

Cecile E. Young, Executive Commissioner

Request for Applications (RFA)

Grant for

Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS) Program

RFA No. HHS0013956

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

March 1, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time

Table of Contents

Article 1	I. Introduction, Definitions, and Statutory Authority	5
1.1	Introduction	5
1.2	Definitions and Acronyms	6
1.3	Statutory Authority	13
Article 1	II. Scope of Grant Project	14
2.1	Purpose	14
2.2	Program Background	14
2.3	Eligible Population	15
2.4	Eligible Service Areas	16
2.5	Eligible Activities	16
2.6	Program Requirements	22
2.7	Required Reports	32
2.8	Performance Measures and Monitoring.	34
2.9	Financial Management System	35
2.9	Final Billing Submission	36
2.10	Data Use Agreement	36
2.11	Limitations on Grants to Units of Local Government	36
Article 1	III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements	37
3.1	Legal Authority to Apply	37
3.2	Application Screening Requirements	37
3.3	Grant Award Eligibility	37
3.4	Grants for Political Polling Prohibited	38
Article 1	IV. Project Period and Grant Term	38
4.1	Project Period	38
4.2	Grant Term	38
4.3	Project Closeout	38
Article `	V. Grant Funding and Reimbursement Information	39
5.1	Grant Funding Source and Available Funding	39
5.2	No Guarantee of Reimbursement Amounts	39

5.3	Grant Funding Prohibitions	40
5.4	Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	41
5.5	Payment Method	41
Article	VI. Application Forms and Exhibits for Submission	42
6.1	Narrative Proposal	42
6.2	Requested Budget	43
6.3	Indirect Costs	44
6.4	Administrative Applicant Information	45
Article	VII. RFA Administrative Information and Inquiries	46
7.1	Schedule of Events	46
7.2	Sole Point of Contact	47
7.3	RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification	47
7.4	Ambiguity, Conflict, Discrepancy, Clarifications	48
7.5	Responses To Questions or Request for Clarifications	49
7.6	Changes, Amendment Or Modification To RFA	49
7.7	Exceptions	49
7.8	Applicant Webinar Conference	49
Article	VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements	50
8.1	Application Receipt	50
8.2	Application Submission	51
8.3	Required Submission Method	51
8.4	Costs Incurred for Application	52
8.5	Application Composition	52
8.6	Application Organization	53
8.7	Application Withdrawals or Modifications	53
Article	IX. Application Screening and Evaluation	54
9.1	Overview	54
9.2	Initial Compliance Screening of Applications	54
9.3	Questions or Requests for Clarification for Applications	54
9.4	Evaluation Criteria	55
9.5	Past Performance	55
9.6	Compliance for Participation in State Contracts	56

Article 2	X. Award of Grant Agreement Process	58
10.1	Final Selection	58
10.2	Negotiations	58
10.3	Disclosure of Interested Parties	58
10.4	Execution and Announcement Of Grant Agreement(s)	59
Article 2	XI. General Terms and Conditions	60
11.1	Grant Application Disclosure	60
11.2	Texas Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)	60
Article 2	XII. Application Confidential or Proprietary Information	60
12.1	Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements	60
12.2	Applicant Waiver – Intellectual Property	62
Article 2	XIII. Submission Checklist	63
	XIV. List of Exhibits and Forms Attached to RFA	

ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY

1.1 Introduction

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the System Agency, is accepting Applications for grant funding under the Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS) Program.

The purpose of this grant program is to promote improved outcomes for children at highest risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services system and expanding the Improved Outcomes Pilot Program.

Applicant can access information regarding current Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) programs and the Prevention and Early Intervention division at the following website: https://www.dfps.texas.gov/prevention and early intervention/.

Applicants should reference Article II, Scope of Grant Project, for further detailed information regarding the purpose, background, eligible population, eligible activities, and requirements.

Grant Name:	Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS) Program
RFA No.:	HHS0013956
Deadline for Submission of Applications:	March 1, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	January 18, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Central Time
Estimated Total Available Funding:	Up to \$18,750,000 for the Project Period
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	3-6 awards
Estimated Max Award Amount:	\$600,000 annually per Applicant
Match Required, if any:	Match is encouraged but not required.

Anticipated Project Start Date:	September 1, 2024
Length of Project Period:	5 years
Eligible Applicants:	Applicant must be a nonprofit corporation, as defined by Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organization Code, or a governmental entity, and Applicant must submit a complete Application by the stated deadline.

To be considered for screening, evaluation, and award, Applicants must provide and submit all required information and documentation as set forth in Article VIII, Application Organization and Submission Requirements, and Article XIII, Submission Checklist, by the Deadline for Submission of Applications established in Section 7.1, Schedule of Events, or subsequent Addenda. See Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening for Applications, for further details.

1.2 **DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS**

Unless a different definition is specified, or the context clearly indicates otherwise, the definitions and acronyms given to a term below apply whenever the term appears in this RFA. All other terms have their ordinary and common meaning.

Refer to all exhibits, including <u>Exhibit B, HHS Uniform Terms and Conditions – Grant</u> <u>v3.3</u>, to this RFA for additional definitions.

"Addendum" or "Addenda" means a written clarification or revision to this RFA, including exhibits, forms, and attachments, as issued, and posted by HHSC to the HHS Grants RFA website.

"Amendment" means a formal revision or addition to a Grant Agreement.

"Applicant" means any person or legal entity that submits an Application in response to this RFA. The term includes the individual submitting the Application who is authorized to sign the Application on behalf of Applicant and to bind Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of the Application. May also be referred to in this RFA or its exhibits as "Respondent".

<u>"Application"</u> means all documents the Applicant submits in response to this RFA, including all required forms and exhibits. May also be referred to in this RFA as <u>"Response"</u> and "<u>Grant Application"</u>.

<u>"Basic Needs"</u> are essentials for a Family to function and could include, but are not limited to, food, shelter, home furnishings, and clothes.

"Budget" means the financial plan for carrying out the grant, as formalized in the Grant Agreement, including awarded funds and any required Match, submitted as part of the Application in response to this RFA. An Applicant's requested Budget may differ from the HHSC-approved Budget executed in the final Grant Agreement.

<u>"Business Day"</u> means any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or day on which Texas State offices are authorized or obligated by law or executive order to be closed.

"Calendar Day" means every day on the calendar, including weekends and public holidays.

"Caregiver" means an individual who attends to the needs of a Child or Youth.

<u>"Case Notes"</u> means the narrative section of the Participant Case Record that document service details.

<u>"Case Record"</u> means any documentation and materials in both the electronic file and external file associated with a Participant.

<u>"CFR"</u> means the Code of Federal Regulations which is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government.

"Child", "Children", or "Youth" means a person under eighteen (18) years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

<u>"Child Protective Investigations"</u> or "<u>CPI"</u> means Child Protective Investigations, a division of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services that examines reports of child abuse or neglect to determine if any Child in the family has been abused or neglected.

<u>"Child Protective Services"</u> or <u>"CPS"</u> means a division of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services that becomes involved with Children and Families when they are referred by the DFPS Investigations division, which investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect.

<u>"Confidential Information"</u> means any communication or record (whether oral, written, electronically stored or transmitted, or in any other form) that consists of:

- A. Confidential Participant information, including Protected Health Information;
- B. Non-public budget, expense, payment, and other financial information;
- C. All privileged work product;
- D. All information designated by HHS or any other State Agency as confidential, including all information designated as confidential under the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552;
- E. Unless publicly disclosed by HHS or the State, the pricing, payments, and terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement;

- F. Information that HHSC or the Grantee utilizes, develops, receives, or maintains to fulfill a duty or obligation under the Grant Agreement and that has not been publicly disclosed; and
- G. Any other information deemed confidential under State or federal confidentiality laws.

"Curriculum" means a specific written program of instruction and planned experiences for individual or Family skill and effectiveness development such as encouraging family unity, communication, improved decision-making, and improved family functioning.

<u>"Deliverable"</u> means a written, recorded, or otherwise tangible work product that the Grantee prepares, develops, or procures to provide as part of the Grantee's obligations under the Grant Agreement. A discrete type or increment of work that may involve the delivery of goods or services.

"Direct Cost" means those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective under the Grant Project responsive to this RFA or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either direct or indirect costs. Direct Costs include, but are not limited to, salaries, travel, Equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported Project or activity.

<u>"DFPS"</u> means the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

<u>"Effective Date"</u> means the date upon which the parties agree the Grant Agreement shall take effect as indicated in the Grant Agreement.

"Equipment" pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one (1) year and a perunit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See also 2 CFR § 200.1 for the definitions of capital assets, computing devices, general purpose equipment, information technology systems, special purpose equipment, and supplies.

"Evidence-Based Program" means a Program Model that meets the following criteria:

- A. Is research-based and grounded in relevant, empirically based knowledge and programdetermined Outcomes;
- B. Has comprehensive standards that ensure the highest-quality service delivery with continuous quality improvement;
- C. Has demonstrated significant positive short-term and long-term Outcomes;
- D. Has been evaluated by at least one rigorous, randomized, controlled research trial across heterogeneous populations or communities, the results of at least one of which has been published in a peer-reviewed journal. For Youth-serving curricula, a rigorous quasi-experiment may be substituted for a randomized control trial at HHSC's discretion;

- E. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program; and
- F. Employs well-trained and competent staff and continually provides staff with relevant professional development opportunities.

<u>"Evidence-Informed Program"</u> means a Program Model that uses the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. A solution that allows for performance and success in all conditions. Components of Evidence-Informed Programs have been tested using a randomized control trial or rigorous quasi-experimental design.

<u>"Family"</u> or "<u>Families"</u> means more than one person affiliated with a Youth receiving programming through this RFA and can include Caregivers, partners, Children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents.

<u>"Fee-For-Service"</u> means a method of payment in which a Grantee is paid a fee for each individual type of service rendered. The service is typically provided in predefined units of service such as dollars per hour or dollars per session. The fee itself is calculated by careful consideration of all reasonable, allowable, and necessary costs the Grantee incurs to deliver that individual service (including all direct and indirect costs).

"Grant Agreement" means the agreement entered into by the System Agency and the Grantee as a result of this RFA, including the Signature Document and all attachments and amendments. Grant Agreement may be used interchangeably with "Contract".

<u>"Grantee"</u> means the party receiving funds under any Grant Agreement awarded under this RFA. Used interchangeably with the terms <u>"Successful Applicant"</u>, <u>"Provider"</u>, <u>"Grant Recipient"</u>, or <u>"Contractor"</u>.

"HHS" includes both the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

"HHSC" means the Health and Human Services Commission.

<u>"Index Child"</u> or <u>"Index Youth"</u> is the Child or Youth for whom a Family's eligibility for LTYFS programming is based. This RFA refers to <u>"Index Child or Youth"</u> to indicate Children or Youth served. <u>"Index Child or Youth"</u> may be used interchangeably with "Participant".

"Indirect Cost" means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect Costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the Grant Project responsive to this RFA but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.

- "Indirect Cost Rate (ICR)" means a device for determining in a reasonable manner the proportion of Indirect Costs each program should bear. It is the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of the Grantee's Indirect Costs to a Direct Cost base.
- <u>"Intake"</u> means the act of receiving, logging, and creating an individual Family record at the Grantee's site that indicates acceptance of the Service Authorization.
- <u>"Invoice"</u> means a Grantee's bill or written request for reimbursement under the Grant Agreement for services performed. Also referred to as <u>"Expenditure Report"</u> or "<u>Financial Status Report"</u>.
- "Long-Term Youth and Family Support Program" or "LTYFS" means community-based prevention and early intervention programming funded under this RFA that aims to improve outcomes for children at highest risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services system. Used interchangeably with "LTYFS Program".
- "Match" is the non-federal and/or non-State share of costs the Grantee is required to contribute to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Project.
- "Memorandum of Understanding" or "MOU" means a nonfinancial agreement between two (2) or more parties to memorialize an agreement to cooperate or coordinate with each other for a specific purpose.
- <u>"Nonresponsive"</u> means the designation for when an Application's noncompliance with a material aspect of the RFA results in the Application's exclusion from grant award consideration.
- "Outcome" means a measure that demonstrates the effect a service has on Participants, typically related to improvements in the lives of Participants regarding safety, permanency, and well-being.
- "Output" means an indicator referring to activities, methods, and approaches and the immediate results generated because of program efforts (e.g., number of Families served).
- <u>"Participant"</u> means a member of the population to be served by Applicant's organization. For the purposes of this grant, a Participant is a member of a Family or household who is receiving programming under this grant. Used interchangeably with the term <u>"Client"</u> for this RFA.
- <u>"Participant Case Record"</u> means any documentation and materials in both the electronic file and external file associated with a specific case.
- <u>"PEI"</u> means the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of DFPS which will move to HHSC effective September 1, 2024. Also referred to as <u>"Family Support Services (FSS)"</u>.
- <u>"PEI (FSS) Program Staff"</u> means employees who work for the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division (or Family Support Services).

<u>"PEIRS Enrollment ID"</u> means the unique identification number for each enrolled Participant or Family member that is generated after a new enrollment is saved in PEIRS.

<u>"Performance Measure"</u> means a service Output, Outcome, or Deliverable used to assess the performance of the Grantee.

<u>"Prevention and Early Intervention Reporting System"</u> or <u>"PEIRS"</u> is the data reporting system used by PEI (FSS) Grantees and PEI (FSS) Program Staff to capture and report program and grant-related information.

