



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

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

Request for Applications (RFA)

For

*DFPS Community-Based Care (CBC)
Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) Catchment Areas 7A and 7B*

RFA No: HHS0016842

*Deadline for Submission of Applications:
September 29, 2026, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time*

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ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has identified the need to provide community-based care services in a proposed community that includes support services to all children and families that support safety, permanency, and well-being of children in its legal conservatorship. DFPS sees a service delivery model that fully engages communities in serving children, youth, and families provided through a performance-based Single Source Continuum Contract (SSCC) as the approach that can most effectively meet this need in a manner that achieves improved outcomes for children in its conservatorship. The SSCC provider must ensure the full continuum of substitute care (foster and kinship care), purchased services, case management and reunification services for children and youth in DFPS legal conservatorship from the designated geographic proposed community, those placed in the proposed community through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of children (ICPC), and through interregional agreements.

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:	Community-Based Care Single Source Continuum Contractor Catchment Areas 7A and 7B
RFA No.:	HHS0016842
Deadline for Submission of Applications:	September 29, 2026 by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	September 7, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Estimated Total Available Funding:	See Exhibits C-1 through C-3 Funding Matrices
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	Multiple
Estimated Max Award Amount:	See Exhibits C-1 through C-3 Funding Matrices

Anticipated Contract Start Date:	March 2027
Length of Project Period:	60 Months
Eligible Applicants:	See Section 2.5, Eligible Applicants

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 Applicant 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: 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 Applicant 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 as a result of this RFA.

Contract or 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.

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 CBC. The designated area in which the SSCC will provide all services described in this Contract. The SSCC 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 SSCC 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 Applicant: 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 SSCC is referred to as a provider, contractor, Grantee, and Subrecipient. Regardless of the term used, beginning in Stage II, DFPS has classified SSCC agreements as Subrecipient relationships.

HHSC: means the Health and Human Services Commission.

PCS: means Purchased Client Services.

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: means the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including the System Agency and any other state agency, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

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

1.3 STATUTORY 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, Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1. Community-Based Care, Section 18(a) and Chapter 40, Texas Human Resources Code, Subchapter C, Section 40.058. Federal funding for this Grant Project is authorized under Chapter 264, Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1 and codified in Community-Based Care, Section 18(a) and Chapter 40, Texas 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 DFPS 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 an SSCC.

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 an SSCC, 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 consider 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.

2.2 COMMUNITY SERVICE AREAS/ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREA

This RFA is a part of the effort to expand CBC into the DFPS 7A and 7B catchment area(s). The Applicant may propose to include additional Texas counties that are not listed below and are not under contract with an existing SSCC. The proposal must not split any Texas county, and the county or counties must be contiguous to:

- A. Region 7A Central Texas/Waco includes 20 counties: Bell, Bosque, Brazos, Coryell,

Falls, Freestone, Grimes, Hamilton, Hill, Lampasas, Leon, Limestone, Llano, Madison, McLennan, Milam Mills, Robertson, San Saba, and Williamson.

- B. Region 7B Capital Area includes 10 counties: Bastrop, Blanco, Burleson, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Travis and Washington.

An applicant may submit an application for Region 7A or 7B or a single application encompassing the entirety of Region 7. DFPS reserves the right to award a Contract for any catchment area described herein including or excluding some or all the additional Texas counties proposed by the Applicant. DFPS may, in its sole discretion and based on best value to the State, award a Contract for all or any portion of Region 7.

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. SSCC 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 for each DCA or one (1) Contract for both DCAs under this RFA as listed in **Section 2.2, Community Service Areas/Eligible Service Area** and as DFPS funding allows. Funding information is based on legislative appropriations and service areas and is provided in **Exhibits C-1** through **C-3, Funding Matrices** for each catchment area as an estimate. 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 Process, Systems, and Structure** of this RFA.

2.4.2 Term

The initial Contract period will begin upon Contract signature and will last 60 months. 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. For additional term information, please see **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, Article VI, Turnover

Requirements.

