



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

Foster Care Agencies

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Three Rivers Adoption Agency d/b/a TRAC Services for Families

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Dr. Jacqueline Wilson, CEO

Address: 1600 W. Carson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Telephone: 412-471-8722 [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: www.tracpgh.org

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

Date Incorporated: 1978

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Proposal: N/A

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* TRAC is a current provider of foster care for Allegheny County. In this capacity, TRAC received an email from both the DHS Director and CYF

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Dr. Jacqueline Wilson	412-41-8122	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Dr. Jacqueline Wilson	412-41-8122	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Jennie Thye	412-41-8122	[REDACTED]
Chief Financial Officer	Joseph Cox	412-41-8122	[REDACTED]
MPER Contact*	Jennie Thye	412-41-8122	[REDACTED]

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

BOARD INFORMATION

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

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Click here to enter text.

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Marcella Knittel

Board Chairperson Address: [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.*

Dr. Sarah Spring, MD
Kids Pediatrics

[REDACTED]

Kelly Hughes; ED
Foster Love Project

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 2/10/2021

Amount Requested: \$1,582,282

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

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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.**

TRAC serves as the central resource for permanency information, adoption and foster family recruitment, placement of special needs children, post-permanency support, education, and referral services throughout Allegheny and its contiguous counties. We work with public and private agencies to implement cooperative, cost effective programs to meet the needs of children in the child welfare system. TRAC provides recruitment, information and referral services, counseling, family preparation, foster care supervision, post adoption services, and parent and professional education services to achieve and maintain maximum permanency opportunities for children and their families.

Children From Birth Up to their 21st Birthday

TRAC's primary mission is to ensure permanency for children who have experienced the trauma of abuse and neglect. Adhering to the permanency standards of the Child Welfare League of America, TRAC is a multi-service agency serving children who cannot remain with their birth families and the resource families who provide these children permanence.

Primarily, the children served fall into several categories.

- More than half the children we serve are African American
- Many children are older and/or part of a sibling group who need to stay together
- A significant number of the children in our care have emotional, physical, or mental challenges. Most of these children have experienced multiple moves in the foster care system and high percentages have been victims of abuse and neglect.

Children being removed and separated from birth family members is a traumatic experience, affecting both the parent(s) and children. Because of this, these children quite often have feelings of hopelessness and isolation. Children adopted or fostered through the child welfare system have come from life experiences of abuse and neglect, generally exacerbated by issues of poverty. Living through such trauma, children are at high risk for developing mental health challenges like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Teens, like younger children in the child welfare system, have been removed from home due to neglect and abuse, and other parent/child conflicts. The trauma teens experience due to being removed from their birth family is as impactful as with the younger child. TRAC understands the primary difference with teens in need of foster care is recognizing where they are at developmentally and the general challenges involved in adolescence. One of the important factors in working with teens is having the willingness to listen to them. Teens have significant insight into their issues and can bring a great deal to the table with regards to possible solutions.

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TRAC's CSR specialists/recruiters have found this particularly useful when identifying possible family resources. Similarly, TRAC is able to work with foster families in assisting them in recognizing the difference between inappropriate behaviors and those behaviors associated with normal adolescent development.

Prospective and current Foster Care Parents

TRAC assists foster and adoptive families with complex issues from adjusting to a TRAC agency offers family preservation and reunification services to families in Western Pennsylvania including crisis intervention, in-home family therapy, therapeutic family visits, and referrals to community services.

One of the primary goals of TRAC is to assist in the development of healthy stable individuals and families. This is particularly important for foster families because of the need to weave together different cultures, habits and life experiences, into one new and celebrated unit. This can be challenging when the traumatic life experiences of the children placed is factored into the stress associated with being removed from birth family connections. In order for children to become emotionally healthy, they must be assisted in going through the healing process. Parenting children with traumatic histories can be difficult for families created through fostering, and increasingly so for families where there are also birth children who are impacted.

Birth Parents

The goal of foster care is always reunification until otherwise indicated. The process of returning a youth back to their birth family is most successful when the birth parents, foster parents, and agency work effectively together. TRAC accomplishes this collaborative triad by ensuring parents are included in all aspects of their youth's life. Encouraging consistent contact between the youth and birth parent, is essential as the family works towards reunification. Consistent visits assist in maintaining the bonds parents have with their children and is more likely to restore the relationship breach that has occurred as a result of out of home placement.

TRAC's ability to work with birth parents is strengthened by the therapeutic work done through its Outpatient Therapy program's Therapeutic Supervised Visitation (TSV) program. TSV is a family driven therapy which places importance on individuals and families having the capacity to identify their own strengths, needs and goals; create relationships; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals. TSV combines the traditional therapeutic process with family visitation. It provides a structured, nonjudgmental environment for parents and a safe nurturing environment for children, as they actively engage in the process of re-building and repairing family relationships.

Stakeholders in Foster Care

TRAC has had a working relationship with Allegheny County Department of Human Services since its inception. That relationship has included foster care and adoption related services for nearly 40 years. Since TRAC is licensed as both a foster care and an adoption agency, the organization has also had the ability to place youth from the child welfare system for whom parental rights have not been terminated. As a Foster Care partner agency, we engage with Allegheny DHS through regular contact which includes the following requirements of an agency per the request for proposal.

- **Option Meeting Participation:** Option meetings are opportunities for TRAC staff to develop strong relationships with DHS/CYF staff. These relationships are vital to the

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ongoing communications necessary to improve permanency outcomes for children. Scheduled by County staff, TRAC regularly participates in Option meetings to hear information regarding children most in need of a foster/permanent family. TRAC also provides information on available families that may be a match with the children waiting.

- **Foster Home Status System Use:** As a longtime foster care provider, TRAC regularly provides the county with up-to-date information on the availability of homes. TRAC is prepared to utilize the Foster Care Home Status System, and has identified the primary individual responsible for inputting this information into the system on daily basis. Likewise, TRAC currently provides a monthly Pipeline report to the county to assist with tracking the status of families moving through the approval process. This report also provides the agency with information to assess the anticipation of increased home availability.

As a founding member of Allegheny County's Permanency Planning Task Force, TRAC values and recognizes the need for communication with DHS staff on all levels. This includes participating in Teaming meetings. Equally important is the agency's relationship with provider agencies, most recently those involved in the Teen initiative. TRAC also has experience working with other DHS stakeholders including CASA and Kids Voice.

In addition to the aforementioned contracts, TRAC also partners and communicates with various entities for the purpose of placing youth from the child welfare system including Westmoreland, Washington, Cambria, Beaver, Butler and Philadelphia counties.

Parent Input

An important stakeholder in the foster care process is the foster parents themselves. TRAC recognizes the importance of these individuals and the sacrifices they make in order to provide safe and nurturing environments for children. TRAC encourages feedback from foster parents as a way to improve service provision. Prior to this request for proposal, TRAC surveyed 124 Foster Care parents for input on services provided to determine areas for growth and assess potential challenges. The survey asked nine questions to gauge the quality of customer service, training and assistance. Respondents also had the option to share open-ended feedback. Several of the recommendations made have already been implemented into programming, included increased communication throughout the process and assistance with obtaining clearances and other concrete goods.

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.

Black Adoption Services (BAS) was developed specifically to increase the number of African American families available for the placement of children. However, TRAC prides itself in the ability to work with all families. As you will read throughout the narrative, TRAC recognizes systemic barriers that exist for Black youth who enter the child welfare system. In working with our Foster Care families, we aim to mitigate those challenges. This is core to our work.

TRAC also has a longstanding history of the approval and placement of LGBTQIA+ families. Having had the AFFIRM training, many TRAC families not only welcome the placement of LGBTQIA+ youth, but do so with the dignity and respect required to ensure the positive emotional health of these youngsters. This not only involves supporting youths SOGIE,

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but includes attending appointments with older youth as they explore medical options available to them through surgery and hormone therapies. TRAC's therapists have also been vital in assisting youth in 'coming out' to their families.

To further our work with LGBTQIA+ youth, TRAC completed its self-assessment through the Human Rights Campaign's All Children All Families Project. Our goal is to complete the benchmarks necessary for full recognition as an organization that provides culturally competent LGBTQIA+ services to families and children. TRAC actively recruits families from the LGBTQIA+ community as part of the agency's recruitment plan. Staff are regular participants in the county's QIC meetings and has established relationships with Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation and PERSAD. Furthermore, LGBTQIA+ youth are referred to TRAC's outpatient clinic for therapeutic services when the need is indicated.

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.

TRAC is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a range of services and resources for children, youth, adults and families to ensure stable relationships and strong community connections. Founded in 1978 as volunteer-driven initiative through the Junior League of Pittsburgh, TRAC has dedicated almost 43 years of work toward the goal of ensuring that no child will have to face a life without permanency.

TRAC's efforts have resulted in national recognition. In 2000, President Clinton awarded the organization the inaugural Adoption Excellence Award. TRAC again received this prestigious award in 2010 for the support services provided to families, specifically recognizing the agency's achievements as they relate to post-permanency services. Compared to the nation disruption rate of 25%, TRAC achieved only 9% -- demonstrating our commitment to the children and families we serve. TRAC is also the recipient of the 2004 Faith Based Award presented by the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) and has been honored as an Angel in Adoption by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute in 2003 and 2005. Other core accomplishments for TRAC include:

- developing the regional One Church One Child program in 1983 which resulted in an ongoing statewide initiative,
- developing Project STAR, and
- serving as a lead agency on the Allegheny County Permanency Planning Task Force.

TRAC's programming has always been therapeutic in nature and has been developed to focus on the specific needs of individuals impacted by the Child Welfare system. TRAC has been providing adoption and foster care focused therapeutic services for two decades. To fill the increased need for this service, TRAC began the process, and has been approved as an approved psychiatric mental health clinic with the ability to accept 3rd party insurance payments.