<u>"Primary Caregiver"</u> means the parent or Caregiver of the Index Child or Youth and is the person who is the primary Participant involved in LTYFS Program offerings.

<u>"Priority Characteristics"</u> means traits that identify the Youth, Caregivers, or Families who may receive programming.

"Professional Mentoring" means an interaction that takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a professional capacity to provide support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development. This interaction is by a paid professional with relevant experience.

<u>"Program Model"</u> means the Curriculum, Evidence-Informed Program, Promising Practice Program, or Evidence-Based Program the Grantee implements.

<u>"Program Staff"</u> means employees working under the auspices of LTYFS Grantees, including Subawardees and volunteers who will be providing support and programming to Youth or their Families.

<u>"Project"</u> or <u>"Grant Project"</u> means the specific work and activities that are supported by the funds provided under the Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA.

"Project Period" is the initial period of time set forth in the Grant Agreement during which Grantees may perform approved grant-funded activities to be eligible for reimbursement or payment. Unless otherwise specified, the Project Period begins on the Grant Agreement Effective Date and ends on the Grant Agreement termination or expiration date, and represents the base Project Period, not including extensions or renewals. When referring to the base Project Period plus anticipated renewal or extension periods, "Grant Term" is used.

<u>"Project Work Plan"</u> or <u>"PWP"</u> means the documentation of how the Grantee will implement and operate the LTYFS grant to achieve the Performance Measures outlined in the Grant Agreement.

"Promising Practice Program" means a Program Model that meets the following criteria:

A. Has an active impact evaluation program or demonstrates a schedule for implementing an active impact evaluation program;

- B. Has been evaluated by at least one Outcome-based study demonstrating effectiveness or random, controlled trial in a homogeneous sample;
- C. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services;
- D. Employs well-trained and competent Program Staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities; and
- E. Is research-based and grounded in relevant, empirical knowledge, and programdetermined Outcomes.

<u>"Protected Health Information"</u> or <u>"PHI"</u> means information protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule providing federal protections for personal health information held by covered entities and gives patients an array of rights with respect to that information. At the same time, the Privacy Rule is balanced so that it permits the disclosure of personal health information needed for patient care and other important purposes.

<u>"Protective Factors"</u> means conditions or attributes in individuals, Families, communities, or society that mitigate or eliminate risk in Families and communities, thereby increasing the health and well-being of Children and Families.

<u>"Referral"</u> means the process whereby a Grantee provides Families with recommended external programming or resources that extend beyond the programming the Grantee provides through this RFA.

<u>"Reflective Supervision"</u> means the regular collaborative reflection between a Program Staff member (clinical or other) and supervisor that builds on the supervisee's use of their thoughts, feelings, and values within a service encounter. It is a necessary, supportive process within the supervisor-staff relationship.

<u>"Responsive"</u> means the designation for when HHSC and DFPS determine that an Application complies with all material aspects of the RFA, including that Applicant has submitted all required documents.

"RFA" means this Request for Applications, including all parts, exhibits, forms, attachments, and Addenda posted on the HHS Grants RFA website. May also be referred to herein as "Solicitation".

<u>"Safe"</u> means the state in which an Index Child or Youth is secure from maltreatment or the risk of danger or harm.

<u>"Service Authorization"</u> means the process whereby the Primary Caregiver consents to participation in programming by completing an enrollment form and any other documentation required by HHSC or the Grantee.

<u>"Service Delivery Area"</u> or <u>"SDA"</u> means the counties within which Applicant proposes to provide LTYFS programming.

"Service Planning and Service Coordination" means a type of engagement that may include checking on Families in person or virtually, delivering Basic Needs support or Family support items, coordinating support services, identifying issues, and providing other related support. Service Planning and Service Coordination may also include providing individualized support or coaching to Caregivers navigating a system or process.

<u>"State"</u> means the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including HHS, DFPS, and any other State Agency or its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

"State Agency" means an agency of the State of Texas as defined in Texas Government Code § 2056.001.

<u>"Subaward"</u> means a written agreement that assigns portions of a Grantee's obligations to a third party that the Grantee selects. The third party assumes some of the Grantee's obligations while the Grantee remains completely responsible for all actions that the Subawardee performs. Subaward may be used interchangeably with the term <u>"Subcontract"</u> or <u>"Subgrant"</u> for this RFA.

<u>"Subawardee"</u> means any entity that has entered into a Subaward with the Grantee to assume some of the Grantee's obligations. Used interchangeably with the term <u>"Subcontractor"</u> or <u>"Subgrantee"</u>.

<u>"System Agency"</u> means HHSC, DSHS, or both, that will be a party to any Grant Agreement resulting from the RFA.

<u>"Theory of Change"</u> means a specific methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation that family-serving organizations use to define long-term program goals and intended Outcomes and then map back to illustrate and identify necessary preconditions to achieve change. A Theory of Change methodology meets the following criteria:

- A. Illustrates how the activities are designed to explicitly bring about change, as well as other external factors that influence program effectiveness;
- B. Explicitly shows how activities achieve meaningful and measurable results; and
- C. Draws on relevant research and theory, illustrating the validity of the program design and how the activities align with local needs, contexts, and circumstances.

<u>"TxGMS"</u> means the Texas Grant Management Standards published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

1.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Pursuant to <u>Senate Bill 24 of the 88th Legislature</u>, the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention division will be called the Family Support Services division and will transfer to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on September 1, 2024.

Pursuant to <u>Rider 42. Long-Term Youth and Family Support of the 88th Legislature</u>, DFPS and HHSC are authorized to release this RFA.

ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT PROJECT

2.1 PURPOSE

This funding opportunity invites Grant Applications requesting funding for the LTYFS Program. The purpose of this program is to increase the availability and accessibility of long-term services and support to Youth and Families in the State of Texas.

2.2 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- A. The 86th Legislature created through Rider 39, in Article II of the General Appropriations Act, the Improved Outcomes Pilot with \$200,000 in the 2020-2021 biennium to implement a pilot program to improve outcomes for Children at the highest risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services system.
 - 1. **Rider 39. Improved Outcomes Pilot.** Out of funds appropriated in Strategy C.1.4, Other At-Risk Prevention Programs, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) shall allocate \$100,000 in General Revenue in each fiscal year to implement a pilot program aimed at improving outcomes for children at highest risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services system. The pilot shall:
 - a. Be evidence-based or incorporate promising practices;
 - b. Be implemented in a county with a population over 800,000; and
 - c. Aim to reduce the child's interaction with the juvenile justice system, reduce teen pregnancy and increase graduation rates over the span of the child's youth.
 - 2. No later than December 1, 2020, DFPS shall report to the Legislative Budget Board, the Governor, the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Speaker of the House, Lieutenant Governor, and the permanent standing committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate with jurisdiction over health and human services on the success of the pilot program in improving outcomes.
- B. Presently, the 88th legislature authorized through Rider 42 the Long-Term Youth and Family Support Program to continue the program aimed at improving outcomes for children at highest risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services system and expand the program.
 - 1. **Rider 42. Long-Term Youth and Family Support.** Out of funds appropriated above in strategy C.1.4, Other At-Risk Prevention Programs, the Department of Family and Protective Services shall allocate \$1,500,000 in General Revenue in fiscal year 2024 and \$3,000,000 in General Revenue in fiscal year 2025 to continue the program aimed at improving outcomes for children at highest risk of reentering the Child Protective Services system, and expand the program into at least two additional areas of the state and provide each program funding for, model

support, including, but not limited to, training and technical assistance. The program shall:

- a. Be evidence-based or incorporate promising practices;
- b. Be implemented in a county with a population over 800,000; and
- c. Aim to reduce the child's interaction with the juvenile justice system, reduce teen pregnancy and increase graduation rates over the span of the child's youth.
- C. PEI seeks to partner with community-based programs and agencies to promote positive Outcomes for Children, Youth, and Families. These programs are free of charge to the public, and participation is voluntary. As part of its array of prevention programming, PEI funds Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS) programming promoting improved outcomes for Youth at-risk of re-entering the Child Protective Services in the State of Texas.
- D. PEI seeks to continue and expand the pilot with similar services under the pilot including long-term Professional Mentoring and support for Youth and their Families.

2.3 ELIGIBLE POPULATION

- A. Eligibility to receive LTYFS services requires that an Index Youth meet the following criteria:
 - 1. Participants must live in the SDA;
 - 2. Participants must be in a grade level from kindergarten-twelfth grade (K-12);
 - 3. Participants who turn the age of 18 years during the school year will be permitted to participate in programming until meeting program goals or the end of the current fiscal year;
 - 4. Participants with a current or previous history with Child Protective Investigations (CPI) or CPS are eligible for services;
 - 5. PEI reserves the right to alter eligibility criteria during the Project Period.
- B. To be eligible to participate in Grantee's LTYFS Program, Youth must exhibit at least two of the following Priority Characteristics:
 - 1. Behavioral concern
 - 2. Childcare or childcare access concerns
 - 3. Current or former military connection
 - 4. Current or past alcohol abuse Caregiver
 - 5. Current or past alcohol abuse Index Child/Youth
 - 6. Current or past child maltreatment or child welfare involvement
 - 7. Current or past conflict at school
 - 8. Current or past criminal justice involvement Index Child/Youth
 - 9. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence
 - 10. Current or past use or abuse of other substance Index Child/Youth
 - 11. Developmental delay or disability Caregiver

- 12. Developmental delay or disability Index Child/Youth
- 13. Family dynamics or structure concern
- 14. Family or household conflict
- 15. High stress level
- 16. Homeless, runaway, or housing instability
- 17. Household contains an enrollee who is pregnant and under 21
- 18. Household has a Child with developmental delays or disabilities
- 19. Household has a history of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment
- 20. Household has a history of substance abuse or needs substance abuse treatment
- 21. Low school attainment Caregiver
- 22. Low-income household
- 23. Mental health concern Caregiver
- 24. Mental health concern Index Youth
- 25. Parenting skills concern
- 26. School engagement concern
- 27. Social support concern

2.4 ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS

- A. HHSC intends to award grants to counties with populations over 800,000. The eligible counties are Bexar, Collin, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Fort Bend, Harris, Hidalgo, Tarrant, and Travis.
- B. Under this RFA, Applicant may propose a Service Delivery Area (SDA) of one or more eligible counties per Application. The proposed SDA is at the Applicant's discretion. Applicant must define and describe its selected SDA. Only one Applicant will be selected to provide programming within each county.
- C. Applicant will develop an appropriate array of programming within the SDA to meet Participant needs, including office locations, community locations, and, where appropriate, delivery of programming at a Participant's home.

2.5 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

This grant program may fund activities and costs as allowed by the laws, regulations, rules, and guidance governing fund use identified in the relevant sections of this RFA. Only grant-funded activities authorized under this RFA are eligible for reimbursement and payment under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA.

- A. The goal of the LTYFS Program is to improve outcomes in Youth and Families by reducing the child's interaction with the juvenile justice system, reducing teen pregnancy, and increasing graduation rates over the span of the child's youth.
- B. Applicants must propose a comprehensive array of programming to serve Youth, Families, and communities. Applicant should develop recommended programming based on the needs and gaps in the Service Delivery Area.

C. LTYFS Eligible Programming

Applicants must propose and describe programming in <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>, based on the needs and gaps in the Service Delivery Area (SDA) as identified through a community assessment. The logic model should also guide and inform proposed programming.

1. Program Model

- a. Applicant must propose to deliver at least one Program Model and additional supportive programming may be allowed. The Applicant must complete and submit <u>Form G-1, Program Model Review Tool</u> (as an attachment to <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>), for any proposed Program Model. If the Applicant's proposed Program Model is listed on a clearinghouse as Promising Practice, Evidence-Informed, or Evidence-Based, the Applicant only needs to complete Section I of Form G-1, Program Model Review Tool.
- b. The following is a non-comprehensive list of possible clearinghouses, databases, and resources for consideration when selecting a Program Model:
 - i. Results First Clearinghouse Database (see https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database);
 - ii. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (see https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp);
 - iii. California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (see https://www.cebc4cw.org/);
 - iv. Youth.gov Program Directory (see https://youth.gov/evidence-innovation#program-directory);
 - v. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Model Programs Guide (see https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/evidence-based-programs);
 - vi. The U.S. Department of Education "What Works" Clearinghouse (see https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/); and
 - vii. Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse (see https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/).
- c. The Applicant must describe in <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>, how the proposed Program Model will meet the needs in the SDA with fidelity.
- Applicants must propose programming to directly engage Youth and Families and must provide at minimum the following core programming defined in Section 2.5 (C) (4) Program Descriptions:
 - a. Intake and Assessment
 - b. Professional Mentoring

- 3. Applicant may also propose ancillary programming defined in **Section 2.5 (C) (4) Program Descriptions** to build comprehensive support for Youth and Families.
 Applicant must determine and describe ancillary programming based on existing community resources and identified community needs:
 - a. Academic Support
 - b. Service Planning and Service Coordination
 - c. Transportation for LTYFS programming
 - d. Basic Needs support
 - e. Other programming

4. Program Descriptions

- a. Intake and Assessment
 - i. Grantee must conduct a formal intake and assessment at the time of enrollment to determine appropriate LTYFS programming;
 - ii. Applicant should include expected duration of initial intake and assessment in the **Form G, Project Work Plan**; and
 - iii. Intake and assessment is a service for first-time Participants or returning Participants reopening a case that has been closed for one hundred twenty-one (121) Calendar Days or longer. An Intake and assessment is the first session scheduled with the Family where the enrollment form, the Protective Factors Survey, and any Grantee-specific documentation are completed. The LTYFS Program Staff will work with the Family and/or Caregiver to identify the presenting concern, subsequent concerns, and Family and individual strengths.

b. Professional Mentoring

Mentoring that takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a professional helping capacity to provide support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development. Mentoring must primarily focus on facilitating an ongoing positive relationship between the Youth and professional mentor who provides help to the younger person as they go through life. Mentoring can include one-on-one coaching in life skills, social-emotional development, and community involvement. Professional Mentoring is delivered by salaried, professionally trained staff with relevant background and experience.

