

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**LAWRENCE COUNTY**  
**Family Group Decision Making**

**LAWRENCE COUNTY**  
**CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES**

**DECEMBER 30, 2024**

**1. Rationale**

**1.1 Purpose of Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The Lawrence County Children and Youth Services (hereinafter referred to as “CYS”), New Castle, Pennsylvania is requesting competitive proposals from professional agencies that are interested and capable of implementing Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) an evidence-based program. The agency chosen will provide skilled, strengths based, evidence-based programming to engage CYF families in planning and service delivery.

**1.2 Background**

The agency expects that 125 families will receive services.

**2. Instructions**

**2.1 RFP Timeline**

Action	Date
<b>RFP Announcement</b>	December 30, 2024 and January 6, 2025
<b>Response Deadline</b>	February 3, 2025 by 4:00 p.m.
<b>Interview Invitation</b> <i>(As Necessary)</i>	February 10-14, 2025
<b>Contract Award Announcement</b>	February 21, 2025

**2.2 Required Review of RFP Package**

CYS will thoroughly review the submitted proposals and determine the agencies that meet the criteria of the services needed. A review by the RFP Committee will be conducted, and if necessary, invitations will be extended to agency(s) if CYF requires clarifications.

CYS may make inquiries, request revisions and additional information from the professional agencies in order to provide an understanding of the services to be provided prior to extending an offer to an agency.

**2.3 Receipt of RFP Package**

The Director of CYF is the sole authority to deliver the proposals too. Agencies are encouraged to obtain all information directly from the Director of CYF. Direct all questions regarding the RFP to the Director of CYF. Incomplete documents may be rejected, dependent upon the discretion of CYF.

## **2.4 Preparation Costs**

CYS will not be responsible for any costs associated with the preparation, submittal, or presentation of any proposal. In addition, costs incurred from the preparation of the proposal should not be included in costs budgeted for the program.

## **2.5 Disclosure of Proposal Contents**

All proposals and associated materials submitted to CYS become the property of CYS and will not be returned to the providing agency. Information contained within the proposals will not be shared during the evaluation of the competitive bid process but will be considered public knowledge following a formal decision. Under Pennsylvania's "Right to Know" laws (65 P.L. 390 § 66.1, 66.3, 21 June 1957) public records are required to be open to reasonable inspection. All proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process and prior to the time a Notice of Intent to Award is issued. Thereafter, the winning proposal will become public information. Copies of said public records may be requested through CYS.

## **2.6 Reservation of Rights**

CYS reserves and may, at its sole discretion, exercise the following rights with respect to this RFP and all proposals submitted pursuant to this RFP:

- a. To reject all proposals, re-issue the RFP at any moment prior to the execution of a final contract,
- b. To reject any proposal that CYS feels is incomplete, proposing agency is not responsive or basics requirements of the RFP are not met to the standards expected by CYS.
- c. To supplement, amend, substitute, or otherwise modify this RFP at any time prior to the execution of a final contract.
- d. To accept or reject any or all of the items in any proposal and award a contract for the whole or only a part of any proposal if CYS determines, at its sole discretion, that it is in CYS's best interest to do so.
- e. To reject the proposal of any agency that, in CYS's sole judgment, has been delinquent or unfaithful in the performance of any contract with CYS, is financially or technically incapable, or is otherwise not a responsible agency.
- f. To waive any informality, defect, non-responsiveness, and/or deviation from this RFP that is not, in CYS's sole judgment, material to the proposal.
- g. To permit or reject, at CYS's sole discretion, amendments (including information inadvertently omitted), modifications, alterations,

and/or corrections to proposals by one or more of the agencies following proposal submission.

- h. To request that one or more of the agencies modify their proposals or provide additional information.
- i. To request additional or clarifying information from any agency at any time, including information inadvertently omitted by an agency.
- j. To require that agencies appear for interviews and/or presentations of their proposals for CYS at a requested time and place.
- k. To inspect projects similar in type and scope to the work sought in this RFP and/or to inspect the agency's facilities to be used in furnishing goods or services required by the RFP.
- l. To conduct such investigations as CYS considers appropriate with respect to the qualifications of any agency and with respect to the information contained in any proposal.

### **3. Submission Guidelines**

#### **3.1 Submission Guidelines**

- CYS requests proposing agencies clearly notate all references and include any documentation necessary to support claims within their proposal.
- All final proposal documents become the property of CYS.
- Agencies agree that any and all communications regarding the RFP, the proposal and inquiries will be directed to the RFP contact, CYS Director, John Bout. Failure to adhere to this guideline may result in disqualification of proposals at the discretion of the Review Panel.