All of TRAC's families are approved for both foster care and adoption, which means all families receive the same level of support regardless of the type of placement. TRAC, like Allegheny County DHS, strives to promote placement stability, reduce time to permanency, and ensure that foster care families have the support they need as TRAC delivers high quality services and the best care possible for children. Since its inception, as indicated TRAC has been providing foster care to adoption services for Allegheny County, and has placed or assisted in the placement of over 7,600 youth. In FY 2020, 36 families completed pre-service training, 25 of whom had family profiles completed. During this same timeframe, 67 children and youth were placed in TRAC homes ranging in age from newborn to 18+ years of age. Thirty-four children

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were 0-5 years, 13 were between 6-12 years, and 20 were 13 years of age and older. Additionally, TRAC finalized 13 adoptions and completed 101 child profiles through the SWAN units of service.

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).

At the writing of this application, TRAC has 67 Allegheny County children placed in 40 TRAC homes. It is TRAC's goal to increase both the bed capacity and number of homes by 50% during the first year of programming under this proposal (100 bed capacity & 60 homes). TRAC recognizes that the number of beds available at any given time will fluctuate based on factors such as length of a child's stay and the challenges exhibited by placed children prohibiting the placement of additional children. The goal is to have families approved on a continual basis through aggressive recruitment and retention strategies.

Of the families approved, TRAC anticipates 15 – 18 spaces (30%) for TFC placements, 15-20 (30%) for teens and the remainder for general and emergency foster care placements, recognizing there will be natural overlapping of demographics based on youth's intersectionality. Currently, the vast majority of families in pre-service training have indicated their willingness to be resources for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Promoting Placement Stability (60 points)

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.
- b. The strategies you will use to ensure your Foster Care families are diverse and culturally humble.
- c. The recruitment staffing strategy, specific roles and number of staff involved in the recruitment of Foster Care families.
- d. The specific recruitment strategies you will use for Emergency Placement Homes, Respite Homes and Emergency Respite Homes.
- e. How you will incorporate a "customer service" approach.
- f. How you include matching events and preplacement visits in your approach.

Since 1979, TRAC has placed or assisted in the placement of 7,600 direct placements. Our mission extends well beyond simply ensuring a child has a roof over their head. As mentioned previously, children being removed and separated from birth family members is a traumatic experience, affecting both the parent(s) and children. In our Foster Care parents, we seek individuals who express a willingness to open their hearts to a child whose behaviors in search of love and stability may at the surface communicate the contrary. Because we hold the needs of the children we serve at our core, we also understand that Foster Care parents best support a child when they apply that same lens of love and compassion to the birth parent. In more than 40 years in operation, not a single Foster Care or Adoptive family arrived at our office prepared for the journey ahead.

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As you will soon read in response to the question directly following this one, TRAC provides rigorous training and supports that make it possible for our Foster Care families to navigate the challenging and rewarding experience of helping a child. To address this work, TRAC employees 1 FTE Community Recruiter. The Recruiter is responsible for a wide range of activities that fall into the following strategic categories.

1. Advertising
2. Social Media
3. Community Engagement

Coalesced into a single recruitment plan, these strategies have proven effective at capturing the attention of many prospective Foster Care parents. Additionally, we rely on word-of-mouth recruitment through current Foster Care families. Truly, no one can speak to the rewarding nature of fostering a child better than those who are helping us in the work.

Advertising

Our recruitment efforts recognize that an individual unfamiliar with TRAC will interact with our brand between five to seven times before being moved to action. Through advertisement, TRAC promotes its brand in print, on television and radio, on billboards and by disseminating collateral material throughout Allegheny County.

- We place billboards for generalized family recruitment and billboards targeting affirming families.
- TRAC participates in on-air live interviews on WAMO radio & WGBN radio, the Lynn Hayes Freeland Show on KDKA-TV, and PCTV.
- Recruitment advertisements are often placed in several local sources including the Soul Pit, The Mount (Mt. Ararat Baptist Church magazine), the New Pittsburgh Courier (monthly), and City Paper.
- TRAC prints collateral marketing materials like face masks, pens, fans, etc. to distribute at events and that make their way into the community through our partnerships and various other means.

Social Media

TRAC connects with individuals in Allegheny County on social media through its Facebook account, which has just under 800 followers. Followers of our page learn more about how to connect as a Foster Parent. Furthermore, we utilize our platform to share resources for Foster Care families. This information serves a dual purpose. Not only does it become another means by which we disseminate helpful information to current families, but it also reinforces to prospective families that resources exist to help navigate whatever challenges they see between them and becoming a Foster Care parent. Examples of recent posts include:

- Understanding Black hair care for white Foster Care parents
- Advice on what to expect on day one as a Foster Care parent
- Encouraging current Foster Care parents to share what they love about their role
- Numerous articles that discuss the life benefits of helping a child in need

Recently, we embarked on showcasing our work through a series of Facebook Live events. Our first two videos were a hit with more than 400 views. TRAC also boosts our posts, places advertisements on Facebook, and leverages our relationships with our partners to promote our content.

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Community Engagement

Community Engagement is our most effective means to reach potential Foster Care families. We work with our community partners, houses of worship, and business partners to educate the community regarding the need for foster homes.

- **Community Partners:** TRAC sets up recruitment tables at approximately 40 community day events throughout Allegheny County each year. Recent events include State Rep. Jake Wheatley's Community Days (Beltzhoover & Hill District), The Black Family Reunion, Gastro Caribe Festival and the Foster Love Project. Past events have included Light Up Night, Pittsburgh PRIDE parade, and the African American Heritage Day Parade.
- **Church Recruitment:** TRAC works with a number of houses of worship to reach potential families. We attend regular bi-weekly meetings with the Baptist Minister's Conference, have a presence at the Unapologetically Blessed Conference, and a table at the Urban League Sunday.
- **Business Recruitment:** TRAC is intentional regarding its business recruitment. Focusing on specific communities each month allows recruiters to establish relationships with owners, thereby increasing their willingness to display recruitment materials. This includes libraries, hair salons and barber shops, community stores, etc.

While COVID-19 has significantly hampered in-person recruitment, our Recruiter continues to aggressively implement recruitment strategies to increase the number of Foster Care and adoptive families.

a. Target Populations

With each of these approaches we have the ability to target our efforts. Our Recruiter takes into consideration the importance of targeting recruitment efforts toward key populations.

Homes that Enable the Children to Remain in their Community

The National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care published in 2009 the Community-based Approaches in Child Welfare Driven Systems of Care. Those standards emphasize the importance of continuity in establishing stability for children once they enter the child welfare system. Children entering Foster Care are all similar in that they each have experienced the trauma of being removed from the birth family and the community that is familiar to them. When families are recruited from communities in which placed children reside, they likely have a better understanding of the nuances of the culture of that community.

In 2015 Allegheny DHS reported most children in placement were from McKeesport, Penn Hills, Wilkinsburg, Perry, Homewood, McKees Rocks, Duquesne, Knoxville, Braddock, Stowe, and Swissvale. Since that time, TRAC has concentrated much of its recruitment in those communities to increase the number of available homes, improving the likelihood that children can be placed in or near the places familiar to them. The following statistics speak to our most current data, aggregated in January 2021 to respond to this request for proposal.

- Of the 46 placed families 39.4% reside in the identified communities.
- Of the 30 families available for placement, 24% reside in the identified communities.
- Of the 24 families currently going through the approval process, 17% reside in the identified communities.

Additionally, in 2020, TRAC was selected to replicate a federally funded family finding initiative for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children

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and Families, Children's Bureau. The Extreme Family Finding model (EFF), developed by Foster Adopt Connect Inc. in Missouri, is staffed by a family recruiter and private investigator working as a team. The model works to find multiple extended family members and kin relationships for children most at-risk of aging out of foster care without an adoptive resource, such as older youth, large sibling groups, and children with significant medical or mental health issues. Unique to EFF, the goal is to match youth to a permanent resource within 20 weeks of referral acceptance. Because of the extensive nature of this model, the recruiter is limited to a caseload of 6 youth. Family connections have been found for 84% of the youth referred (5 of 6), during the 8-month project. The success of the EFF project has resulted in a current waiting list from county caseworkers desiring the service for their hardest to place youth.

TRAC also employs 1 FTE Child Specific Recruiter (CSR) and 1 FTE Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) recruiter. The staff in these positions carry a caseload of children, most of whom are from Allegheny County, who need additional supports and resources to find a family resource.

Unique to TRAC's recruitment strategies is the Waiting Child segment aired on KDKA-TV. One of the first of its kind in the country and initially funded through Wendy's, the Waiting Child showcases children and youth doing every day activities that are of interest to them. Coordinating with KDKA talent, TRAC staff select youth from throughout Allegheny and its contiguous counties. From donning a chef's hat and assisting in restaurants kitchen, to Steelers training camp, to riding a roller coaster at Kennywood Park, audiences are able to see beyond a child's stated challenges and into their full potential as thriving, emotionally healthy individuals with the assistance of a foster family. Families have been found for approximately 50% of the youth aired on these segments.

Homes with Diverse Needs

TRAC is keenly aware of the disproportionate representation of African American and mixed-race children in the child welfare system as compared to their white peers. At its foundation, TRAC has worked to ensure the diversity of its families is comparable to the children most in need of placement. In 2020, TRAC embarked on the process of determining the impediments to African American Families completing the approval process, using recruitment data from 2018/2019.