The Applicant must have program guidelines for its Mentoring program. These guidelines should include:

- i. Recruitment (mentors and mentees): Description of eligibility requirements, expectations for Mentoring relationship and Outcomes, target audience for recruitment, and methods of recruitment;
- ii. Screening (mentors): Description of the application and interview process; criteria for accepting or disqualifying applicants; comprehensive background check; references check; written agreement with expectations for length of relationship and frequency of meeting;

- iii. Training (mentors): Description of required number of training hours and mode of training to be used. Training content must include:
 - 1. Allowable contact between a mentor and mentee (e.g., only at school or in community);
 - 2. A definition of Mentoring;
 - 3. Descriptions of the roles of a mentor and a mentee;
 - 4. Guidelines for any financial transactions including gifts;
 - 5. Sources of assistance available to support mentors;
 - 6. Initiation and termination or closure of relationship;
 - 7. Warning signs and problem-solving for certain mentee behaviors or crises (e.g., self-harm, suicidal ideation, aggression);
 - 8. Risk management policies (appropriate physical contact, safety, transportation of mentees, mandatory reporting requirements, confidentiality and anonymity, money, photos and social media use, emergency procedures, etc.); and
 - 9. Both mentor and mentee expectations for the frequency of Contact and length of relationship.
- iv. Matching and initiating mentor relationship: Description of matching and initiating relationship process;
- v. Monitoring and support: Description of supervision, support, and feedback provided to mentors;
- vi. Relationship closure: Description of procedure to manage, document, and notify participants of anticipated and unanticipated closures; closure procedure must include:
 - 1. Exit interview with mentors and mentees;
 - 2. Written policy and procedure for managing re-matching; and
 - 3. Review of program rules for post-closure contact.
- vii. Additional Mentoring program requirements and restrictions:
 - 1. Peer Mentoring and Family Mentoring programs do NOT satisfy this requirement;
 - 2. Grantee must conduct Mentoring in individual or small group settings.
 - 3. The mentor-to-Youth ratio for group settings should be no greater than four youth to one mentor;
 - 4. Most Mentoring should be in person, Grantee must provide justification for any virtual programming;
 - 5. Goal setting: Description of procedure to manage goal setting objectives to include but not limited to life skill development, short/long term goals and frequency of review; and
 - 6. Communication methods: Identify age-appropriate communication with mentee weekly that includes, but is not limited to, by phone, in-person, and virtual contact that are within Grantee organizational policies and procedures.

c. Academic Support

Academic support includes providing skills, classes, tutoring, or other support dedicated to the academic success of Youth and purchasing reasonable and

necessary items related to a positive educational experience. Academic support provided by Program Staff could include but is not limited to:

- i. College preparation activities;
- ii. Researching and applying to schools;
- iii. Researching student aid and scholarships;
- iv. Helping to understand grade point averages; and
- v. Other activities designed to increase Youth engagement in the learning process and improve academic performance.

d. Service Planning and Service Coordination

PEI defines Service Planning and Service Coordination as a different, shorter engagement type that may include checking on Families in person or virtually, delivering Basic Needs or Family support items, coordinating support services, identifying issues, and providing other related support. Service Planning and Service Coordination may also include providing individualized support or coaching to Caregivers navigating a system or process. Grantee must be prepared to provide justification for Grantee's level of Service Planning and Service Coordination. Examples include but are not limited to:

- i. Assisting Caregiver in gaining access to benefits;
- ii. Supporting a Caregiver through a legal matter;
- iii. Empowering Caregivers to advocate for their Youth within a school system (e.g., Individualized Education Plan or Admission, Review, Discharge meetings);
- iv. Assisting a Family with an immediate need such as locating a community food bank or food pick-up information;
- v. Contacting another community organization to facilitate a warm Referral (warm Referrals can include phoning the service for the person, passing on information to the service with the person's consent and, in some cases, where people need more support, helping them to navigate the service system); and
- vi. A call with a current Participant addressing heightened stress and helping navigate to immediate resources.

e. Transportation for LTYFS programming

Grantee facilitates Participant transportation to and from LTYFS activities. A Participant may use this service as often as needed in conjunction with LTYFS Programming. Transportation options could include but are not limited to:

- i. Program Staff transporting a Participant in a personal or Grantee-owned vehicle;
- ii. Purchasing a bus or metro pass; and
- iii. Paying for a taxi or ride-sharing service.

f. Basic Needs support

Grantee provides Basic Needs support through Referrals, in-kind, purchased, or donated items to fill needs that are essential for a Family to function. PEI

RFA No. HHS0013956 Page 20 of 65 reimburses Basic Needs support at cost in adherence with PEI policy. Basic Needs support could include but are not limited to:

- i. Food;
- ii. Shelter;
- iii. Home furnishings;
- iv. Baby items;
- v. Clothes;
- vi. Hygiene items;
- vii. Utility assistance;
- viii. Job training;
- ix. Transportation (not related to LTYFS Programs. See "Transportation for LTYFS Programs");
- x. Healthcare related items (prescription eyeglasses, first-aid kits);
- xi. Driver education classes and license fees;
- xii. Test preparation study courses;
- xiii. College application fees;
- xiv. Graduation cap and gown;
- xv. College entrance exam or other educational or workforce exams; and
- xvi. Other related items to fulfill unmet personal and household needs.

g. Other programming

Applicants may propose other programming not listed above by including details in <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>. HHSC will approve any other programming proposed during negotiations or upon approval of the annual Project Work Plan. Applicant should describe programming, the community need the programming will remedy, and why the Applicant selected the programming.

h. Programming Delivery Methods

PEI prefers face-to-face programming which should encompass most program delivery methods; however, Grantee may provide telephone and video programming. Applicants should address the following items, at a minimum, in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:

- i. Describe policies and procedures for telephone and virtual programming and plan for assessing program quality;
- ii. Describe which programming can be provided by telephone or virtual platform and the platform to be used;
- iii. Describe how Parent/Youth Participant preference drives program delivery method; and
- iv. Describe Intake procedures. PEI encourages in-person Intakes.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Grant Projects funded under this RFA must meet the following program requirements:

- A. The awarded Grantee agrees to adhere to all the following conditions for the LTYFS Program:
 - 1. All Participants must enter the program voluntarily. Voluntarily means that the Family or Youth must not be coerced, court ordered, or mandated to participate in LTYFS.
 - 2. Grantee cannot charge Participants a fee for participating in LTYFS or for any LTYFS participation-related costs.
 - 3. Grantee must provide programming to Families without regard to their economic status.
 - 4. The average number of unduplicated Index Youth served monthly must meet the minimum established in the Grant Agreement. An unduplicated Index Youth is an Index Youth with a unique PEIRS Enrollment ID number who is only counted one time per month for monthly Output and one time during the State fiscal year for the annual Output.
 - 5. Grantee must comply with all policy updates and clarifications that HHSC issues during the Project Period.
 - 6. Grantee must participate in all HHSC required webinars, trainings, and conference calls. Grantee must include appropriate Program Staff relevant to the topic area.

B. Use of Subawards

- 1. Grantee may choose to enter into a Subaward for the provision of any direct programming described within this RFA. Subawardees providing programming under this RFA shall meet the same requirements and levels of experience as required of Applicant.
- 2. No Subaward under this RFA shall relieve the Grantee of the responsibility for ensuring that the requested programming is provided according to standards.
- 3. Application will include work to be performed by Subawardees and will include proposed Subawardee budget or budgets.
- 4. Grantee will award Subawards based on its own internal policies and processes. Grantee will notify HHSC in writing, within ten (10) days, if the Subawardee changes.
- 5. After award, Grantee and Subawardee must negotiate any needed changes to the Subawardee SDA, and report requested changes to HHSC. Any proposed change from the Grantee or Subawardee to the direct programming provided, or proposed change that would require a new Subawardee, must have prior approval from HHSC.
- 6. If Grantee terminates any Subaward, and the Grantee has not fully expended the funds obligated to the Subawardee during the grant year, the Grantee must find a replacement Subawardee within sixty (60) Calendar Days or obligate those funds in a manner consistent with the purposes of LTYFS. HHSC must approve any changes.

C. Logic Model

- 1. A logic model is a program map. It is a simple, logical illustration of what the program does, why, and how the Applicant will know if the program is successful. There are a wide variety of logic model formats, but most have the same key components including: resources or inputs, activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and impact. A good logic model demonstrates the Applicant's program Theory of Change in a measurable format. The logic model should also guide and inform proposed programming to reach proposed Outcomes for Youth and Families.
- 2. As part of the Application, each Applicant must submit a logic model for its proposed LTYFS Program. The logic model must be submitted as an attachment to **Form G, Project Work Plan**, and labeled as "**Attachment G-1, Logic Model**."
- 3. Applicant may use any logic model format. Suggested sources for development of a logic model include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Kellogg Foundation-Logic Model Development Guide.
 - b. Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service, https://friendsnrc.org/evaluation/logic-models/.
 - c. The University of Kansas, https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main.
- 4. Grantee should update the logic model if any component changes such as program activities or resources, or at least annually with annual submission of the Project Work Plan.

D. Organizational Qualifications and Requirements

Applicant must use <u>Form F, Program Narrative</u>, to describe how the Applicant meets the following qualifications:

- 1. Applicant should outline the organization's knowledge or experience implementing programs such as providing prevention programs to Youth and Families, experience in developing and managing youth-focused or family-focused, community-based, or long-term service programs relevant to programmatic requirements.
- 2. Applicant should outline the organization's knowledge or experience in areas such as managing budgets, grants, or contracts to demonstrate ability to support administrative and fiscal requirements. This could be demonstrated with monitoring reports from any Texas State Agency or federal funding entity or with audits performed on Applicant's organization in the past five years.
- 3. Subawardees should also demonstrate relevant experience.

E. Organizational Competence

Applicant should propose to implement improvements to its organization to further the goals of competently supporting LTYFS Participants by promoting the Protective Factors in Families and communities. Applicants should describe organizational competence in <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>. Areas to address should include the following:

- 1. Plan to strategically hire Program Staff. The most effective staffing structure for competently supporting LTYFS Participants incorporates intentional recruitment of Program Staff with relevant backgrounds, demographics, and experience supporting Families.
- 2. Plan to strategically hire organizational leadership. Organizational leadership should have relevant backgrounds, demographics, and experiences and be reflective of the community served.
- 3. Plan to make support available to all Family members through LTYFS Program sites that are easy to get to and have flexible hours.
- 4. Plan to cultivate LTYFS Participant voices and perspectives.
- 5. Plan to brand the LTYFS Program and recruitment materials in ways that resonate with Families in their communities.
- 6. Plan to conduct strategic outreach to include engaging Participants in outreach strategies such as word-of-mouth and culturally relevant promotional campaigns.
- 7. Plan to involve LTYFS Program alumni in LTYFS activities and program development.
- 8. Plan to acknowledge and respect Youth and Families, including their cultural traditions, languages, values, socioeconomic status, religion, individual abilities, and other aspects.
- 9. Plan to promote community and Youth voice as an organizational priority. Examples could include incorporating community members and Youth in strategic planning, reviewing, and revising policies and procedures, or conducting an annual survey or assessments.

F. Program Staffing Requirements

Applicant must develop, provide, and manage a staffing plan to ensure delivery of competent and robust programming and continuity of programs in the event of a vacancy that includes minimum educational or experience requirements for direct service staff, administrative staff, Subawardee staff, and volunteers. Applicants should describe the program staffing plan in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.

- 1. If Applicant elects to enter into a Subaward for any programming, the same minimum staffing qualifications apply to Subawardee staff. The Program Staff who are primarily responsible for delivering the direct service programming and related components must be adults eighteen (18) years or older.
- 2. The staffing plan, at a minimum, should include the following requirements for all Program Staff:
 - a. Appropriate labor skill set;
 - b. Minimum education and experience requirements;

RFA No. HHS0013956 Page 24 of 65

- c. Detailed position descriptions;
- d. Comprehensive employee training plan; and
- e. Succession plan for all program positions.
- 3. Applicant should develop a staffing structure for their LTYFS Program that encompasses the roles and qualifications outlined in Section 2.6 (H) Program Staff Roles and Qualifications.
- 4. PEI does not require separate positions for each of these roles. Applicants may assign duties as a full-time or part-time position based on program size and scope.
- 5. PEI reserves the right to authorize each position funded under the grant.