### **4. Method of Contractor Selection**

#### **4.1 Review Process**

CYS Director and Panel will review all submitted proposals to clearly identify that all materials have been submitted in complete form. The Panel will review and analyze the proposals to determine those agencies that would meet the need in Lawrence County in the best manner. Agencies will be reviewed seeking project plans that will address the implementation of Family Group Decision Making while paying close attention to the efficient use of financial resources to provide the highest degree of service to the children and families of Lawrence County. CYS will also review the actionable work plans from the contracted agency to work in close collaboration with CYS as necessary.

CYS may elect to conduct interviews and requests for revisions and additional service from provider agencies that meet standard qualifications. The interviews and discussions will provide CYS with the

opportunity to clearly determine the most qualified candidate and fully understand the range of services that will be implemented.

Agencies responding to the RFP will be treated with fair and equal treatment as a final decision will be based upon the criteria set forth in this RFP to determine the best service. The agency representative listed in the response must be present during the interview process, should the review panel deem this action necessary. If at any time an agency chooses to withdraw from the process, they must do so in written form to the CYS Director.

#### **4.2 Right to Negotiate**

After completion of the evaluation process, including any interviews held with agencies during the evaluation process, CYS may elect to initiate contract negotiations with one or more of the selected agencies. The option of whether or not to initiate contract negotiations rests solely with CYS and the County of Lawrence.

#### **4.3 Failure to Negotiate**

If a selected agency fails to provide the information required to begin negotiations in a timely manner; or fails to negotiate in good faith; or indicates they cannot perform the contract within the budgeted funds available for the project; or, if a selected agency and the County after a good faith effort, simply cannot come to terms, the County may terminate negotiations with that particular agency and commence negotiations with any other agency.

#### **4.4 Award of Contract**

CYS will offer a contract award on behalf of the County of Lawrence to the selected agency. Contract terms will be determined through negotiations with CYS and the County of Lawrence.

### **5. Standard Contract Information**

#### **5.1 Standard Contract Provisions**

The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will be governed by the terms and conditions requested by CYS and the County of Lawrence. The contract term will be for an initial period of (4) months, with project work expected to begin March 2025. Renewals and extensions of the contract will be determined during discussions following the first term of service, marking the first annual review for June 2025.

## **5.2 Contract Content**

The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will consist of this RFP, the agency's proposal, and any additional information deemed necessary as a result of the negotiations held with the successful agency.

## **5.3 Insurance**

The agency must maintain appropriate active insurance policies. Proof of insurance should be available at all times.

## **6. Program – Project Summary**

### **6.1 Project Summary**

CYS is seeking an external agency to implement Family Group Decision Making, an evidence-based program. The agency chosen will provide skilled, strengths-based empowerment model designed to unite a wide family group, including relatives, friends, community members, and others in collectively making decisions to resolve an identified concern.

### **6.2 Project Goals, Objectives and Core Elements**

The primary goals of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) are to empower families by allowing them to actively participate in making decisions regarding their children's safety, permanency, and well-being, utilizing a strengths-based approach that focuses on identifying and leveraging family strengths to develop a plan that best suits their needs, while involving a wider support network including extended family, friends, and service providers.

In essence, FGDM aims to create a collaborative environment where families can take ownership of their situations, identify solutions, and work towards positive outcomes for their children, all while being supported by a wider network of individuals and services.

Objectives Include:

- Child Safety
- Family Empowerment
- Identify and Build Upon Family Strengths
- Bringing Together Supports and Resources
- Having Culturally Sensitive Practices
- Creating a Customized Family Plan

Core Elements:

- Providing an independent coordinator who is charged with creating an environment in which transparent, honest and respectful dialogue occurs between agency personnel and family groups signifies an agency's commitment to empowering and non-oppressive practice.
- Lawrence County CYS personnel recognize the family group as their key decision-making partner, and time and resources are available to convene this group.
- Family groups have the opportunity to meet on their own, without the statutory authorities and other non-family members present, to work through the information they have been given and to formulate their responses and plans.
- When agency concerns are adequately addressed, preference is given to a family group's plan over any other possible plan.
- Follow-up processes after the family group decision making meeting occur until the intended outcomes are achieved, to ensure that the plan continues to be relevant, current and achievable, because family group decision making is not a one-time event but an ongoing, active process.
- Lawrence County CYS support family groups by providing the services and resources necessary to implement the agreed-upon plans.

### **6.3 Program Reporting and Guidelines**

The awarded agency will be required to report to CYS in a variety of ways to ensure open lines of communication and collaboration.

