1. **Rationale**

1.1 **Purpose of Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The Lawrence County Children and Youth Services (hereinafter referred to as “CYS”), New Castle, Pennsylvania is requesting competitive proposals from professional agencies that are interested and capable of providing services for children at risk of placement by Lawrence County CYS and their families within the guidance of this proposal. The agency chosen will provide a location within the community and meet all expectations and guidelines set forth by the HOMEBUILDERS® program and its developer, The Institute for Family Development.

1.2 **Background**

Over 150 children are currently placed in out-of-home settings through Lawrence County CYS. Lawrence County CYS is seeking an intensive, in-home program to reduce the need for placement and keep children in the home. Lawrence County CYS seeks an agency to provide a community setting which can provide 24 hour crisis timely response to families at the request of CYS through the implementation of the HOMEBUILDERS® program.

2. **Instructions**

2.1 **RFP Timeline**

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2.2 **Required Review of RFP Package**

CYS will thoroughly review the submitted packages and determine the agencies that meet the criteria of the services needed. The review by RFP Committee will be conducted, and if necessary, invitations will be extended to any agency(s) that require additional clarifications from CYS as to the contents of the agency(s) submitted package.

In the case that they are needed, following interview invitations, revisions, additional information and inquiries may be requested from the professional agencies on behalf of CYS in order to provide understanding of the services to be provided prior to extending an offer to an agency.

2.3 **Receipt of RFP Package**

The Director of CYS is the sole authority to provide the RFP package to interested companies or individuals. Agencies are encouraged to obtain all...
information directly from Director of CYS. CYS is in unable to verify if other packages are accurate. Direct all questions regarding the RFP to Director of CYS.
Incomplete documents may be rejected, dependent upon the discretion of CYS.

2.4 Preparation Costs
CYS will not be responsible for any costs associated with the preparation, submittal, or presentation of any proposal. In addition, costs incurred from the preparation of the proposal should not be included in costs budgeted for the program.

2.5 Disclosure of Proposal Contents
All proposals and associated materials submitted to CYS become the property of CYS and will not be returned to the providing agency. Information contained within the proposals will not be shared during the evaluation of the competitive bid process, but will be considered public knowledge following a formal decision. Under Pennsylvania's “Right to Know” laws (65 P.L. 390 § 66.1, 66.3, 21 June 1957) public records are required to be open to reasonable inspection. All proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process and prior to the time a Notice of Intent to Award is issued. Thereafter, the winning proposal will become public information. Copies of said public records may be requested through CYS.

2.6 Reservation of Rights
CYS reserves and may, at its sole discretion, exercise the following rights with respect to this RFP and all proposals submitted pursuant to this RFP:

a. To reject all proposals, re-issue the RFP at any moment prior to the execution of a final contract,
b. To reject any proposal that CYS feels is incomplete, proposing agency is not responsive or basics requirements of the RFP are not met to the standards expected by CYS,
c. To supplement, amend, substitute, or otherwise modify this RFP at any time prior to the execution of a final contract.
d. To accept or reject any or all of the items in any proposal and award a contract for the whole or only a part of any proposal if the CYS determines, in its sole discretion, that it is in the CYS’s best interest to do so,
e. To reject the proposal of any Agency that, in the CYS’s sole judgment, has been delinquent or unfaithful in the performance of any contract with the CYS, is financially or technically incapable, or is otherwise not a responsible Agency.
f. To waive any informality, defect, non-responsiveness, and/or deviation from this RFP that is not, in the CYS’s sole judgment, material to the proposal.
g. To permit or reject, at the CYS’s sole discretion, amendments (including information inadvertently omitted), modifications, alterations, and/or
corrections to proposals by one or more of the Agencies following proposal submission.

h. To request that one or more of the Agencies modify their proposals or provide additional information.

i. To request additional or clarifying information from any Agency at any time, including information inadvertently omitted by an Agency.

j. To require that Agencies appear for interviews and/or presentations of their proposals for CYS at a requested time and place.

k. To inspect projects similar in type and scope to the work sought in this RFP and/or to inspect the Agency’s facilities to be used in furnishing goods or services required by the RFP.

l. To conduct such investigations as CYS considers appropriate with respect to the qualifications of any Agency and with respect to the information contained in any proposal.

3. Submission Guidelines

3.1 Submission Guidelines

- CYS requests proposing agencies clearly notate all references and include any documentation necessary to support claims within their proposal.
- All final proposal documents become the property of CYS.
- Agencies agree that any and all communications regarding the RFP, the Proposal and inquiries will be directed to the RFP contact, CYS Director, William Betz. Failure to adhere to this guideline may result in disqualification of proposals at the discretion of the Review Panel.

4. Method of Contractor Selection

4.1 Review Process

CYS Director and Panel will review all submitted proposals to clearly identify that all materials have been submitted in complete form. The Panel will review and analyze the proposals to determine those agencies that would meet the need in Lawrence County in the best manner. Agencies will be reviewed seeking project plans that will address the ability to successfully implement the HOMEBUILDERS® program while paying close attention to the efficient use of financial resources to provide the highest degree of service to the children and families of Lawrence County. CYS will also review the actionable work plans from the contracted agency to work in close collaboration with CYS as necessary.

