



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services



OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY-BASED CARE
TRANSITION

***Grace Windbigler, Interim Statewide Director
of the Office of Community-Based Care
Transition***

Request for Applications (RFA)

For

***DFPS Community-Based Care
Rural Community-Based Care
Pilot Program***

Catchment Area Region 9

RFA No: HHS0016279

Date of Release: November 26, 2025

Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses:

***January 12, 2026 by 10:30 a.m. Central
Time***

NIGP Codes: Class/Item

952-47 Foster Care Services

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ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) invites applications from qualified organizations to serve as the Lead Entity for the Rural CBC Pilot Program authorized by Senate Bill 513, 88th Texas Legislature.

The Rural CBC Pilot Program seeks to design, implement, and evaluate a Community-Based child welfare system in rural regions of Texas, with an emphasis on:

- Co-design with DFPS and local Community Alliances,
- Improved permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families,
- Regional flexibility to address diverse community needs, and
- Shared accountability across state, local, and provider partners.

Under guidance of Texas Family Code (TFC) Section 264.183, DFPS is required to implement a Rural CBC Pilot Program which is aimed at improving child welfare services in rural areas in which at least two-thirds of the counties comprising the area have a population of 50,000 or less and where traditional CBC has not been established and where there has been no response from interested applicants through the formal Request for Application (RFA) process. The Rural CBC Pilot Program will be developed and implemented by DFPS in partnership with a Lead Entity, which may be a nonprofit or local government entity selected through a competitive procurement process.

Grant Name:	Rural Community-Based Care Pilot Program Catchment Area Region 9
RFA No.:	HHS0016279
Deadline for Applications:	January 12, 2026, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	December 11, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Estimated Total Available Funding:	See Exhibit C
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	One
Estimated Max Award Amount:	See Exhibit C

Anticipated Contract Start Date:	TBD
Length of Project Period:	60 Months
Eligible Applicants:	Section 2.5 Qualifications and Selection of Lead Entity

To be considered for screening, evaluation and award, Applicants must provide and submit all required information and documentation as set forth in **Article VI, Required Respondent Information** and **Article IX, Submission Checklist** by the Deadline for Submission of Applications established in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. See **Section 4.3, Initial Compliance Screening** for further details.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

As used in this Solicitation, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following terms and conditions have the meanings assigned below. These definitions are in addition to the definitions found in **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**.

Addendum: 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 and ESBD. Each Addendum will be posted and must be signed by the Applicant and returned with its Application.

Apparent Grant Recipient: an organization that has been selected to receive a grant award through a Response to this RFA but has not yet executed a Grant Agreement or Contract.

Applicant or Respondent: 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 the Applicant and to bind the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of the Application.

Application, Proposal or Response: A set of documents submitted in response to an RFA by an Applicant offering to provide the services solicited binding on the Respondent once accepted by DFPS.

Business Day(s): excludes federal holidays and weekends.

Calendar Day(s): includes all weekdays, weekends and federal holidays.

Client: means a member of the target population to be served under a Grant Agreement because of this RFA.

Contract or Grant Agreement: A promise or a set of promises, for breach of which the law gives a remedy, or the performance of which the law in some way recognizes as a duty. It is an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are

enforceable or otherwise recognizable at law. The term also encompasses the written document that describes the terms of the agreement. For state contracting purposes, it generally describes the terms of a purchase of goods or services from a vendor or service provider.

DFPS: means the Department of Family and Protective Services.

Deliverable: A unit or increment of work required by the Contract, including such items as services, reports, or documents.

Designated Catchment Area (DCA): A geographic area (also known as designated catchment area) for providing Child protective services that is identified as part of Community-Based Care. The designated area in which the Lead Entity will provide all services described in this Contract. The Lead Entity will be responsible for ensuring services described in this Contract for all eligible Children and their families who are from the agreed to geographic area. Region and catchment area are also interchangeable terms used to indicate the DCA for the Lead Entity throughout this RFA.

ESBD: means the Electronic State Business Daily, the electronic marketplace where State of Texas bid opportunities over \$25,000 are posted. The ESBD may currently be accessed at <http://www.txsmartbuy.com/esbd>.

Grantee, Grant Recipient, Subrecipient or Successful Respondent:

A party or organization that receives a grant award as a result of this RFA or an entity that expends awards received from a pass-through entity to carry out a program. As defined by 45 CFR 75, a Subrecipient relationship exists when funding from a pass-through entity is provided to perform a portion of the scope of work or objectives of the pass-through entity's award agreement with the federal awarding agency. Throughout this Contract, the Lead Entity is referred to as a provider, contractor, Grantee, and Subrecipient. Regardless of the term used, beginning in Stage II, DFPS has classified Lead Entity agreements as Subrecipient relationships.

Health and Human Services Commission or HHSC: The administrative agency established under Chapter 531, Texas Government Code or its designee.

RFA or Solicitation: means this Request for Applications, including all parts, exhibits, forms, attachments, and addenda posted on the HHS Grants RFA website and the CPA Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD).

Standard Terms and Conditions: The terms and conditions applicable to any Contract resulting from this RFA that govern the Response and any resulting Contract.

State: The State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including HHS, DFPS, and any other state agencies, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

TxGMS: means the Texas Grant Management Standards published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

1.3 AUTHORITY

The State of Texas, by and through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), on behalf of DFPS, is requesting Applications pursuant to its authority under Chapter 264, Family Code, Subchapter B-1. Community-Based Care, Section 18(a) and Chapter 40, Human Resources Code, Subchapter C, Section 40.058. Federal funding for this Grant Project is authorized under the Chapter 264, Family Code, Subchapter B-1 and codified in Community-Based Care, Section 18(a) and Chapter 40, Human Resources Code, Subchapter C, Section 40.058. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated state and federal funds. Any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. Federal funding awarded to the System Agency is through the program(s) listed below:

Assistance Listing Description:	CFDA Number:
Guardianship Assistance Title IV-E	93.090
Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program	93.471
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	93.558
John H. Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program	93.599
Adoption Opportunities	93.652
Foster Care Title IV-E	93.658
Adoption Assistance	93.659
Social Services Block Grant	93.667
Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants	93.669
John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood	93.674
Medical Assistance Program Title XIX Administration-Federal	93.778

ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT PROJECT

2.1 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

For over 100 years, providers in Texas have served Children and families that reside in their community. Over the last 15 years, Foster Care has shifted from a service primarily provided by DFPS directly to one where approximately 95% is offered through the private sector.

In 2010, DFPS engaged in an effort known as Foster Care Redesign (FCR) that expanded the role of the community to include provision of placement services, capacity/network development, community engagement, and the coordination and delivery of services to Children in Foster Care and their families using a (Lead Entity).