2.5 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

In accordance with Texas Family Code Section 264.154, Qualifications of Single Source Continuum Contractor, to enter into a Contract with the commission or department to serve as a SSCC to provide services under this subchapter, an entity must meet the following:

2.5.1 Minimum Qualifications of the SSCC (Stages I-III)

The SSCC must have experience in delivering residential child-care and treatment services to children and youth in Foster Care.

2.5.2 Entity Qualifications

2.5.2.1 The SSCC must be a nonprofit entity that has an organizational mission focused on child welfare or a governmental entity;

2.5.2.2 The SSCC may be an in-state or out-of-state entity; with a majority of the entity's board members residing in Texas. In accordance with [Texas Family Code Section 264.154](#); DFPS will consider the extent to which an SSCC Applicant has experience providing services to children, youth, and families in the proposed community; and

2.5.2.3 The SSCC may be a single entity or submit a Proposal through the formation of a consortium of providers, which may include itself. If a consortium submits an application Proposal under this RFA, one (1) provider must act as the consortium's lead in directly contracting with DFPS.

2.5.3 Nonprofit 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, Minimum Qualifications of the SSCC (Stages I-III)** and **Section 2.5.2, Entity Qualifications**, are eligible to apply. Refer to Article V, Narrative Proposal; Article VI, Required Applicant Information; and Article IX, Submission Checklist for required forms.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

To meet the mission and objectives of CBC, Applicants 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

As a part of this Contract, the SSCC will be responsible for participating in T3C model and must adhere to credentialing requirements in support of the current system to the T3C model. 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.

T3C is anticipated to be fully implemented by September 2027. 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](#).

This RFA contains the requirements that all Applicants 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, DFPS 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. More specific standards are listed in [Exhibit H, Performance Measures](#).

2.9 STANDARDS

The SSCC must comply with the requirements applicable to this funding source cited in the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* [eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 200 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#), the [Texas Grant Management Standards \(TxGMS\)](#), and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

The SSCC 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, the SSCC 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
P.O. Box 13247, Mail Code: 1560
Austin, TX 78711
Phone Toll Free (888) 388-6332
Phone: (512) 438-4313
Fax: (512) 438-5885

The SSCC 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.

The SSCC 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.

The SSCC will be required to submit an updated version of the SSCC 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 SSCC's readiness. An updated SSCC Management Plan is due at least 45 Calendar Days prior to entering a new Stage of Implementation for DFPS approval.

2.10 DATA SECURITY

By entering into a Grant Agreement with DFPS as a result of this Solicitation, Applicant agrees to be bound by the Contractor Information Security Requirements found in **Exhibit B. DFPS SSCC 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 Applicant 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
Date of Release Posted to HHS Grants RFA website and ESBD	August 31, 2026
Applicant Conference Attendance is Optional	September 3, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Request for Clarification	September 7, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Request for Clarification to be Posted	September 21, 2026
Deadline for Submission of Applications [NOTE: Responses must be RECEIVED by HHSC by the deadline.]	September 29, 2026 by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Contract Start Date	March 2027

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 and [HHS Grants RFA](#) website any dates listed after the Deadline for Submission of Applications 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 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 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](#), and the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website. It is the responsibility of

Applicant 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, Point of Contact** as soon as possible so corrective Addenda may be furnished to prospective Applicants.

3.4 INQUIRIES

3.4.1 Point of Contact

Interested Applicants 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	John Norton
Title	Grant Specialist, HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services
Address	Procurement and Contracting Services Building 1100 W 49th St. MC: 2020 Austin, TX 78756
Phone	(512) 776-6140
Email	John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov

3.4.2 Prohibited Communications

All communications between Applicants and other agency staff members concerning the Solicitation may not be relied upon and Applicant 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 Applicant's 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. Applicants' 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 Applicant

Applicants 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 RFA](#) website and the [ESBD](#) website. DFPS reserves the right to amend answers prior to the Deadline for Submission of Applications. It is Applicant'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 Applicant Conference

HHSC and DFPS will conduct a virtual Applicant Conference via webinar at 10:00 a.m. Central Time on the date and time set out in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**.

