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**STATE OF INDIANA**

**Request for Information 25-81835**

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION**

**On Behalf Of**

**Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and Department of Child Services (DCS)**

**Request for Information Regarding:**

**Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching**

**Response Due Date:**

**December 16, 2024 @ 3:00 PM ET**

~~Teresa Deaton-Reese,~~ Angie Alexander, Procurement Consultant

Indiana Department of Administration

Procurement Division

402 W. Washington St., Room W468

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 25-81835**

**I. PURPOSE OF THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)**

The purpose of this RFI is to gather feedback and information for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and Department of Child Services (DCS) regarding a potential Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program. The Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program is a residential transition program provided in homes for youth with high acuity needs that emphasizes active-treatment transitional supports and caregiver training and coaching. Responses to this RFI will provide important input for the State’s co-design efforts, direction, and potential implementation of the program.

The feedback and information gained from this RFI may be used in the development of a future solicitation process, leading to the designation of a provider(s) best suited to meet the State’s needs. The State may elect to limit participation in any future competitive solicitation to vendors that respond to this RFI. The State prefers that Respondents answer all questions, but if they have expertise in only one program area, Respondents may choose to answer RFI questions related to only the Youth Transitional Homes program (sections IV.1.a, IV.2.a, IV.3.a, IV.3.c, IV.4, IV.5, IV.6, IV.7, and IV.8) or the Caregiver Coaching program (sections IV.1.b, IV.2.b, IV.3.b, IV.3.c, IV.6, IV.7, and IV.8).