Building off the foundation of FCR, the 85th Legislature passed SB11 in 2017, creating a new model known as Community-Based Care (CBC). This effort moved the Texas Foster Care System from a statewide model to a community-based model designed to meet the individualized needs of Children, Youth, and families in the State of Texas. Purchasing a continuum of care that includes case management and all substitute care services from a Lead Entity, and the local community allows DFPS to focus on Child safety through investigating reports of abuse and neglect, providing in home Family-based safety services, and ensuring quality oversight of the Foster Care system.

The 87th Legislature, Regular Session, passed additional Legislation (SB 1896) to further support the expansion of Community-Based Care and created The Office of Community-Based Care Transition

For close to 40 years the Texas Foster Care System has been built on Authorized Service Levels that considers the Child's need, Caregiver/Provider expectations, contract, and foster care rates for both the Legacy System and the CBC model. The 88th Texas Legislature realized that something new is needed for Texas Children and directed DFPS to build an entirely new foster care service continuum known as the Texas Child-Centered Care (T3C).

T3C, formerly known as Foster Care Rate Modernization, includes a new universal assessment and placement process (which includes a new version of the Case Assistance Navigator(s) (CANS), twenty-four clearly defined service packages, a new foster care rate structure, and a robust Continuous Quality Improvement process.

As a part of this Contract, the Lead Entity will be responsible for supporting the transition of the current system to the T3C model beginning in January 2025. This transition work includes, but is not limited to the following:

- A. Developing a provider network that incorporates the T3C model including clearly defined service packages and add-on packages;

- B. Employing well-trained staff to administer the CANS assessment and support the T3C placement process for Children, Youth, and young adults in care;
- C. Establishing the expertise and infrastructure to support the T3C transition process; and
- D. Participating in the evaluation of the T3C System as defined through the external Continuous Quality Improvement Process.

As part of the implementation, DFPS reserves the right, through unilateral or bilateral amendment under this Contract, to modify terms and conditions, including, but not limited to, those related to child assessment, service planning, placement, and foster care rates to support the transition to the T3C System. For more information on the T3C System and transition plan, please visit [DFPS Foster Care Rate Modernization](#).

2.2 COMMUNITY SERVICE AREAS

The proposal must not split any Texas county, and the county or counties must be contiguous to: Region 9 which includes (30 counties) Andrews, Borden, Coke, Concho, Crane, Crockett, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Howard, Irion, Kimble, Loving, Martin, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, Midland, Pecos, Reagan, Reeves, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Terrell, Tom Green, Upton, Ward, and Winkler.

DFPS reserves the right to award a Contract for a catchment area as described above without including some or all of the Applicant's proposed additional Texas counties.

2.3 DFPS ROLE ASSUMPTIONS

DFPS will maintain responsibility for the following functions and services as a part of the CBC model:

- A. Intake;
- B. Investigations;
- C. Family-based safety services,
- D. Eligibility determination;
- E. Interstate compact on the placement of Children administrator;
- F. Technical subject matter expertise;
- G. Lead Entity case management;
- H. Contract oversight;
- I. Contract management;
- J. Monitoring for all remaining DFPS Contracts; and
- K. Quality assurance and oversight of the Foster Care system.

2.4 AWARD AND TERM

2.4.1 Funding Matrix

DFPS expects to award one (1) Contract under this RFA for Designated Catchment Area. Funding information is based on legislative appropriations and service areas and is provided in [Exhibit C](#) for Rural CBC Pilot Program area. DFPS may adjust

and prorate actual award amounts at the time of execution based on start dates. For additional funding information as it relates to matching or alignment of funds, please see **Section 6.1.2, Financial Processes, Systems and Structure** of this RFA.

2.4.2 Term

The initial Contract period will begin upon Contract signature and last 60 months. DFPS will make one (1) grant award for the designated Rural CBC Pilot Program service area as DFPS funding allows and will be implemented in the order determined by DFPS. At its sole discretion, DFPS retains an option to renew for one (1) additional 60-month term. Additionally, DFPS reserves the right to extend the Contract as necessary to complete the mission of the grant

2.5 Qualifications and Selection of Lead Entity

2.5.1 Qualifications of Lead Entity

- A. To enter a contract with DFS, a Lead Entity must be:
 - 1. A nonprofit entity that has a board of directors composed entirely of residents of the Designated Community Area; or
 - 2. A local government entity.

2.5.2 Selection of Lead Entity

- A. In selecting a Lead Entity, the Department shall consider whether a prospective contractor has:
 - 1. Strong community support and partnerships
 - 2. Demonstrated experience leading collaborative initiatives in the region; and
 - 3. The capacity to coordinate with local community organizations to serve children and families.

2.5.3 Non-profit and Governmental Entities

Governmental entities or community-based nonprofits that have an organizational mission focused on Child welfare services, meet the qualifications in **Section 2.5.1, Qualifications and Selection of Lead Entity** and must complete **Form B-1, Governmental Entity-Authorized Officials (if applicable)** or **Form B-2, Nonprofit Entity or For-Profit Entity-Board Directors and Principal Officers (if applicable)** whichever is applicable.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

To meet the mission and objectives of CBC, Respondents must meet all eligibility requirements and be able to perform all responsibilities listed in Article II, Scope of Work of the **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**.

2.7 STATEMENT OF WORK

This RFA contains the requirements that all Respondents must meet to be considered for an award under this RFA. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in disqualification of the respondent without further consideration. Each respondent is solely responsible for the preparation and submission of a Proposal in accordance with instructions contained in this RFA.

Before completing the Proposal, refer to the relevant program standards provided in **Exhibit I. Statement of Work**. Other sections within the RFA may contain additional instructions pertaining to unique program requirements set forth in legislation or regulations.

2.8 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

DFPS will monitor the performance of Contract(s) awarded under this RFA. All services and Deliverables under the Contract shall be provided at an acceptable quality level and in a manner consistent with acceptable industry standard, custom, and practice.

2.9 STANDARDS

The Lead Entity must comply with the requirements applicable to this funding source cited in the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (45 CFR 75); the *Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS)*, and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

The Lead Entity must conduct project activities in accordance with Federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination. Guidance for adhering to non-discrimination requirements can be found on the [Health and Human Services \(HHS\) Civil Rights Office](#) website.

Upon request, a Grantee must provide the HHS Civil Rights Office with copies of all the Grantee's civil rights policies and procedures. Grantees must notify HHS' Civil Rights Office of any civil rights complaints received relating to performance under the Contract no more than ten (10) Calendar Days after receipt of the complaint. Notice must be directed to:

HHS Civil Rights Office
701 W. 51st Street, Mail Code W206
Austin, TX 78751
Phone Toll Free (888) 388-6332
Phone: (512) 438-4313
TTY Toll Free (877) 432-7232
Fax: (512) 438-5885

A Grantee must ensure that its policies do not have the effect of excluding or limiting the participation of persons in the Grantee's programs, benefits or activities on the basis of national origin, and must take reasonable steps to provide services and information, both orally and in writing, in appropriate languages other than English, in order to ensure that

persons with limited English proficiency are effectively informed and can have meaningful access to programs, benefits, and activities.