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 Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1, 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://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/82858c7f-44ab-4711-bdf3-053dd9a9c686@9bf97732-82b9-499b-b16a-a93e8ebd536b?source=copyLinkLegacyShareLinkDialog>

Webinar Instructions:

- A. Click the **Register** button
- B. 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 Applicant's 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 12 or larger for normal text, no less than size 10 font for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- E. Blank forms provided in the Attachments, if applicable, 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 Applications 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 APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND DELIVERY

3.7.1 Application Receipt

Applications must be received by HHSC PCS by the Deadline for Submission of Applications specified in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. HHSC PCS 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.

DFPS and HHSC will not be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHSC PCS. It is Applicant's responsibility to ensure its Application is received by HHSC PCS before the Deadline for Submission of Applications. DFPS and HHSC will not 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 bind 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 Applications provided in 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 completed **Exhibit K and Exhibit L**.
3. 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.
4. 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 Response including all electronic copies must be submitted in one package to HHSC PCS 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.” USB drive must include the completed **Exhibit K and Exhibit L**.
2. 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. HHS0016842
RFA TITLE:	Community-Based Care Single Source Continuum Contractor Catchment 7A and/or 7B
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:	Applicant to provide due date identified in Section 3.1, Schedule of Events
SOLE POINT OF CONTACT'S NAME:	John Norton
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. DFPS and HHSC will not 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 Applications, an Applicant may:

1. Withdraw its Solicitation Response by submitting a written request to the Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1, Point of Contact**; or
2. Modify its Solicitation Response by submitting a written amendment to the Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1, Point of Contact**.

B. DFPS may request 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 Entity Information,” “Narrative Proposal,” and “Required Applicant Information”);
 1. **Exhibit K and Exhibit L** and
 2. 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 Applications 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 HHSC PCS 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 Applications, 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. APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

4.1 PROPOSAL SCREENING AND EVALUTATION

DFPS will use an evaluation process to select the successful Applicants. DFPS may consider capabilities or advantages that are clearly described in the Proposal, which may be confirmed by oral presentations, and references contacted by HHSC PCS. DFPS and HHSC PCS reserve the right to contact individuals, entities, or organizations that have had dealings with the Applicant 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. Applicant must 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. Applicant must be a governmental entity.

To be considered for evaluation Applicants shall execute **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.10** 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**, DFPS 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.

4.4 EVALUATION

Applications will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the following subsections.

4.4.1 Competitive Range Determinations

HHSC and DFPS may determine 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. Cutoff for the competitive range may be based on the "natural break" in scores and on reasoned judgment that Applications below the cutoff cannot be made successful through clarification and negotiation. By way of example, in a scenario where evaluation scores are 97, 93, 82, 81, 79 and 68, the competitive range may include only the top two (2) tentative award finalists. 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.

DFPS, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to award a Contract for all or any portion of Region 7, as DFPS determines to be the best value for the State. HHSC and DFPS are not obligated to enforce a natural break in scores and reserve the right to advance three or fewer tentative award finalists to oral presentations, if applicable.

4.4.2 Evaluation Criteria

Applications shall be evaluated based upon the following criteria, see also **Exhibit M, Evaluation Tool**:

1 Service Objectives and Quality Indicators(15%)

- 2 Delivery Model.....(15%)
- 3 Compliance and General Requirements(10%)
- 4 Placement Services and Services to Children.....(15%)
- 5 Case Management.....(15%)
- 6 History and Experience(20%)
- 7 Financial Process, Systems, and Structure(10%)

4.5 FINAL SELECTION

4.5.1 Oral Presentations

DFPS may, at its sole discretion, request oral presentations from one or more Applicants included in the competitive range. If applicable, HHSC will notify selected Applicants 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 to clarify the scope and content of the written Proposal.