**II. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES**

1. Introduction and Background
   1. Program Introduction:
      1. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and Department of Child Services (DCS) are seeking information related to a potential Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program. The program aims to deliver two essential services for youth with high acuity needs and their caregivers: 1) Provision of Youth Transitional Homes to youth with high acuity needs, which are residential transitional homes that provide intensive services for youth who are either ready to step down from residential care or who could be maintained in the community to prevent escalation to more restrictive settings, have a history of behavioral and mental health needs and are at risk of long-term institutionalization; 2) and Provision of Caregiver Coaching services to families and caregivers whose youth (including youth in foster care) are in the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program to ensure that the caregivers and home environment is equipped to support their youth. The ultimate goal of this program is to provide youth with therapeutic, treatment-focused support in a caring environment to facilitate their timely transition back to a stable home, school, and community setting, while concurrently equipping caregivers with the necessary skills and tools for sustained success. In order to ensure the long-term success of the youth and their caregivers, both prongs of the program need to work in tandem. The provider shall ensure that the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program coordinates service delivery, provides supports to prepare the home environment, sets up a supportive schedule for youth’s return, and communicates about the progress of the youth and their caregivers. The State intends to explore available services by gathering information from vendors in this space.
      2. Youth Transitional Homes are not intended to be a traditional group home program. This program is differentiated from traditional group home and residential programs in a number of facets detailed below:
         1. **Targeted Referrals and Admissions:** Referrals will come from limited sources and admission decisions will be based solely on how the youth’s needs fit the offerings of the program, as well as whether a youth’s caregiver (including biological, kin, adoptive, and foster) will be involved in caregiver coaching throughout treatment. The State reserves the right to further define this admission criteria and ultimately determine if a youth and their caregiver shall be admitted to the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program.
         2. **Mandatory Caregiver Engagement:** Caregiver (including biological, kin, adoptive, and foster) engagement in the youth’s care, as well as any caregiver coaching recommended in the treatment plan, is required for the youth to be enrolled in the program.
         3. **Community-Integrated Care:** Youth Transitional Homes will prioritize community-integrated care for youth, including the use of incrementally increasing visits to their home and community, as well as involvement in school, vocational services, and community activities.
         4. **Active Discharge Planning:** Providers and caregivers will be actively working towards discharge throughout the Youth Transitional Home stay. This program is not intended for long-term residential care or short-term emergency placements.
         5. **High Quality, Specialized Staff:** The program will employ high-quality staff who have specialized training in serving youth with high acuity needs and their caregivers. These professionals will continue to implement strategies aimed at transitioning youth back to their homes and communities, aligning with the program’s overall goal of caregiver unit and community reintegration.
   2. Background
      1. Nationally, youth have long been housed by child welfare agencies in traditional group homes, which often served as long-term residential programs for youth that had nowhere else to go. Research shows that utilizing residential programming instead of home-based care for youth who can be maintained safely and successfully in the community harms youth rather than helps them. A movement to deinstitutionalize child welfare programming has helped move youth to community-based care but left a gap in appropriate intermediary programs for youth with high acuity needs. Due to this gap, youth with high acuity needs lack suitable placements to help them and their caregivers find eventual sustainability back in the community leading to longer residential stays than are medically necessary.
      2. A barrier to youth with high acuity needs transitioning back to home, school, and community care may be their home environment. In order to ensure that youth with high acuity needs are able to transition home successfully and achieve permanency, the caregivers must be actively involved in ensuring that the home environment will be supportive and meet the needs of the youth.
2. Definitions
   1. Youth with High Acuity Needs: Youth (ages 14-17) that require a higher level of care and supervision due to safety concerns for themselves and others. While each youth’s needs and experiences differ, youth with high acuity needs often present with one or more of the following behaviors: aggression (physical and verbal), elopement, defiant behavior, maladaptive sexual behavior, self-harm, suicidal ideation and attempts, property destruction, and substance use disorder. Youth with high acuity needs also frequently have multiple diagnoses (including mood disorders), a history of placement disruptions, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, behavioral and/or mental health concerns, and are often receiving services from multiple State systems.
   2. Caregiver: A child’s caregivers are responsible for ensuring the health, well-being, safety, and happiness of the child whether they be the youth’s biological, kinship, adoptive, or foster family, friends, or other community members. A caregiver unit refers to the youth along with the group of caregivers that make up the youth’s support system in and out of the home.
   3. Comprehensive Caregiver Plan: A Comprehensive Caregiver Plan outlines what caregivers need to support youth with high acuity needs in their transition from the Youth Transitional Home. It considers the youth’s current level of need, treatment, strategies for support, and their own wants. The plan includes a detailed plan of training needs, strategies, safety plan and an outlined structured schedule for the youth to ensure a successful reintegration.
   4. Home-Based: The ultimate goal is to have youth living in their home; this includes kinship, foster care, and other home-based placements outside of their biological caregiver’s home. Youth Transitional Homes should try to utilize school and community-based programs and resources wherever possible to support the transition back home.
   5. Intellectual Disabilities / Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD): Chronic conditions that affect a person’s physical, intellectual, or emotional development. This includes individuals with a mental and/or physical impairment (other than a sole diagnosis of mental illness) found to be closely related to intellectual disability, such as a condition that results in similar impairment of general intellectual functioning or adaptive behavior or requires treatment or services similar to those required for a person with an intellectual disability.
   6. Serious Mental Illness (SMI): A mental, behavioral, or emotional condition that significantly interferes with a person's ability to function in daily life. SMI may include, but is not limited to, illnesses such as psychosis, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and borderline personality disorder.
   7. Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Generally considered a treatable condition that causes people to have difficulty controlling their use of substances.
   8. Youth-Centered Services: Provision of services in a manner that involves and supports youth at every level of care. This approach prioritizes the best interest of the youth and encompasses their opinion, ensuring they are part of the decision-making. It involves thoughtful strategies aimed at addressing all aspects of the youth’s well-being across various life domains, including physical, emotional, social, and educational needs.
3. Guiding Principles and Goals
   1. Guiding Principles
      1. Each youth possesses a unique life experience and deserves holistic treatment and support.
      2. Youth exist within various contexts and unique circumstances, including different home environments that contribute to their success in the community, therefore targeted coaching and support must be offered to the youth’s caregivers.
   2. Goals
      1. All youth’s treatment plans include active and committed caregiver engagement by ensuring that the caregivers have the resources and training to enable a successful, long-term, discharge home.
      2. Each caregiver unit will have a detailed crisis and coaching plan, resources, and access to services to ensure that the home environment will fully support the youth, with an anticipated discharge date to home of no more than 12 months.
      3. Effective treatment requires addressing the needs of both the youth and the caregiver unit as a whole, ensuring meaningful and lasting outcomes.
4. Target Population
   1. This program intends to serve two populations that together make up a caregiver unit: youth who are either ready to step down from residential care or who could be maintained in the community to prevent escalation to more restrictive settings, and the caregivers in the youth’s home environment.
      1. Youth Transitional Homes Target Population
         1. The target population for Youth Transitional Homes comprises youth with high acuity needs who are deemed ready for discharge from residential placements but require additional support and treatment in a home-like setting to facilitate a successful transition back to their caregivers. In addition to youth who are deemed ready for discharge, on a case-by-case basis the State also intends to consider youth who have previously been involved in residential or other acute stays who meet the requirements for this program in order to prevent unnecessary escalation to more restrictive settings. All youth participating in the program must have up-to-date medication, diagnoses, and medical information prior to participating in the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program. The State is initially targeting this program to serve children ages 14-17 but is open to alternative suggestions from Respondents.
         2. The State intends for this program to be open to all youth, including those involved with the Department of Child Services. Youth are not eligible for this placement if they do not have active caregiver involvement or if they are in need of a short-term emergency placement or acute stay for stabilization.
      2. Caregiver Coaching
         1. In order to facilitate the transition from the Youth Transitional Homes back to the home setting, caregivers must be ready and capable of supporting the youth. All caregivers (including foster and kin caregivers) of youth in the transitional homes shall participate in training and coaching to ensure they are prepared to receive the youth into their home and equipped with the skills to better assist the youth.
5. Program Requirements
   1. This section provides essential information and context for potential Respondents to consider when developing their responses to the RFI. As stated in Section 1: Introduction and Background, the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching program will include both Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching services to youth and caregivers, which are both critical for a youth’s long-term success in the community.
      1. Service Array
         1. Caregiver-Centric Service Delivery
            1. Youth Transitional Homes