- Quarterly business review with CYS Fiscal Supervisor (Including budget review --- progress to YTD budget)
- Program success metrics
- Monthly report to include number of referrals, number of groups, families served, children served, number of participating natural and community supports, number of new plans, number of completed plans, and outcomes.
- Inclusion of agency personnel, as directed
- Under 23 Pa.C.S. § 6311, Program workers are required to report any suspected child abuse. The agency chosen will be required to keep up to date on all impending changes to regulations and requirements of mandated reporting.

## **7. Program – Project Expectations**

### **7.1 Scope of Work**

FGDM in Pennsylvania is primarily based on aspects of the Oregon Family Unity Model and the New Zealand Family Group Conferencing process. FGDM conferences in Pennsylvania generally include:

- Extensive preparation
- An opening and sharing of strengths, concerns and resources
- Private family time (mandatory for FGDM)
- A family presentation of the plan and plan acceptance by the referring agency
- Plan review and approval (if appropriate) by the Court and plan implementation and monitoring

### **7.2 Evaluation Plan**

The submitting agency must include within their proposal a plan for evaluation of services provided.

## **8. Program Qualifications**

### **8.1 Proposing Agency**

The proposing agency shall at minimum:

- Have child welfare or case management experience
- Provide bilingual staff (when necessary)
- Have experience with operating evidence-based or researched based child welfare programming
- Completeness of proposal & clarity in addressing request
- Experience collaborating with child welfare professionals
- Current capacity to provide these services immediately
- Ability to provide work in a timely manner

The agency shall train or familiarize staff in the following:

- Parenting
- Child development
- Drug and Alcohol issues, referrals for treatment
- Mental Health issues and referrals for treatment
- CPSL Standards
- CPR/First Aide certified
- Trauma Informed Care



- Supporting Children and Families With Disabilities

The agency must also be willing to adhere to all CYS guidelines, procedures, and requirements.

## **8.2 Project Team Requirements:**

- Project team:
  - Minimum education requirement of a bachelor's degree in social work or a related field AND/OR 4 years work experience working in relevant field.

The agency is required to ensure receipt and provide all background check materials as required by CYS. Educational requirements, training, certifications, and experience must be provided to CYS upon award of contract for all personnel assigned to the project.

The agency must notify CYS in writing within 5 business days of personnel changes, vacancies, or otherwise noteworthy events. Failure to do so will be handled at the discretion of CYS Director.

The agency acknowledges the need for staff and team members that will work in accordance with agency, CYS, County of Lawrence and all Pennsylvania state guidelines. The staff must represent the agency, CYS and the County of Lawrence in a professional manner.

## **8.3 Project Timeline**

The selected Agency(s) will be required to begin the work on March 3, 2025 with the understanding that the selected agency will be ready to serve the first referral as of April 21, 2025. The term of the services shall be from March 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025. This project is expected to renew July 1, 2025 for a period of 12 months.

## **9. Proposal Format and Content**

### **9.1 Submission of Proposal**

Proposals shall be submitted with two (2) copies on 8½" x 11" paper to:

**LAWRENCE COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES  
ATTN: CYS DIRECTOR,  
1001 East Washington St.  
New Castle, Pa 16101**

Agencies assume responsibility of ensuring that their proposals have been submitted successfully. All proposals shall be submitted in two (2) parts – Project Proposal and Financial Proposal.

The **Project Proposal** shall cover the technical aspects of the project but shall not include any mention of fees or out-of-pocket expenses. The Project Proposal shall provide CYS and Panel with enough detail to make an educated decision based on the description and detailed plan of action for the program.

The **Financial Proposal** shall include all details as to the fees charged and out-of-pocket expenses to be billed. A detailed proposed budget must be provided, including all anticipated expenses incurred in the program. The budget should reflect actual expected expenses through implementing the program. The budget progress update will be provided to CYS during the monthly update for review. The budget should reflect the program’s initial nature of a six (4) month period.

The Project Proposal and the Financial Proposal should be submitted together, clearly noting the agency name, date submitted and contact person.

## **9.2 Proposal Format**

CYS encourages all interested agencies to submit a proposal focusing on the project benefits as well as a detailed financial plan. CYS discourages lengthy and costly proposals; however, all responses should be professional and clearly describe the potential services to be provided. CYS will base its decision upon the content of the program to be implemented, so this should be the focus of the response.

## **9.3 Introductory Letter**

All proposals should include a brief introductory letter to introduce CYS to the submitting agency. The intent of the letter is to clearly show the intent of the agency in earning the award of the. The letter should also include a brief background of the submitting agency to clearly define the experience of the agency in the area of child welfare.