During that time TRAC recruited 199 families, of which 114 (57.3%) were African American. While an impressive number, African American families dropped off during each segment of the process, resulting in only 6 (5.5%) being approved. Through telephone contact surveys, valuable information was obtained that enabled the agency to put in place strategies that would increase the retention rate of African Americans specifically, but certainly all families generally. While the current pandemic has severely impacted TRAC's ability to carry out normal recruitment activities, information has been obtained regarding the success of the strategies implemented. Since July 2020, 20 African American families have been recruited. Of these, 10 have been approved (50%) and 9 have been placed.

One of the key strategies from this process, which will be utilized with all families, was the development and implementation of the Specialized Support Services Checklist. The foundation of the checklist is the increase in communication with potential families. This strategy allows for the recognition of problems, challenges and barriers families are experiencing that are hindering their forward movement in the process.

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Homes that Allow Siblings to Remain Together

Keeping siblings together is important in the positive outcomes experienced when placed in foster care. Older children separated from younger siblings are often further traumatized by the worry they have for their siblings. Additionally, when placed together siblings are provided with someone familiar in their life decreasing the amount of emotional upheaval they experience. As part of the approval process, families are asked the number of children they are able to accept in their home based on space and ability. At least half of recruited families indicated their willingness to keep siblings together by accepting placement of multiple children.

b. Strategies to Ensure Foster Care Families are Diverse and Culturally Humble

From orientation to profile signing, families are continually educated on the types of children in need of placement. Each TRAC family receives training in the following topics, which are addressed in full in question 9: Cultural identity, Who Are the Children, Working with Birth Families, Child Development, Trauma & Neurobiology, Attachment, Loss & Grief, Sexual Abuse & Health the Hurts, Healing Parents, Crisis Theory & Intervention, Prudent Parenting, Resources, and First-Aid and CPR. As stated previously, no individual arrives at TRAC fully prepared for the calling that is being a Foster Care parent. Our orientation process provides those initial supports. In this regard, our trainings complement both recruitment and retention efforts.

Race is often discussed with our Foster Care families in relation to individual lived experiences, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity and religion. In fact, being in foster care is also a culture that must be understood by families. During these oftentimes difficult conversations, families are encouraged to explore their own cultural experiences and how they impact their relationships with other groups. Exploring their biases in a nonjudgmental environment provides families the space to reflect on, learn from, and share existing or newfound understanding.

This of course is only the first step in the process. As with most learning objectives, ongoing conversations are vital to the development of cultural humility that is long-term. This is accomplished by ensuring TRAC staff also have ongoing trainings and courageous conversations so they too can continuously reflect upon their own levels of cultural humility. In addition to increasing their comfort in addressing these issues with our families, staff is also equipped to have these difficult conversations with the youth placed in our homes.

c. Recruitment Staffing Strategy, Specific Roles and # of Staff Involved in the Recruitment

As indicated above, TRAC's current compliment of staff is 1 FTE Community Recruiter, 1 FTE Child Specific Recruiter, and 1 FTE Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter. To achieve the goals stated herein, TRAC plans to hire an additional 1 FTE Community Recruiter to develop and implement strategies for the EFF project.

d. Specific Strategies for Emergency Placement, Respite, and Emergency Respite Homes

TRAC will utilize its current process of contacting families who previously did not complete the approval process. While fostering may not have been the right thing for the family at that time, they comprise individuals who may be willing to provide respite or emergency shelter foster care. Additionally, our regular recruitment efforts will include seeking families for the full spectrum of foster family needs. Discussions regarding the type of resource a family desires to be, are held throughout the entire process, from orientation to training to family profile creation.

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e. Incorporation of Customer Service Approach

TRAC has long recognized the importance of strong relationships with foster families being key to successful placements. TRAC's customer service approach includes treating each family with dignity and respect, 24-hour availability to discuss challenges, and celebrating successes. Additionally, TRAC seeks to hear open and honest critique of experiences with the organization. To that end, evaluations were sent to families who did not complete the approval process to see what was seen as done right and what changes were recommended to improve the experience.

- “TRAC prepared me so well for the foster/adoption process. I’ve known what to expect each step of the way. If I have questions, I know where to go to get answers. Well trained caseworkers. Knowledgeable case workers, easy and available. Answers questions quickly.”
- “The trainings at TRAC were very extensive and informative. Additionally, once a child was placed with us, we felt very supported.”
- “My family profile was done excellently. Tom really took the time to do his job and it was great. Everyone there seems to want to help you with any question and I love that. I love being here!”

f. Matching Events and Pre-placement Visits

Matching events provide a unique and interactive opportunity for agencies with available families to showcase the children looking for placement. These activities allow families to ask questions about the children to the people working directly with them. TRAC's Adoption Coordinator and Recruiter regularly attend matching events held by other provider agencies. Likewise, TRAC holds matching events where other providers are invited to participate. While COVID-19 has resulted in the inability to hold matching events in person, TRAC has held one virtual event, with a 2nd scheduled for April 2021.

TRAC's major matching event, Celebration of Families, is held late summer at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. The event, which is free to families and workers, not only gives attendees a free, relaxing day at the zoo, but the large matching room, allows agencies and families the opportunity to have face to face conversations regarding the children in need of permanency.

As indicated, most matching events involve families viewing photos and information on available children. While effective, these events generally omit the voices and desires of the children exhibited. To address this, TRAC held the county's first reverse matching event for older youth. Using the same concept as done with regular match events, reverse matching invited agencies to attend and provide information on the families available for placement, to the youth. This fun and interactive activity empowered youth by allowing them to interview agency staff and allowed them to decide as to which families they would like to learn additional information on and potentially meet.

With the exception of emergency placements, TRAC supports pre-placement visits prior to a child's move into a foster family. Pre-placement visits afford both the child and foster family an opportunity to interact with one another to begin the process of developing a relationship. By having children share their likes and dislikes, and the foster family sharing the operation of their household, parties gain information on not only how they will get along, but what the family may need to adapt in order to ensure the child is included in the family unit. There are no set number of pre-placement visits that are appropriate. Rather, the number is decided upon based on the needs of the child. Visits may range from a few meetings during the day, while others are

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progressive, moving from day visits to overnights to weekend visitation to assure all involved are comfortable and ready for the child to move into the home.

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.

One of TRAC's greatest strengths is the support we provide our families, as is evident in the Foster Care parent survey responses shared in question 5. In testament to our efforts, TRAC was the first agency in Western Pennsylvania to recognize the importance of adoption post placement services to the healthy development of families. As stated previously, TRAC has been recognized twice by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the services it provides to families. Because, as indicated, all of TRAC's families are approved for both foster care and adoption, all families receive the same level of support regardless of the type of placement.

TRAC caseworkers have regular contact with families and are available to them 24-hours per day in case of emergency. TRAC Caseworkers visit the foster home within 24-hours of placement. Subsequent home visits occur every 14 days. For teens in placement, weekly visits occur during the first six weeks of placement, to provide support to the placement. TRAC workers have historically made visits to the home as often as is needed, particularly in difficult placements and/or emergency situations. Also, conversations regarding challenges in the placement are a part of discussions during visits to the home.

TRAC encourages open and honest communication between caseworker and families, and sees this as essential to successful placement. When challenges indicate the need for additional support, caseworkers are strongly encouraged to make a referral for therapy with the agency's outpatient clinic and/or schedule a psychiatric evaluation with the psychiatrist.

Ongoing support is also an important factor in retaining families. Until placed with a child and the case transferred to a caseworker, TRAC's Adoption & Foster Care Coordinator will have at least biweekly contact with families to maintain their interest and excitement regarding helping a child in need of placement. Once placed, caseworkers are responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with families through regular contact.

TRAC continually refines its retention efforts, while also remaining realistic that our work asks ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Moreover, we recognize that retention is a process rooted in nurturing relationships. TRAC is currently in contact with the aforementioned 108 potential African American families who are now positioned for continued engagement with the agency. Throughout this renewed interaction, what was an interruption in their journey to fostering may be reversed, with them and TRAC now being better positioned to ensure their completion of the process.

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).

Peer supports are an integral component of our operations. With an eye to the future, TRAC intends to build upon our established methods and braid in a new component in order to

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strengthen our already recognized system of support. TRAC assists in navigating resources and support, reliable respite care, and advice and social support. As part of our continued work with Allegheny DHS, our agency will develop and implement Families Supporting Families (FSF) into our work.

Advice and Social Support

Chat N Chill is the agency's parent support group. The group meets at the East Liberty Presbyterian Church monthly during the school year. Having as many as 80 people in attendance (including parents and children), the group allows foster and adoptive families to share strategies and successes with one another, and offer support particularly for new families. Based on suggestions from families, trainings are provided on specific topics. These parent groups are led by TRAC therapists. At the same time, youth groups, divided by Littles, Middles and Teens, are in a different area of the church participating in age appropriate activities. The groups and activities allow the youth to share their stories in a safe place and gives them a sense of connectedness, by being with others with similar lived experiences. While COVID-19 has disrupted the in-person support group meetings, staff have made the necessary adjustments to offer the group via the agency's ZOOM HIPPA compliant platform.

As evidence of Chat N Chill's effectiveness in building a supportive network, there is a strong core group of individuals who have regularly participated for several years. Having developed solid relationships, these families have strengthened their circle by creating a Facebook group allowing them to receive and provide ongoing peer support. While the Facebook group is not affiliated with TRAC, families must be active in the agency's Chat N Chill to gain access to and participate in it.

It is these individuals that TRAC intends to utilize for its initial FSF support pods. From their experiences, these individuals are aware that families who have a strong support system are more successful in foster parenting. Because they are experienced Foster Care families, these individuals are knowledgeable of the entire spectrum of challenges that face foster and adoptive families including unexpected crises, birth parent connections, runaway teens, education advocacy, and mental health challenges. Each FSF ambassador will serve as the point of contact and support for 2 – 4 assigned families. While primarily used for new families, ambassadors may also be assigned to existing families who would benefit from the additional support to ensure success and increase retention rates. In addition to providing support for challenges faced in parenting, ambassadors are also equipped with the knowledge of resources available that newer families in particular, are often not certain how to navigate. As relationships develop between the families and ambassadors, it is anticipated that the circle of supports will extend to include providing respite for one another.

