Life LINE
youth & family services, inc.

Adoption and Guardianship Support Services: Respondent Clarifications and Best and Final Offer (BAFO)

Respondent Clarifications

a. Describe your organization's understanding of the needs and challenges specific to LGBTQ+ children and families. How does your organization propose to accommodate those children and families?
As shared in our Technical Proposal, Lifeline incorporates training using the State of Indiana's online LGBTQ+ Practice Guidebook. However, beyond the education and training piece, Lifeline has a history and experience working with LGBTQ+ youth and families, both in our residential and our home- / community-based services. This experience has given our staff an understanding of some of the common issues and challenges those within the LGBTQ+ community may face such as peer / family acceptance, feeling misunderstood, discrimination, confusion, use/misuse of pronouns, and mistreatment. In addition, members of the LGBTQ+ community are at greater risk for substance abuse disorders, depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide. As a result of this understanding and awareness, our staff are equipped to help youth and families explore these specific issues and help build informal supports within their families, friends, and communities that can promote self-worth and wellness. We're also carefully watching for early signs of the risks mentioned above, to ensure the health and safety of our clients.

Another factor that we are sensitive to with this population is that we must meet youth and parents where they are. For example, a youth may not have shared his or her confusion or revelations about their identity with anyone yet. Our staff are prepared to offer support to help individuals move from where they are to where they want to go and have supports (evidence-based practices, therapists, etc.) to address any underlying issues.

b. Are in-home services available on demand to families in crisis?
Yes. In our Technical Proposal we focused on the 24/7 availability of our on-call staff via the toll-free Support Line; however, crisis support is not limited to the telephone. Based on the specific circumstances (urgency and severity), our staff will assess the situation and proceed with the appropriate intervention which may include phone consultation, telehealth services, in-person visit, or a call to emergency services personnel, as necessary to mitigate risk and ensure child / family safety. It is important to note that those staffing the 24/7 Support Line have access to a clinically licensed therapist 24/7 as needed to support this assessment and intervention process.

c. What is your proposed process for assessing a child's readiness for permanency if they are already placed with their adoptive or guardianship family?
Our staff will assess a child's reading for permanency based on a combination of factors:

- Assessments over time
- Reports from child
- Reports from adoptive / guardianship parents
- Service plan progress (i.e., objectives being achieved)
- Assessments and feedback from other providers involved

As we see safety concerns resolved, progress toward goals / objectives, and are receiving confirmation from all involved (youth, adults, other providers), we will make recommendations for permanency. Using a similar approach, we're seeing 88% of families remain intact in our Family Preservation Services program.

d. What would you propose the Service and Prevention plan submitted to DCS look like and include?

We would propose a Service and Prevention Plan that is formatted to include:

- Overview of client, disposition, reason referred
- CANS Assessment
- Risk or Safety Concerns
- Strengths
- Needs and Goals organized by Life Category
- Supporting Interventions (services, evidence-based practices) planned for each Life Category / Goal, along with current status and date last updated
- Signatures of client and provider

The above plan will be sent to DCS and updated monthly. Our monthly reports to DCS will include the services provided; updated information regarding needs and goals; adjustments to service intensity; evidence-based practices implemented; updated safety and risk information; and the results of any new assessments.

Please note that we are open to making adjustments / additions in our reporting, both in terms of format and items included as needed.

e. Who will be responsible for the payment of formal respite care?
Lifeline will be responsible for the payment of any respite care required families referred under this RFP / contract.

f. Will there be in-person crisis intervention or will it be conducted via phone call?
Similar to our response in item b, yes in-person crisis intervention is available. Our Technical Proposal focused on the 24/7 availability of our on-call staff via the toll-free Support Line; however, crisis support is not limited to the telephone. Based on the specific circumstances (urgency and severity), our staff will assess the situation and proceed with the appropriate intervention which may include phone consultation, telehealth services, in-person visit, or a call to emergency services personnel, as necessary to mitigate risk and ensure child / family safety. It is important to note that those staffing the 24/7 Support Line have access to a clinically licensed therapist 24/7 as needed to support this assessment and intervention process.

g. How will your staff manage caseloads with the addition of adoption and guardianship support cases and additional training demands, on top of their existing workload?
Our staff will not be taking on Adoption and Guardianship Support cases on top of a full caseload; rather, they will have opportunities to begin serving cases as some of their existing cases close out and as new staff join us. In addition, Lifeline requires ongoing training from all of our staff, so the additional training required under this RFP will be considered part of the continuing education already built into staff schedules.

Most importantly, we have built our structure for growth and currently have the additional capacity and flexibility to meet upcoming programming needs. We are also proposing the use of a subcontractor to acquire quality staff as needed to meet future demand, in addition to our existing staff.

h. Can you please explain the assumptions used to calculate your Pre-Adoption and Pre-Guardianship Support Services Proposed Hours per Month per Referral for each age group? Also, please explain why the hours for the age 5-13 group is higher than the two other age groups.

Our proposed hours per month were based on the amount of time estimated to provide specific services and care, such as TBRI, CANS assessments, placement visits, completing the Lifebook, and the frequency / intensity of care determined by specific evidence-based practices. We also used data derived from our Family Preservation Services program to inform our estimates.

The hours for the age group 5-13 are higher due to the fact that in that age range, youth become available to participate in their own individual sessions in addition to the parent / family-focused visits, which increases the time invested. In addition, the attention span at this age often requires shorter, but more frequent sessions compared to the older age groups where more can be accomplished in a single visit. For these reasons, we have allotted more service time per month in the 5-13 age group.

Best and Final Offer (BAFO)

We took great care to submit a proposal that would allow us to provide the level of quality and care that we believe families need and that the State of Indiana has come to expect from us. In order to deliver services at this level, we need the necessary resources to recruit and retain the best providers in our State. To reduce the original cost proposed means we would have to also reduce our quality—a move that wouldn't serve our mission, the State's expectations, nor our families well.

As such, please consider the costs in our original proposal as our Best and Final Offer (BAFO). (We have resubmitted our original Attachment D – Cost Proposal and Attachment A – Subcontractor Commitment Form for your reference.)

We look forward to the possibility of partnering together to serve children and families throughout the State of Indiana in need of Adoption and Guardianship Support Services. Thank you for your consideration!