Grantees must comply with Executive Order 13279, and its implementing regulations at [45 CFR Part 87](#) or [7 CFR Part 16](#), which provide that any organization that participates in programs funded by direct financial assistance from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture or U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services must not, in providing services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary based on religion or religious belief.

2.10 DATA SECURITY

By entering into a Grant Agreement with DFPS as a result of this Solicitation, Respondent agrees to be bound by the Contractor Information Security terms found in **Exhibit B, DFPS Lead Entity Uniform Terms and Conditions**.

2.11 NO GUARANTEE OF VOLUME, USAGE OR COMPENSATION

DFPS makes no guarantee of volume, usage, or total compensation to be paid to any Respondent under any awarded grant, if any, resulting from this Solicitation. Any awarded grant is subject to appropriations and the continuing availability of funds.

DFPS reserves the right to cancel, make partial award, or decline to award a grant under this Solicitation at any time at its sole discretion.

There should be no expectation of additional or continued funding on the part of the grant Recipient. Any additional funding or future funding may require submission of an application through a subsequent RFA.

ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

3.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
RFA Date of Release	November 26, 2025
Respondent Conference	December 4, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Request for Clarification	December 11, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Request for Clarification to be Posted	December 23, 2025

Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses [NOTE: Responses must be RECEIVED by HHSC by the deadline.]	January 12, 2026, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Contract Start Date	TBD

Note: These dates are a tentative schedule of events. DFPS reserves the right to modify these dates at any time upon notice posted to the [ESBD](#), the [eGrants website](#), and the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website any dates listed after the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses will occur at the discretion of DFPS and may occur earlier or later than scheduled without notification on the [ESBD](#) and [HHS Grants RFA](#) website. DFPS reserves the right to stagger anticipated Contract award date, Contract start date, and/or readiness or implementation phases. After the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses, 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](#) webpage. Each Applicant is responsible for checking the ESBD, HHS Grants website and Procurement Forecast for updates.

3.2 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO GRANT

DFPS reserves the right to change, amend or modify any provision of this Solicitation, or to withdraw this Grant, at any time prior to award, if it is in the best interest of DFPS and will post such on the [ESBD](#), [eGrants website](#), and the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website. It is the responsibility of Respondent to periodically check the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website and ESBD to ensure full compliance with the requirements of this Grant.

3.3 IRREGULARITIES

Any irregularities or lack of clarity in this RFA should be brought to the attention of the Point of Contact listed in **Section 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact** as soon as possible so corrective Addenda may be furnished to prospective Respondents.

3.4 INQUIRIES

3.4.1 Point of Contact

Interested Respondents must submit all requests, questions, or other communication about this Grant in writing to HHSC's Point of Contact addressed to the person listed below:

Name	Edna Fuentes
Title	Contract Administration Manager I

Address	Procurement and Contracting Services Building 1100 W 49th St. MC: 2020 Austin, TX 78756
Phone	(956) 202-2674
Email	Edna.Fuentes2@dfps.texas.gov

3.4.2 Prohibited Communications

All communications between Respondents and other agency staff members concerning the Solicitation may not be relied upon and respondent should send all questions or other communications to the sole point of contact. This restriction does not preclude discussions between affected parties for the purposes of conducting business unrelated to this Solicitation. **Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of Respondent's Solicitation Response.**

3.5 QUESTIONS

HHSC will allow written questions and requests for clarification of this Solicitation. Questions must be submitted in writing and sent by email to the Point of Contact listed in **Section 3.4.1, Point of Contact** above. Respondents' names will be removed from questions in any Responses released. Questions shall be submitted in the following format. Submissions that deviate from this format may not be accepted:

- A. Identifying Solicitation number;
- B. Section Number;
- C. Paragraph Number;
- D. Page Number;
- E. Text of passage being questioned; and
- F. Question.

Note: Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions and Requests for Clarification set forth in Section 3.1, Schedule of Events above. Please provide entity name, address, phone number; fax number, e-mail address, and name of contact person when submitting questions.

3.5.1 Clarification Request Made by Respondent

Respondents must notify the Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specifications, omission, or other error in the Solicitation in the manner and by the deadline for submitting questions.

3.5.2 Responses to Questions

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification may be posted on the

HHS Grants website, the **ES B D** website and eGrants website. DFPS reserves the right to amend answers prior to the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation on Response. It is Respondent's responsibility to check the ESBD and HHS Grants Opportunity website or contact the Point of Contact for updated responses. DFPS also reserves the right to provide a single consolidated response of similar questions at its sole discretion.

3.5.3 Respondent Conference

HHSC and DFPS will conduct a virtual Respondent Conference via webinar at 10:00 a.m. Central Standard Time on December 4, 2025.

Attendance is optional and not required; however, 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 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact**, at least 72 hours before the meeting in order to have reasonable accommodations made by HHSC.

Webinar Information:

The conference will be held through GoToWebinar, which may be accessed at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5223495405784428893>

Webinar Instructions:

- A. Enter Webinar ID: 129-319-731
- B. Enter Attendee's business email
- C. To register, the participants must have the following information ready:
 - 1. First and last name of each attendee/registrant,
 - 2. E-mail address for the attendee/registrant,
 - 3. Applicant's legal name; and
 - 4. Job title of attendee/registrant.

3.6 SOLCITATION RESPONSE COMPOSITION

All Applications must be:

- A. Clearly legible and no more than 60 pages excluding attachments;
- B. Sequentially page-numbered and include the respondents name at the top of each page;
- C. Organized in the sequence outlined in **Article IX - Submission Checklist**;
- D. In Arial Times New Roman, or Verdana font, size twelve (12) or larger for normal text, no less than size ten (10) font for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- E. Blank forms provided in the Attachments must be used (electronic reproduction of the forms is acceptable; however, all forms must be identical to the original form(s) provided); do not change the font used on forms provided;

- F. Correctly identified with the RFA number and Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses date;
- G. Responsive to all RFA requirements; and
- H. Signed by an authorized official in each place a signature is needed (copies must be signed but need not bear an original signature).

3.7 SOLICITATION RESPONSE SUBMISSION AND DELIVERY

3.7.1 Application Receipt

Applications must be received by the System Agency by the Deadline for Submission of Solicitations Responses specified in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. The System Agency will date and time stamp all Applications upon receipt. Applications received after the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses may be ruled ineligible. Applicants should allow for adequate time for submission before the posted Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses.