G. Program Staff Roles and Qualifications

Applicant may decide to assign the responsibilities and activities, as detailed below, to an existing role or position, or Applicant may propose a dedicated role depending on the size and scope of the overall LTYFS Program. If Applicant is not creating a dedicated role for the staff positions detailed below, Applicant must integrate these activities into the roles of other managers who meet the qualifications listed below. Applicant must have a clear organizational structure with program director and financial manager responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified Program Staff. Proposed staff roles and responsibilities should be clearly detailed in **Form G, Project Work Plan.**

1. Program Director

The program director role, or equivalent position, is the primary program contact and is responsible for program oversight, all program activities and offerings, and supervision.

a. Qualifications

The program director should:

- i. Have a bachelor's degree, at minimum, in a relevant field;
- ii. Have three years of relevant program management and supervisory experience; and
- iii. Have experience with performance evaluation, data analysis, reporting, and Youth and Family programming.
- iv. Applicant may substitute experience for education on a year-for-year basis if the person holding the program director position does not have a bachelor's degree.

b. Responsibilities and Activities

The program director is responsible for the following activities:

- i. Serve as the primary LTYFS Program contact and liaison.
- ii. Provide program oversight, to include managing operations, supporting, and monitoring performance related to the project, and planning for improvements where needed.

- iii. Ensure that program operations and activities adhere to all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines required by the Grantee, the LTYFS grant, and the selected Program Model(s).
- iv. Ensure that LTYFS Program goals are met, especially related to Deliverables, Outputs, and processes.
- v. Assist in Budget planning, ensuring that the Budget aligns with program goals and operations.
- vi. Hire, train, and supervise Program Staff.
- vii. Ensure regular administrative supervision and Reflective Supervision of direct service staff.
- viii. Ensure proper clinical consultation and oversight for counselors if applicable.

2. Financial Manager

The financial manager role, or equivalent position, is the primary financial contact.

a. Qualifications

- i. The financial manager should have a bachelor's degree or higher in a relevant field such as accounting or finance with a minimum of two years of work experience in accounting and have proficient skill in automated accounting system(s) and Microsoft Excel.
- ii. Applicant may substitute experience for education on a year-for-year basis if the person holding the financial manager position does not have a bachelor's degree.

b. Responsibilities and Activities

The financial manager is responsible for the following activities:

- i. Serve as the primary financial contact and liaison.
- ii. Assist in Budget planning to ensure that the Budget is aligned with program goals and operations.
- iii. Provide financial oversight of the grant.

3. Data Support

The data entry support role, or equivalent position, is responsible for timely and accurate data entry into PEIRS.

a. Qualifications

The data support role should:

- i. Have a high school diploma or higher;
- ii. Have relevant work experience; and
- iii. Have a minimum of two years of relevant data entry experience.

b. Responsibilities and Activities

The data support role is responsible for the following activities:

- i. Assist with Performance Measure tracking, data analysis, and reporting;
- ii. Coordinate with the program director;
- iii. Ensure accurate data entry into PEIRS;
- iv. Enter all data for a specific month into the system no later than thirty (30) Calendar Days following the close of the month in which an enrollment occurred, programming was provided, or Participant was discharged; and
- v. Enter data prior to the thirty (30) Calendar Days following the close of the month to meet billing requirements.

4. Professional Mentor

The professional mentor may provide individual sessions, guidance, advice, feedback, and support to a mentee and serve as a role model or advocate, depending on the specific goals and objectives established with the mentee.

a. Qualifications

The professional mentor should:

- i. Have relevant experience.
- b. Responsibilities and Activities

The professional mentor is responsible for the following activities:

- i. Report to appropriate supervisor;
- ii. Complete required training necessary to deliver selected Program Model(s);
- iii. Complete required program documentation; and
- iv. Conduct other approved duties as determined by the Grantee.

H. Organizational Training Requirements

- 1. Applicant should submit a training plan that includes both initial and ongoing training for all Program Staff including volunteers, Subawardee employees, and anyone else working on the grant. Applicants should include a summary of all training elements in Form G, Project Work Plan. Staff training must include the following competencies:
 - a. New employee orientation;
 - b. Program Model training (when appropriate);
 - c. Additional training topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Healthy relationships;
 - ii. Effective collaboration;
 - iii. Effective group facilitation;
 - iv. Ethics;
 - v. Child and Youth development;
 - vi. Cross-cultural training;
 - vii. Positive Youth development;
 - viii. Protective Factors;

- ix. Crisis intervention;
- x. Trauma-informed care;
- xi. Mental Health First Aid Training;
- xii. Domestic Violence awareness;
- xiii. Referrals and service connections;
- xiv. Substance use;
- xv. Internet safety for Youth;
- xvi. Case documentation;
- xvii. Case management;
- xviii. Bullying; and
 - xix. Suicide prevention and postvention.
- 2. Grantee must participate and involve appropriate staff in webinars, trainings, and conference calls, including the annual Partners in Prevention (PIP) conference, as required by HHSC.
- 3. Grantee must develop and follow processes to track all required training in personnel files. All training must be noted in the regular program quarterly reports.
- 4. Subawardees performing programming under this grant must meet the same training requirements.
- I. Recruitment, Outreach, and Retention
 - 1. Applicant should describe proposed recruitment and outreach plans and strategies to connect to eligible population within the SDA in Form G, Project Work Plan.
 - 2. Applicant should describe plans to promote program retention in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
 - a. Retention plans should include a variety of ways to address barriers to engagement and participation.
 - b. Applicant may propose the use of incentives to support program retention and participation. Applicant should elaborate on proposed incentives including how they will be provided and how they will benefit the Participants and LTYFS.
 - i. Incentives should not be used, nor appear to be used, as payment for participation. Therefore, incentives cannot be provided at every session or interaction with a Participant, be excessive, or based on keeping an appointment.
 - ii. Incentives should be used in the cases of milestone achievement or after successful program completion.
 - iii. For information on effective incentive types and strategies, please consult the field guide and webinar slides available here: http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org/2016/12/14/using-incentives-in-human-services-field-guide-literature-review-and-webinar/.
 - c. HHSC must approve program incentives which must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary.

J. Service Authorization and Enrollment

Grantee must have an enrollment process that includes completing the HHSC enrollment form or a Grantee enrollment form capturing all required data, which includes a Primary Caregiver's signed consent to participate, a review of eligibility criteria, and any additional surveys and assessments as required by HHSC. Grantee must complete all required fields of the enrollment form. The Grantee must ask for social security number; however, if a Participant refuses to provide their social security number, Grantee must document refusal on the form. The expectation is that Grantees will make a good faith effort to obtain social security numbers. Grantees should complete the enrollment form in its entirety and ensure that all required data is entered in PEIRS. Primary Caregivers must sign the enrollment form giving consent prior to the provision of programming. Applicant must document their enrollment process in Form G, Project Work Plan.

K. Annual Data Authorization

Grantee must complete a new data authorization form for each participating Primary Caregiver either at the beginning of each fiscal year, or at the beginning of the program year after services begin, or on each anniversary of Participant enrollment in the program, for as long the Participant receives programming.

L. Close of Program Participation

Applicants must describe the process for closure and discharge of LTYFS program participation and enrollment in <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>.

- 1. Grantee must have a closure process that includes collecting any required surveys from Participants and documenting any additional Referrals. Grantee must document closure on the discharge form and in PEIRS.
- 2. If a Participant and Index Child or Youth have not received a service in ninety (90) Calendar Days, the Grantee must complete the discharge process.
- 3. If the Participant and Index Child or Youth return within the next thirty (30) Calendar Days (120 Calendar Days since their last service), the "Undo Discharge" function should be used to reactivate the registration in PEIRS rather than reenrolling the Participant and Index Child or Youth.
- 4. For all former Participants, whose PEIRS enrollment has been closed for more than one hundred twenty (120) Calendar Days, Program Staff should review their enrollment form to ensure that information is still current. If any information is outdated, Program Staff must open a new enrollment and complete any paperwork required by PEI or the Grantee.

M. Required Record Keeping

Grantee must track all LTYFS activities provided in accordance with the Grantee's approved Form G, Project Work Plan.

- 1. Grantee must ensure that all program documentation is complete, accurate, and maintained in an organized fashion.
- 2. Grantee must maintain records in a manner that protects the Confidential Information of all members of the Participant's Family.
- 3. Grantee must maintain individual Participant Case Records that include the following:
 - a. Enrollment form;
 - b. Annual Data Authorization form;
 - c. Required surveys;
 - d. Service activity documentation, such as sign-in sheets or Case Notes;
 - e. Outgoing Service Referrals;
 - f. Discharge form; and
 - g. Other agency documentation or documentation required by Program Model (if applicable).
 - h. Grantee must keep Case Notes. Case Notes are the narrative section of the Participant Case Record where the Grantee documents program details. Case Notes support the sessions delivered and billed to HHSC. Case Notes must include, at a minimum:
 - i. Programming type;
 - ii. Date and duration of programming;
 - iii. Participants in the program;
 - iv. Briefly identify topic or concern discussed;
 - v. Program Model used, if applicable;
 - vi. Response or communication from the Participant(s);
 - vii. Effectiveness of programming session topics, direct engagement, or interventions; and
 - viii. Plans for next steps and follow-up.
- 4. Grantee must develop and maintain a tracking system to record Participants referred to the Grantee for LTYFS. Documentation must include:
 - a. Date of Referral;
 - b. Origin of the Referral;
 - c. Participant eligibility; and
 - d. Date Participant began program.
- 5. Grantee must ensure compliance with all recordkeeping requirements in this RFA.
- 6. Grantee may maintain records electronically.
- 7. Grantee must make all LTYFS records available and accessible to HHSC upon request.

N. Program Surveys

Applicants must describe plans for the administration of the following surveys in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:

1. Pre- and Post-service Survey

- a. Grantee must provide a pre-service survey to Youth. The survey may be provided to the Youth either at Intake or at the beginning of services.
- b. Grantee must provide a post-service survey to the Youth when the Youth completes the program, or on an annual basis if the Youth is enrolled in the LTYFS Program for more than a year.
- c. Grantee must make a concerted effort to have the Youth complete a postservice survey if they leave the program prior to completion.
- d. The Grantee must maintain the pre-service and post-service surveys in the Participant Case Record.
- e. Grantee must provide a summary of the results of the pre-and post-service surveys annually.

2. Program Experience Surveys

- a. Grantee will administer the Program Experience Survey (PES) at discharge.
- b. Grantee will administer the PES to the Participant, or the Primary Caregiver based on the age of the Participant at discharge. Participants ages 10 and up should complete the survey. Primary Caregiver should complete the survey for Participants 0-9 years old.
- c. Grantee must document attempts to administer the PES in the Participant Case Record.
- d. The same Participant must complete the PES at discharge.
- 3. Grantee must also participate in any required evaluation activities administered through PEI research and evaluation and any contracted partners (if applicable).

O. Collaborating with PEI Grantees within Service Delivery Area

- 1. Applicant must outline initial plan for working with other PEI Grantees within the SDA in Form G, Project Work Plan. To learn more about current PEI Grantees in your community visit: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/About_Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs.asp.
- 2. Applicant must work with PEI Grantees within the SDA and develop formal partnerships within sixty (60) Calendar Days of the Grant Agreement execution. One example is a non-binding Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU). See this resource published by the Administration for Children and Families: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fysb/mou 508.pdf.

P. Background Checks

Grantee must ensure completed background checks as directed by PEI before Program Staff can complete any of the activities below:

- 1. Have direct contact with a Participant
- 2. Access PEIRS, or
- 3. Access Participant records

Grantee must complete background checks every two years for all staff members who complete any of the activities above.

Q. Transition Plan

At the end of the Project Period, including any extensions or other grant termination or cancellation, the Grantee will work in coordination with HHSC to transition programming, data, and Participant Case Record to a new Grantee, if applicable.

2.7 REQUIRED REPORTS

The System Agency will monitor Grantee's performance, including, but not limited to, through review of financial and programmatic reports and Performance Measures under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA. Each Grantee awarded a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA must submit the following reports by the noted due dates:

A. Quarterly Reports

Grantee must submit quarterly reports to PEI to provide ongoing information regarding implementation efforts, achievements, and challenges. PEI Program Staff will provide a unique quarterly report template to Grantees to use for each reporting period. PEI requires quarterly reports for each year of the Project Period. The following table provides due dates for all quarterly reports. If the standard due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the first Business Day following the weekend or holiday.

REPORT	DUE DATE
Quarter 1 Report (September, October, November)	December 15 th
Quarter 2 Report (December, January, February)	March 15 th
Quarter 3 Report (March, April, May)	June 15 th
Quarter 4 Report (June, July, August)	September 15 th

B. Monthly Billing Requirements

- 1. PEI will provide required forms after grant award.
- 2. Grantee will submit an Invoice and State of Texas Purchase Voucher through PEIRS monthly to request reimbursement from PEI.
- 3. Grantee will submit the Invoice and Purchase Voucher through PEIRS no later than the last day of the month following that in which the expenditures occurred. If the last day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, the Invoice and Purchase Voucher are due the next Business Day.
- 4. Upon receipt of a proper and verified Invoice, and after deduction of any known previous overpayment made by HHSC, HHSC will pay Grantee from available funds for programming rendered in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.

- 5. Grantee must create and maintain reliable and accurate records to support all actions related to invoicing, payments, and adjustments for programming provided to LTYFS Participants. Records must include the following:
 - a. Signed State of Texas Purchase Vouchers;
 - b. Expenditure Reports, monthly mileage log, monthly Participant activity log, incentives log; and
 - c. Any other supporting documentation required by HHSC.

