

**South Carolina Department of Social Services
Request for Information (RFI)
Capacity Building for Transitional Age Foster Youth
July 16th, 2024**

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS or “Department”) is seeking information from current licensed and contracted Child Placing Agencies and Group Care facilities who are in “good standing” with the Department about capacity building efforts for Transitional Age Foster Youth programming as well as any other contracted agencies providing services to young people 14 to 21.

Over the last few years, the Department has worked diligently to develop and enhance a continuum of trauma-informed, family-centered, strengths-based, and culturally responsive services to support children, youth, and families. While these efforts have positively impacted the individuals there are still gaps in the available continuum of transitional services for young people aged 14 to 21.

The Department profoundly understands the unique needs of transitional aged young people and the need for a diverse set of wraparound supports to support their transition to adulthood and independence. Moreover, the Department and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood believe that youth should have the opportunities to reach and maintain successful self-sufficiency during this critical time when young adults take on the responsibility for their future while helping them to maintain meaningful relationships with those who will continue to support and encourage them after they exit foster care.

Recently, the Department has received one time funding to invest in the development and implementation of support services targeting improved transitional outcomes, strengthen stability and success for teens and older youth with foster care experience. It is through this request for information that the Department and its community partners will be able to explore, assess, build, and align service arrays to improve transitional success outcomes for youth and young adults with foster care experience.

By strategically investing in our current providers, we can support them in taking innovative approaches that will help promote stability and support young people transitioning from foster care in achieving self-sufficiency and long-term independence.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

This RFI is an information gathering and market research tool, not a formal solicitation to fulfill a specific requirement (such as in a “Request for Proposals” document) and therefore, no contract will be awarded by the SCDSS from this RFI. However, SCDSS may use the information gathered from submissions to this RFI to develop capacity building grants for transitional age foster youth with the goal of achieving the changes described in section 1 of this RFI.

General Information

In an effort to support the Department’s implementation of the Transition Services and Support Division, the Department is soliciting responses from established providers who are interested in becoming a partner in accordance with the provisions contained herein. The responses must be focused on improving transitional services and support for youth and young adults who are or have been in foster care aged 14- until their 21st birthday. More than one activity outlined below may be included in the response.

Describe in detail information about all activities which are included in the response.

- A.1. Professional Development/Training
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, staff training that are youth focused and strengths based.
- A.2. Consultation Services
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, transitional age focus program exploration, development, and implementation to improve policy, practice, and procedure.
- A.3. Youth Leadership and Development
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, creating, and maintaining Youth Engagement Advocates (YEA!) chapters. YEA! chapters are youth led and youth driven advisory and advocacy groups for transitional aged youth with foster care experience.
- A.4. Housing Service Array
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, Supervised Independent Living, Transitional Programs, Housing Education, and Home Management.
- A.5. Life Skills Development
- A.6. Academic Secondary Support (through Highschool/GED)
- A.7. Post Secondary Education Support (College or Vocational Training)
- A.8. Career preparation/employment readiness activities
- A.9. Mentoring/Life Coaching
- A.10. Financial Literacy
- A.11. Cultural and Personal Identity
 - Examples include but are not limited to minority populations. This is to include LGBTQIA+, English as second language, minority racial groups.
- A.12. Services and supports for youth with physical, behavioral, mental, and well-being needs.
- A.13. Parenting and Parenthood Support and Skill Development
- A.14. Health education and risk prevention
- A.15. Transportation ownership
- A.16. Supportive Relationships
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, strengthening Sibling Connections and Community Connections.

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to seek information for exploratory purposes.

Program Description

- A.1. Describe your agency's plan to successfully implement the activities and services related to this RFI.
- A.2. Describe your agency's collaboration with existing service providers, community stakeholders, SCDS, and how working collaboratively with other community agencies will support the activities proposed.
- A.3. Describe your strategies to promote self-sufficiency and youth engagement in services and supports.
- A.4. To ensure meaningful youth partnership, describe your plan to identify a young person who will be a direct recipient of proposed services and changes and plan to include their feedback into implementation groups, planning meetings, and review of progress.
- A.5. Describe and identify the service development needs and barriers in the community and how your agency will work collaboratively to build and enhance necessary structures, support, goods, and services.

Components, Functions and Budget

Describe in detail the components, functions, and budget:

- A.1. Describe the system your agency will use to collect demographic and services- provided data and evaluate its success in responding to the identified needs of the youth served and providing cost-effective services.
- A.2. Describe how you will track outcomes of young people who receive the services you have described in your response.
- A.3. Describe how your organization will approach continuous quality improvement and how you will measure the results.
- A.4. Describe in detail the specific costs associated with each proposed activity.
- A.5. Describe the budget for services and support by listing an itemized amount for all activities.

AMENDMENTS

ALL CHANGES TO THIS RFI WILL BE MADE BY THE SCDSS PROCUREMENT OFFICE IN THE FORM OF WRITTEN AMENDMENTS THAT WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THIS DOCUMENT. AMENDMENTS TO THIS RFI WILL BE POSTED ON THE DSS WEBSITE.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The state shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the contractor in connection with the preparation and submission of any response to this RFI.

All responses and accompanying documentation submitted will become the property of the state and will not be returned.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE

Listed below is the estimated timeline for the RFI. Dates and times indicated below are **estimated** and may be changed at the discretion of the Procurement Manager.

July 16, 2024 – Release of RFI

July 31, 2024 - 5:00 p.m. EST – Closing date for RFI

RESPONSE

Interested contractors should send a letter of interest and responses to the Procurement Manager assigned indicated below. Responses may be emailed to the Procurement Director, Shaneka Oliver at dssprocurement@dss.sc.gov no later than 5 PM July 31, 2024.

Responses are limited to 10 pages for the narrative. Single spacing is permissible. Responses should follow the headings:

- a) General Information
- b) Program Description
- c) Components, Functions and Budget
- d) Training and Support Services

THE ABOVE REFERENCED INFORMATION IS THE ONLY INFORMATION REQUESTED FOR THIS RFI AT THIS TIME.

REMINDER: THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP).

DO NOT SEND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, SUCH AS BROCHURES, ETC. UNLESS REQUESTED BY THE PROCUREMENT MANAGER.