## **9.4 Qualification Statement**

Each proposal shall include, at minimum, the following information about the company:

- number of years in operation
- relevant experience in child welfare or case management services

**RFP RESPONSE DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 3, 2025**

**CYS CONTACT:** JOHN BOUT- DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES - COUNTY OF LAWRENCE

- organizational structure of the company
- formal organizational chart
- most recent annual report to include most recent:
  - income statement
  - balance sheet
  - statement of cash flow
  - an auditor’s report attesting to the accuracy of the financial statements

All proposing agencies should consider the following areas when preparing a formal response to the RFP:

- Agency’s main business focus
- The agency’s strengths and how CYS will benefit
- Strategic plan regarding the program to be developed
  1. Program planning
  2. Results measurement
  3. Program goals
  4. Family engagement strategies
- Project team member organization, reporting structures and collaboration
- Proposed services to be implemented and historical success metrics for similar initiatives
- Services currently provided by the agency, noting services that currently provide benefit to CYS and the County of Lawrence

## **9.5 Subcontractors**

Subcontractors will not be allowed.

## **9.6 Insurance**

All agencies must provide CYS and the County of Lawrence with a sample of their insurance certificate as evidence of coverage types and levels. The agency must provide updated and accurate proof of required insurance at all times during the period of the contract.

## **10. Financial Proposal**

Financial Proposals must be submitted and include all requested documentations for the RFP as well as a complete budget for the March 1, 2025-June 30, 2025, initial project parameter.

### **10.1 Proposed Project Budget**

The anticipated budget should include:

- Itemized list of all direct and indirect costs

- Total number of hours (at various hourly rates)
- Direct expenses
- Payroll (Salaries)
- Supplies
- Employee overhead expenses
- Employee Dedicated Time percentage

*\*Note this is not an exhaustive list - CYS requires a complete budget proposal noting all anticipated expenses to execute the proposed program properly and efficiently.*

The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will be for a fixed fee amount, based upon the needs of the financial proposal. The County of Lawrence may agree to program fund the project as an initial startup for no more than 16-months ending June 30, 2026. As of July 1, 2026 the program will be fee for service. The County of Lawrence will make payment to the agency following receipt of a properly prepared invoice for services satisfactorily performed. Progress payments may be determined as set by the County of Lawrence so long as the agency maintains a satisfactory review from CYS during quarterly reviews. The timing and percentage of such progress payments shall be mutually agreed upon during the contract negotiation.

CYS and the County of Lawrence reserve the right to cancel the contract with 60 days' notice if at any time the agency fails to meet the terms of the contract.

## **11. Evaluation Criteria and Process**

### **11.1 Review Process**

The CYS Director will facilitate the creation of a review Panel to review all proposals to determine the most qualified agency. Communications should be directed to John Bout, Director, CYS.

### **11.2 Evaluation Criteria**

In order to identify the Agency that meets the needs of CYS and Lawrence County, all proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria by the review Panel and scored appropriately:

- **Proposed Project Plan - 25%**
  - The agency's plan of action in establishing the program in the County of Lawrence and to work in collaboration with CYS. CYS is

seeking the quality of the plan and a realistic approach to implement the plan successfully.

- **Proposed Financial Plan – 20%**
  - Review of the proposed finances needed to successfully implement a program as well as detailed descriptions of use of funds to be provided.
- **Dedicated Resource Commitment – 15%**
  - The agency’s workforce is devoted to executing the plan in a timely and efficient manner. This would include the proposed project administrator and team members slated to work on this project.
- **Project Team/Personnel Qualifications – 10%**
  - The agency’s proposed workforce qualifications in the area of Social Work/Child Welfare. CYS is seeking skilled, qualified and experienced personnel to be assigned to the project team.
  - *If selected, agencies should be prepared to provide proof of education, training, certificates and background check data to CYS.*
- **Agency Experience/Past Performance – 15%**
  - The agency’s experience in the area of social work and child welfare as it relates to the parenting/life skills program. Historical performance creating and implementing similar projects, as well as references verifying successful performance, will provide sufficient data.
- **Financial Stability – 10%**
  - Review of the agency’s historical records and financial data to determine that the agency is currently in good standing and able to manage a contract of this scope to fulfill the contract.
- **Proposal Content/Format – 5%**
  - Review of final proposal content and formatting in compliance with the requirements noted in the RFP.

**11.3 Interview Invitations**

During the evaluation process, the Panel may at its discretion request any one or all agencies to discuss, in person, their agency’s qualifications with the Review Panel. Such presentations will provide agencies with an opportunity to answer the questions from the Review Panel and provide clarification as needed.

**11.4 Agency Acknowledgement**

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the agency of the conditions contained within this request for proposal. Agencies must clearly and specifically note any terms in which revisions are requested within the proposal. Unless otherwise noted in the proposal, agencies understand that terms provided within the proposal submitted and agreed upon will be the baseline for a contract between the selected agency and CYS.