C. PEIRS Data Requirements

- 1. Grantee must enter all service data for Participants served through LTYFS into PEIRS. Data that must be entered into PEIRS includes the following:
 - a. Participant enrollment information;
 - b. Service data:
 - c. Participant discharge information; and
 - d. Survey data.
- 2. Grantee must ensure accurate data entry into PEIRS and must enter all data for a specific month into the system no later than thirty (30) Calendar Days following the close of the month in which an enrollment occurred, programming was provided, or a Participant and/or Family was discharged. For example, all data for October should be entered no later than November 30th.
- 3. Grantee must use a secure internet connection to complete PEIRS data entry and ensure that the computer equipment used for data entry meets minimum requirements established by PEI for efficient connection to PEIRS. At the time of this RFA, the minimum requirements are Internet Explorer 11 (or higher) or Google Chrome 99 (or higher).
- 4. To have access to PEIRS, Program Staff must:
 - a. Have cleared a background check; and
 - a. Annually complete HHSC's cybersecurity training, a version of which is located at the following URL:

https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/contracting/hhs-information-security-cybersecurity-training-for-contractors.pdf.

D. Compliance With Reporting Requirements

Grantee shall provide all applicable reports in the format specified by System Agency in an accurate, complete, and timely manner and shall maintain appropriate supporting backup documentation. Failure to comply with submission deadlines for required reports or other requested information may result in System Agency, in its sole discretion, placing the Grantee on financial hold without first requiring a corrective action plan in addition to pursuing any other corrective or remedial actions under the Grant Agreement.

2.8 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND MONITORING

The System Agency will look solely to Grantee for the performance of all Grantee obligations and requirements in a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA. Grantee shall not be relieved of its obligations for any nonperformance by its Subgrantees or Subcontractors, if any.

Grant Agreement(s) awarded as a result of this RFA are subject to the System Agency's performance monitoring activities throughout the duration of the grant Project Period. This evaluation may include a reassessment of Project activities and services to determine whether they continue to be effective throughout the Grant Term.

Grantees must regularly collect and maintain data that measures the performance and effectiveness of activities under a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA in the manner and within the timeframes specified in this RFA and resulting Grant Agreement, or as otherwise specified by System Agency. Grantees must submit the necessary information and documentation regarding all requirements, including reports and other Deliverables, and will be expected to report on the following measures:

- A. PEI requires Outputs and Outcomes for each Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA.
- B. Grantee reports on Outputs and Outcomes in the quarterly report detailed in **Section 2.7**, **Required Reports**.
- C. Performance Measures incorporated into all LTYFS grants include, but are not limited to, those included in Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes, below:

Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes		
Outputs/Outcomes Defined	Target Output/Outcome (or %)	
Output 1: Expected number of Index Youth served annually.	Applicant will propose the number of Index Youth served annually*	
Output 2: Expected number of Index Youth served monthly.	Applicant will propose the number of Index Youth served monthly*	
Output 3: Primary Caregiver or Index Youth who are at least age ten and older will complete the PEI Program Experience Survey at discharge.	50%	
Outcome 1: Index Child or Youth remain safe while receiving programming.	100%	
Outcome 2: 10- to 17-year-old Index Youth will not engage in delinquent behavior.	100%	

Outcome 3: Primary Caregiver or Index Youth who are at least age ten and older	80%
will report positive (agree/strongly agree)	
Outcomes in at least one domain of the	
Program Experience Survey at discharge.	

^{*} Outputs are subject to negotiation based on available funds and PEI requirements.

- D. Applicant will propose the following target Outputs and Outcomes listed above in Table 1: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes, at the time of Application submission, in Form G, Project Work Plan:
 - 1. Total number of Index Youth served annually; and
 - 2. Average number of Index Youth served monthly.
- E. PEI will negotiate these target Outputs and Outcomes with Applicant prior to award of a Grant Agreement based on available funds and PEI requirements.
- F. Grantee will report to PEI on required Outputs and Outcomes through PEIRS, along with any additional reports that may be developed, implemented, and maintained by PEI during the Grant Term.
- G. In addition to Outputs and Outcomes listed in Table 1, PEI will track the Grantee's progress toward:
 - 1. Index Children and Youth remain Safe twelve (12) months after discharge; and
 - 2. Index Children and Youth remain Safe three (3) years after discharge.

If requested by System Agency, the Grantee shall report on the progress towards completion of the Grant Project and other relevant information as determined by System Agency during the grant Project Period. To remain eligible for renewal funding, if any, the Grantee must be able to show the scope of services provided and their impact, quality, and levels of performance against approved goals, and that Grantee's activities and services effectively address and achieve the Project's stated purpose.

2.9 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Grantee must have a financial management system in place to maintain internal controls, ensure proper management of federal and State funds, maximize non-federal resources, and maintain solvency. The Grantee's accounting and internal control systems must meet the following requirements:

- A. The systems must be appropriate to the size of the organization.
- B. The accounting system must consist of source documents, a chart of accounts, journals, ledgers, and routine financial reports.
- C. The accounting system must be capable of producing expenditure reports, cost center analyses, budget formats, and automated reports as required by, and without additional support from, HHSC.

- D. Include records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for federally funded activities. These records must contain information on federal awards, authorizations, financial obligations, unobligated balances, assets, expenditures, income, and interest and be supported by source documentation.
- E. Effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets. Ensure all funds and assets are adequately safeguarded and are solely used for authorized purposes.
- F. Comparison of expenditures with Budget amounts for each grant award. Written procedures to implement the requirements of this section.
- G. The internal controls system must safeguard the Grantee's assets, produce accurate accounting data, promote efficient operations, and ensure adherence to prescribed accounting policies and procedures.
- H. Effective internal controls must involve a division of responsibility among different employees for a sequence of related functions, clear establishment of each employee's responsibilities and duties, and use of standards such as procurement policies, proofs, checks, and other security measures.
- I. Meet the minimum standards for financial management systems in the <u>Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 277.6 Standards for Financial Management Systems</u> and <u>2 CFR Statue 200.302 Financial Management</u>.
- J. The Grantee must use the accrual basis accounting method for all financial Deliverables. This includes, but is not limited to, invoices, expenditure reports, or any other financial documents or reports as requested by HHSC. This requirement does not constitute a change to the agency's financial management system.

2.9 FINAL BILLING SUBMISSION

Unless otherwise directed by the System Agency, Grantee shall submit a reimbursement or payment request in PEIRS as a final close-out invoice not later than forty-five (45) Calendar Days following the end of the term of the Grant Agreement. Reimbursement or payment requests received after the deadline may not be paid.

2.10 DATA USE AGREEMENT

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant agrees to be bound by the terms of <u>Exhibit C, Data Use Agreement (DUA)</u> or <u>Exhibit C-1, Data Use Agreement (DUA)</u> Governmental Entity, including but not limited to the terms and conditions regarding <u>Exhibit C-2</u>, <u>Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI)</u>, <u>Attachment 2 to DUA</u>, attached to this RFA.

2.11 LIMITATIONS ON GRANTS TO UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act of the 88th Legislature, Article IX, Section 4.04,

In each Grant Agreement with a unit of local government, grant funds appropriated under the General Appropriations Act will be expended subject to limitations and reporting requirements similar to those provided by:

- (1) Parts 2, 3, and 5 of Article IX of the General Appropriations Act of the 88th Legislature (except there is no requirement for increased salaries for local government employees);
- (2) Government Code, §§556.004, 556.005, and 556.006; and
- (3) Government Code, §§2113.012 and 2113.101.
- (b) In this section, "unit of local government" means:
- (1) a council of governments, a regional planning commission, or a similar regional planning agency created under Local Government Code, Chapter 391;
- (2) a local workforce development board; or
- (3) a community center as defined by Health and Safety Code, §534.001(b).

ARTICLE III. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 LEGAL AUTHORITY TO APPLY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it has legal authority to apply for the Grant Agreement that is the subject of this RFA and is eligible to receive awards. Further, Applicant certifies it will continue to maintain any required legal authority and eligibility throughout the entire duration of the Grant Term, if awarded. All requirements apply with equal force to Applicant and, if the recipient of an award, Grantee, and its Subgrantees or Subcontractors, if any.

Each Applicant may only submit one Grant Application per SDA.

3.2 APPLICATION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluations, Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. Applicant must be a nonprofit entity as described by <u>Texas Business Organization Code</u> Chapter 22 or a governmental entity.
- B. Submit a complete Application by the stated deadline.

3.3 GRANT AWARD ELIGIBILITY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that:

A. Applicant and all of its identified subsidiaries intending to participate in the Grant Agreement are eligible to perform grant-funded activities, if awarded, and are not

- subject to suspension, debarment, or a similar ineligibility determined by any State or federal entity;
- B. Applicant is in good standing under the laws of Texas and has provided HHS with any requested or required supporting documentation in connection with this certification;
- C. Applicant shall remain in good standing and eligible to conduct its business in Texas and shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Texas Secretary of State and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts;
- D. Applicant is currently in good standing with all licensing, permitting, or regulatory bodies that regulate any or all aspects of Applicant's operations; and
- E. Applicant is not delinquent in taxes owed to any taxing authority of the State of Texas as of the Effective Date of this Grant Agreement.

3.4 GRANTS FOR POLITICAL POLLING PROHIBITED

Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 4.03, none of the funds appropriated by the General Appropriations Act may be granted to or expended by any entity which performs political polling. This prohibition does not apply to a poll conducted by an academic institution as part of the institution's academic mission that is not conducted for the benefit of a particular candidate or party. By submitting a response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it is not ineligible for a Grant Agreement pursuant to this prohibition.

ARTICLE IV. PROJECT PERIOD AND GRANT TERM

4.1 PROJECT PERIOD

The Project Period is anticipated to be September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2029.

4.2 GRANT TERM

The System Agency may, at its sole discretion, extend the Grant Term for any period(s) of time through Grant Agreement extensions or renewals with funded Project Periods, provided the Grant Term, including all extensions or renewals, does not exceed five (5) years.

4.3 PROJECT CLOSEOUT

System Agency will programmatically and financially close the grant award and end the Grant Agreement when System Agency determines Grantee has completed all applicable actions and work in accordance with Grant Agreement requirements. The Grantee must submit all required financial, performance, and other reports as required in the Grant Agreement. The Project close-out date is ninety (90) Calendar Days after the Grant Agreement end date, unless otherwise noted in the original or amended Grant Agreement. Funds not obligated by Grantee by the end of the Grant Agreement term and not expended by the Project close-out date will revert to System Agency.

ARTICLE V. GRANT FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENT INFORMATION

5.1 GRANT FUNDING SOURCE AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total amount of State funding available for the LTYFS grant program is up to \$18,750,000 for the entire Project Period. It is the System Agency's intention to make multiple awards to Applicants that successfully demonstrate the ability to increase availability and accessibility of services and resources to Youth and Families in the State of Texas.

HHSC estimates the total amount of funding for the LTYFS grant is \$3,000,000 per State of Texas fiscal year. Annual awards per individual grant typically range between \$300,000 and \$600,000. HHSC estimates the value of the RFA at the annual amount multiplied by five (5) years + 25% to allow for additional funding during the Project Period.

Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for the amount of grant funding they can responsibly expend during the Project Period to avoid lapsed funding at the end of the Grant Term. Successful Applications may not be funded to the full extent of Applicant's requested Budgets in order to ensure grant funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and programs.

Reimbursement will only be made for actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Project Period. No spending or costs incurred prior to the Effective Date of the award will be eligible for reimbursement.

HHSC funds LTYFS with State general revenue. HHSC reserves the right to fund this RFA with other sources during the Project Period.

HHSC reserves the right to increase, decrease, or cancel funding for Grantees at any time during the Project Period. Any change in the number of awards or funding amounts is at HHSC's sole discretion.

5.2 NO GUARANTEE OF REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

There is no guarantee of total reimbursements to be paid to any Grantee under any Grant Agreement, if any, resulting from this RFA. Grantees should not expect to receive additional or continued funding under future RFA opportunities and should maintain sustainability plans in case of discontinued grant funding. Any additional funding or future funding may require submission of a new Application through a subsequent RFA.

Receipt of an Application in response to this RFA does not constitute an obligation or expectation of any award of a Grant Agreement or funding of a grant award at any level under this RFA.

5.3 GRANT FUNDING PROHIBITIONS

Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- 1. Any use of grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-grant sources;
- 2. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- 3. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. § 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
- 4. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation for, an elected or appointed government official;
- 5. Vehicles for general agency use; to be allowable, vehicles must have a specific use related to Project objectives or activities;
- 6. Entertainment, amusement, or social activities and any associated costs including, but not limited to, admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity, or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- 7. Costs of promotional items and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs unless such costs are incurred for components of the LTYFS Program, preapproved by HHSC, and directly related to the program's purpose;
- 8. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or where such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- 9. Membership dues for individuals in any civic or community organizations, except when preapproved by HHSC and required for program implementation;
- 10. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the Grant Project;
- 11. Any activities related to fundraising;
- 12. Any allocation of grant funds to individuals that do not meet the requirements outlined in **Section 2.3**, **Eligible Population**;
- 13. Equipment and other capital expenditures such as capital improvements, property losses and expenses, real estate purchases, mortgage payments, remodeling, the acquisition or construction of facilities, or other items that are unallowable pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.439; unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- 14. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law; and
- 15. Other unallowable costs as listed under TxGMS, Appendix 7, Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart and/or 2 CFR 200, Subpart E Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, where applicable.

