

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth
Residential Programs



Division of Regulatory Management

Terri Miller, Director

March 1, 2024

Application Guidance and Instructions

RFA Title: Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Residential Programs

RFA Number: BSS 03-29-2024 TL

| Key Dates | |
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| Decision Date: | April 29, 2024 |
| Operational Date (on or before) | July 01, 2024 |
| Target Area To Be Served: | Statewide |

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Introduction

To support West Virginia's implementation of a Transitional Living model of care, the West Virginia Department of Human Services (DoHS), Bureau for Social Services (BSS), is soliciting applications from West Virginia's licensed residential treatment providers interested in converting 38 beds to a transitional living for vulnerable youth residential program in accordance with the provisions contained herein.

The program should serve a maximum of 10 youth in one cottage. The program will provide transitional living services which includes the development of permanent connections and permanency services for males and females between the ages of 17 and 21 who cannot be served in their own homes or other community-based settings. Single occupancy bedrooms are not required. However, preference will be given to proposals which indicate single occupancy bedrooms; a maximum of two youth per bedroom will be considered.

The organization will be responsible for the development and implementation of the new transitional living for vulnerable youth program. The program will serve youth who have historically been placed in a residential treatment facility to meet their needs.

The transitional living for vulnerable youth program will be part of a continuum of care for youth who come into the foster care system, the goal of which is to allow youth to receive the needed services in the least restrictive setting.

1.2 Background

The mission of DoHS is to promote and provide appropriate health and human services for the people of West Virginia, to improve their quality of life. West Virginia is recognized for a collaborative, highly responsive, quality youth welfare system built on the safety, well-being, and permanency of every youth.

The mission of BSS is to provide an accessible, integrated, comprehensive quality service system for West Virginia's youth, families, and adults to help them achieve maximum potential and improve their quality of life.

2. INSTRUCTIONS TO VENDORS SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

The vendor request for application will be listed on the [BSS Website](#). The Application must contain all the information requested below. The vendor must be prepared to discuss their responses and answer any follow-up questions.

2.1. Submitting the Application

Applications will be accepted via bsscasgrantscontract@wv.gov. Anyone interested in applying must submit an application by **April 12, 2024**.

To request Technical Assistance related to the RFA or documents, please forward all inquiries to bsscasgrantscontract@wv.gov. Please include the RFA Number and “Application Technical Assistance” in the subject line.

Responses to Technical Assistance questions will be posted to the [BSS Website](#) on **March 22, 2024**.

Telephone calls regarding the Request for Application will not be accepted. All questions must be submitted electronically by **March 18, 2024**.

3. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

3.1. Conflict of Interest

The organization affirms that it, its officers, members, or employees presently have no interest and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect which would conflict or compromise in any manner or degree with the performance or its services hereunder.

3.2. Prohibition against Gratuities

The organization warrants that it has not employed any company or person other than a bona fide employee working solely for the organization or a company regularly employed as its marketing agent to solicit or secure the grant and that it has not paid or agreed to pay any company or person any fee, commission, percentage, brokerage fee, gifts, or any other consideration contingent upon or resulting from the award of agreement.

For breach or violation of this warranty, DoHS will have the right to annul this agreement without liability at its discretion, and/or to pursue any other remedies available under law.

3.3. Certifications Related to Lobbying

Organization certifies that no federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid by or on behalf of the company or an employee thereof, to any person for purposes of influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any Federal entity, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of an Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

If any funds other than federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee or any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the Organization will complete and submit a disclosure form to report the lobbying.

The organization agrees that this language of certification will be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including sub-contracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

3.4. Governing Laws and Compliance

This agreement will be governed by the laws of the State of West Virginia. The organization further agrees to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all other applicable Federal, State, and local Government regulations.

3.5. Subcontracts/Joint Ventures

The organization is solely responsible for all work performed under any resulting agreement and will assume sole responsibility for all services. DoHS will consider the organization to be the sole point of contact regarding all contractual matters.

4. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS/SCOPE

4.1. Target Population

The target population is limited to males and females between the ages of 17 and 21 who:

1. Are in the custody of the BSS through a youth abuse or neglect petition, a juvenile justice petition, or a voluntary placement agreement and for whom a transitional living for vulnerable youth group setting is in the youth's best interest; **and**
2. Have demonstrated an inability to function in a foster home, kinship/relative home, or less restrictive community-based placement setting.
3. Have undergone assessment and have been determined to need this type of intervention assistance and are presenting with the following factors:
 - Need a family or family-like setting.
 - Have experienced failed foster/adoptive care placements.
 - Require engagement/integration into the community.
 - Need appropriate adult relationships.
 - Experience social functioning deficits.
 - Current treatment needs can be met in the community on an outpatient basis.

4.2. Program Requirements

4.2.1. Residential Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth Programing

Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth (TLVY) is client driven, individualized services for youth that ensure basic needs (physical and psychological health, food and shelter, safety, etc.) are met, both in the short term, and by connecting youth to resources when they leave the program and teaching the confidence to make decisions, achieve success, and get help when they need it. Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth will:

1. Create a safe environment for youth, both physically and emotionally.
2. Treat youth with respect and involve them in decision-making in their learning plan and transition plan, as well as service delivery.
3. Involve youth in programmatic decision-making and offer other leadership opportunities.
4. Establish and maintain clear, developmentally appropriate boundaries and guidance.
5. Engage youth in community life and ensure they have opportunities to make real contributions (volunteering, jobs, arts, culture).
6. Ensure opportunities for youth to develop positive, supportive relationships with adults and peers.
7. Encourage and support youth to build new skills.

8. Develop and test new knowledge and practical skills.
9. Facilitate supportive youth-adult relationships and partnerships.

4.2.2. Program Structure

The agency shall utilize real life learning opportunities within the community to help the youth develop life skills needed for a successful transition to a community-based setting and adulthood and shall guide the youth to develop skills and abilities to address responsibilities for day-to-day tasks and monitor whether this guidance has been effective or if additional needs exist. Youth in the TLVY are expected to learn new skills, practice them in the program, and demonstrate competency. Examples include:

- Prepare budgets.
- Prepare meals.
- Do their own laundry and cleaning.
- Learn how to access mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment and general medical appointments.
- Use public transportation, if accessible.
- Education linkage, job preparation, and access to other community services.
- Learn to access public assistance including food, housing, Medicaid.
- Interact in social and community groups.
- Driver's License Attainment & Transportation Linkage.

4.2.3. Program Requirements

1. Licensed by BSS as a residential transitional living for vulnerable youth facility and follows all applicable rules within 78 CSR 3.
2. Employ a care manager with the equivalent of a bachelor's degree. Staff in this role will maintain a ratio of 1:10, for a minimum average of three hours/week per child.
3. Trauma-informed organizational structure.
4. Small group cottage structure, offering opportunities for relationship building and family style interactions.
5. Capacity per TLVY license of up to 10 youth, with multiple cottages operating independently to provide consistency and foster small group family units.
6. The ratio of staff to youth is 1:6 during awake hours and 1:12 during sleeping hours.
7. Discharge planning that includes the youth and begins at the youth's placement date.
8. Staff training on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.
9. Background checks as outlined with WV CARES for employees as well as protective service checks submitted to the Bureau of Social Services.
10. Medication management, as needed.

11. Sex trafficking/vulnerable youth programming.
12. Psychiatric consult/medication monitoring, as needed through an established connection to a community provider.

4.2.4. Trauma-informed Care

All Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth settings must demonstrate delivery of trauma-informed care.

1. Documentation of policies and procedures that incorporate trauma-informed care into all levels of the provider's functioning, including:
 - Training and support to all staff on secondary trauma and resources for support.
 - Documentation of training for all employees, volunteers, interns, and independent contractors on the trauma-principles which guide the Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting's care. Training to be completed within 90 days of hire, updated as needed, and renewed annually.
 - Policies to inform response to crisis, with consideration for client trauma factors.
 - Accommodations to the physical environment to promote safety and reduce re-traumatization.
 - Agency practices that will promote the input and involvement of youth and families in their own care and in program development and reform.