No HHS agency will be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by the System Agency. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure its Application is received by the System Agency before the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses. 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 DFPS 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.

3.7.2 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 binds the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of an Application.

3.7.3 Required Submission Method

Applicants must submit their completed Applications by the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses provided in the **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, using one of the approved methods identified below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g., facsimile or email) will not be

considered and will be disqualified.

A. Submission Option #1

HHS Online Bid Room: Applicants shall upload the following documents to the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit O. HHS Online Bid Room.**

File Size Limitation: Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.

1. One (1) copy marked as “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.
2. One (1) copy of the complete Application marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable, in accordance with **Section 8.3, Public Information Act.** in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.
3. Electronic submissions must be separated by electronic medium used for submission:
 - a. Administrative Information, including all forms;
 - b. Narrative Proposal, including all forms; and
 - c. Applicable Exhibits and Required Forms.

For Applicants who choose to mail in Application, the entire Solicitation Response including all electronic copies must be submitted in one package to HHSC at the address listed in **Section 3.7.3, Required Submission Method.** The number of copies and directions for submitting an “Original” and “Copies” are outlined in **Article IX, Submission Checklist.**

B. Submission Option #2

Sealed Package with USB Drives: Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives:

1. 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.”

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 8.3, 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
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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
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Sealed packages must be clearly labeled with the following:

RFA No:	RFA No. HHS0016279
RFA TITLE:	Rural Community-Based Care Pilot Program
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF SOLICITATION RESPONSES:	January 12, 2026, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
SOLE POINT OF CONTACT'S NAME:	Julie Irby
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.

3.7.4 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.

3.7.5 Application Response

- A. Prior to the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses, a Respondent may:
 1. Withdraw its Solicitation Response by submitting a written request to the Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1**; or
 2. Modify its Solicitation Response by submitting a written amendment to the Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1**.
- B. DFPS may request Solicitation Response Modifications at any time.

3.7.6 Application Organization

The complete Application, in a Portable Document Format (".pdf") file, must:

- A. Be organized in the order outlined in **Article IX, Submission Checklist**, and include all required sections (e.g., "Administrative Information," "Narrative Proposal," and "Exhibits to be Submitted with Application");
 - 1. Each Application section must have a cover page with the Applicant's legal name, RFA number, and Name of Grant identified.
- B. 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.

3.7.7 Application Withdrawals or Modifications

Prior to the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses set forth in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, an Applicant may:

- A. Withdraw its Application by submitting a written request to the Sole Point of Contact; or
- B. 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 the System Agency by the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses set forth in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda.

No withdrawal or modification request received after the Deadline for Submission of Solicitation Responses, set forth in **Section 3.1, 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 IV. SOLICITATION RESPONSE EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

4.1 PROPOSAL SCREENING AND EVALUTATION

HHSC will use an evaluation process to select the successful respondent(s). HHSC may consider capabilities or advantages that are clearly described in the Proposal, which may be confirmed by oral presentations, site visits, demonstrations, and references contacted by HHSC. HHSC reserves the right to contact individuals, entities, or organizations that have had dealings with the respondent or proposed staff, whether identified in the Proposal.

4.2 APPLICATION PRE-SCREENING

In order to be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluations. Applications will be reviewed for the following minimum qualifications:

- A. Be a nonprofit entity that has an organization mission focused on child welfare and majority of the entity's board members residing in Texas; or
- B. Be a governmental entity.

To be considered for evaluation, Applicants shall execute **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitations and Affirmations v.2.4** and provide all other required information and documentation set forth in this Solicitation as part of their response. This RFA contains the requirements that all Applicants shall meet to be considered for evaluation. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of the Applicant without further consideration. Each Applicant is solely responsible for the preparation and submission of an Application in accordance with instructions contained in this RFA.

4.3 INITIAL COMPLIANCE SCREENING

HHSC will perform an initial screening of all Proposals received. Unsigned Proposals and Proposals that do not include all required forms and sections, are subject to rejection without further evaluation.

In accordance with **Section 4.4, Evaluation**, HHSC reserves the right to waive minor informalities in a Proposal and award Contract(s) that are in the best interest of the State of Texas.

It is the intent of the legislature that the department contract with community-based nonprofit or governmental entities that have an organizational mission focused on Child welfare services. The services provided by the entities must include direct case management to ensure Child safety, permanency, and well-being, in accordance with State and Federal Child welfare goals.

4.4 EVALUATION

Applications will be evaluated and scored using **Exhibit M, Evaluation Tool**, and in accordance with the factors required by this RFA and other factors deemed relevant by HHSC and DFPS.

4.4.1 Competitive Range Determinations

HHSC and DFPS may determine those certain Proposals are within the competitive range for consideration for negotiation and possible Contract award, for Proposals that receive the highest or most satisfactory evaluation. HHSC and DFPS may, in the interest of administrative efficiency, place reasonable limits on the number of Proposals that will be included in the competitive range.

4.4.2 Specific Selection Criteria

Grant Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

Evaluation Criteria	Value
Local Board Composition	10%
Oversight & Bylaws	5%
Partnerships	10%
Community and Collaboration Plan	10%
Relevant Experience	10%
Service Continuum/Innovation	15%
Geographic Reach	5%
Financial Stability	10%
Flexible and Adaptable Infrastructure/Systems	10%
Data Reporting Capacity	7%
Continuous Quality Improvement Framework	8%

4.5 FINAL SELECTION

4.5.1 Oral Presentations and Site Visits

DFPS may, at its sole discretion, request oral presentations, site visits, and/or demonstrations from one or more respondents included in the competitive range. If applicable, HHSC will notify selected Respondents of the time and location for these activities and may supply agendas or topics for discussion. DFPS reserves the right to ask additional questions during oral presentations, site visits, and or demonstrations to clarify the scope and content of the written Proposal. The Respondent's oral presentation, site visit, and/or demonstration must substantially represent material included in the written Proposal and should not introduce new concepts or offers unless specifically requested by DFPS.

4.5.2 DISCUSSIONS WITH RESPONDENTS

DFPS may, but is not required to, conduct discussions with all, some, or none of the Respondents included in the competitive range for the purpose of obtaining the best value for DFPS. It may conduct discussions for the purpose of:

- A. Obtaining clarification of Proposal ambiguities;
- B. Requesting modifications to a Proposal; and

DFPS may make an award that represents best value to the State of Texas.

4.6 NEGOTIATION AND AWARD

The negotiation phase will involve direct contact between the successful Applicant and HHSC/DFPS representatives; in person, via phone and/or email. During negotiations, successful Applicants may expect:

- A. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Proposal, proposed catchment service area that fit the criteria, and fiscal information; and
- B. Requests from HHSC and/or DFPS for clarification or additional detail regarding the submitted Application.