Reliable Respite Care

TRAC's recruitment plan includes seeking and approving families interested in providing respite care for children in care. Additionally, TRAC is in the process of contacting current families, as well as those who previously completed an intake with the agency but did not complete the approval process, to determine their willingness to be approved as respite families. Through our years of experience, TRAC has gained the knowledge indicating the best respite is when the families providing it have a relationship with the family in need. To support this, it is our goal to match the skills of respite families with foster families. This allows for the

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development of relationships and the increase in consistency in parenting the child receives during respite. TRAC's goal is to obtain 20 respite families during the first year of programming.

Additionally, TRAC recognizes the need for respite care goes beyond overnight stays. For many families, the ability to have special time for themselves minus children, is enough to revitalize their energy. For a decade TRAC has offered weekend retreats for those we work with whose lives have been touched by foster care and adoption. In total, we have offered 19 retreats that impacted 276 unique lives.

- **Parent Only Retreats:** This event is one of our most memorable because it aided Foster Care and adoptive parents in building peer networks while also creating an opportunity for education and growth. TRAC staff were present to share on various topics such as self-care and relaxation.
- **Full Family Weekend:** Family weekends offer another opportunity for training. At these retreats we focus on Healing Therapeutic Parent and tools for parenting traumatized children. This is done while also allowing the family to enjoy fun activities that increase trust and improve relationships as a family unit.
- **Father/Child and Mother/Child Retreats:** These retreats provided a special opportunity for a Foster Care parent to get precious one on one time with one or two of their children in their care while providing respite for the other parent. Parents and children were able to network with groups of their peers throughout the weekend forming lasting relationships and information support networks.
- **Teen Retreats:** This two-night retreat was a chance for the teens to have a getaway and hang out with other teens. This weekend was empowering as it gave teens a chance to socialize as well as normalize their experience as being foster or adoptive youth. It gave them a chance to see that "they are not the only ones" who aren't living with their birthparents.

Assistance Navigating Resources and Support

TRAC sets the stage for emotional support by fostering a non-judgmental environment. In doing so, Foster Care parents feel equally comfortable being vulnerable with other parents as with TRAC staff. To that end, our staff is available 24/7 to support Foster Care parents as they care for children in need. We also aid Foster Care parents by making sure they are aware of internal resources provided by TRAC such as our outpatient clinic. Furthermore, caseworkers often collaborate with their colleagues regarding outside resources to which they make referrals to families in need of specific services in their communities. With one of the agency's therapists being a former school psychologist, caseworkers often consult with this individual regarding specialized educational services and providing skills and knowledge to families on advocating that system. When needed, this therapist as well as the Clinical Director, have attended school meetings with parents to support families in their advocacy for educational services and to give educators additional information on how past trauma impacts a child's ability to learn.

Foster Care parents often bring their lived experiences of trauma to fostering. Because of this, behaviors exhibited by their placed children may be emotionally triggering. When recognized, TRAC staff is able to encourage foster families to seek therapy through the agency's outpatient clinic. Secondary trauma is also an issue faced by foster families. It is not unusual for families to suffer emotional distress resulting from hearing the oftentimes horrific details of the trauma experienced by children. Hearing repeated stories of abuse and neglect can lead to PTSD symptomology if exposure is prolonged without intervention and self-care. Being emotionally

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healthy is a concept reiterated beyond foster parent pre-service training with the understanding that being healed is imperative to being a successful healing parent.

a. COVID-19 Innovation

TRAC continued to host its Chat N Chill support group virtually following CDC guidance to postpone in-person activities. While not the traditional peer-to-peer in terms of Foster Care parent to Foster Care parent practice, it should be noted that during COVID-19 our team was able to quickly pivot to develop strategies to continue providing support in the absence of being face to face. In addition to having ZOOM groups for parents, story time for children and activities with older children were conducted virtually. COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on birth parent visitation. TRAC caseworkers quickly turned to ensuring birth families maintained contact with their children through virtual formats. With this both foster and birth parents had to become comfortable with communicating with one another, recognizing that each was working in the best interest of the child.

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.

TRAC's goal is to approve families within the 12-week timeframe. In our traditional process, prior to COVID-19, parents received all materials during an in-person orientation where it could be explained in detail. The intent behind this is to ensure TRAC followed best-practices designed to protect the children we serve while not overwhelming potential Foster Care parents, as the paperwork associated with the approval process can be daunting. Currently, all paperwork is mailed in one packet as we proceed with virtual operations.

During orientation meetings, an open and honest discussion is held to determine the possibility of issues that may impede the approval process as well as probable solutions. For example, individuals who disclose past court involvement are encouraged to apply for their clearances as soon as possible so they can be reviewed early in the approval process, specifically for Title 18 violations. At all times, it is TRAC's goal to screen people in rather than weed them out of the process.

Once in receipt of the application, TRAC staff make weekly contact with families to determine the existence of any challenges hindering them from completing the forms. This contact continues from the time of application to approval. Orientations are held on a rolling basis throughout the week (including Saturdays) taking into consideration the schedule availability of each family. Once orientation is completed, families are immediately scheduled for pre-service trainings which run continually throughout the year. Currently, pre-service trainings are conducted over five weeks. Two staff trainers are present for each training, allowing for observation of potential red flags and/or adverse reactions particularly on sensitive topics that may delay or stop the process. As families proceed through trainings and show a commitment to the process, they are assigned to the profile writer to begin the home study process which includes interviews, a minimum of 2 home visits, gathering additional information (e.g. contact with previous therapists) and reviewing paperwork.

Foster Care Home Approval Requirements

TRAC's application and orientation process requires the successful completion of the following mandatory items prior to approval, as detailed in the request for proposal.

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- **State/County Regulation Compliance:** TRAC is licensed by the State of Pennsylvania as a Foster Family Care agency and as such, complies with all regulations set forth in Chapter 3700 in the PA code. Additionally, TRAC is licensed to provide adoption services as per chapter 3350 of the Pennsylvania regulations, as well as a private children and youth social service agency per chapter 3680. As per regulations, TRAC's case records are reviewed annually for compliance. The agency has consistently passed all audits and has received full licensure each year. To ensure compliance, case records are reviewed throughout the year to make certain all required documents are up-to-date. Additionally, the BAS program assistant maintains regular contact with foster families and caseworkers to alert them to expiring documents. The Adoption Coordinator plays an active role by ensuring family re-evaluations are completed within the required time-frame. TRAC's case records are also audited by the DHS contract monitor to ensure compliance with state regulations and county mandates.
- **Certifications:** All members of the family, who are of age, are required to submit documentation of Act 33, Act 34, and FBI clearances. Clearances must be less than 1 year old at time of family approval. Original documents are reviewed by staff and maintained in the case record. Families who have lived outside the state of Pennsylvania less than 10 years ago are also required to receive clearances from those states. Clearances returned with negative information are reviewed by staff and supervisors to ascertain if information prohibits families from being approved based on Title 18 offenses. All negative information is reviewed with families to provide them an opportunity to discuss the circumstances of the offense, providing information necessary to consider moving forward with the approval process. Families are informed during the approval process of the requirement to have clearances updated regularly as per State regulations. They are further informed that failure to do so will result in a provisional approval upon recertification and the possibility that children placed in the home are removed. Enhanced clearances are also conducted on each family by Allegheny County DHS. The information contained therein is also taken into consideration during the approval process. If at any time a family cannot be approved due to negative items on a clearance, TRAC staff meets with families in person to inform them of the agency's inability to approve them. This conversation is followed up with a letter which also indicates the family's ability to appeal this decision. The profile writer also conducts a background check through the court systems to determine if any family members are named in court litigation and the outcomes. Additional information is obtained through a 10-year driving record for each adult applicant and a credit report.
- **Resource Family Registry:** As an affiliate agency of the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), a CY131 form is completed for each family, either approved or disapproved, and submitted for inclusion in the statewide resource family registry.
- **Annual Evaluation of Foster Care Homes:** As per State regulations, TRAC's families are evaluated annually. As part of the recertification process, the evaluation includes a review of required documents and updates as indicated, an in-person review of the home to ensure it continues to meet regulatory safety standards, a conversation with foster parents regarding challenges, successes and needs they may have.

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- Clearance Assistance Every 5 Years: As per State regulations, clearances must be renewed regularly for all adults in the foster home. Families are informed approximately 3 months in advance of the need for updated documents. Families who have financial difficulty obtaining clearances in a timely manner can receive some financial relief from TRAC. Additionally, families who do not have the technology to complete clearances online are provided with this assistance at the TRAC office.

Delays

TRAC observes several factors that have the ability to impede our 12-week timeline. In all cases, our agency staff steps in to assist parents if the cause is within our control. One consistent delay has been the difficulty surrounding timely completion of clearance forms. If as stated above, it is discovered that the delay is based on the lack of financial resources or technology, assistance is provided to mitigate this issue. Moreover, TRAC understands the differing abilities of those seeking approval. When it is perceived a family may be having difficulty completing paperwork, the profile writer, recruiter/retention worker or program director avail themselves for assistance. As mentioned, there are delays that are outside of TRAC's or a family's control. The time for the return of clearances—in particular the FBI or required clearances from other states of residence—often increase the time it takes for final approval. The delay in receiving the Act 34 clearance then delays submission of the application for the County's Enhanced Clearance. Additional delays include the need for families to slow down the process for personal reasons, the need to make corrections to the home to ensure a child's safety, and the need to make up missed training classes.