Services should be delivered in a child-centered manner. Youth who utilize a transitional home may have experienced complex trauma and may not have learned the necessary skills for coping and managing this trauma. This leads to difficulties in developing trusting relationships, interacting appropriately with others, particularly members of the caregiver unit, and living fulfilling lives in the home. In order for the provider to best support these youth, the State intends for the services to be provided in a manner that prioritizes each individual youth’s needs rather than reducing them to their diagnosis. Providers are encouraged to develop innovative methods for service provision that meets each youth and caregiver’s individualized needs.

* + - * 1. Caregiver Coaching

The coaching services delivered to the caregivers should prioritize a caregiver-centric approach, focusing on meeting the needs of both the youth and the caregivers. By providing coaching and supports in the home, caregivers will be empowered and equipped to create a supportive home environment for the youth, facilitating a successful transition home. Respondents are encouraged to explore all options available for providing the caregivers with the necessary coaching supports and services they will need to ensure the youth’s safety and success in the home, school, and community. Recognizing that each caregiver will have unique needs, the Respondent is expected to provide individualized support to ensure the success of both the caregivers and the youth at the start of youth’s admission.

* + - 1. Best Practices and Treatment Models
         1. Youth Transitional Homes

This program intends to deliver services in line with evidence-based practices and treatment models, subject to State approval. Respondents are encouraged to suggest any best practices and treatment models they think would improve youth and caregiver outcomes in a transitional home and provide details around why these practices and models will help ensure the success of the program.

* + - * 1. Caregiver Coaching

This program intends to deliver services in line with evidence-based practices and coaching models, subject to State approval. Respondents are encouraged to suggest any best practices and treatment models for parental education and coaching that they think would improve youth and caregiver outcomes in preparation for and once a youth has returned to their home environment.