DFPS may announce a tentative or Apparent Grant Recipient once the DFPS Commissioner and Office of Community Based Care Transition Director have given approval to initiate negotiation and execute Contracts.

HHSC will post to the HHS Grants Opportunities Website and may publicly announce a list of Applicants whose applications are selected for final award. This posting does not constitute DFPS's agreement with all the terms of any Applicant's Proposal and does not bind DFPS to enter a Contract with any Applicant whose award is posted.

4.7 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION BY HHSC/DFPS

HHSC/DFPS reserves the right to ask questions or request clarification from any Respondent at any time during the application process.

ARTICLE V. NARRATIVE PROPOSAL REQUIRED RESPONDENT INFORMATION

5.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a high-level overview of the Respondent's approach to meeting the RFA's requirements. The summary must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives of the community-based care program.

5.2 OBJECTIVES AND QUALITY INDICATORS

5.2.1 Narrative Proposal

Respondents should carefully read the specific questions of each section. If the Respondent plans to provide the service or perform the function through a subcontractor, the Respondent must detail the services or function to be subcontracted, and how the Respondent and the subcontractor will coordinate the service or function. Respondents should describe any prior working relationships with the subcontractor and include any letters of commitment to contract with the Lead Entity as an attachment to the Proposal. The Narrative Proposal must include a detailed description of the following program components and describe:

- A. How the Respondent will develop and manage a continuum of care and service delivery model designed to facilitate achievement of the service objectives and quality indicators using the staged implementation model;
- B. How the respondent plans to implement a community-based model that fully engages stakeholders in achieving desired outcomes;
- C. The plan to ensure Children are safe in their placements;
- D. The plan to ensure Children are placed in their home communities;
- E. The plan to ensure Children are appropriately served in the least restrictive placement;
- F. The plan to ensure Siblings are placed together in Foster Care;
- G. The plan to ensure that Children have stability in their placement and minimize moves in care and school of origin;
- H. The plan to ensure connections to Family and others important to the Child are maintained;
- I. How the model is responsive to the diverse and individual needs of the local communities within the proposed community service area, including ongoing methods to assess changing community needs;
- J. The plan to ensure that Children and Youth are provided opportunities, experiences, and activities like those experienced by their non-Foster Care peers; and opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives;
- K. The plan to reunify Children with the biological parents of the Children when possible;
- L. The plan to promote placement of Children with relative or kinship Caregivers, if reunification is not possible; and
- M. The proposed schedule, processes, and procedures for transition of Children pending emergency or planned placement services and foster homes from DFPS to the Lead Entity. Include plan for communicating with providers, foster parents, judiciary, and the community.

5.3 DELIVERY MODEL

5.3.1 Lead Entity Management Plan

The Respondent's Proposal must include a Lead Entity Management Plan. The Lead

Entity will be required to submit an updated version of the Lead Entity Management Plan within 45 Calendar Days after the Contract effective date that reflects any negotiated changes and will be used by DFPS to evaluate the Lead Entity's readiness. An updated Lead Entity Management Plan is due at least 45 Calendar Days prior to entering a new Stage of Implementation for DFPS approval.

The Lead Entity Management Plan must clearly identify all tasks and activities associated with each item, dates of completion, and key staff responsibilities. The Lead Entity Management Plan should, at a minimum, include the following:

- A. Plan schedule, processes, and procedures for transition of Children and Youth from the Designated Community Area (DCA) who are already being served by the Lead Entity and/or the Lead Entity network (if applicable) in the legacy system to the Lead Entity model. DFPS anticipates a full transition between systems within 12 months of the Contract effective date. Any exceptions to transition will be determined by DFPS on a case-by-case basis and based on the best interest of the individual Child;
- B. For Stage II, proposed the schedule, processes, and procedures for transition of legacy cases, foster homes from DFPS, and kinship homes into the Lead Entity. Include plan and time frames for communicating with providers, foster parents, judiciary, and the community. DFPS anticipates a full transition between systems within 12 months of the Contract effective date. Any exceptions to transition will be determined by DFPS on a case-by-case basis and based on the best interest of the individual Child;
- C. Development of services network/continuum, including plan for assessing need, recruiting, communicating with, and training network providers;
- D. Quality management plan that documents the necessary information required to effectively manage service quality from project planning to delivery. The plan must define a service's quality policies, procedures, criteria, areas of application, roles, responsibilities, and authorities;
- E. Workforce development and training which must include a plan for ensuring that all caseworkers, supervisors, Caregivers, and other direct care staff providing services through the Lead Entity complete training to support attainment of safety, permanency, and well-being for the Children in their care. Trauma-informed training, Cultural Competency trainings and trainings on Human Trafficking Prevention are required. The plan may propose phasing in this training and can utilize DFPS' The Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence (CLOE);
- F. Plan to give employment preference to employees of DFPS whose position is being impacted by the implementation of CBC which includes compensation and benefits, if applicable;
- G. Proposed community specific risk and issues management plan;
- H. Disaster recovery and business continuity plan that is specific to the proposed community including a data backup and recovery plan;
- I. Plan for development of Lead Entity-specific policy and procedures to support all aspects of service delivery, finance, and administration of the proposed model;
- J. Plan to address situations in which a Child referred to the Lead Entity is placed in the same home as a Child in the DFPS legacy system or vice versa;
- K. Plan to control catchment area service capacity and access capacity in other catchment areas or parts of the State ensuring systems capacity; and
- L. Plan to identify and address case management and contracting conflicts of interest. DFPS will not transfer services to the contractor until the department has determined the plan is adequate during the required Readiness review.

5.3.2 Lead Entity Administrative Management

The Lead Entity's administrative management of the continuum of care and service delivery system must, at a minimum, include the following:

- A. If intending to use subcontractors/network to deliver services a proposed network of providers including the type and anticipated percentage of services they will deliver. Such listing must indicate, for each provider type, the name, client characteristics to be served.
- B. Describe how your organization would manage the continuum of services. Include descriptions of:
 - 1. Your organization's governing body;
 - 2. Proposed organization structure;
 - 3. Staffing plan;
 - 4. Capacity; and
 - 5. Procedures to manage service providers.
- C. If proposing to use subcontractors/network to deliver services, describe the Respondent's credentialing and licensure requirements and demonstrate how the Respondent ensures that the minimum credentialing requirements are met by subcontractors/providers rendering covered services;
- D. If proposing to use subcontractors/network to deliver services, describe the Respondent's credentialing on-site assessment of the subcontracted physical facility (foster home, residential treatment, or emergency shelter) including any assessments that will be used to assess safety beyond minimum standards;
- E. If proposing to use subcontractors/network to deliver services, describe the Respondent's on-going assessment of the subcontracted physical facility (foster home, residential treatment, or emergency shelter) and quality of care provided beyond minimum standard;
- F. If Respondent will subcontract, identify what method(s) Respondent will use to collect data from subcontractors, including managing and reporting data on client services, network service providers, hospitalizations, foster homes, outcomes, and payments to subcontractors;
- G. If subcontractors also subcontract with another Lead Entity, identify process for coordinating with other Lead Entitys on data collection protocols;
- H. If proposing to use subcontractors/network to deliver services, describe the network re-credentialing process and how to capture and assess the following:
 - 1. Tracking complaints and trends to resolution; and
 - 2. Results from quality reviews/quality assurance/licensing processes that require improvement.

