family assessments • Assists in implementing interventions identified in relevant service plans • Transports clients to and from appointments, visits, and meetings as needed • Supervises visits between children and authorized adults • Teaches life skills/parenting skills in the home or community setting as needed • Assists in linking families to formal and informal community resources • Provides verbal feedback in a timely manner to Permanency Specialist and Resource families following all visits, as well as written documentation for case file • Attends, participates in, and when called upon, testifies at all relevant meetings and hearings for assigned cases as necessary • Complies with office protocol requirements including record keeping, logging, and documentation • Assists in maintaining files in accordance with Project STAR policy, contractual requirements and DPW regulations • Attends and contributes to relevant Project STAR staff and team meetings 	<p>EDUCATION: High School Diploma or GED required.</p> <p>EXPERIENCE: One year experience working with diverse populations and/or people with disabilities</p> <p>SKILLS REQUIRED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to obtain and follow travel directions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to maintain professional competence and skills through continuing education and supervision • Maintains Family Visitation room • Adheres to policies and procedures pertaining to client and family transportation • Documents daily activities in a clear, professional and timely manner • Assists with coverage of any and all programmatic services that pertain to Project STAR services, which includes but not limited to, Adoption, Foster Care, IFS, Visit Coaching and TTT. • Performs other duties as assigned. 	
Foster Care Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and implements service plans that reflect the unique needs of all assigned clients in collaboration with clients, referral sources, and judicial guidelines • Assesses client needs using formal and informal evaluations, referral source recommendations, and client preferences • Transports clients to visits, medical appointments, hearings and other appointments as needed • Provides parent education to clients as needed • Establishes and maintains collaborative working relationships with referral sources and other social service agencies • Has familiarity with community services systems • Prepares reports as mandated by Project STAR standards and contractual requirements • Submits all reports to supervisor for review on a weekly basis • Attends, participates in, and when called upon, testifies at all relevant meetings and hearings for assigned cases as necessary • Complies with office protocol requirements including record keeping, logging, and documentation • Maintains files in accordance with Project STAR policy, contractual requirements, and DPW regulations • Attends and contributes to relevant Project STAR staff and team meetings • Works to maintain professional competence and skills through continuing education and supervision • Adheres to policies and procedures pertaining to client and family transportation 	<p>EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in Social Work or related Human Service field required. Masters preferred.</p> <p>EXPERIENCE: Minimum of one year experience working in Child Welfare</p> <p>SKILLS REQUIRED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to make professional decisions independently in the field

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents daily activities in a clear, professional, and timely manner• Independently connects clients with community resources• Conducts SWAN related activities as assigned (Placement Services only)• Mentors Permanency Specialist I as needed• Assists with coverage of any and all programmatic services that pertain to Project STAR services, which includes but not limited to, Adoption, Foster Care, IFS, Visit Coaching and TTT.• Performs other duties as assigned.	
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ORGANIZATION CHART



**VP Early Childhood & Education role to be filled
VP Child & Family Services is currently Director of Behavioral Health & Family Services*

Implementation Timeline-The Children's Institute

March 1- April 30, 2021

- 5 families are to be identified, contacted, and will agree to support TFC placements.
- 2 staff members will be identified and registered for the 5 day in person Safe Crisis Management (SCM) train the trainer certification class.
- All foster care marketing on social media will be updated to reflect the following needs, diverse/culturally humble families, teen families, sibling group placements, unplanned and emergency respite placements, and TFC families.
- Initial assessment calls with potential foster families will emphasize the need for diverse/culturally humble families, teen placements, sibling groups, unplanned and emergency respite placements, and TFC placements. Families who are only willing to accept babies will be screened out at this time.
- Certification of 3-4 foster families who meet the needs present each fiscal quarter will be implemented. The requirement will be added to the family recruiter supervision form.
- The CI behavioral health Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) trained therapist will develop a schedule for training of CI foster care staff and TFC families through the remainder of the 2021.
- 1-3 current foster families will be identified for participation the CI Fostering Connections mentorship program.

May 1- June 30, 2021

- 2 staff members will attend the 5 day in person SCM train the trainer certification class.
- SCM training will be scheduled for all foster care staff.
- All foster care staff will attend TBRI training.
- A minimum of 3-4 foster families will complete certification. They will be open to accepting one or more of the following types of placements, TFC, children over the age of 5, unplanned placements, emergency respites, teens, and sibling groups.
- Engagement with 1-3 foster families will occur for participation in the CI Fostering Connections mentorship program. The families who are interested will fill out an application, attend a training with the Permanency Supervisor, and will sign a mentor agreement.
- All families who are certified after May 1, 2021 will be expected to participate in the Fostering Connections Mentorship program. They will complete a survey during the certification process to determine what kind of support they feel they might need, any specific needs they have, and how often.

Implementation after June 30, 2021

- Foster care team members will be trained in SCM by July 31, 2021
- Families who are certified for TFC placements will be trained in SCM and TBRI. Training will be scheduled each month moving forward to ensure timely completion. Allegheny County CYF will be notified as each family completes training and is available to accept TFC placements.
- 1 foster care team member will attend TBRI train the trainer certification training. Upon completion, the new TBRI trainer will be responsible for scheduling monthly trainings for new hire team members and foster families in the certification process.
- Implementation of the Foster Care Connections mentorship program will occur in July 2021. The foster care and permanency supervisors will meet to review newly certified family surveys and assign them to a mentor who best suits their needs. Connection between families will be initiated through an introduction meeting. The mentor and mentee families will work together for a 4-month period of time. At the conclusion of the partnership, both families will fill out surveys for review and so adjustments can be made for effectiveness of the program.
- 30-50% of all families certified moving forward will include those who are willing to accept TFC placements.