* + - 1. Community-Based Care
         1. Youth Transitional Homes

This program is intended to serve as a step-down from residential care or as an intermediary program to prevent youth from needing residential care. In order for youth to be successfully maintained in the community after being part of the Youth Transitional Homes, exposure to their school and community environment and development of community-based skills will be critical to their success. The Respondent is encouraged to consider how community-based care will be incorporated into the Youth Transitional Homes treatment planning.

* + - * 1. Caregiver Coaching

Caregivers must be prepared to support the youth when they return to the home, school, and community environment. This includes education, therapy, skill building, recreation, and other activities necessary for the youth to engage in the community as wholly as possible. The Respondent is encouraged to consider how the caregiver coaching will support community-based care.

* + - * 1. Community Outreach

Respondents are encouraged to consider how they will conduct outreach to entities in the community (law enforcement, behavioral health units/hospitals, neighborhood associations, etc.) that may be impacted by these Homes to ensure a cooperative relationship.

* + - 1. Long-term Discharge Success
         1. Youth Transitional Homes

Respondents are encouraged to consider how they will ensure that the home placement is successful after discharge.

* + - * 1. Caregiver Coaching

When a youth is nearing readiness to discharge, the readiness of the caregiver to receive and support the youth back in their home will also be assessed. The State is looking for the provider to conduct a series of step-down to home visits where the youth may return home for a period of time under the observation and supervision of the provider. These visits should be used for evaluation purposes to determine if the caregiver is ready to receive the youth and what additional components are required to ensure a safe and successful discharge.

* + 1. Youth Experience
       1. All youth, regardless of mental and physical ability, have the right to live, love, play, and pursue their own life aspirations. This program intends to center the youth’s needs, best interests, and voice at the core of the Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching work. As such, the Respondent is encouraged to explain how they plan to center the youth’s voice in provision of services and permanency planning.

1. Staffing and Staff Training
   1. Proposed staffing roles, structure, and training should contribute to creating a structured and nurturing environment that is tailored to meet the diverse needs of each youth and their caregivers. The Respondent should propose staffing and subcontractors to meet both the Youth Transitional Homes requirements and Caregiver Coaching requirements.
2. Monitoring and Evaluation
   1. The safety and wellbeing of youth is the primary priority of this program. To this end, strict monitoring and evaluation of both the youth and the Provider will be required by the State. Additionally, the State expects that caregiver and youth readiness are thoroughly assessed prior to discharge.
   2. Once a youth has been discharged, monitoring visits to check on the youth’s stability and caregivers’ success in maintaining a supportive, safe, and successful home environment should be conducted for at least six months.

**III. RESPONDENT REQUIREMENTS**

In order to respond to this RFI, Respondents should have experience serving populations similar to those described by Section II. This includes previous experience with Foster Care Services, Group Home Services, Residential Treatment Services, and Community-Based Services, as well as experience providing services to children with intensive medical, mental, emotional, and/or behavioral needs. Respondents may choose to answer RFI questions related to only the Youth Transitional Homes program (sections IV.1.a, IV.2.a, IV.3.a, IV.3.c, IV.4, IV.5, IV.6, IV.7, and IV.8) or the Caregiver Coaching program (sections IV.1.b, IV.2.b, IV.3.b, IV.3.c, IV.6, IV.7, and IV.8) if they have expertise in only one area.

**IV. RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS**

Responses should follow the outline as provided below.