4.2.5. Vulnerable Youth Programming

All Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth settings will provide vulnerable youth/sex trafficking prevention programming for all youth in their care and will include the following elements:

1. Education about sex trafficking, including definition and prevalence.
2. Understanding one's own vulnerabilities and how to protect oneself from traffickers.
3. Enhancement of existing support system(s) (family, friends, community).
4. Development of support system(s) when one does not exist.
5. Service linkage, as needed, for housing, homeless prevention, and educational support.
6. Runaway prevention programming.

4.3. Identifying and Securing Support Network

Finding connections for youth is important for their mental health, growth, and development. It is common for youth to lose contact with their family and connections over time and with multiple moves. Meaningful connections help youth develop a sense of belonging and increase positive outcomes for youth.

The Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting must:

1. Begin family network building activities at intake and involve identified supports in all aspects of the youth's care throughout their stay.
2. Utilize the Helping Everyone/Each Other Reach Out (HEERO) program to assist with relationship building and identification of meaningful peer and adult connections.

3. Utilize Family Finding (Kevin Campbell) practice strategies to search and identify meaningful relationships for the youth.
4. Assess and determine the type and level of role any identified support may be able to fill. It is important to understand these roles may change over time.
5. Build a network of support, including family, fictive kin, etc. Options should not be limited to just those of permanency.

4.3.1 Family Engagement

For the purposes of youth receiving care in Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth the concept of family is inclusive of all biological family, siblings, former and potential caregivers, fictive kin, foster parents, and other positive, supportive figures in the youth's life. It is critical to each youth that a network of family supports be involved in the process, engaged when they are discovered, and included as part of planning for the youth.

Family Engagement must incorporate the following practices:

1. Identify known positive supports for the youth.
2. Develop and continuously update a contact sheet of family, fictive kin, and other positive, supportive adults which includes contact information and preferred methods of communication. This practice will be conducted in accordance with the BSS [Family Engagement Desk Guide](#).
3. Ensure the opportunity for the youth to have contact with family, as well as other sources of support (i.e., peers, other relatives, teachers, etc.) several times a week. A variety of technological tools (Zoom, Skype, Facetime, email, text) for these communications should be made available.

4.4. Discharge Planning

Discharge planning will begin at the time of admission to the Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting and continue throughout the youth's stay. A discharge location may have been identified prior to admission to the residential setting; if one is not identified, family network building activities must be prioritized. Discharge planning will focus on returning the youth to a home/community setting.

4.4.1. Discharge Plan Development

The discharge plan will be created in collaboration with the youth's multi-disciplinary team, including family, BSS, residential staff, the youth's support system, and others identified by the youth as a significant support.

1. The Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth provider will continue with the current discharge plan.
2. The discharge plan must be included in each youth's service plan. Discharge must be discussed and reviewed with the team at each service plan review, and plans modified accordingly.

4.4.2. Considerations for Discharge Planning

1. Youth will be engaged in the discharge planning process with opportunities for their input into their discharge plan and placement.
2. Transition starts prior to discharge, with opportunities for the youth to rehearse and practice strategies and routines and to process and adjust with guidance. Barriers to a successful discharge will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
3. The Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth provider will assist with transitioning the youth to the planned discharge setting and assure all necessary community services are meeting the youth's needs prior to final discharge. Discharge planning should consider an array of service needs, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Medical
 - b. Education
 - c. Youth Supports

4.4.3. Discharge Packet Contents

The Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting will convene a final discharge planning meeting at least two days prior to a planned discharge. At this time, all members of the youth's planning team will be provided with the following written information:

1. Information about the community mental health service providers for the youth, including contact information, any scheduled appointments, and steps to access each provider.
2. Contact information for the Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting and its role in continued support.
3. Contact information for medical providers identified for the youth's ongoing health needs, medications, appointments, etc.
4. Recognition of the youth efforts, strengths, and progress that has been made during the youth's stay in the Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth setting.