- I. Describe quality assurance and utilization management processes, including the protocol for evaluating placement decisions on a regular basis, continuous assessment of Children in residential treatment, emergency shelters, use of exceptional care and other high-end placements to manage utilization to ensure quality services, progress towards service plan goals, and compliance with all Contract terms, performance expectations, outcomes, and outputs;
- J. Provide a description of the proposed provider training programs, including types of training to be offered, topics covered, how the respondent will ensure provider participation, frequency and how training programs will be evaluated;
- K. Provide a description of how Respondent will develop and maintain qualified staff that have the skills, education, experience, and training for the services they provide;
- L. Provide a description of Respondent's system for tracking and reporting Serious Incidents as well as other safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes;
- M. Provide a description of Respondent's system that alerts of situations or issues that require immediate response, including issues which are likely to pose a threat to Child safety;
- N. Provide a Designated Community Area disaster recovery and business continuity plans that ensure rapid, effective response and re-establishment of system operations and service delivery in the event of unplanned system outages or disaster and catastrophic occurrences. This must include response to situations in all areas of the State or nation where the Lead Entity has Children, Youth or young adults placed; and
- O. Provide Respondent's process for the training and use of alternative Caregivers for all Child-Placing Agencies in the proposed community to facilitate reciprocity of licenses for alternative Caregivers between agencies, including respite and overnight care providers.

5.3.3 Lead Entity Community Engagement Plan (CEP)

The Lead Entity must ensure that Children and families receive the necessary services in their local communities. Provide a Preliminary Community Engagement Plan(s) that addresses the following requirements:

- A. Describe how communities/stakeholders within the proposed community were engaged in developing Respondent's Narrative Proposal;
- B. Plans should include strategies, activities, and timelines for engaging the community initially (during start-up), during initial implementation, and on an ongoing basis; and

- C. Include in any outreach/communication efforts respondent has conducted during the Proposal development in the proposed community.

5.4 COMPLIANCE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

5.4.1 Legal/Regulatory

The Applicant must:

- A. Describe how the Lead Entity will comply with all applicable minimum standards for 24-hour residential Child-care operations and with State and Federal laws and regulations;
- B. Describe the plan to assume the statutory duties of the department in connection with the delivery of case management, substitute care services and services for kinship Caregivers in that proposed community; and
- C. Describe the plan to comply with all court orders regarding the provision of substitute care, case management services and/or purchased services for Children, Youth, and families served through the Lead Entity, relevant to the stage being implemented.

5.4.2 Cultural Competency

The Applicant must:

- A. Describe the plan to provide ongoing education in the form of orientation, training, workshops, and other educational opportunities to help Lead Entity staff, Caregivers, and subcontractors understand the impact race, culture, and ethnic identity have on them and others and how they impact services to Children and Families;
- B. Describe the plan to ensure that Caregivers and subcontractors understand the impact of disproportionality and disparities in the Child welfare system; and
- C. Describe the plan to coordinate and deliver services in a manner that is relevant to the culture of Children and Families served in the distinct communities and population hubs within the designated proposed community.

5.5 PLACEMENT SERVICES CAPACITY SHARING

The Applicant must:

- A. Describe your organization's assessment of the existing paid Foster Care capacity in the proposed community service area including the method used for any assessment and/or engagement activities in the development of this Proposal. Include any assessment methods used, or that may be used, to evaluate the quantity and quality of capacity currently available;
- B. Describe your organizations assessment of gaps in paid Foster Care capacity, including the method used for any assessment and/or engagement activities in the development of this Proposal;

- C. Describe the plan for maintaining the capacity to accept referrals statewide from DFPS for paid Foster Care every single day of the year, including nights and holidays;
- D. Describe the plan to accept all referrals for paid Foster Care (No Reject) made by DFPS and continue to meet the individual needs of Children referred (No Eject) until DFPS determines the individual is no longer eligible for the Lead Entity services (Stage I);
- E. Describe the plan to share statewide placement capacity utilization within the Lead Entity catchment area, with other Lead Entitys, and with DFPS's Legacy System. The plan must support and include the process for accepting referrals from outside the Lead Entity catchment area as well as acknowledging DFPS's prerogative to contract with the Lead Entity's residential subcontractors to ensure the appropriate placement for a Child;
- F. Describe the plan to ensure that all Children three (3) years old and older have their needs assessed using any version of the CANS assessment;
- G. Describe the plan to adapt to and abide by requirements of local courts regarding placement processes and/or notification requirements;
- H. Describe the plan to ensure Children in paid Foster Care receive all follow-up medical exams, Early and Periodic Screening and Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) exams, including Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) referral, and dental exams in accordance with STAR Health and DFPS Policy timeframes;
- I. Describe the plan to recruit and approve adoptive homes;
- J. Describe the plan to offer Preparation for Adult Living Skills and Supervised Independent Living (SIL) services; and
- K. Describe the plan to develop and implement a process by which Children, Youth, and Families may elevate concerns about the provision and/or quality of services provided.