1. Qualifications and Experience: Provide a brief summary of your company’s qualifications, experience, and/or expertise providing services similar to those requested in this RFI. Specifically address the following questions in your response:
   1. Youth Transitional Homes
      1. What unique qualifications and past experiences make your organization ideal for providing this type of service?
      2. Share key learnings and success stories from similar projects. What specific aspects of your program would inform your approach to Youth Transitional Homes?
   2. Caregiver Coaching
      1. What unique qualifications and past experiences make your organization ideal for providing caregiver coaching services?
      2. Share key learnings and success stories from similar projects. What specific aspects of your program would inform your approach to caregiver coaching?
2. Service Array
   1. Youth Transitional Homes
      1. Describe your innovative approach to providing Youth Transitional Home services as described in this RFI.
      2. What best practices and services do you recommend for youth with complex needs?
      3. How would your services be youth and caregiver-centered, prioritizing individual needs?
      4. How would your services ensure safety and holistic care for the youth?
      5. Please explain how you would engage other service providers and education to offer holistic care.
   2. Caregiver Coaching
      1. How would you engage and support caregivers to prepare them for reintegration of their youth?
      2. What creative strategies and best practices would you use in caregiver coaching?
      3. Considering the complex needs of youth transitioning back into their home environments, describe your strategies to ensure that caregivers and the home setting are prearranged to support youth upon discharge.
      4. Please describe how you would follow up with caregivers after the youth has returned to their home in order to ensure placement stability and long-term success.
3. Program Set Up
   1. Youth Transitional Homes
      1. Please describe your vision for the optimal structure and environment of a Youth Transitional Home, including the following components:
         1. Describe the home environment.
         2. Provide the proposed number of youths per home.
         3. Define the proposed age range of youths in the home.
         4. Specify the genders of youths in the home.
         5. Specify the number of homes necessary for statewide coverage.
         6. Describe how your recommended geographic spread of homes would ensure that youth can stay involved in their communities. If there are youth that you anticipate will not be able to be served in their communities, please describe your plan for caring for these children.
         7. Describe how you plan to provide transportation to and from the home and/or support services for youth, caregivers and/or kin to ensure that the youth can stay involved in their communities.
      2. Please outline your recommended timeline and necessary steps for program implementation, including any potential challenges.
      3. Please describe how you would determine the appropriate mix of youths in each home, considering their specific needs and behaviors.
      4. What strategies would you employ to ensure that youth transition out of residential settings promptly, aiming for permanency in their community?
   2. Caregiver Coaching
      1. Please describe the frequency with which you would plan to provide caregiver coaching services.
      2. Where would these services be provided (e.g., in the caregiver’s home, on-site, hybrid with use of technology)?
      3. How would you ensure that caregivers remain involved in services? If a caregiver was to become noncompliant with participation requirements while the youth is in placement, how would you handle the situation?
      4. How would you proactively set up the home environment for youth to return back to their home and community?
   3. Coordination
      1. How would you integrate Youth Transitional Home services with caregiver coaching to create a seamless and comprehensive care model? Highlight any innovative strategies that could enhance coordination and improve outcomes for youth and caregivers.
4. Differentiation between Youth Transitional Homes and Traditional Group Homes
   1. How would your approach differ from a traditional group home as described in the Descriptions of Services Sections 1.a.ii and 5.a of the description of services aside from the provision of or coordination with caregiver coaching?
5. Youth Experience
   1. Please describe how your program would prioritize and respect the individual needs of each youth. What methods would you use to actively involve youth in decisions about their care and daily activities?
6. Staffing and Staff Training
   1. Identify key staff positions and describe their roles.
   2. What training would you provide to ensure staff are prepared to address the unique needs of each youth and caregiver?
   3. How would you ensure staff remain highly qualified and effective?
7. Monitoring and Evaluation
   1. How would you measure the success of your program?
   2. What metrics and feedback mechanisms would you use to track success and progress?
8. Costs
   1. Please describe a high-level estimate of the costs associated with running a Youth Transitional Home and/or providing Caregiver Coaching, including implementation/start-up costs, staffing expenditures, therapy and care costs, home and licensure costs, caregiver coaching costs, etc.

**V. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Subject to State law, all information submitted in Respondents’ responses to this RFI 25-81835 will be kept confidential unless this RFI results in the release of a competitive solicitation at a later date. If a competitive solicitation results from this RFI, the information contained in the response submissions for this RFI will be made available to the public once the resulting solicitation has been awarded and the protest period has ended. Proprietary information may be requested to be kept confidential. Any such information must be marked clearly in your response submission as “CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL.” It is the responsibility of the Respondent to ensure that all confidential information is easily identifiable as confidential.