The Applicant's oral presentation must substantially represent material included in the written Proposal and should not introduce new concepts or offers unless specifically requested by DFPS.

Oral presentation, if applicable, is worth 100 points and will be used to determine final award recommendations. Oral presentation questions or scenarios will be based on the main evaluation criteria categories listed in the following scoring criteria using **Exhibit M-1, Oral Presentation Evaluation Rubric**.

- A. Delivery Model;
- B. Placement Services and Services to Children;
- C. Case Management;
- D. Experience; and
- E. Financial Processes, Systems, and Structure.

4.5.2 DISCUSSIONS WITH RESPONDENTS

DFPS may, but is not required to, conduct discussions with all, some, or none of the Applicants 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
- C. Resolving ties or further distinguishing Applicants.

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

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 DFPS for clarification or additional details 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.

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.

4.7 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

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

ARTICLE V. NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

5.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a high-level overview of Applicant'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 SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND QUALITY INDICATORS

5.2.1 Narrative Proposal

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

- A. How the Applicant 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 Applicant 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 SSCC. Include plan for communicating with providers, foster parents, judiciary, and the community.

5.3 DELIVERY MODEL

5.3.1 SSCC Management Plan

The Applicant's Proposal must include an SSCC Management Plan. The SSCC Management Plan must clearly identify all tasks and activities associated with each item, dates of completion, and key staff responsibilities. The SSCC Management Plan should, at a minimum, include the following:

- A. Plan schedule, processes, and procedures for transition of children and youth from the DCA who are already being served by the SSCC and/or the SSCC network (if applicable) in the legacy system to the SSCC 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 SSCC. 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 SSCC 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 SSCC-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 SSCC 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 SSCC Administrative Management

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

1. An integrated continuum of service providers to ensure the effective management and coordination for availability of an array of quality services necessary to meet the diverse and unique needs of Children and Youth in least restrictive settings and effectively reduce the number of moves for Children and Youth in Substitute Care and families of those Children who require services to support safety, permanency, and well-being.
2. Based on the stage of implementation the necessary organizational structure, staff, capacity, policies, and procedures to manage, oversee, coordinate, and deliver all of the following:
 - a. A continuum of services to arrange, conduct, and coordinate the Child/Youth's placement within the continuum of care;
 - b. Case Management services for all Children, Youth and Families who are referred to the SSCC by DFPS;
 - c. A timely array of services, support, and oversight to Kinship Caregivers and Families;

- d. Family reunification support services and oversight to be provided after a Child receiving services from the Contractor is returned to the Child's Family;
- e. Quality Assurance and Utilization Management (QA and UM) practices which continuously monitor operations and services in order to ensure quality services, progress towards Service Plan goals, and compliance with all Contract terms, performance expectations, outcomes, and outputs;
- f. The SSCC must be able to demonstrate the validity of the Utilization Management Process to DFPS as an accurate reflection of the level of care provided to Children and Youth referred under the Contract. DFPS or a designated third party will review the SSCC Utilization Management process and results at regular intervals to ensure that the SSCC is complying with its approved Exceptional Care policy and process;
- g. The capacity to develop and maintain qualified staff that have the skills, education, experience, and training for the services they provide;
- h. A system for tracking and reporting Serious Incidents as well as other safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and mechanisms;
- i. A system that alerts the SSCC of situations or issues that require immediate response, including issues which are likely to pose a threat to Child safety;
- j. Designated Community Area specific disaster recovery and business continuity practices which ensure rapid, effective response and re- establishment of system operations and service delivery in the event of unplanned system outages or catastrophic occurrences. This must include response to situations in all areas of the state or nation where the SSCC has Children, Youth or Young Adults placed;
- k. Create a single process for the training and use of Alternative Caregivers for all Child-Placing Agencies in the Designated Community Area to facilitate reciprocity of licenses for Alternative Caregivers between agencies, including respite and overnight care providers;
- l. A financial system that ensures timely payment, appropriate utilization, and on-going management of financial resources so that needed services are provided within the allocated funds; and
- m. Capacity to collect, manage, and report data on client services, network service providers, subcontractors, hospitalizations, foster homes, outcomes, and outputs.