5.6 CASE MANAGEMENT

The Applicant must:

- A. Describe your organization's assessment of the existing purchased services and community resources available to Families in the proposed community, including the method used for any assessment and/or engagement activities in the development of this Proposal. Include any assessment methods used, or that you plan to use, to evaluate the effectiveness of services currently available;
- B. Describe your organizations assessment of gaps in services for Families in the

area, including the method used for any assessment and/or engagement activities in the development of this Proposal;

- C. Describe the plan for Case Management services that at a minimum include:
 - 1. Caseworker visits with the Child including strategies Respondent plans to use to engage the Child;
 - 2. Family and Caregiver visits including strategies Respondent plans to use to engage the Families;
 - 3. Permanency Planning including Respondent's plan to meet quality indicators related to how Respondent's Permanency Planning model can lead to shorter stays for Children in conservatorship and increase the exits to positive permanency outcomes;
 - 4. Child and Family service planning that includes strategies on how Respondent plans to ensure that Children and Youth are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their lives,
 - 5. The coordination and monitoring of services required by the Child and the Child's Family, including services to Children and parents residing outside the Catchment area;
 - 6. The assumption of court-related duties regarding the Child, including but not limited to:
 - a. Providing any required notifications or consultations;
 - b. Preparing court reports;
 - c. Attending judicial and permanency hearings, trials, and mediations;
 - d. Complying with applicable court orders; and
 - e. Ensuring the Child is progressing toward the goal of permanency within State and federally mandated guidelines.
 - 7. Promoting Reunification of Children with their biological parents when possible, including support services to be provided after the Child is returned to their Family;
 - 8. Providing ICPC services for Lead Entity Children placed out of State and Children placed in the Catchment area from out of State; and
 - 9. Promoting the placement of Children with relative or kinship Caregivers, including Family finding activities and engagement, and the provision of support services to relative and Kinship Caregivers.
- D. Propose a plan for implementing graduated caseloads for Caseworkers in Implementation Phase.;
- E. Describe how the model will integrate Case Management and service delivery to Children and service delivery to Families while avoiding duplication of related activities;
- F. Describe the schedule, processes, procedure, and timeline for the implementation of CBC in the Catchment area, including a timeline for implementing: Case Management services for Children, Families, and relative and Kinship Caregivers receiving services in the Catchment area; and Family reunification support services to be provided after a Child receiving services from the Lead Entity is returned to the Child's Family;

- G. Describe the plan for maintaining the capacity to accept referrals from DFPS for Substitute Care (Kinship and Foster Care) every single day of the year, including nights and holidays;
- H. Describe the plan to accept all referrals for Substitute Care, Kinship, and paid Foster Care (No reject), made by DFPS and continue to meet the individual needs of Children referred (No reject) until the Child reaches legal permanency (Stages II-III); and
- I. Describe the plan to ensure that Children have stability in their placements, including stability in paid Foster Care and in Kinship Placements.

ARTICLE VI. REQUIRED RESPONDENT INFORMATION

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY INFORMATION

Respondent must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability to manage and coordinate the types of activities described in this Solicitation. As a part of the Solicitation Response requested in **Article V, Narrative Proposal Required Respondent Information**, Respondent must provide the following information:

6.1.1 History and Experience

The Applicant must:

- A. Provide a brief narrative description of your organization's history, accomplishments, primary purpose, and number of years in operation and submit as **Exhibit J. History and Experience**. Explain how your organization's experience and success demonstrates your ability to provide the expected services. If Applicant is a newly formed business entity created for the purpose of applying under this RFA, then the Response should demonstrate the experience of associated entities and staff. If Applicant is a consortium of providers, then the Response should detail the experience of each consortium member entity. In **Exhibit J. History and Experience**, also include the following:
 - 1. Describe your organizational structure, include your advisory board of directors (indicate number of board members and verification that a majority live in Texas), list of all advisory councils or committees, the length of their existence and their function; and
 - 2. Describe the relationship between your organization and other community-based services to be provided. These should include, but not be limited to, linkages to the reentry population and linkages to those in the community providing employment services. Where possible, provide letters of support from those organizations that have worked with your organization, which describe the nature of past and/or current collaborations.

6.1.2 Financial Processes, Systems, and Structure

The Applicant must:

Provide a detailed description of the accounting system Respondent will use as **Exhibit G, Financial Processes and Reporting**. This accounting system must be capable of supporting the operation and management of a provider network, payroll, and subcontractor payments and comply with all requirements outlined in this RFA.

Provide a detailed description of the information system Respondent will use that collects, integrates, and reports financial and outcome data, supports the management and oversight of the service network, and the validation of services as **Exhibit G, Financial Processes and Reporting**.

As part of its Application, Respondent must develop and submit a budget. The proposed budget must include the methodology in support of its proposed Implementation Phase associated with Child placement, conservatorship services, kinship home development and maintenance, reunification, and case management services. Respondent must label the operating budget proposal for a daily per diem case management rate as **Exhibit L, Lead Entity Implementation Phase Operating Budget Proposal Face Page**, and included with Respondent's Application.

The Respondent must develop and submit a detailed plan to transition to a new service continuum of care based upon T3C. As described above, the T3C transforms the foster care system, which includes an evidence-informed universal assessment of a Child's needs, clearly defined service packages tailored to meet those specific needs, and a new fully funded foster care rate methodology that aligns payment with the cost of care; and

The Respondent must develop and submit a Proposal for its intended Purchased Client Services (PCS) array that includes estimated fee schedules for Foster Care providers and services offered within available PCS funding allocations. Fees charged to DFPS must be reasonable and comparable to those for similar services within the proposed community.

Respondent must label the cost Proposal for Purchased Client Services as **Exhibit K, Purchased Client Services Proposal Face Page**, and include with Respondent's Application.

6.1.3 Litigation and Contract History

In its Solicitation Response, Respondent must submit copies as **Exhibit P, Litigation and Contract History**, of all monitoring reports, corrective action plans, and other support documentation related to alleged or confirmed significant Contract compliance and management issues. Respondent must fully describe all significant failures in detail including the lessons learned by Respondent from the issues or failures and steps taken to reduce the likelihood of any similar recurrence. Failure to comply with the terms of this requirement may disqualify Respondent.

In addition, Respondent must disclose details surrounding any civil or criminal litigation (pending or completed) or investigation (pending or completed) that occurred during the five (5) years immediately prior to the submission of its

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Solicitation Response that involves Respondent. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Respondent. Solicitation Response may be rejected based upon Respondent'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 obligations.

6.1.4 Conflicts

Respondent must certify and submit as **Exhibit O. Conflicts**, that it does not have any personal or business interests that present a conflict of interest with respect to the RFA and any resulting Contract. Additionally, if applicable, the Respondent must disclose all potential conflicts of interest. The Respondent must describe the measures it will take to ensure that there will be no actual conflict of interest and that its fairness, independence, and objectivity will be maintained. DFPS will determine to what extent, if any, a potential conflict of interest can be mitigated and managed during the term of the Contract. Failure to identify actual and potential conflicts of interest may result in disqualification of a Solicitation Response or termination of a Contract.

Please include any activities of affiliated or parent organizations and individuals who may be assigned to this Contract, if any.

Additionally, pursuant to [Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code](#), a successful Respondent awarded a Contract greater than \$1 million dollars, or that requires an action or vote of the governing body, must submit a disclosure of interested parties to the State agency at the time the business entity submits the signed Contract. Rules and filing instructions may be found on the Texas Ethics Commissions public website and additional instructions will be given by HHSC to successful Respondents.

6.2 AFFIRMATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Respondent must complete and return all of forms and exhibits listed in **Article IX, Submission Checklist**.