**VI. PRE-RESPONSE CONFERENCE**

A pre-response conference will be held at the date, time and virtual location specified in Section XI Key RFI Dates. At this conference, potential respondents may ask questions about the RFI and the RFI process. Respondents are reminded that no answers issued verbally at the conference are binding on the State and any information provided at the conference, unless it is later issued in writing, also is not binding on the State. Attendance at this conference is optional and not a prerequisite to submission of an RFI response.

**VII. QUESTIONS/INQUIRY PROCESS**

All questions in regard to RFI 25-81835 must be submitted in writing via email using Attachment A - Questions and Answers Template to ~~Teresa Deaton-Reese at~~ [~~tdeaton@idoa.in.gov~~](mailto:tdeaton@idoa.in.gov) Angie Alexander @ [angalexander@idoa.in.gov](mailto:angalexander@idoa.in.gov) no later than 3 p.m. ET on the date listed in Section XI Key RFI Dates. The email subject line should contain the following phrase “RFI 25-XXXX –

Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching”.

Procurement Division personnel will compile a list of the questions/inquiries submitted by all Respondents. The responses to these questions will be posted to the IDOA website. The question/inquiry and answer link will become active after initial responses to questions have been compiled. Only answers posted on the IDOA website will be considered official and valid by the State.

Please note that Teresa Deaton-Reese is the State’s single point of contact for this RFI. Inquiries are not to be directed to any staff member of DCS or FSSA.

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFI, or if additional information is necessary to facilitate a clearer interpretation of the provisions of this RFI prior to the due date for submissions, an addendum will be posted on the IDOA website.

**VIII. INTENT TO RESPOND FORM (OPTIONAL)**

Each Respondent is requested to provide an optional intent to respond form indicating whether they intend to submit a response for this RFI. If the Respondent subsequently decides not to respond after submitting this intent to respond, there are no ramifications. Please submit the letter using the Intent to Respond Form (Attachment B). The letter may be emailed to [~~tdeaton@idoa.in.gov~~](mailto:tdeaton@idoa.in.gov) [Angalexander@idoa.in.gov](mailto:Angalexander@idoa.in.gov) by October 31, 2024 at 3pm ET.

**IX. RESPONSE DOCUMENTS SUBMISSION**

Responses must be submitted via email to Teresa Deaton-Reese at [~~tdeaton@idoa.in.gov~~](mailto:tdeaton@idoa.in.gov)[angalexander@idoa.in.gov](mailto:angalexander@idoa.in.gov) no later than 3 p.m. ET on the date listed in Section XI Key RFI Dates. The email subject line should contain the following phrase “RFI 25-81835 – Youth Transitional Homes and Caregiver Coaching”. Any information received after the due date and time will not be considered.

**X. RFI REVIEW, CLARIFICATIONS, AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

The State may request written responses from and/or remote meetings with Respondents to this RFI for the purpose of collecting additional information and/or receiving clarification on information provided. Invitations may be extended to Respondents of this RFI subsequent to the receipt of responses.

**XI. KEY RFI DATES**

Below is a chart that contains all of the deadlines associated with RFI 25-81835:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY:** | **DATE:** |
| Issue of RFI | Wednesday, October 16, 2024 |
| Pre-Response Conference | Wednesday, October 30, 2024  9am to 10am ET  [**Join the meeting now**](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NmQxN2YyMTEtOTY5MC00MWJlLTljMmMtOWExMzAyZDJiMjYy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%222199bfba-a409-4f13-b0c4-18b45933d88d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%228c3ae4c6-11b8-4828-870b-fb090e474285%22%7d) |
| Deadline to Submit Written Questions | Thursday, October 31, 2024 |
| Deadline to Submit Letter of Intent (*optional*) | Thursday, October 31, 2024 |
| Response to Written Questions | Thursday, November 14, 2024 |
| Submission of Responses | Monday, December 16, 2024 @ 3:00 P.M. (EST) |