CYS may elect to conduct interviews and requests for revisions and additional service from provider agencies that meet standard qualifications. The interviews and discussions will provide CYS with the opportunity to clearly determine the most qualified candidate and fully understand the range of services that will be implemented.
Agencies responding to the RFP will be treated with fair and equal treatment as a final decision will be based upon the criteria set forth in this RFP to determine the best service. The agency representative listed in the response must be present during the interview process, should the review panel deem this action necessary. If at any time an agency chooses to withdraw from the process, they must do so in written form to the CYS contact person.

4.2 Right to Negotiate
After completion of the evaluation process, including any interviews held with Agencies during the evaluation process, CYS may elect to initiate contract negotiations with one or more of the selected Agencies. The option of whether or not to initiate contract negotiations rests solely with CYS and the County of Lawrence.

4.3 Failure to Negotiate
If a selected Agency fails to provide the information required to begin negotiations in a timely manner; or fails to negotiate in good faith; or indicates they cannot perform the contract within the budgeted funds available for the project; or, if a selected Agency and the County after a good faith effort, simply cannot come to terms, the County may terminate negotiations with that particular Agency and commence negotiations with any other Agency.

4.4 Award of Contract
CYS will offer a contract award on behalf of the County of Lawrence to the selected agency. Contract terms will be determined through negotiations of CYS and the County of Lawrence.

5. Standard Contract Information
5.1 Standard Contract Provisions
The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will be governed by the terms and conditions requested by CYS and the County of Lawrence. The contract term will be for an initial period ending June 30, 2016, with project work expected to begin upon reward of contract and the agreement of terms within. Renewals and extensions of the contract will be determined during discussions following the first term of service, marking the first annual review for June 2016.

5.2 Contract Content
The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will consist of this RFP, the Agency’s proposal, the program parameters set forth by the Institute for Family Development HOMEBUILDERS® model, and any additional information deemed necessary as a result of the negotiations held with the successful Agency.

5.3 Insurance
Agency must maintain an active insurance policy. Proof of insurance should be available at all times.
6. Program – Project Summary

6.1 Project Summary
CYS is seeking an external agency to provide intensive, in-home crisis intervention, counseling, and life-skills education for families who have children at imminent risk of placement using the HOMEBUILDERS® model. The goal of CYS is to provide a service to prevent placement through the implementation of an intensive diversion program designed to alleviate the need for removal of a child. The chosen agency will be required to meet all program requirement of the HOMEBUILDERS® program and the community needs of Lawrence County.

6.2 Project Goals and Objectives
The following description is taken from the Institute for Family Development website and is the property thereof:

HOMEBUILDERS® provides intensive, in-home crisis intervention, counseling, and life-skills education for families who have children at imminent risk of placement in state-funded care. It is the oldest and best-documented Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) program in the United States. Our goal is to prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of children through intensive, on-site intervention, and to teach families new problem-solving skills to prevent future crises.

The HOMEBUILDERS® program accepts only families referred by the state, in which one or more children are in imminent danger of being placed in foster, group, or institutional care. HOMEBUILDERS® is also used for families whose children are being returned from out-of-home care, and for difficult post-adoption situations.

The program should be adequately staffed and prepared to meet the demands of this population. The proposal should address the ability of the agency to provide status updates on a regular frequency and have the ability to provide evidence based services and measurable outcomes.

6.3 Program Reporting and Guidelines
The awarded agency will be required to report to CYS in a variety of ways to ensure open lines of communication and collaboration.

- Quarterly business review with CYS director (Including budget review --- progress to YTD budget)
- Program success metrics
- Quarterly metric goals
- Reporting requirements of HOMEBUILDERS® program
- Under 23 Pa.C.S. § 6311, Program workers are required to report any suspected child abuse. Agency chosen will be required to keep up to date on all impending changes to regulations and requirements of mandated reporting.

7. Program – Project Expectations
7.1 Scope of Work

The selected Agency shall provide a community location able to accommodate timely response to referrals made by CYS. Agency will work in cooperation with CYS and the families referred. Agency will meet all licensing and training requirements as outlined by the HOMEBUILDERS® program and the Institute for Family Development.

7.2 Evaluation Plan

The proposing agency must include their plan for evaluation of services provided. The agency may be required to provide statistical data such as total number of hours of services per child, type of service provided or demographic data to further quantify the effectiveness of each aspect of their program in addition to the data CYS gathers regarding total number of children served, total dollar amount spent per child and general attendance statistics.

The agency will be requested to provide routine monthly status reports. In accordance with the agreement, the agency will develop an evaluation plan that will be communicated and approved of by the CYS Director and evaluation will be provided as requested by CYS.

All evaluation requirements will be in accordance with the program specifications indicated in the HOMEBUILDERS® Model.