Perhaps most importantly, if at any time during the process, therapeutic support is deemed necessary, the process will be temporarily stopped to allow individuals sufficient time for personal healing. When this occurs, families are immediately referred to our outpatient clinic so these issues can be discussed with a therapist. Our process is trauma-informed from start to finish. TRAC respectfully prioritizes the emotional well-being of our Foster Care families as we guide them through requirements of the child welfare system.

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.

TRAC's foster families currently complete 33 hours of pre-service training in addition to CPR/First Aid as part of the approval process and a required 15 hours of training annually to remain a Foster Care parent with TRAC.

Pre-Service Training

TRAC recognizes the impacts of complex trauma, race based trauma, intergenerational trauma, situational trauma and the unique needs they present for both the children served and the prospective foster parents. Consequently, our trainings are delivered to Foster Care parents using a trauma-informed approach while educating them on the impact of trauma on children placed in the child welfare system. To ensure curricula is robust and current, TRAC has an internal training committee of qualified staff members who are committed to updating and creating new training opportunities. The training committee meets regularly throughout the year.

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To build a treatment foster care or therapeutic foster care program, TRAC has increased the curriculum by seven additional hours of training. These hours are reflected in increased time for trauma and neurobiology, crisis theory and intervention, and healing parenting to ensure treatment parents are prepared to handle difficult behaviors. Two additional classes are being incorporated specifically to address the needs of TFC families.

- **Navigating Systems:** This class focuses on advocacy in the different systems a treatment parent may encounter.
- **Treatment Parenting:** This class focuses on the unique roll of a therapeutic foster parent. When indicated, TRAC's trainings include information that addresses the intersectionality of race and other cultural identities, continually providing foster families with opportunities to reflect on their own identities and privileges.

It should also be noted that we utilize several modalities to reach parents of differing learning types. Auditory, visual, kinesthetic, visual, and text-based learners are catered to by utilizing videos, lecture, hands-on activities, and text-based activities to present the material. Our trainings incorporate homework assignments to ensure comprehension and continued reflection. This holds true for all of the following, mandatory trainings.

- **Mandated Reporter:** One of a few face-to-face trainings approved by the state of Pennsylvania, this training is approved to provide CEU's to all licensing bodies, including educators in the state.
- **Crisis Interventions:** Utilizing crisis theory information, some of which is adapted from Pressley Ridge curriculum, this training discusses parents as healers of hurt children. The crisis in practice portion of the training incorporates information from such trauma experts as Dan Siegel and the evidence-based trauma information from Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) developed by Dr. Karin Purvis and Dr. David Cross from Texas Christian University.
- **Healing Parents:** This training assists families in understanding the reasons behind a child's behavior. It stresses that the most important variable in treating trauma in children is the role they play in being healthy and responsive caretakers to provide support and nurturance for the child.
- **Sexual Abuse/Healing the Hurts:** In preparing families to be healing parents, this training teaches that not everyone who suffers a damaging childhood grows up to be a damaged adult. The training explores sex and sexuality in children during various life stages, including expected behaviors, those of concern, and those that elicit professional intervention.
- **Loss and Grief:** This training gives families a better understanding of how their own loss and grief can influence the healing process of foster children and their ability to care for them. It emphasizes viewing loss and grief not as a problem to be fixed, but as a process of healing and growth without set rules.
- **Attachment:** This training provides a thorough overview of attachment, its relationship to trauma, and the necessity of healing to promote the trust required for the development of healthy relationships.
- **Trauma/Neurobiology:** Parents receive training in the topic of trauma, the difference between singular vs complex trauma, brain development, dissociation vs hyper-arousal, the 5 F's (fight, flight, freeze, fawn and fib), Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, the teen brain and brain development and neurotransmitters.
- **Child Development:** This training describes the sequence of changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood. It includes information about the brain during

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development, sensory processing, the teen brain and an understanding of common mental health diagnoses

- **Who are the Children:** This training illustrates the types of children who enter the foster care system. It explores topics such as the ACEs study, the seven core losses in foster care, and adoption and current AFCARS.
- **Cultural Identity:** Through the use of interactive activities, videos and discussion, this training assists families in exploring the intersectionality of their various cultures as they develop skills needed to preserve and honor both the placed child's culture and the foster family's culture. Most related to cultural humility, this highly interactive training ensures families take a deep look into their cultural biases, beliefs and rituals as they relate to race, gender identity and religion, and the need to navigate these issues in their role as foster parents.
- **Who are the Resource Parents:** Through the use of scenarios, activities and videos, this training assists families with exploring their past and present family dynamics as well as their motivation for and expectations of fostering
- **Legal Issues:** This training provides families with an overview of the legal process as it relates to the child welfare system.
- **Resources:** This training assists families in understanding various resources available to them. It also encourages them to begin the process of identifying their personal support system and resources in their community.
- **Prudent Parenting:** Presenting the curriculum developed by Allegheny County, parents are given the information regarding their roles and responsibilities as foster parents.
- **AFFIRM:** Having had the AFFIRM training, many TRAC families not only welcome the placement of LGBTQIA+ youth, but do so with the dignity and respect required to ensure the positive emotional health of these youngsters. This not only involves supporting youth's SOGIE, but has includes attending appointments with older youth as they explore medical options available to them through surgery and hormone therapies. All new TRAC families are required to receive the AFFIRM training.
- **CSEC:** Staff and families receive this training when it is offered by DHS. While some tenets of Commercially, Sexually Exploited Children is woven into our Sexual Abuse training and statistics provided through Mandated Reporter training, the overview is brief, often leaving families with the desire to learn more. As these trainings become available, TRAC staff and families will be registered to attend.

Ongoing Training for Foster Care Parents

Exceeding the twelve-hour recertification training proposed in the request for proposal, TRAC currently requires foster parents to obtain 15 hours of training annually as long as they are an active parent with the agency. While families can obtain these hours in a variety of ways, TRAC offers a minimum of 30 hours of training to ensure families meet this requirement. Many topics are developed based on the assessed needs of the families. Recent topics include: Harry Potter and the Core Issues of Adoption, Act 101, Equipping Foster Parents to Actively Support Reunification, What to do When Things Get Hard, Honoring Your Foster/Adoptive Child's Story, Helping Children Understand Birth Family and Foster Care, and Celebrating and Working Through Issues of Race in Adoption.

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Families are required to complete a transfer of learning form after each training class attended. Currently, all trainings are conducted virtually. However, this format will continue with the addition of face-to-face opportunities once TRAC is able to do so.

Staff Credentials

TRAC boasts a team of expert staff with notable training experience. Our staff trains parents as well as other trainers for Foster Care agencies across the United States. The following list details notable experience of current TRAC personnel.

- Created and consulted on national training curriculums for foster care and adoption
- Been published in national publications on topics such as sensory processing and the preparation of children for permanency.
- Guest lectured on numerous occasions for the University of Pittsburgh Medical students
- Taught and guest lectured numerous courses in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work
- Spoken at local, state, national, and international conferences on topics such as trauma, attachment, child development, sensory processing, and recruitment
- Certifications include:
 - Parent Child Interactional Therapy (PCIT) trainer
 - Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) practitioners and educator
 - Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) trainer

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.

The goal of foster care is always reunification until otherwise indicated. The process of returning a youth back to their birth family is most successful when the birth parents, foster parents and the agency work effectively together. TRAC proposes to accomplish this collaborative triad by ensuring parents are included in all aspects of their youth's life. As mandated by State regulations, the TRAC caseworker meets with the youth in the foster home within 24 hours of placement. During this time, the worker and the family will determine three possible dates and times they are available to meet with the birth family. These dates will be presented to the birth family within 24 hours and an agreed upon date confirmed. During this face-to-face (or virtual) meeting birth parents will have the opportunity to share information regarding the uniqueness of their family, including cultural rituals the parents feel important for the youth to continue while in placement.

During COVID-19, Foster Care parents and birth parents began to interact using video conferencing for planned visits. TRAC observed that in many cases, the accessibility improved the relationship between the birth parent and Foster Care parent. We began to hear stories about Foster Care parents coordinating story-times at night before bed and more regular communication for the birth parent to be involved in their child's routine. This has effectively eased the transition between homes for the child and created a sense of stability. It has also improved relationships between Foster Care and birth parents, allowing each to see that the other is well-intentioned with nothing more than the child's best interest at heart. TRAC aims to walk away from COVID-19 with a focus on using technology to continue to mimic these results, which certainly offered a ray of light in the darkness.

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Icebreaker

Focusing on the youth, icebreaker meetings allow the families to discuss the likes and dislikes of the youth including favorite/least favorite foods, activities and hobbies, as well as the youth's strengths and special qualities. Additional information such as education programs, special dietary needs, bedtimes, curfews, medication used, allergies and medical and mental health needs will also be discussed. In addition to obtaining pertinent information, the purpose of this meeting is to move from the historically adversarial birth parent/foster parent relationship, to one of respect and allegiance born out of a mutual concern for the youth. TRAC's experience conducting icebreaker meetings with teens, informs that these interactions were beneficial to the stability of placements.

Ongoing Communication

TRAC plans to also develop a process by which birth parents are provided a monthly calendar of events and services their child will be taking part in. This will include medical and mental health appointments, educational appointments, ISP meetings, family visitation and extracurricular activities. For older youth, TRAC will also develop a schedule that allows the child to speak with birth parents on a regular basis, but no less than one time per week. During at least one of these telephone contacts, the foster parent will be expected to have a conversation with the birth parent, to provide updates to the child's progress towards ISP goals, educational progress, behavioral challenges, etc. To assist in the reunification process, particularly when parent and child conflict has been identified as the reason for out-of-home placement, the family and children will be referred to TRAC's Outpatient clinic for therapeutic assessment and treatment.