ARTICLE VII. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

7.1 FISCAL CAPACITY AND FISCAL CONTROLS

Applicant must provide the following with its application:

A. Most recent two (2) years of accrual basis financial reports including:

1. Balance sheet;
2. Statement of income and expense;
3. Statement of changes in financial position;
4. Cash flows; and
5. Capital expenditures.

B. Notes to the financial statements

1. Last two (2) years of audited financial statements;
2. If applicable, last two (2) years of consolidated audited financial statements for any holding companies or affiliates;
3. An un-audited financial statement of the most recent quarter of operation;
4. A full disclosure of any events, liabilities, or contingent liabilities that could affect Respondent's financial ability to perform this Contract; and
5. Last two years of the Federal Form 990.

Note: Personal Financial Statements will not be considered in lieu of financial statements of applicant Corporations, Partnerships, or LLC's.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

8.1 COSTS INCURRED

Respondents understand that issuance of this Solicitation in no way constitutes a commitment by any System Agency to award a Contract or to pay any costs incurred by a Respondent in the preparation of a Response to this Solicitation. DFPS is not liable for any costs incurred by a Respondent prior to issuance of or entering into a formal agreement, Contract, or purchase order. Costs of developing Solicitation Responses, preparing for or participating in oral presentations and site visits, or any other similar expenses incurred by a Respondent are entirely the responsibility of the Respondent, and will not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Texas.

8.2 CONTRACT RESPONSIBILITY

DFPS will look solely to Respondent for the performance of all contractual obligations that may result from an award based on this Solicitation. Respondent shall not be relieved of its obligations for any nonperformance by its subcontractors.

8.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT

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:

A. Mark Original Application:

1. 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
2. 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);

B. Certify in Original Application – HHS Solicitation: Certify, in the designated section of the **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4**, Applicant’s confidential information assertion and the filing of its Public Information Act Copy; and

C. 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:

1. 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);
2. Each portion Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure must be redacted (blacked out); and
3. Applicant must identify, adjacent to each redaction, the claimed exemption from disclosure. Each identification provided as required in **Subsection (C) of this section** must be identical to those set forth in the Original Application as required in **Subsection A(2)**, 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 v2.4, 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 <http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov>.

8.4 NEWS RELEASES

Prior to final award a Respondent may not issue a press release or provide any information for public consumption regarding its participation in the procurement. Requests should be directed to the HHSC Point of Contact Identified in Article III.

8.5 HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESS (HUB)

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/>.

8.6 SOLICITATION CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

To the extent allowable under **Texas Government Code, Chapter 552**, all contract negotiations conducted prior to final contract award are to remain confidential and not be shared or disclose since such information would give an advantage to certain competitors/bidders as this competitive solicitation for Community-Based Care is on-going and will re-occur until there is statewide implementation, including the re-procurement of existing and new contracts every five to ten years thereafter. By submitting a proposal, Respondents agree to not disclose information as it relates to negotiations. DFPS reserves the right to cease Contract discussions with Respondents who do not adhere to this policy.

8.7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent grants HHS the right to obtain information from any lawful source regarding the Respondent's and its directors,' officers,' and employees':

- A. Past business history, practices, and conduct,
- B. Ability to supply the goods and services; and
- C. Ability to comply with Contract requirements.

By submitting a Proposal, a Respondent generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing HHS information about the Respondent. HHS may take such information into consideration in evaluating Proposals.

ARTICLE IX. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided for Respondent's convenience only and identifies documents that must be submitted with this Solicitation in order to be considered responsive. Any Solicitation Response received without these requisite documents may be deemed nonresponsive and may not be considered for Contract award.

A. Original Solicitation Response Package

The Solicitation Package must include the "Original" Solicitation Response in hard copy consisting of the four parts described in detail below, each under separate cover but packaged together and clearly labeled "Original" on each.

B. Administrative Entity Information (Forms A - B-2)

- 1. Form A – Face Page _____
- 2. Form B-1 – Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials (if applicable) _____
- 3. Form B-2 – Nonprofit Entity or For-Profit Entity – Board of Directors and Principal Officers (if applicable) _____

C. Narrative Proposal (Article V) (to be provided by Applicant) _____

D. Required Respondent Information (Article VI) _____

- 4. Exhibit A – HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4 _____
- 5. Exhibit B – DFPS Lead Entity Uniform Terms and Conditions _____
- 6. Exhibit D – Certification Regarding Lobbying _____
- 7. Exhibit E – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs _____
- 8. Exhibit F – FFATA Certification _____
- 9. Exhibit G – Financial Processes and Reporting (to be created by Applicant) _____
- 10. Exhibit J – History and Experience (to be created by Applicant) _____
- 11. Exhibit O – Conflicts (to be created by Applicant) _____
- 12. Exhibit P – Litigation and Contract History (to be created by Applicant) _____
- 13. Signed Addenda or Addendums _____

- E. Financial Capacity, Stability, and Structure (Articles VI and VII) _____
- 14. Exhibit K – Purchased Client Services Cost Proposal Face Page _____
- 15. Exhibit L – Operating Budget Cost Proposal Face Page _____
- F. Copies of Solicitation Response Package _____

The Respondent will provide the following number of electronic copies (all clearly labeled as “copy”) in addition to the hard copy “Original” Solicitation Response. Electronic copies must be submitted on a USB Drive and separated by folders.

1. 2 Electronic copies of **Administrative Entity Information**
2. 2 Electronic copies of **Narrative Proposal**
3. 2 Electronic copies of **Applicable Exhibits**

ARTICLE X. LIST OF EXHIBITS AND FORMS ATTACHED TO RFA

Exhibits

- Exhibit A – HHS Solicitation Affirmations, v2.4
- Exhibit B – DFPS Lead Entity Uniform Terms and Conditions
- Exhibit C – Funding
- Exhibit D – Certification Regarding Lobbying
- Exhibit E – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
- Exhibit F – FFATA Certification
- Exhibit G – Financial Processes and Reporting **(to be created by Applicant)**
- Exhibit I – DFPS Statement of Work
- Exhibit J – History and Experience **(to be created by Applicant)**
- Exhibit K – Purchased Client Services Cost Proposal Face Page
- Exhibit L – Lead Entity Operating Budget Proposal Face Page
- Exhibit M – Evaluation Tool
- Exhibit N – Lead Entity Required Reports
- Exhibit O – Conflicts **(to be created by Applicant)**
- Exhibit P – Litigation and Contract History **(to be created by Applicant)**

Forms

- Form A – Face Page
- Form B-1 – Governmental Entity–Authorized Officials (if applicable)
- Form B-2 – Nonprofit Entity or For-Profit Entity–Board of Directors and Principal Officers (if applicable)

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