5.4 COST SHARING OR MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Although HHSC does not require Match funding for this grant, requests for funding may not be fully funded to ensure that funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and programs. HHSC encourages Applicants to outline Match in **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Rates Template**.

Applicant may provide matching funds through local philanthropic, private, or city or county funds or through pooled funds from partner organizations committed specifically to the LTYFS grant. Applicant may not use State or federal funds as Match. Applicant should calculate the value of donated materials, professional services, and volunteer time in accordance with TxGMS.

Match is defined as the non-federal or non-State share of costs that the Grantee is required to contribute to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Project. Match must be treated consistently with grant funds and used only for allowable and allocable purposes.

All cost sharing or matching funds and contributions must meet all the following criteria:

- 1. Are verifiable from the Grantee's records;
- 2. Are not included as contributions for any other State or federal award;
- 3. Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of Grant Project objectives;
- 4. Are allowable under the Grant Agreement;
- 5. Are not paid by the State or federal government; and
- 6. Are provided for in the approved Grant Project Budget.

Donations: The value of donated services may be used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements. If a third party donates supplies, the contribution will be valued at the market value of the supplies at the time of donation. If a third party donates the use of Equipment or space in a building, but retains title, the contribution will be valued at the fair rental rate of the Equipment or space. If a third party donates Equipment, building, or land, and title passes to Grantee, the treatment of the donated property will be determined based on TxGMS, Cost Sharing or Matching Section.

Refer to Title 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and TxGMS issued by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts for additional Match information and requirements.

5.5 PAYMENT METHOD

Grant Agreement(s) awarded under this RFA will be funded on a Fee-For-Service basis for reasonable, allowable, and allocable Grant Project costs. Under the Fee-For-Service payment method, Grantee is required to finance operations and will only be reimbursed for services delivered on a monthly basis and supported by adequate documentation. No additional payments will be rendered unless an advanced payment is approved.

- A. HHSC will pay grants awarded from this RFA primarily on a Fee-For-Service basis. Applicants will use **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates** to develop a Budget that incorporates cost factors that will contribute to the development of no more than four (4) proposed unit rates. Proposed unit rates must cover all Direct Costs and Indirect Costs for the grant that are allowable, reasonable, and necessary.
- B. HHSC will pay a portion of this grant with a cost reimbursement component for ancillary expenses such as travel, Basic Needs support, and disaster response. For reimbursed expenses, Grantees must incur the cost before HHSC will reimburse Grantees for actual expenses. HHSC will only reimburse for those actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Project Period. HHSC will determine the cost reimbursement budget for ancillary expenses during negotiations with Applicants selected for award.
- C. HHSC and DFPS will negotiate final unit rates with the selected Applicants. For additional information about unit rates and projected costs, see **Exhibit E, Cost Considerations**.

ARTICLE VI. APPLICATION FORMS AND EXHIBITS FOR SUBMISSION

Note: Applicants must refer to **Article XIII**, **Submission Checklist**, for the complete checklist of documents that must submitted with an Application under this RFA.

6.1 NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

Using the specific Forms and Attachments listed below, Applicants shall provide an executive summary, a program narrative, and a Project Work Plan which describes their proposed activities, processes, and methodologies to satisfy all objectives described in **Article II, Scope of Grant Project**, including:

- a. Form E, Executive Summary
- b. Form F, Program Narrative
 - i. Attachment F-1, Monitoring Reports (if applicable) (Applicant provides)
- c. Form G, Project Work Plan
 - i. Attachment G-1, Logic Model (Applicant provides)
 - ii. Attachment G-2, Agency Organization Chart (Applicant provides)
 - iii. Attachment G-3, Subawardee Organization Chart (if applicable) (Applicant provides)
 - iv. Form G-1, Program Model Review Tool (template provided)

For the attachments listed above that state "(Applicant Provides)," a template is not attached to this RFA nor being provided by HHSC. The Applicant is responsible for labeling the requested information with the attachment title.

6.1.1 Executive Summary

Applicants must use <u>Form E, Executive Summary</u>, to provide a high-level overview with a broad understanding of the Applicant's approach to meeting the RFA's requirements. The summary must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives for this grant opportunity. The page limit is one page.

6.1.2 Program Narrative

Applicants must use <u>Form F, Program Narrative</u>, to describe their background and experience. The Program Narrative must not exceed 15 pages (excluding attachments). Applicant should attach monitoring reports (if applicable) to <u>Form F, Program Narrative</u>, and label as <u>Attachment F-1</u>, <u>Monitoring Reports</u>.

6.1.3 Project Work Plan

Applicants must use <u>Form G, Project Work Plan</u>, to identify all proposed tasks to be performed, including all Project activities, during the grant Project Period. Applicants must complete and submit all required attachments.

6.2 REQUESTED BUDGET

Attached **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template**, of this RFA is the template for submitting the requested Budget. Applicants must develop the requested Budget to support their proposed Project and in alignment with the requirements described in this RFA.

Applicants must ensure that Project costs outlined in the requested Budget are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and developed in accordance with applicable State and federal grant requirements. Reasonable costs are those that, in nature and amount, do not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. A cost is allocable to a particular cost objective if the cost is chargeable or assignable to such cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received. See 2 CFR § 200.403 or TxGMS Cost Principles, Basic Considerations (pgs. 32-33), for additional information related to factors affecting allowability of costs.

HHSC will pay Grant Agreements awarded from this RFA primarily on a Fee-For-Service basis. Applicants will use **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template** to develop a budget that incorporates cost factors that will contribute to the development of no more than four (4) proposed unit rates. Proposed unit rates must cover all Direct Costs and Indirect Costs for the grant that are allowable, reasonable, and necessary.

HHSC will pay a portion of this grant with a cost reimbursement component for ancillary expenses such as travel, Basic Needs support, and disaster response. For reimbursed expenses, Grantees must incur the cost before HHSC will reimburse Grantees for actual expenses. HHSC will only reimburse for those actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Project Period. HHSC or DFPS will determine the cost reimbursement budget for ancillary expenses during negotiations for Applicants selected for award.

HHSC and DFPS will negotiate final unit rates with the selected Applicants. For additional information about unit rates and projected costs, see **Exhibit E**, **Cost Considerations**.

Applicants must utilize the Budget template provided, **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template**, and identify all Budget line items and matching costs. Budget categories must be broken out into specific Budget line items that allow the System Agency to determine if proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and necessary for the successful performance of the Project. Applicants must enter all costs in the Budget tables and explain why the cost is necessary and how the cost was established. Matching funds must also be identified in the requested Budget.

If selected for a grant award under this RFA, only System Agency-approved Budget items in the requested Budget may be considered eligible for reimbursement.

Submission of Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template, is mandatory. Applicants that fail to submit a requested Budget as set forth in this RFA with their Application will be disqualified.

6.3 INDIRECT COSTS

Applicants must have an approved Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) or request the de minimis rate to recover Indirect Costs. All Applicants are required to complete and submit <u>Form D</u>, <u>Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire</u>, with required supporting documentation. The questionnaire initiates the acknowledgment or approval of an ICR for use with System Agency cost-reimbursable Grant Agreements. Entities declining the use of Indirect Cost cannot recover Indirect Costs on any System Agency award or use unrecovered Indirect Costs as Match.

HHS typically accepts the following approved ICRs:

- 1. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- 2. State of Texas Approved Indirect Cost Rate

The System Agency, at its discretion, may request additional information to support any approved ICR agreement.

If the Applicant does not have an approved ICR agreement, the Applicant may be eligible for the ten percent (10%) de minimis rate or may request to negotiate an ICR with HHS.

For Applicants requesting to negotiate an ICR with HHS, the ICR Proposal Package will be provided by the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group to successful Grantees. The ICR Proposal Package must be completed and returned to the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group no later than three (3) months post-award.

The HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group will contact applicable Grantees after Grant Agreement execution to initiate and complete the ICR process. Grantees should respond within thirty (30) Business Days or the request will be cancelled, and Indirect Costs may be disallowed.

Once HHS acknowledges an existing rate or approves an ICR, the Grantee will receive one of the three Indirect Cost approval letters: ICR Acknowledgement Letter, ICR Acknowledgement Letter – Ten Percent De Minimis, or the ICR Agreement Letter.

If an Indirect Cost Rate Letter is required but it is not issued at the time of Grant Agreement execution, the Grant Agreement will be amended to include the Indirect Cost Rate Letter after the ICR Letter is issued.

Approval or acceptance of an ICR will not result in an increase in the amount awarded or affect the agreed-upon service or performance levels throughout the life of the award.

6.4 ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICANT INFORMATION

Using <u>Forms A</u> through $\underline{\mathbf{D}}$ attached to this RFA, Applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability as an organization to manage and coordinate the types of activities described in this RFA.

1. Litigation and Contract History

Applicant must include in its Application a complete disclosure of any alleged or significant contractual or grant failures.

In addition, Applicant must disclose any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending over the last five (5) years that involves Applicant or in which Applicant has been judged guilty or liable. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant. See **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations**. Applicant certifies it does not have any existing claims against or unresolved audit exceptions with the State of Texas or any agency of the State of Texas.

Application may be rejected based upon Applicant's prior history with the State of Texas or with any other party that demonstrates, without limitation, unsatisfactory performance, adversarial or contentious demeanor, or significant failure(s) to meet contractual or grant obligations.

2. Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire

Applicant must complete <u>Form C, Financial Management and Administrative</u> <u>Questionnaire</u>, and submit with its Application.

ARTICLE VII. RFA ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION AND INQUIRIES

7.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	January 10, 2024 January 16, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time January 18, 2024, by 2:00 p.m. Central Time February 1, 2024. March 1, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time	
Funding Announcement Posting Date Posted to HHS Grants RFA and Texas eGrants websites		
Applicant Webinar Conference Attendance is Optional		
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification		
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted		
Deadline for Submission of Applications NOTE: Applications must be <u>RECEIVED</u> by HHSC by this deadline if not changed by subsequent Addenda to be considered eligible.		
Anticipated Notice of Award	August 1, 2024	
Anticipated Project Start Date	September 1, 2024	

Applicants must ensure their Applications are received by HHSC in accordance with the Deadline for Submission of Applications (date and time) indicated in this Schedule of Events or as changed by subsequent Addenda posted to the HHS Grants RFA website.

All dates are tentative and HHSC reserves the right to change these dates at any time. At the sole discretion of HHSC, events listed in the Schedule of Events are subject to scheduling changes and cancellation. Scheduling changes or cancellation determinations made prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications will be published by posting an Addendum to the HHS Grants RFA website. After the Deadline for Submission of Applications, if there are delays that significantly impact the anticipated award date, HHSC, at its sole discretion, may post updates regarding the anticipated award date to the Procurement Forecast on the HHS Procurement Opportunities website. Each Applicant is responsible for checking the HHS Grants RFA website and Procurement Forecast for updates.

7.2 SOLE POINT OF CONTACT

All requests, questions, or other communication about this RFA shall be made by email **only** to the Grant Specialist designated as HHSC's Sole Point of Contact listed below:

Name: Amy Pearson

Title: Grant Specialist, HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services

Email: Amy.Pearson@hhs.texas.gov

Applicants shall not use this email address for submission of an Application. Follow the instructions for submission as outlined in Article VIII, Application Organization and Submission Requirements.

However, if expressly directed in writing by the Sole Point of Contact, Applicant may communicate with another designated HHS representative, e.g., during grant negotiations as part of the normal grant review process, if any.

Prohibited Communications: Applicants and their representatives shall not contact other HHS personnel regarding this RFA.

This restriction (on only communicating in writing by email with the sole point of contact identified above) does not preclude discussions between Applicant and agency personnel for the purposes of conducting business unrelated to this RFA.

Failure of an Applicant or its representatives to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of the Application.

7.3 RFA QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

Written questions and requests for clarification of this RFA are permitted if submitted by email to the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification established in **Section 7.1**, **Schedule of Events**, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website.

Applicants' names will be removed from questions in any responses released. All questions and requests for clarification must include the following information. Submissions that do not include this information may not be accepted:

- 1. RFA number;
- 2. Section or paragraph number from this Solicitation;
- 3. Page number of this Solicitation;
- 4. Exhibit or other attachment and section or paragraph number from the exhibit or other attachment;
- 5. Page number of the exhibit;
- 6. Language, topic, section heading being questioned; and
- 7. Question.

The following contact information must be included in the email submitted with questions or requests for clarification:

- 1. Name of individual submitting question or request for clarification;
- 2. Organization name;
- 3. Phone number; and
- 4. Email address.

Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification set forth in Section 7.1, Schedule of Events, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website.

HHSC may review and, at its sole discretion, may respond to questions or other written requests received after the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification.

7.4 AMBIGUITY, CONFLICT, DISCREPANCY, CLARIFICATIONS

Applicants must notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error in the RFA in the manner and by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification. Each Applicant submits its Application at its own risk.

If Applicant fails to properly and timely notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error in the RFA, Applicant, whether awarded a Grant Agreement or not:

- 1. Shall have waived any claim of error or ambiguity in the RFA and any resulting Grant Agreement;
- 2. Shall not contest the interpretation by HHSC of such provision(s); and
- 3. Shall not be entitled to additional reimbursement, relief, or time by reason of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error or its later correction.

7.5 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS OR REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATIONS

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification will be consolidated, and HHSC will post responses in one or more Addenda on the HHS Grants RFA website. Responses will not be provided individually to requestors.