Strengths-Based Approach

TRAC works with foster parents to increase their knowledge and skills in working with birth parents in a non-judgmental way, so they are not only respected and supported, but vital in their youth's life. Regardless of the service provided, TRAC uses a strengths-based approach when working with families. Foster families are most successful when their strengths are at the forefront of interactions regarding the children placed in their home. Armed with additional knowledge, foster families are able to transfer this approach when interacting with birth parents. Additionally, using the strengths-based approach with birth parents has shown to be very beneficial in their quest at reunification. Dealing with their own issues of grief and loss associated with placement, often compounded with substance and domestic abuse and mental health issues, birth parents are often overwhelmed with emotions and feel a sense of hopelessness concerning navigating the child welfare system. These behaviors are exhibited through anger and other behaviors detrimental to the reunification process. Gaining a positive sense of self and a recognition of their strengths allows birth parents to work through their issues acknowledging their ability to do so.

In spite of the services put in place to have a youth return home, if the past and present traumatic life events experienced by birth parents have not been adequately addressed, there is a greater likelihood that the youth will return to the child welfare system. TRAC's outpatient clinic uses a strengths-based approach when dealing with birth parents' underlying mental health issues. Specifically, through the development of their treatment plan the parent is key in the development of their goals and therefore, accountable in achieving them. With regular review of

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treatment plan goals, parents are able to further realize their strengths and are empowered to continue the process and eventual reunification

11. Provide a detailed plan for establishing and sustaining Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) homes. Please include:

- a. The standards of the specific model you intend to use and why you chose it.
- b. How you will implement the model, including specifics about the development and use of treatment plans at the client level.
- c. How your organizational capacity and infrastructure will be able meet all model standards and train and support Foster Care parents.
- d. Your proposed process and timeline to establish between 30% and 50% of your Foster Care homes as TFC settings.

a. The standards of the specific model you intend to use and why you chose it.

TRAC's TFC training model includes the agency's own curriculum, Trauma-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), with enhancements from the Pressley Ridge model. TRAC's curriculum is trauma-informed and includes the works of Dr. Karen Purvis, David Cross, Dan Siegel and Bruce Perry. TBRI is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and 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.

TBRI is designed to meet the complex needs of children who have experienced adversity, early harm, toxic stress, and/or trauma. Because of their histories, it is often difficult for these children to trust the loving adults in their lives, which often results in perplexing behaviors. TBRI offers practical tools for parents, caregivers, teachers, or anyone who works with children, to see the "whole child" in their care and help that child reach his highest potential.

Children who have experienced trauma have changes in their bodies, brains, behaviors, and belief systems. While a variety of parenting strategies may be successful in typical circumstances, children with histories of harm need caregiving that meets their unique needs and addresses the whole child. That said, we've found that any child benefits from a nurturing, trusting relationship with a safe adult. TBRI is used worldwide in homes, residential facilities, group homes, schools, camps, schools, juvenile justice facilities, courts, with survivors of sex trafficking, in faith communities, courts, with law enforcement, in clinical practices and beyond.

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

TRAC already trains Foster Care parents in TBRI theory and techniques. In fact, the senior therapist and Clinical Director have received the intensive trainer from the model's creator with the latter also being a TBRI educator. Because TRAC believes in the importance of foster families having a firm foundation in trauma and the therapeutic process, TFC trainings will be incorporated into all training materials/sessions and provided to all families. Seven additional trainings hours, specific to skills important for TFC families include: Trauma & Neurobiology, Healing Parents, Navigating Systems, Treatment Parenting, Crisis Theory & Intervention, and Documentation.

Ongoing training for TFC homes will occur on a monthly basis. Topics will include additional information on child development and how each developmental stage is impacted by

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trauma, addressing behavioral challenges, medication monitoring and resources. Guest speakers who are professionals in their field will be invited to present on specific topics. Additionally, specific training sessions will either be developed or referred for families in need of topic specific information to meet the needs of the children in their care. These training topics will be discussed with families and included in their annual evaluation.

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

TRAC intends to provide this training to all parents due to its relevance in fostering any child entering foster care placement. TRAC's training committee and staff trainers are prepared to provide all trainings TRAC currently provides. Curriculum development is underway for the training sessions mentioned above. Once completed, staff trainers will be trained in the topics and will be prepared to begin implementing the additional topics immediately. To ensure training and support goes beyond formalized sessions, TRAC caseworkers will receive continual training on these topics to review with foster parents on an ongoing basis to ensure placement stability and positive outcomes for children. TRAC's caseworkers are always available to foster families 24 hours per day. In addition to our on-call system, foster families are provided with the cell phone numbers of their caseworker. A supervisor is always available during on-call for additional support.

As previously indicated, TRAC is a trauma informed organization, and is credentialed as a psychiatric mental health clinic. Therapists are extremely skilled in trauma informed theory and practice and participate in ongoing education to stay abreast of the most current therapeutic strategies and tools. This allows for immediate consultation and collaboration with casework staff and foster parents. In addition to the clinical director, there are four full-time and four part-time therapists, as well as a psychiatrist on staff. All therapists are required to be at minimum a Licensed Social Workers, and many staff are also credentialed as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker or a Licensed Professional Counselor. TRAC's clinic creates a non-judgmental environment that promotes open and honest communication allowing children, adults and families to begin the process of healing from traumatic past experiences. All therapists are trained in the TBRI model. In addition, BAS staff receive training in the model and will be trained in the agency's TFC model to ensure their ability to provide regular support to foster families. As part of the proposed changes to the foster care program, one therapist will be assigned to TRAC's BAS program.

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

As indicated previously, TRAC integrates TFC trainings into required trainings for all Foster Care parents, recognizing the children being placed will all benefit from the skills developed through this information. While all families will not be identified as TFC homes, doing this also provides for the probability that a child placed may require more supports than previously recognized at the time of intake. In anticipation of proposal acceptance, TRAC is in the process of discussing the tenets of being a TFC home with current families, recognizing that many of the children placed most likely will fall into that category of need. TRAC's plan to establish a minimum of 30% of its families as TFC homes, will begin during recruitment. The Director of Adoption and Foster Care Resources and the BAS recruiter, are well versed in the varying types of foster families needed and are able to discuss what is entailed from each. It is expected that

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the threshold of 30% of foster families being categorized as TFC homes within 9 months of the acceptance of this proposal.

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

TRAC prioritizes the timely completion of paperwork and data as required by our partners, including Allegheny County DHS. Our staff is expertly trained to work with families to obtain the information required in a trauma-informed manner. TRAC staff also understand the importance of completing assessments to help advance the children we serve on their way to permanency, to support Foster Care parents in their roles, and to help DHS continually improve the child welfare system with local data and observation.

Assessment

TRAC conducts all of the following assessments identified in the request for proposal. Those assessments are detailed below.

- **CANS:** TRAC staff are regularly trained to utilize the CANS assessment tool to ensure the needs of each child are identified and an appropriate plan of treatment developed. As new staff are hired, they receive CANS training when it is next scheduled by the County.
- **Education Screening Tool:** This tool is generally conducted by DHS staff. However, if trained in the tool, TRAC caseworkers will be able to screen youth as required. TRAC caseworkers are able to provide input to the screening based on their relationship with the youth and any information received from birth and foster parents and school performance.
- **Individual Service Plan Review (ISP):** As per State regulations, caseworkers develop an initial Individual Service Plan (ISP) within 30 days of a child's placement in the home. Subsequent ISP's are done every 6 months thereafter. The ISP is entered into the KIDS system. As is required, letters of invitation are mailed to birth parents and members of the conferencing team, informing them of the date, time and location of the meeting and encourage their attendance. Equally as important as contributing to the ISP, is the commitment of support provided by the team to assure the youth is successful in obtaining the developed goals. When the need for additional services are indicated, TRAC will assist the foster family in coordinating these services.
- **Home Study and Family Profile:** As indicated previously, TRAC makes every attempt to complete the family profile and approval process in 90-days, barring circumstances that arise that are outside of the agency's control.
- **Transition Planning:** While the county has not yet identified what is requested for transition planning, TRAC does utilize its Life 101© for older youth. Different from the Lifebook completed as part of the SWAN child preparation unit of service, Life 101© focuses on topics specific to teens who are most likely to transition out of foster care. Topics include: sex and sexuality, budgeting, obtaining a social security card, applying for services, addressing educational and medical needs, and identifying a support system.

Staff Training

During the onboarding for new personnel, staff completes an orientation process that covers the agency's overall operations and focuses on an in-depth training of what is expected of them. The orientation includes an overview of all reports and assessments, expectations for how

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they are to be completed, and the timeframe in which each is expected. In addition, all staff are required to attend the foster parent pre-service trainings to ensure they have the same level of knowledge as our families and begins the process of the development of trauma informed skills.

Quality Assurance

TRAC program undergo regular scheduled and random audits of files to ensure state and county regulations are adhered to. Equally important, is the feedback we receive from those we serve through periodic satisfaction surveys. Conducted by the TRAC's Quality Improvement committee, data is collected from foster families, birth families and youth to ensure the agency is providing the highest quality of service.

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.

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

In preparation for this proposal, TRAC held a focus group with currently placed teens. Six of the eight invited teens actively participated and were open and honest in their discussions. Of note were the statements that continued the foster parent thread of the need for improved communication. Youth indicated the need to address issues such as, having the ability to meet with potential Foster Care families prior to being placed, having regular goal setting meetings and additional training for foster families on the topic of cultural competency. They also noted the positive relationships they have developed with the TRAC staff assigned to their case. It is the plan for subsequent focus groups to be held quarterly to ensure the continued feedback from this population to ensure they are given voice in their placement.