4.5. Reporting

Quarterly report with the following information:

1. Number of referrals received.
2. Number of referrals accepted for placement.
3. Number served.
4. Number with an Independent Living needs assessments.
5. Number who had a transition or learning plan developed or revised.
6. Academic Support:
 - Number enrolled in high school or working toward GED equivalent.

- Number enrolled in post-secondary education.
- Number provided academic support.
- Number with the likelihood of educational attainment due to academic support.
- 7. Connections:
 - Number who have at least one permanent connection.
 - Number who need a permanent connection established.
 - Number connected to a family support program.
 - Number connected to an adult mentor.
 - Number with increased connections with adults.
- 8. Employment:
 - Number assisted with career preparation.
 - Number assisted with identifying employment programs or vocational training.
 - Number with increased financial self-sufficiency due to career preparation and/or employment/training assistance.
- 9. Personal Management:
 - Number receiving education and practical experience regarding public assistance (financial, food, housing, etc.)
 - Number assisted with budgeting (with the opportunity to actually have a budget.)
 - Number who were provided assistance and education regarding health education and risk prevention (Substance abuse programs, Medicaid, mental health services, etc.)
 - Number with increased skills in the above areas due to assistance.
 - Number with decreased risk of homelessness due to education.
- 10. Number discharged to a more intensive treatment setting.
- 11. Number who establish new responsibilities this month. For example, paying bills independently, scheduling appointments, working with landlords.

4.6. Timeframes/Mandatory Start Date

The organization must demonstrate the ability to be fully operational by **July 1, 2024**. The organization may begin admitting to the transitional living for vulnerable youth program starting **July 1, 2024**. Funding will begin after placement in the form of a boarding care payment for room, board, supervision, and transitional living services through the normal placement payment process.

4.7. Service Delivery Area

The organization will serve youth from all counties in West Virginia, with emphasis on keeping youth within their home region.

5. VENDOR APPLICATION

5.1. Economy of Preparation

Applications should be prepared simply and economically, providing a concise description of the items requested in Section 4. Emphasis should be placed on completeness and clarity of the content.

5.2. Incurring Cost

Neither the State nor any of its employees or officers shall be held liable for any expenses incurred by any Vendor responding to this RFA, including but not limited to preparation, delivery, or travel.

5.3. Application Format

Vendors should provide responses in the format as noted in the following sections.

5.4. Administrative Data

The Application cover page and Assurances shall include the following: name of Applicant; service delivery area to be covered; Applicant's business address; telephone number; name of authorized contact person; signature of person authorized to act on agency's behalf; and date.

Applicant shall provide a narrative summary of the agency's organization, its size, experience, and resources. The summary is limited to two (2) pages and shall include:

1. Identifying information.
2. Date organization established.
3. Type of ownership.
4. Copy of current license to do business in the State of West Virginia.
5. List of current services being provided.
6. Organizational chart.

5.5. Applicant Capability/Personnel Experience

Discuss the capability and experience of the applicant organization.

5.6. Rate and Startup Budget

The Department will pay a rate of \$271.53 dollars, per youth, per day during the youth's placement, to cover the room, board, supervision, and transition services. This rate is all inclusive. The youth will be provided with a medical card.

6. EVALUATION

The organization must comply with all requirements provided within this announcement to be eligible. Applications that fail to comply with the requirements provided within this document, incomplete applications, or applications submitted after the application deadline will not be reviewed or scored.

A Statement of Assurance agreeing to these terms is required of all applications and must be signed by the applicant organization's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Project Officer.

All applications will be forwarded to an independent review team which will score the application in accordance with the criteria stated below. The organization who best meets the specifications of the announcement will be eligible for an award. The maximum **number of points available is 80**.

DoHS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications, in whole or in part, without prejudice if doing so is felt to be in the best interests of DoHS. DoHS also reserves the right to contact the organization to clarify applications.

Applicant's failure to provide complete and accurate information may be considered grounds for disqualification. DoHS reserves the right, if necessary, to ask the organization for additional information to clarify their applications and negotiate changes to the application.