HHSC reserves the right to amend answers previously posted at any time prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications. Amended answers will be posted on the <u>HHS</u> <u>Grants RFA</u> website in a separate, new Addendum or Addenda. It is Applicant's responsibility to check the <u>HHS Grants RFA</u> website or contact the Sole Point of Contact for a copy of the Addendum with the amended answers.

7.6 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

HHSC reserves the right to change, amend, modify, or cancel this RFA. All changes, amendments and modifications or cancellation will be posted by Addendum on the HHS Grants RFA website.

It is the responsibility of each Applicant to periodically check the HHS Grants RFA website for any additional information regarding this RFA. Failure to check the posting website will in no way release any Applicant or awarded Grantee from the requirements of posted Addenda or additional information. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable in any regard for the failure of any individual or entity to receive notification of any posting to the websites or for the failure of any Applicant or awarded Grantee to stay informed of all postings to these websites. If the Applicant fails to monitor these websites for any changes or modifications to this RFA, such failure will not relieve the Applicant of its obligation to fulfill the requirements as posted.

7.7 **EXCEPTIONS**

Applicants are highly encouraged, in lieu of including exceptions in their Applications, to address all issues that might be advanced by way of exception by submitting <u>Exhibit H</u>, <u>Exceptions</u>, or via questions or requests for clarification pursuant to <u>Section 7.3</u>, <u>RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification</u>.

No exception, nor any other term, condition, or provision in an Application that differs, varies from, or contradicts this RFA, will be considered to be part of any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA unless expressly made a part of the Grant Agreement in writing by the System Agency.

7.8 APPLICANT WEBINAR CONFERENCE

HHSC and DFPS will conduct an Applicant Webinar Conference on the date and time set out in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events** to review the key elements of this RFA. Attendance is optional and not required; however, it is strongly encouraged.

People with disabilities who wish to attend the meeting and require auxiliary aids or services should contact the Sole Point of Contact identified in **Section 7.2**, **Sole Point of Contact**, at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting in order to have reasonable accommodations made by HHSC.

The Applicant Webinar Conference may be held by webinar or conference call, or both. Attendees are required to sign a conference attendance log and those joining via conference call are required to send an email to the Sole Point of Contact (see Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact) advising of participation in the conference. Whether signing the conference attendance log in person or sending email notification, each attendee must provide their name, attendee's company name, and attendee's email address.

WEBINAR INFORMATION:

The conference will be held through GoToWebinar, which may be accessed at: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7693670321771722077

Webinar Instructions:

- 1. Enter Webinar ID: 353-376-342
- 2. Enter Attendee's business email
- 3. To register, the participants must have the following information ready:
 - a. First and last name of each attendee/registrant;
 - b. Email address for the attendee/registrant;
 - c. Applicant's legal name; and
 - d. Job title of attendee/registrant.

ARTICLE VIII. APPLICATION ORGANIZATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

8.1 APPLICATION RECEIPT

Applications must be received by HHSC by the Deadline for Submission of Applications specified in **Section 7.1**, **Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. HHSC will date and time stamp all Applications upon receipt. Applications received after the Deadline for Submission of Applications may be ruled ineligible. Applicants should allow for adequate time for submission before the posted Deadline for Submission of Applications.

No HHS agency will be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHSC. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure its Application is received by HHSC before the Deadline for Submission of Applications. No HHS agency will be responsible for any technical issues that result in late delivery, non-receipt of an Application, inappropriately identified documents, or other submission issue that may lead to disqualification.

Note: All Applications become the property of HHSC after submission and receipt and will not be returned to Applicant.

Applicants understand and acknowledge that issuance of this RFA or retention of Applications received in response to this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment to award Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

8.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

By submitting an Application in response to this solicitation, Applicant represents and warrants that the individual submitting the Application and any related documents on behalf of the Applicant is authorized to do so and to bind the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of an Application.

8.3 REQUIRED SUBMISSION METHOD

Applicants must submit their completed Applications by the Deadline for Submission of Applications provided in the **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, using one of the approved methods identified below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g., facsimile, email) will not be considered and will be disqualified.

- 1. **Submission Option #1 HHS Online Bid Room:** Applicants shall upload the following documents to the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit F, HHS Online Bid Room. File Size Limitation:** Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.
 - a. One (1) copy marked as "Original Application" that contains the Applicant's entire Application in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file.
 - b. One (1) copy of the completed **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template**, in its original Excel format.
 - c. One (1) copy of the complete Application marked as "Public Information Act Copy," if applicable, in accordance with **Section 12.1**, **Texas Public Information Act**, in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file.
- 2. Submission Option #2 Sealed Package with USB Drives: Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives:
 - a. One (1) USB drive with the complete Application file marked as "Original Application" in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed Application package and mark the USB and envelope with "Original Application." USB drive must include the completed **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template**, in its original Excel format.
 - b. One (1) USB drive with a copy of the complete Application file marked as "Public Information Act Copy," if applicable and in accordance with **Section 12.1**, **Texas**

Public Information Act. The copy must be in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed package and mark the USB and envelope with "Public Information Act Copy" or "PIA Copy."

Applicant must deliver Applications submitted via USB by one of the methods below.

Overnight/Express/Priority Mail	Hand Delivery
Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Tower Building, Room 108 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756	Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Procurement & Contracting Services Building 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756

Sealed packages must be clearly labeled with the following:

RFA No.:	HHS0013956	
RFA TITLE	Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS) Program	
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS	March 1, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time	
SOLE POINT OF CONTACT'S NAME:	Amy Pearson	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	Applicant's legal name	

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring the USB drives are submitted in sealed packaging that is sufficient to prevent damage to contents and delivered by overnight or express mail, or hand delivery to the addresses above. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable for any damage.

8.4 COSTS INCURRED FOR APPLICATION

All costs and expenses incurred in preparing and submitting an Application in response to this RFA and participating in the RFA selection process are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant.

8.5 APPLICATION COMPOSITION

All Applications must:

- 1. Be Responsive to all RFA requirements;
- 2. Be clearly legible;

- 3. Be presented using font type Verdana, Arial, or Times New Roman, font size 12 pt., with one-inch margins and 1.5-line spacing; the sole 12-point font size exception is no less than size 10 pt. for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- 4. Include page numbering for each section of the Application; and
- 5. Include signature of Applicant's authorized representative on all exhibits and forms requiring a signature. Copies of the Application documents should be made after signature.

8.6 APPLICATION ORGANIZATION

The complete Application file .pdf must:

- 1. Be organized in the order outlined in **Article XIII**, **Submission Checklist**, and include all required sections (e.g., "Administrative Information," "Narrative Proposal," and "Exhibits to be Submitted with Application").
 - a. Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template, is to be submitted in its original Excel format.
 - b. Each Application section must have a cover page with the Applicant's legal name, RFA number, and Name of Grant identified.
- 2. Include all required documentation, exhibits, and forms completed and signed, as applicable. Copies of forms are acceptable, but all copies must be identical to the original. All exhibits must be submitted and obtained directly from the posted RFA package; previous versions and copies are not allowed or acceptable.

8.7 APPLICATION WITHDRAWALS OR MODIFICATIONS

Prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, an Applicant may:

- 1. Withdraw its Application by submitting a written request to the Sole Point of Contact; or
- 2. Modify its Application by submitting an entirely new submission, complete in all respects, using one of the approved methods of submission set forth in this RFA. The modification must be received by HHSC by the Deadline for Submission of Applications set forth in **Section 7.1**, **Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda.

No withdrawal or modification request received after the Deadline for Submission of Applications, set forth in **Section 7.1**, **Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be considered. Additionally, in the event of multiple Applications received, the most timely received and/or modified Application will replace the Applicant's original and all prior submission(s) in its entirety and the original submission(s) will not be considered.

ARTICLE IX. APPLICATION SCREENING AND EVALUATION

9.1 OVERVIEW

A three-step selection process will be used:

- 1. Application screening to determine whether the Applicant meets the minimum requirements of this RFA;
- 2. Evaluation based upon specific criteria; and
- 3. Final selection based upon State priorities and other relevant factors, as outlined in **Section 10.1, Final Selection**.

9.2 Initial Compliance Screening of Applications

All Applications received by the Deadline for Submission of Applications as outlined in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be screened by HHSC to determine which Applications meet all the minimum requirements of this RFA and are deemed Responsive and qualified for further consideration. See **Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements**.

At the sole discretion of HHSC, in coordination with DFPS, Applications with errors, omissions, or compliance issues may be considered Nonresponsive and may not be considered. The remaining Applications will continue to the evaluation stage and will be considered in the manner and form as which they are received. HHSC reserves the right to waive minor informalities in an Application. A "minor informality" is an omission or error that, in the determination of HHSC if waived or modified, would not give an Applicant an unfair advantage over other Applicants or result in a material change in the Application or RFA requirements. **Note:** Any disqualifying factor set forth in this RFA does not constitute an informality (e.g., **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations**, or **Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template**).

HHSC and DFPS may give an Applicant the opportunity to submit missing information or make corrections at any point after receipt of Application. The missing information or corrections must be submitted to the Sole Point of Contact email address in Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact, by the deadline set by HHSC. Failure to respond by the deadline may result in the rejection of the Application and the Applicant not being considered for award.

9.3 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION FOR APPLICATIONS

HHSC and DFPS reserve the right to ask questions or request clarification or revised documents for a submitted Application from any Applicant at any time prior to award. System Agency reserves the right to select qualified Applications received in response to this RFA without discussion of the Applications with Applicants.

9.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the following scoring criteria using **Exhibit G, LTYFS Evaluation Criteria**.

Scoring Criteria: Qualified Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

- 1. Applicant's Background and Experience (35%)
- 2. Program Delivery (45%)
- 3. Reasonable Project Cost (20%)

9.5 PAST PERFORMANCE

System Agency reserves the right to request additional information and conduct investigations as necessary to evaluate any Application. By submitting an Application, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing information about the Applicant at the request of System Agency.

System Agency may examine Applicant's past performance which may include, but is not limited to, information about Applicant provided by any governmental entity, whether an agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas, another state, or the federal government.

System Agency, at its sole discretion, may also initiate investigations or examinations of Applicant performance based upon media reports. Any negative findings, as determined by System Agency in its sole discretion, may result in System Agency removing the Applicant from further consideration for award.

Past performance information regarding Applicants may include, but is not limited to:

- 1. Notices of termination;
- 2. Cure notices;
- 3. Assessments of liquidated damages;
- 4. Litigation;
- 5. Audit reports; and
- 6. Non-renewals of grants or contracts based on Applicant's unsatisfactory performance.

Applicants also may be rejected as a result of unsatisfactory past performance under any grant(s) or contract(s) as reflected in vendor performance reports, reference checks, or other sources. An Applicant's past performance may be considered in the initial screening process and prior to making an award determination.

Reasons for which an Applicant may be denied a Grant Agreement at any point after Application submission include, but are not limited to:

- 1. If applicable, Applicant has an unfavorable report or grade on the CPA Vendor Performance Tracking System (VPTS). VPTS may be accessed at: https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking/, or
- 2. Applicant is currently under a corrective action plan through HHSC, DFPS, or DSHS, or
- 3. Applicant has had repeated, negative vendor performance reports for the same reason, or
- 4. Applicant has a record of repeated unresponsiveness to vendor performance issues, or
- 5. Applicant has contracts or purchase orders that have been cancelled in the previous 12 months for non-performance or substandard performance, or

Any other performance issue that demonstrates that awarding a Grant Agreement to Applicant would not be in the best interest of the State.

9.6 COMPLIANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATE CONTRACTS

Prior to award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA, and in addition to the initial screening of Applications, all required verification checks will be conducted.

The information (e.g., legal name and, if applicable, assumed name (d/b/a), tax identification number, Unique Entity Identifier ("UEI," a unique identifier created via SAM.gov, which replaces the previously used DUNS)) provided by Applicant will be used to conduct these checks. At System Agency's sole discretion, Applicants found to be barred, prohibited, or otherwise excluded from award of a Grant Agreement may be disqualified from further consideration under this solicitation, pending satisfactory resolution of all compliance issues.

Checks include:

1. State of Texas Debarment and Warrant Hold

Applicant must not be debarred from doing business with the State of Texas (https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking/debarred-vendors.php) or have an active warrant or payee hold placed by the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA).

2. U.S. System of Award Management (SAM) Exclusions List

Applicant must not be excluded from contract participation at the federal level. This verification is conducted through SAM, the official website of the U.S. Government, which may be accessed at: https://sam.gov/content/home.

3. Divestment Statute Lists

Applicant must not be listed on the Divestment Statute Lists provided by CPA, which may be accessed at:

https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/publications/divestment.php

a. Companies that boycott Israel;

RFA No. HHS0013956 Page 56 of 65

- b. Companies with Ties to Sudan;
- c. Companies with Ties to Iran;
- d. Foreign Terrorist Organizations; and
- e. Companies with Ties to Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

4. HHS Office of Inspector General

Applicant must not be listed on the HHS Office of Inspector General Texas Exclusions List for people or businesses excluded from participating as a provider: https://oig.hhsc.state.tx.us/oigportal2/Exclusions.

5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Applicant must not be listed on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE), excluded from participation as a provider, unless a valid waiver is currently in effect: https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/.

Applicant must not be listed on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE), excluded from participation as a provider, unless a valid waiver is currently in effect: https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/.