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

As indicated, TRAC conducted an evaluation of 124 foster families. Evaluations were sent either through the mail, or completed on line via Survey Monkey. With a response rate of 44%, 88% of respondents stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with TRAC's overall service, 92% indicated their understanding of available TRAC services, and 100% indicate having an increased understanding of the types of children placed in foster care following training. As with other evaluations/focus groups conducted, the issue of increased communication was noted. As indicated earlier, this issue is being aggressively addressed through the weekly contact with families as they progress through the approval process. Additional strategies are being developed to increase communication with families between approval and placement, to keep them actively engaged in the process.

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Through TRAC's Quality Improvement committee, evaluations will be conducted with families quarterly to ensure issues are identified and addressed quickly. This process is directly related to the strategies needed to increase family retention.

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.

TRAC collects and provides data on a regular basis. Demographics on foster families such as race, location, and children placed is entered into TRAC's data system and tracked by the Director of Operations, who also spearheads the agency's Quality Improvement committee. As previously stated, casework staff enter data and information into the DHS KIDS system within 24 hours of contact with the child or the provision of service. Likewise, the Pipeline report is provided on a monthly basis as required by DHS. Other data reporting systems, e.g. MPER, ClientView, IMT are completed by the assigned staff person. TRAC plans to increase the use of the Transportation Hub to assist with transportation needs when all alternatives have been exhausted.

Staffing and Staff Training (40 points)

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

Attached with proposal package.

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.

TRAC is pleased to report that our agency already meets the goals detailed in the request for proposal. The best-practices and requirements outlined are those we perform with proficiency, at a minimum. To that end, TRAC simply requires additional staff that function within our current model so that we may meet the growing needs of the system as the number of families' recruited increases.

Additional Staff

TRAC currently employs 5 FTE caseworkers and 1 FTE case aide to carry out our work. We plan to add 1 additional FTE case aide to the staff roster and 2 FTE caseworkers. Ideally, through this staffing model, we can designate one caseworker to work specifically with the teen population. Teens require a specialty expertise to meet their emotional needs and, moreover, the responsibilities related to their casework. Realistically, this one caseworker will be able to serve seven to nine individual youths at a time. The second new caseworker will not have a specificity. Rather, our staffing model simply requires an additional team member to build capacity in anticipation of the increase in placements, as well as best practices in providing effective service. The additional 1 FTE Case Aid will assist in providing transportation when foster parents are unable to do so. The plan is also to assign 1 FTE therapist to specifically work with the BAS

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program. This position will assure quick access to mental health services; particularly those placed in therapeutic foster homes and timely referrals to TRAC's psychiatrist when indicated. As we increase the number of individuals we serve it is imperative our clinic increases in capacity in order to accommodate growing needs for trauma-informed therapy.

Recruitment

As detailed in the Implementation Timeline, TRAC will advertise open positions and begin the hiring in April. This timeframe will position the agency to be prepared to have individuals in place at the commencement of our grant agreement with Allegheny DHS. Ideally, these individuals will be hired prior to July 2021 in order for them to undergo orientation and obtain a clear understanding of the foster care program. Startup costs to accommodate this need is included in the budget amount requested.

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.

As per State regulations, all TRAC professional staff are required to have 40 hours of training per year, a maximum of 20 of which can be from supervision. Furthermore, all master's level State licensed staff are required to have 30 hours of training every 2 years for licensure. In accordance with the Foster Care Agencies Request for Proposal, TRAC addresses the following training topics.

- Child Protective Service Law (CPSL): Training on CPSL regulations is part of new staff orientation. All staff receive this training and are provided a copy of the regulation for their personal file for ongoing review.
- Mandated Reporting: TRAC's 3-hour Mandated Reporter training is one of a few face-to-face trainings approved by the state of Pennsylvania. The training is approved to provide CEU's to all licensing bodies, including educators in the state.
- CSEC: Staff and families receive this training when it is offered by DHS. While some tenets of Commercially, Sexually Exploited Children is woven into our Sexual Abuse training and statistics provided through Mandated Reporter training, the overview is brief, often leaving staff families with the desire to learn more. As these trainings become available, TRAC staff will be registered to attend.
- SOGIE/LGBTQIA+: All past TRAC staff have had training in Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE), with one program supervisor certified as a trainer in the topic through Allegheny County DHS CYF. A date is currently being scheduled to ensure all new staff are trained on this topic within 90 days of hire.
- Racial Equity and Inclusion: Because of the disproportionate representation of Black children and families within the child welfare system, TRAC is intentional in its training of staff regarding the impact race has on those we serve. As part of this process, all staff who were employed at the time of its offering, attended the Racial Equity training conducted by Joyce James. Since that time, additional trainings called Courageous Conversations have been conducted during staff meetings. These sessions allow staff to be uncomfortable in their lack of knowledge about the historical nature of racism throughout all systems (medical, education, child welfare, criminal justice) in a safe environment. TRAC's administration recognized the need for such trainings in order to work effectively with families (birth and foster) and youth specifically as they navigate the current racialized climate. Session 4, 5, &

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6 are scheduled for spring 2021. TRAC is currently working on an anti-racist training for staff and other professionals for late spring.

- Prudent Parent: As part of the orientation process, all new TRAC staff are required to attend pre-service training sessions. As such, each receives training in prudent parenting. This is especially important so caseworkers can review, support and empower families in their role as foster parents.
- De-escalation Training: This training will be new to TRAC. Possible trainings are being reviewed to assess which will be best for TRAC staff and families. The implementation of this training will be ready upon the acceptance of this proposal.
- First Aid-CPR: All TRAC staff and families complete the First Aid/CPR requirement regularly.
- Pa C.S. Title 23 (Domestic Relations): In collaboration and cooperation with DHS, TRAC adheres to all sections of Title 23 particularly as it relates to Child Protective Services, adoption and other related provisions outlined in the Act.
- 55 Pa. Code: Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA): All TRAC staff and families are made aware of HIPAA and the requirements to adhere to its tenets. Staff and families sign documentation indicating their understanding of this requirement.
- Recruitment Training and Recruitment Collaborative: TRAC has a history of working with other provider agencies to increase the amount and topics of trainings available to families, as well as collaborative recruitment strategies. TRAC anticipates re-establishing these collaborations at the acceptance of this proposal.

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

TRAC is intentional in its efforts to have racially and culturally diverse staff. To increase the likelihood of reaching diverse hires and building an inclusive staff, TRAC utilizes a number of platforms available for recruitment.

- Digital Job Boards assist TRAC in reaching new candidates from outside of our immediate network. These less targeted approaches communicate our needs to a broad audience: New Pittsburgh Courier, Indeed, and University job placement boards.
- TRAC utilizes respected and established communication vehicles developed to reach and support the black community. In particular, job opportunities are advertised in the New Pittsburgh Courier and the Soul Pit. TRAC also utilizes the University of Pittsburgh School of Social network to advertise employment opportunities to recent graduates.
- Employee referrals serve us well. TRAC maintains a high retention rate for employees because of the focus placed on creating a supportive environment. That customer service approach extends beyond our families and the children we impact. Our employees are our most valued resource. TRAC team members share in our mission and can identify the right qualities in future team members.

Organizational Capacity and Implementation Challenges (30 points)

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

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

Service Name	Service Description	Contracting Entity	Contract Amount	Start Date of Contract
Adoption Resources	Recruitment & Retention & Matching	Allegheny County	125,000	1980
Black Adoption Services	Foster Care & Adoption	Allegheny County	125,1000	1983
Family Connections	Post Adoption Services & Child Preparation	Allegheny County	Enter text.	1988
Therapeutic Services	LGBTQIA+ therapy & recruitment	Allegheny County	Enter text.	2018
SWAN	All units of service	SWAN	800,000	Approx. 1990.
Foster Care	Placement & support	Washington County	44.94 per day	Ongoing
Foster Care	Placement & support	Beaver County	70.87 per day	Ongoing
Foster Care	Placement & support	Lawrence County	70.87 per day	Ongoing
Foster Care	Placement & support	McKean County	70.87 per day	Ongoing
Foster Care	Placement & support	Philadelphia County	91.50 per day	Ongoing

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.

As described throughout this proposal, TRAC has 40+ years of experience providing foster care/adoption services and implementing aggressive recruitment. Through this experience TRAC has a keen understanding of what it takes to recruit families, recognizing the need to often recruit 100 families in order to have a hopeful 25% complete the process through approval. While this has always been a challenge, TRAC has never wavered in its mission to educate the community regarding the need for families and has been creative in its development of strategies to meet a changing demographic. While we are proud of the work we do, we are limited in scope due to the financial resources available. With the acceptance of this proposal, TRAC is fully prepared to continue outreach with our already established relationships and is working on strategies to develop new ones. Additionally, as indicated in this proposal, TRAC has identified the low retention rate of African American families. However, as also reported, data has been collected regarding the challenges these families faced with completing the approval process, and strategies to address these issues have been created and implemented. Related to the approval of families is the issue of doing so within the 90-day timeline outlined. TRAC always works diligently to meet this timeline except in cases previously indicated that are beyond our control. As the number of families recruited and retained continues to increase, it is our intention to utilize TRAC's team of casual workers to assist with completing family profiles. These individuals currently assist in the completion of Child and Family profiles through SWAN and are experienced in gathering information and interviewing families in order to produce an excellent product. TRAC is currently reviewing the list of families in the process that can be expedited to approval with this service.

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

RFP for Foster Care Agencies

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.

