

Request for Information

Title: Expansion of Kinship Support and Reunification Services

Date: December 1, 2021

Background: Community Based Care (CBC) is a new approach to managing the child welfare system in Texas involving the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) contracting with local Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) to manage all services for children and families in out-of-home care, within a defined geographic area. This model is built upon the philosophy that local communities can best develop solutions to supporting children in safe families, particularly when given the ability to be flexible and innovative. The primary role of TDFPS is to define clear contract expectations and regularly track performance results.

Four SSCCs are currently active and serve approximately 23% of youth in the Texas child welfare system. While the SSCCs all operate independently, we often work together on joint projects that enhance our outcomes and our ability to further develop the Community Based Care model to best support children and families. Currently, all four SSCCs are initiating efforts to expand and enhance kinship services.

Project Description: One advantage of Community Based Care is the ability to design programs to specifically target needs of individual communities. Developing services to identify, engage, support, and sustain kinship placements is of interest to all four SSCC's. While this work may be conducted somewhat differently in each region, we believe there will be continuity in all of the efforts and opportunities to learn from each other. We believe a mindful effort to maintain regular communication, information sharing, learning and problem solving among the four projects will greatly enhance the work of all SSCC's and provide important professional development for program staff.

This proposal aims to engage experienced outside leadership to coordinate, enhance, and track the work being done in all four regions. The aim of this work will be the creation of well-designed, effective programs in each area, and the establishment of ongoing learning, problem solving, and development of kinship resources utilizing best practices and recent knowledge of what works.

Goal: Kinship programs in all four catchment areas will have the information, support, and coordination needed to achieve stated, measurable goals in utilization and outcomes of kinship services in each region.

Request for Information: This Request for Information solicits responses from experts in Kinship services with the expertise to define the structure, plans and activities needed to best achieve the above Goal. The SSCCs are seeking an expert to provide a detailed description of the activities involved in this work, which may include:

- All activities needed to schedule, plan and lead regular meetings with kinship program leadership from each catchment area. The anticipated frequency would be a monthly joint meeting.
- Joint meeting agenda items based on the current needs of each region. Some of the activities envisioned as being part of this work would include:
 - A structure for sharing information on projects in each region
 - Identification of successes and what activities contributed to the success
 - Identification of problems or barriers and development of strategies to overcome or manage these challenges
 - Case presentations
 - Practical learning about kinship services advances in other states
 - Discussion of current research and best practices for kinship programs
 - Training for SSCC kinship staff as needs are identified
 - Involvement of local providers conducting kinship work
 - Periodic involvement of state kinship staff from other regions in the discussions
 - Accountability toward individual regional goals
 - Periodic review of each SSCC's commitment to this work
 - Building strong cooperative relationships among participating SSCC kinship staff
 - Quarterly written updates on status of group to SSCC leadership
 - At least one annual in-person event
 - Coordination of work between Kinship and Permanency casework staff
- **Duration of project:** The SSCC's are interested in initially committing to this work being conducted through August 31, 2023.
- **Submission:** The following information should be included in the response
 - Qualifications of proposer(s)
 - Description of previous similar experiences or descriptions of involvement in previous kinship projects.
 - Expectations for accomplishments in a 12-15 month project.
 - Availability to start.
- **Timeline:** This request is currently active and will be kept open until a contract is developed with a project leader. SSCC's hope to have a contract signed by early 2022 with a start date in Q1 of 2022.
- **Contact Information:** Any questions regarding this request can be directed to:

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