5.3.3 SSCC Community Engagement Plan (CEP)

The SSCC 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. Include strategies (in the proposed/Preliminary Community Engagement Plan) for engaging the entities listed in Section 2.14 (D)3, of **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, in each population hub and/or distinct community within the designated proposed community;
- B. Describe how communities/stakeholders within the proposed community were engaged in developing Applicant's Narrative Proposal;
- C. Plans should include strategies, activities, and timelines for engaging the community initially (during start-up), during initial implementation, and on an ongoing basis;
- D. Plans should describe how the Applicant will develop, sustain, and utilize the community advisory committee (per Senate Bill 1398, 89th Regular Session) for continuous quality improvement in service delivery and case management; and
- E. Include in any outreach/communication efforts Applicant has conducted during the Proposal development in the proposed community.

5.4 COMPLIANCE AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

5.4.1 Legal/Regulatory

The Applicant's plan must:

- A. Describe how the SSCC will comply with all applicable minimum standards for 24-hour residential child-care operations and with State and Federal laws and regulations, as outlined in **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, Section 2.17 (B);
- 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 SSCC, relevant to the stage being implemented.

5.5 PLACEMENT SERVICES AND SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Applicant must:

- A. Describe its 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 its organization's 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 SSCC services (Stage I);
- E. Describe the plan to share statewide placement capacity utilization within the SSCC catchment area, with other SSCCs, and with DFPS's legacy system. The plan must support and include the process for accepting referrals from outside the SSCC catchment area as well as acknowledging DFPS's prerogative to contract with the SSCC'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 the most recent 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 (PAL) 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 organization's 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 Applicant plans to use to engage the child;
 2. Family and caregiver visits including strategies Applicant plans to use to engage the families;
 3. Permanency planning including Applicant's plan to meet quality indicators related to how Applicant'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 Applicant 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 SSCC 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 Stage II. See **Exhibit G. SSCC Required Reports**, for more information on data requirements for graduated caseloads;
- 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 SSCC 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 APPLICANT INFORMATION

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY INFORMATION

Applicant 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 Applicant Information**, Applicant must provide the following information:

6.1.1 History and Experience

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 and corporate structure, include your advisory board of directors (indicate number of board members and verification that a majority live in Texas), divisions, subsidiaries, 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.
 - 3. Describe your organization's history experience with performance metrics, critical tasks, contract requirements, foster Care Litigation reporting case reclamation, and stakeholder engagement.

6.1.2 Financial Process, Systems, and Structure

Applicant must:

Provide a detailed description of the accounting system Applicant will use as **Exhibit N, 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 Applicant 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 N, Financial Processes and Reporting**.

As part of its Application, Applicant must develop and submit a budget by each Stage of service. The proposed budget must include the methodology in support of its proposed Stage II services associated with child placement, conservatorship services, kinship home development and maintenance, reunification, and case management services. Applicant must label the operating budget proposal for a daily per diem case management rate as **Exhibit L, SSCC Stage I and Stage II Operating Budget Proposal Face Page** and include with Applicant's Application. See **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, Section 2.28, Major Deliverable #5 - Case Management (Stages II-III).

The Applicant 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.

The Applicant 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 as defined in **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**. Fees charged to DFPS must be reasonable and comparable to those for similar services within the proposed community.

Applicant must label the cost Proposal for Purchased Client Services as **Exhibit K, Purchased Client Services Cost Proposal Face Page**, and include with Applicant's Application. See **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, Section 3.12, Kinship Caregivers Grant/CPS Plan (Stage II), and **Exhibit I, DFPS Statement of Work**, Section 2.33, Chart 13: Sample Service Array.

The Applicant must submit all Cost Proposals for Stage I and Stage II. The purpose of the Applicant Cost Proposals is to compare and ensure alignment with the DFPS approved funding provided in **Exhibit C-1 through C-3, Funding Matrices**. All available funding for this Contract is listed in **Exhibit C-1 through C-3, Funding Matrices** and its terms are non-negotiable.