6.1. Evaluation Criteria

The Application to be a Transitional Living for Vulnerable Youth must include the following three sections for evaluation purposes.

6.1.1 Criteria One

The required information in Criteria One is worth five points each for a total of 35 points.

1. The organization must provide a comprehensive overview of the organization's proposed program, describing in detail the target population (as outlined in Section 4.1).
2. The organization must explain their trauma-informed structure and provide evidence of its existence.
3. The organization must describe the discharge planning process it will utilize, including how the agency will use the youth's transition plan to determine the appropriate discharge plan and how they will use it to determine when a youth is ready for discharge.
4. The organization must describe how they will assist the youth in developing permanent connections and how they will ensure the youth develops the skills needed to maintain the permanent connections.
5. The organization must provide a detailed description of staffing patterns, the proposed schedules for all shifts, and the number of care managers, supervisors, and direct youth care staff necessary to deliver transitional living care.

6. The organization must describe how youth will access medical and mental health services in the community and how the agency will incorporate the youth's choices in how the service will be accessed and where the service is provided.
7. The organization must provide agency policies and procedures relevant to the transitional living for vulnerable youth program and describe the training plan for staff in the following areas:
 - Trauma informed care
 - Ethical behaviors
 - Family engagement
 - Building permanent connections
 - Prudent parent standard
 - Life skills assessment
 - Vocational, academic, transition plan or futures plan development
 - Financial literacy
 - Health care and insurance utilization
 - Crisis response
 - Advocacy to include training and knowledge of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
 - Mentoring
 - Linkage/referral
 - Sex trafficking
 - Adolescent brain development

6.1.1 Criteria Two

The required information in Criteria Two is worth four points each for a total of 24 points.

1. The organization must provide a narrative summary of the agency's organization, its size, experience, and resources, including identifying information, the date the organization was established, and the type of ownership. list of current services provided and a copy of current license to do business in the State of West Virginia.
2. The organization must demonstrate its capacity to deliver quality transitional living services and effective intervention skills for youth admitted to transitional living for vulnerable youth programs.
3. The organization must describe the target population the agency seeks to serve and their experience working with the youth identified as the target population.
4. The organization must describe its history within the community and the collaboration with existing service providers, community stakeholders and the youth welfare agency and provide evidence that it has the capacity and experience to serve the target population.

5. The organization will provide job descriptions with the education, training, and experience requirements for each position delivering services to youth (including supervisory, care management, and direct youth care staff).
6. The organization must outline the way on-site and/or off-site family engagement opportunities will be conducted with the youth's family and permanent connections. The organization must describe how they will assist family/connections participation in the transition plan process for each youth.

6.1.1 Criteria Three

The required information in Criteria Three is worth three points each for a total of 21 points.

1. The organization must describe its use of culturally appropriate services.
2. The organization will include an organizational chart showing how the transitional living for vulnerable youth program fits into the overall structure.
3. The organization must provide a detailed organizational chart showing proposed positions, a chain of command, and a written plan for staff.
4. A cover page and assurances with the name of Applicant, service delivery area, business address, telephone number, name of authorized contact person and signature of the person authorized to act on the agency's behalf, and the date the application is submitted.
5. The organization must provide a step-by-step plan for recruitment, and training and implementation of the Program with anticipated timeframes.
6. The organization must demonstrate its plan to establish, operate, and successfully implement a transitional living for vulnerable youth program.
7. The organization must describe how it will partner with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the Schools of Diversion and Transition to provide the youth with the appropriate education services and support.

7. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

7.1. Insurance Requirements

The organization selected must always during the term of the Agreement, have and keep in force a liability insurance policy in an amount not less than one million dollars, which shall include General Liability, Personal Injury, Directors and Officers Liability, and Professional Liability, where applicable.

7.2. License Requirements

The organization and its employees must be licensed pursuant to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations and will, upon request, provide proof of all licenses.

7.3. No Debt Affidavit

A signed "No Debt Affidavit" document must accompany all applications.

7.4. Background Checks

All employees must have a protective services background check and a criminal background check through WV CARES.