Additionally, if a subrecipient under a federal award, the Grantee shall comply with requirements regarding registration with the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM). This requirement includes maintaining an active SAM registration and the accuracy of the information in SAM. The Grantee shall review and update information at least annually after initial SAM registration and more frequently as required by 2 CFR Part 25.

For Grantees that may make procurements using grant funds awarded under the Grant Agreement, Grantee must check SAM Exclusions that contain the names of ineligible, debarred, and/or suspended parties. Grantee certifies through acceptance of a Grant Agreement it will not conduct business with any entity that is an excluded entity under SAM.

HHSC reserves the right to conduct additional checks to determine eligibility to receive a Grant Agreement.

ARTICLE X. AWARD OF GRANT AGREEMENT PROCESS

10.1 Final Selection

After initial screening for eligibility and Application completeness, and initial evaluation against the criteria listed in **Section 9.4, Evaluation Criteria**, the System Agency may apply other considerations such as program policy or other selection factors that are essential to the process of selecting Applications that individually or collectively achieve program objectives. In applying these factors, the System Agency may consult with internal and external subject matter experts.

The System Agency will make final funding decisions based on Applicant eligibility, evaluation rankings, geographic distribution across the State, State priorities, reasonableness, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.

All funding recommendations will be considered for approval by the HHSC Program Deputy Executive Commissioner or their designee.

10.2 **NEGOTIATIONS**

After selecting Applicants for award, HHSC or DFPS may engage in negotiations with selected Applicants. As determined by HHSC or DFPS, the negotiation phase may involve direct contact between the selected Applicant and HHSC or DFPS representatives by virtual meeting, by phone, and/or by email. Negotiations should not be interpreted as a preliminary intent to award funding unless explicitly stated in writing by HHSC or DFPS and is considered a step to finalize the Application to a state of approval and discuss proposed grant activities. During negotiations, selected Applicants may expect:

- 1. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Application and requested Budget; and
- 2. Requests from HHSC or DFPS for revised documents, clarification, or additional detail regarding the Applicant's submitted Application. These clarifications and additional details, as required, must be submitted in writing by Applicant as finalized during the negotiation.

10.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTED PARTIES

Subject to certain specified exceptions, Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code, Disclosure of Interested Parties, applies to a Grant Agreement of a State Agency that has a value of \$1 million or more; requires an action or vote by the governing body of the entity or agency before the Grant Agreement may be signed; or is for services that would require a person to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 of the Texas Government Code.

One of the requirements of Section 2252.908 is that a business entity (defined as "any entity recognized by law through which business is conducted, including a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation") must submit a Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, to the System Agency at the time the business entity submits the signed Grant Agreement.

Applicant represents and warrants that, if selected for award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA, Applicant will submit to the System Agency a completed, certified, and signed Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, at the time the potential Grantee submits the signed Grant Agreement.

The Form 1295 involves an electronic process through the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). The online process for completing the Form 1295 may be found on the TEC public website at: https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/whatsnew/elf info form1295.htm.

Additional instructions and information to be used to process the Form 1295 will be provided by the System Agency to the potential Grantee(s). Grantee may contact the Sole Point of Contact or designated contract manager for information needed to complete Form 1295.

If the potential Grantee does not submit a completed, certified, and signed TEC Form 1295 to the System Agency with the signed Grant Agreement, the System Agency is prohibited by law from executing a Grant Agreement, even if the potential Grantee is otherwise eligible for award. The System Agency, as determined in its sole discretion, may award the Grant Agreement to the next qualified Applicant, who will then be subject to this procedure.

10.4 EXECUTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT AGREEMENT(S)

The System Agency intends to award three (3) to six (6) Grant Agreements as a result of this RFA. However, not all Applicants who are deemed eligible to receive funds are assured of receiving a Grant Agreement.

At any time and at its sole discretion, System Agency reserves the right to cancel this RFA, make partial award, or decline to award any Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

The final funding amount and the provisions of the grant will be determined at the sole discretion of the System Agency.

HHSC may announce tentative funding awards through an "Intent to Award Letter" once the HHSC Program Deputy Executive Commissioner and relevant HHSC approval authorities have given approval to initiate and/or execute grants. Receipt of an "Intent to Award Letter" does not authorize the recipient to incur expenditures or begin Project activities, nor does it guarantee current or future funding.

Upon execution of a Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA, HHSC will post a notification of all grants awarded to the HHS Grants RFA website.

ARTICLE XI. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

11.1 GRANT APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

In an effort to maximize State resources and reduce duplication of effort, the System Agency, at its discretion, may require the Applicant to disclose information regarding the application for or award of State, federal, and/or local grant funding to the Applicant or subgrantee or subcontractor (i.e., organization who will participate, in part, in the operation of the Project) within the past two years.

11.2 TEXAS HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUBS)

In procuring goods and services using funding awarded under this RFA, Grantee must use HUBs or other designated businesses as required by law or the terms of the State or federal grant under which this RFA has been issued. See, e.g., 2 CFR § 200.321. If there are no such requirements, System Agency encourages Applicant to use HUBs to provide goods and services.

For information regarding the Texas HUB program, refer to CPA's website: https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/vendor/hub/.

ARTICLE XII. APPLICATION CONFIDENTIAL OR PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

12.1 TEXAS PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT – APPLICATION DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Applications and resulting Grant Agreements are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (PIA), Texas Government Code Chapter 552, and may be disclosed to the public upon request. Other legal authority also requires System Agency to post grants and Applications on its public website and to provide such information to the Legislative Budget Board for posting on its public website.

Under the PIA, certain information is protected from public release. If Applicant asserts that information provided in its Application is exempt from disclosure under the PIA, Applicant must:

1. Mark Original Application:

- a. Mark the Original Application, at the top of the front page, with the words "CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION" in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font); and
- b. Identify, adjacent to each portion of the Application that Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure, the claimed exemption from disclosure (NOTE: no redactions are to be made in the Original Application);

RFA No. HHS0013956 Page 60 of 65

- Certify in Original Application HHS Solicitation Affirmations: Certify, in the designated section of the <u>Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations</u>, Applicant's Confidential Information assertion and the filing of its Public Information Act Copy; and
- 3. **Submit Public Information Act Copy of Application:** Submit a separate "Public Information Act Copy" of the Original Application (in addition to the original and all copies otherwise required under the provisions of this RFA). The Public Information Act Copy must meet the following requirements:
 - a. The copy must be clearly marked as "Public Information Act Copy" on the front page in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font);
 - b. Each portion Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure must be redacted (blacked out); and
 - c. Applicant must identify, adjacent to each redaction, the claimed exemption from disclosure. Each identification provided as required in Subsection (3) of this section must be identical to those set forth in the Original Application as required in Subsection 1(b), above. The only difference in required markings and information between the Original Application and the "Public Information Act Copy" of the Application will be redactions which can only be included in the "Public Information Act Copy." There must be no redactions in the Original Application.

By submitting an Application under this RFA, Applicant agrees that, if Applicant does not mark the Original Application, provide the required certification in Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, and submit the Public Information Act Copy, the Application will be considered to be public information that may be released to the public in any manner including, but not limited to, in accordance with the Public Information Act, posted on the System Agency's public website, and posted on the Legislative Budget Board's public website.

If any or all Applicants submit partial, but not complete, information suggesting inclusion of Confidential Information and failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this section, the System Agency, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to (1) disqualify all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section, or (2) to offer all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section additional time to comply.

No Applicant should submit a Public Information Act Copy indicating that the entire Application is exempt from disclosure. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire Application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or privileged information is not acceptable, and may make the entire Application subject to release under the PIA.

Applications should not be marked or asserted as copyrighted material. If Applicant asserts a copyright to any portion of its Application, by submitting an Application, Applicant agrees to reproduction and posting on public websites by the State of Texas, including the System Agency and all other State Agencies, without cost or liability.

The System Agency will strictly adhere to the requirements of the PIA regarding the disclosure of public information. As a result, by participating in this RFA, Applicant acknowledges that all information, documentation, and other materials submitted in its Application may be subject to public disclosure under the PIA. The System Agency does not have authority to agree that any information submitted will not be subject to disclosure. Disclosure is governed by the PIA and by rulings of the Office of the Texas Attorney General. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel concerning disclosure issues resulting from this process and to take precautions to safeguard trade secrets and proprietary or otherwise Confidential Information. The System Agency assumes no obligation or responsibility relating to the disclosure or nondisclosure of information submitted by Applicants.

For more information concerning the types of information that may be withheld under the PIA or questions about the PIA, please refer to the Public Information Act Handbook published by the Office of the Texas Attorney General or contact the attorney general's Open Government Hotline at (512) 478-OPEN (6736) or toll-free at (877) 673-6839 (877-OPEN TEX). To access the Public Information Act Handbook, please visit the attorney general's website at the following URL http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov.

12.2 APPLICANT WAIVER – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

SUBMISSION OF ANY DOCUMENT TO SYSTEM AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THIS SOLICITATION CONSTITUTES AN IRREVOCABLE WAIVER AND AGREEMENT BY THE APPLICANT TO FULLY INDEMNIFY THE STATE OF TEXAS AND SYSTEM AGENCY FROM ANY CLAIM OF INFRINGEMENT REGARDING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE APPLICANT OR ANY THIRD PARTY FOR ANY MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO SYSTEM AGENCY BY THE APPLICANT.

The remainder of this page is left blank intentionally

ARTICLE XIII. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

HHSC, in coordination with DFPS, in its sole discretion, will review all Applications received and will determine if any or all Applications which do not include complete, signed copies of these exhibits, will be disqualified or whether additional time will be permitted for submission of the incomplete or missing exhibits. If additional time is permitted, Applicants will be notified in writing of the opportunity to provide the missing documentation by a specified deadline. Failure by an Applicant to submit the requested documentation by the deadline WILL result in disqualification. Applications that do not include Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations (completed and signed), and Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template (completed), will be disqualified. See Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications for further detail.

This Submission Checklist identifies the documentation, forms, and exhibits that are required to be submitted as part of the Application.

The Application must be organized in the order below and include each required section and the forms and exhibits identified within a section:

1.	Ad	Administrative Information					
	a.	Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information (template provided)					
	b.	Form B, Administrative Information (template provided)					
	c.	Form B-1, Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials (if applicable)					
		(template provided)					
	d.	Form B-2, Non-Governmental Entity – Board of Directors and					
		Principal Officers (if applicable) (template provided)					
	e.	Form C, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire					
		(template provided)					
	f.	Form D, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate					
		(ICR) Questionnaire (template provided)					
2.	Narrative Proposal [The Narrative Proposal must be titled "Narrative Proposal" and						
	inc	lude the Applicant's Legal Name, the RFA No., and the name of the grant					
	program. Use the titles below for each required section.]						
	a.	Form E, Executive Summary (template provided)					
	b.	Form F, Program Narrative (template provided)					
		i. Attachment F-1, Monitoring Reports (if applicable)					
		RFA No. HHS0013956					

	c.	For	rm G, Project Work Plan (template provided)	
		i.	Attachment G-1, Logic Model (Applicant provides)	
		ii.	Attachment G-2, Agency Organization Chart (Applicant provides)	
		iii.	Attachment G-3, Subawardee Organization Chart (if applicable)	
			(Applicant provides)	
		iv.	Form G-1, Program Model Review Tool (template provided)	
3.	Ex	khibit	s to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted with Application	
	a.	Exhib	oit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations	
		<u>Exhi</u>	bit A is mandatory and must be completed, signed, and submitted	for the
		Appl	ication to be considered Responsive. Applications received without Ex	khibit A
		or wi	th an unsigned Exhibit A will be disqualified.	
		- 1 ·		
	b.		pit D, Requested Budget Template and Proposed Unit Rates Template	
		(Exce		
		This	Requested Budget Template is mandatory and must be submitted v	vith the
		Appl	ication, in the original format (Excel), for the Application to be con	sidered
		Resp	onsive. Applications received without the completed Requested	Budget
		Temp	plate will be disqualified.	
	c.	Exhib	pit C, Data Use Agreement	
	d.	Exhib	pit C-1, Data Use Agreement Governmental Entity	
	e.	Exhib	pit C-2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI), Attachment 2 to DUA	
	f.	Exhib	pit H, Exceptions (if applicable)	
	g.	Exhib	oit I, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs	
	h.	Exhib	oit J, Certification Regarding Lobbying	
4.	A	ddend Each	la Addendum, if any, must be signed and submitted with the Application.	

ARTICLE XIV. LIST OF EXHIBITS AND FORMS ATTACHED TO RFA

Exhibits

Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.4, August 2023

Exhibit B, HHS Uniform Terms and Conditions – Grant, version 3.3, November 2023

Exhibit C, Data Use Agreement

Exhibit C-1, Data Use Agreement Governmental Entity

Exhibit C-2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI), Attachment 2 to DUA

Exhibit D, Requested Budget and Proposed Unit Rates Template

Exhibit E, Long Term Youth and Family Support Cost Considerations

Exhibit F, HHS Online Bid Room

Exhibit G, Long Term Youth and Family Support Evaluation Criteria

Exhibit H, Exceptions (if applicable)

Exhibit I, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs

Exhibit J, Certification Regarding Lobbying

Forms

Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information

Form B, Administrative Information

Form B-1, Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials

Form B-2, Non-Governmental Entity – Board of Directors and Principal Officers

Form C, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire

Form D, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire

Form E, Executive Summary

Form F, Program Narrative

Form G, Project Work Plan

Form G-1, Program Model Review Tool