6.1.3 Litigation and Contract History

In its Response, Applicant 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. Applicant must fully describe all significant failures in detail including the lessons learned by Applicant 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 Applicant.

In addition, Applicant 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 Solicitation Response that involves Applicant. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant.

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 obligations.

6.1.4 Conflicts

Applicant 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 Applicant must disclose all potential conflicts of interest. The Applicant 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 Applicant 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 DFPS to successful Applicants.

6.2 AFFIRMATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Applicant must complete and return all the 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 Applicant'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 LLCs.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

8.1 COSTS INCURRED

Applicants understand that issuance of this Solicitation in no way constitutes a commitment by DFPS to award a Contract or to pay any costs incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of a Response to this Solicitation. DFPS is not liable for any costs incurred by Applicant 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, or any other similar expenses incurred by Applicant are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant, and will not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Texas.

8.2 CONTRACT RESPONSIBILITY

DFPS will look solely to Applicant for the performance of all contractual obligations that may result from an award based on this Solicitation. Applicant 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 v. 2.10**, 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 v. 2.10**, 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 Applicant 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 **Section 3.4.1, Point of Contact**.

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 disclosed 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 (5) years thereafter. By submitting a proposal, Applicants agree to not disclose information as it relates to negotiations. DFPS reserves the right to cease Contract discussions with Applicants who do not adhere to this policy.

8.7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

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ARTICLE IX. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist identifies documents that must be submitted with the Application to be considered responsive. Any Application received without these requisite documents may be deemed nonresponsive and may not be considered for Contract award.

- A. Administrative Entity Information (Forms A - B-2)
 - 1. Form A, Face Page _____
 - 2. Form B-1, Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials _____
 - 3. Form B-2, Nonprofit Entity or For-Profit Entity – Board of Directors and Principal Officers _____
- B. Narrative Proposal (Article V) (**to be created by Applicant**) _____
- C. Required Applicant Information (Article VI) _____
 - 4. Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.10 _____
 - 5. Exhibit B-1, DFPS Grant Certifications and Affirmations Version FY26 _____
 - 6. Exhibit D, Certification Regarding Lobbying _____
 - 7. Exhibit E, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs _____
 - 8. Exhibit F, FFATA Certification _____
 - 9. Exhibit J, History and Experience (**to be created by Applicant**) _____
 - 10. Exhibit N, Financial Processes and Reporting (**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, Stage I and Stage II Operating Budget Cost Proposal Face Page _____
- F. Copies of Solicitation Response Package _____

The Applicant 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. 1 Electronic copy of **Administrative Entity Information**
- 2. 1 Electronic copy of **Narrative Proposal**
- 3. 1 Electronic copy of **Applicable Exhibits**

ARTICLE X. LIST OF EXHIBITS AND FORMS ATTACHED TO RFA

Exhibits

Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, v2.10
Exhibit B, DFPS SSCC Uniform Terms and Conditions
Exhibit B-1, DFPS Grant Certifications and Affirmations, Version FY26
Exhibit C-1, Funding Matrix Catchment Area 7
Exhibit C-2, Funding Matrix Catchment Area 7A
Exhibit C-3, Funding Matrix Catchment Area 7B
Exhibit D, Certification Regarding Lobbying
Exhibit E, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
Exhibit F, FFATA Certification
Exhibit G, SSCC Required Reports
Exhibit H, Performances Measures
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, SSCC Stage I and Stage II Operating Budget Proposal Face Page
Exhibit M, Evaluation Tool
Exhibit M-1, Oral Presentation Evaluation Rubric
Exhibit N, Financial Processes and Reporting **(to be created by Applicant)**
Exhibit O, Conflicts **(to be created by Applicant)**
Exhibit P, Litigation and Contract History **(to be created by Applicant)**
Exhibit Q, HHS Online Bid Room

Forms

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

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