TRAC's greatest strength is its 40+ year history in providing the proposed scope of services. Because most of the requirements have been done and/or recently implemented prior to this proposal, we are confident in our ability to begin all aspects required. Other than the aforementioned DHS provided or directed trainings, TRAC is prepared to implement the additional training hours to both staff and families. A potential challenge is the hiring of 3 additional staff as outlined in this document. In order to ensure the full implementation of programming on July 1, 2021 these 3 individuals would need to be employed, preferably prior to that date so orientation and training can be concluded by the start date. It is anticipated that DHS will provide funding for the time period prior to July 1, 2021, the amount which is indicated in the line item budget attachment.

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

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

Attached with proposal package.

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

Personnel

- Director of Adoption & Foster Care Resources: This position is funded at 100%.
- BAS Program Supervisor: This position is funded at 100%
- Caseworkers: This position is funded at 100%
- Case Aides: This position is funded at 100%
- Recruiters: This position is funded at 100%
- Therapist: This position is funded at 100%
- Adoption Coordinator: This position is funded at 80%
- Family Profile Writer: This position is funded at 100%
- Program Assistant: This position is funded at 100%
- Benefits: Benefits include taxes, medical insurances, and pension payments. The rate is calculated at 26.5%.
- Payroll Taxes: Payroll taxes are calculated at 7.5%.

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Casual Employees

- Evening/Weekend Receptionist: This amount is allocated to the BAS program for administrative coverage during the evening and weekend hours of operation, for visitation and therapy.
- Staff Trainers: Two staff are scheduled for each foster parent pre-service training. This amount represents the payments to these individuals.
- On-Call: BAS staff are scheduled for on-call, to ensure 24-hour availability for placements and emergencies. This expense is based on the amount reimbursed, assuming being called out for service each day.

Contract Workers

- Audit: The cost represents the amount allocated to BAS for the completion of TRAC's annual financial audit.
- Security: While TRAC currently does not utilize office security, the need to do so may increase as the number of family visits and birth parent involvement increases.
- Insurance: This cost represents the amount allocated to BAS for TRAC's commercial insurance.
- Psychiatrist: TRAC's psychiatrist is a contracted position on-site 8 hours per week. The budgeted cost represents the amount allocated to BAS (10%) for services rendered under this proposal.
- Outside Services: This cost represents the amount allocated to BAS for contracted services (e.g. graphic designs, etc.)

Operating Expenses

The following expense amounts were allocated to the foster care program based on a percentage of the total agency budget (54.8%). Items with an [] represents increases made beyond the allocated percentage due to the additional amount needed for program operation associated with this proposal:*

Rent, office supplies, phone*, postage*, printing*, newsletter/yellow pages, annual report, staff development, Gala/Special Events, equipment/furniture*, rental/maintenance equipment, membership fees, computer expenses, Board meetings, legal fees.

The following expense amounts are directly related to the foster care program:

Adoption Resources materials, event registration fees, Celebration of Families, staff travel, parent travel & clearance assistance, TRAC meetings & Ice Breakers, parent expenditures/concrete goods, support group (FP hub), foster parent stipends, teen transportation, teen allowance, online searches (Extreme Family Finding specific), lodging (Extreme Family Finding specific)

In-kind expenses not included in budget: Private investigator for Extreme Family Finding. Currently, Allegheny County is providing this individual, and this proposal assumes the continuation of this process.

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Three Rivers Adoption Council (DBA: TRAC Services for Families)
 Foster Care Program
 Budget - FY 21/22

EXPENSES

PERSONNEL

Salary
Total Salaries 685,300.00

BENEFITS

Benefits	181,605.00	26.50%
Payroll Taxes	51,397.00	7.50%
Total Benefits	233,002.00	

CASUAL EMPLOYEES

Salary/Benefits
 Evening/Weekend Receptionist 6,250.00
 Staff Trainers 12,000.00
 On-Call 15,000.00
Total Casual Employees 33,250.00

TOTAL PERSONNEL 947,532.00

CONTRACT SERVICES

Audit	8,500.00	
Security	6,250.00	
Insurance	12,500.00	
Psychiatrist	9,360.00	10%
Outside Services	9,000.00	
TOTAL CONTRACT SERVICES	45,610.00	

OPERATING

Rent	118,368.00
Office Supplies	8,219.00
Materials (AR)/Misc	9,000.00
Telephone/Fax/Cell Phones	8,500.00
Postage	5,000.00
Printing	4,384.00
Newsletter/Yellow Pages	10,275.00
Annual Report	500.00
Annual Appeal	500.00
Event Registration Fees	5,000.00
Radio/TV/Social Media	20,000.00
Print Media	12,000.00
Staff Development	7,000.00
Celebration of Families	8,000.00

Gala/Special Event Expenses	5,480.00	
Equipment/Furniture	6,000.00	
Rental/Maintenance Equipment	9,316.00	
Membership Fees	3,836.00	
Computer Expenses	16,440.00	
Staff Travel	55,000.00	
Parent Travel & Clearances	8,000.00	
TRAC Meetings/ Icebreaker Meetings	4,000.00	
Board Meetings	274.00	
Parent Expenditures/ Emergency Concrete Goods	5,000.00	
Chat n Chill - Support Group	3,000.00	
Miscellaneous		
Food	2,000.00	
Depreciation	8,220.00	
Legal Fees	2,740.00	
Retreats	50,000.00	
Teen Transportation	15,000.00	
Teen Allowance	10,000.00	
Online Family Searches	1,000.00	
EFF Lodging	2,500.00	
TOTAL OPERATING	424,552.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,417,694.00	
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	141,764.00	10%
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	1,559,463.00	

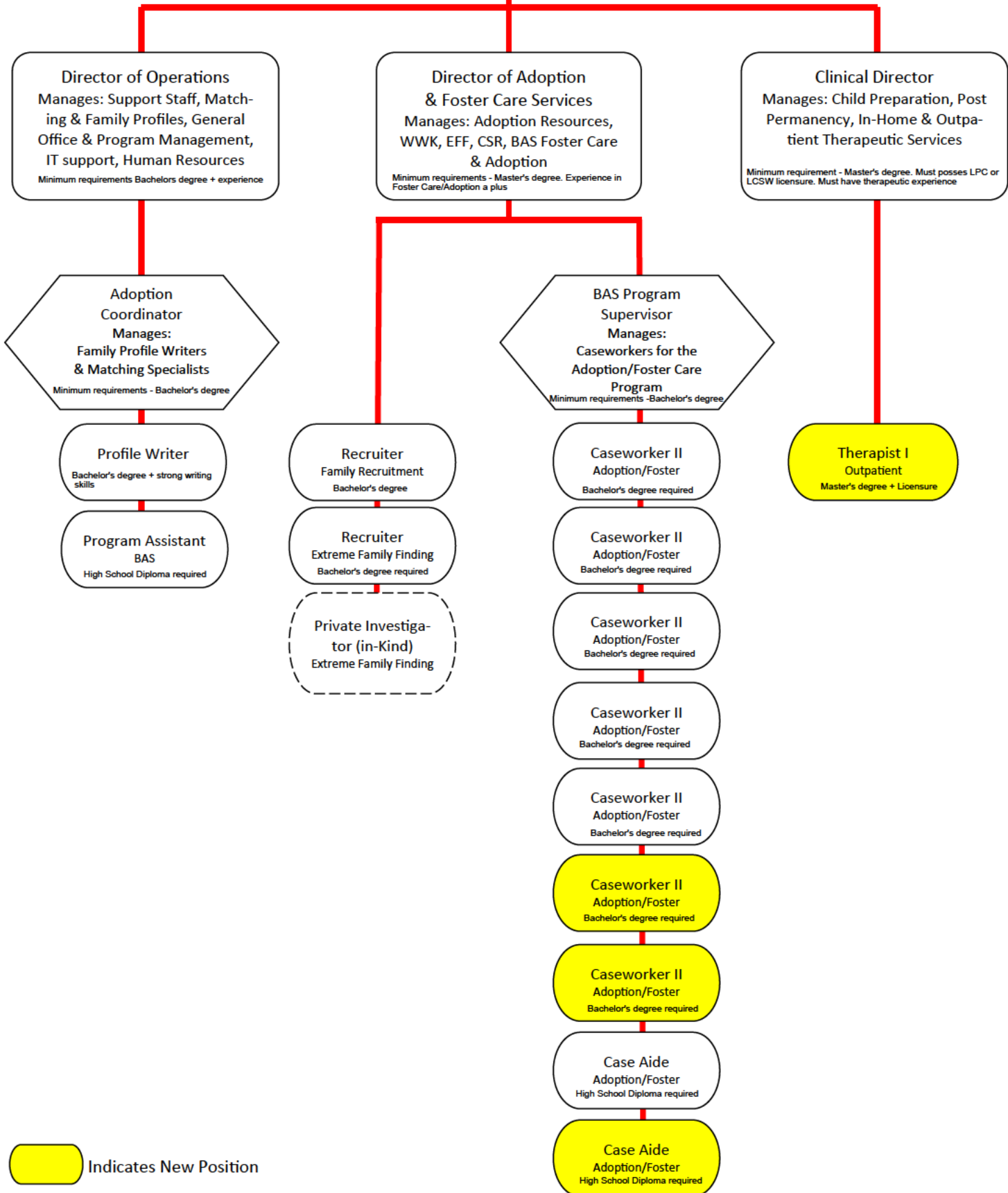
Start-Up Costs


Caseworker	6,185.00
Caseworker	6,185.00
Case Aide	1,649.00
Laptops	3,300.00
Recruitment Materials	3,500.00
Printing	1,500.00
Graphic Design	500.00
Total Stat-Up Costs	22,819.00

Total Amount Requested **1,582,282.00**

TRAC Services for Families

Organizational Chart



 Indicates New Position



Foster Care Implementation Timeline