8. Program Qualifications

8.1 Proposing Agency

The proposing agency shall at minimum:

- have child welfare or case management experience
- provide bilingual staff (when necessary)

The agency shall train or familiarize staff in the following:

- All requirements set forth by the HOMEBUILDERS® Model
- CPSL Standards
- CPR/First Aide certified

The agency must also be willing to adhere to all CYS guidelines, procedures and requirements.

It is important to note that “proposing agency” refers to the company that would enter into a contract with CYS and the County of Lawrence. To be considered, the proposing agency must meet or exceed the benchmarks set forth above on their own merit. The experience and qualifications of agencies that the proposing
agency will partner with in the performance of this project, cannot be used to bring a proposing agency’s less than required experience and qualifications up to the benchmark. Also important to note is that the CYS is not interested in a joint venture project, but prefers to enter into a contract with a single entity.

8.2 Project Team Requirements:
- **Project administrator:**
  - Minimum education requirements Master’s degree in Social Work or a related field and at least 5 years’ experience working with Child Welfare. Must meet minimum requirements of HOMEBUILDERS® program.
- **Project team:**
  - Minimum education requirement of a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work or a related field AND/OR 4 years work experience working in relevant field. Must meet minimum requirements of HOMEBUILDERS® program.

The agency is required to ensure receipt and provide all background check materials as required by CYS. Educational requirements, training, certifications and experience must be provided to CYS upon award of contract for all personnel assigned to the project.

The agency must notify CYS in writing within 5 business days of personnel changes, vacancies or otherwise noteworthy events. Failure to do so will be handled at the discretion of CYS Director.

The agency acknowledges the need for staff and team members that will work in accordance with agency, CYS, County of Lawrence and all Pennsylvania state guidelines. The staff must represent the agency, CYS and County of Lawrence in a professional manner. CYS and County of Lawrence reserve the right to request review of employee actions in areas in which actions may not have met CYS standards of work. Issues will be reported by the CYS director to the project administrator.

8.3 Project Timeline
The selected Agency(s) will be required to begin the work within a reasonable timeframe following the reward of contract. The term of the services shall be from award of contract through June 30, 2016.

9. Proposal Format and Content
9.1 Submission of Proposal
Proposals shall be submitted on 8½" x 11" paper to:

**LAWRENCE COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES**
**ATTN: CYS DIRECTOR,**
**1001 East Washington St.**
**New Castle, Pa 16101**
Electronic submissions will be accepted. These submission must be sent via email to CYS Director, William Betz at wrbetz@co.lawrence.pa.us. All electronic submissions must be received by the deadline. Due to the potential for large files being sent electronically, Agencies that have not received a notice of receipt prior to the deadline should resubmit electronically or by standard mail. Notify CYS Director if electronic submissions have been provided without written response acknowledging receipt. Electronic submissions submitted after the deadline will not be accepted for any reason, Agencies assume responsibility of ensuring the proposals have been submitted successfully.

All proposals shall be submitted in two (2) parts – Project Proposal and Financial Proposal.

The **Project Proposal** shall cover the technical aspects of the project, but shall not include any mention of fees or out-of-pocket expenses. The Project Proposal shall provide CYS with enough detail to make an educated decision based on the description and detailed plan of action for the program.

The **Financial Proposal** shall include all details as to the fees charged and out-of-pocket expenses to be billed. A detailed proposed budget must be provided, including all anticipated expenses incurred in the program. The budget should reflect actual expected expenses through implementing the program. The budget progress update will be provided to CYS during the monthly update for review.

The Project Proposal and the Financial Proposal should be submitted together, clearly noting the agency name, date submitted and contact person.

**IT IS REQUESTED THAT EACH INTERESTED AGENCY SUBMIT A PROJECTED TIMELINE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM IN LAWRENCE COUNTY UPON REWARD OF CONTRACT INCLUDING REQUIRED TRAINING, HIRING OF STAFF, AND SET-UP AT AGENCY’S SELECTED LOCATION.**

**9.2 Proposal Format**
CYS encourages all interested agencies to submit a proposal focusing on the project benefits as well as a detailed financial plans. CYS discourages lengthy and costly proposals; however, all responses should be professional and clearly describe the potential services to be provided. CYS will base its decision upon the content of the program to be implemented, so this should be the focus of the response.

**9.3 Introductory Letter**
All proposals should include a brief introductory letter to introduce CYS to the proposing agency. The intent of the letter is to clearly show the intent of the agency in earning the award of the contract for the visitation house program in
Lawrence County. The letter should also include a brief background of the proposing agency to clearly define the experience of the agency in the area of child welfare.

9.4 Qualification Statement
Each proposal shall include, at minimum, the following information about the company:

- number of years in operations
- relevant experience in child welfare or case management services
- organizational structure of the company
- formal organizational chart
- most recent annual report to include most recent:
  - income statement
  - balance sheet
  - statement of cash flow
  - an auditor’s report attesting to the accuracy of the financial statements

All proposing agencies should consider the following areas when preparing a formal response to the RFP:

- Agency’s main business focus
- The Agency’s strengths and how CYS benefits from working with agency
- Strategic plan regarding the program to be developed
  1. Program planning
  2. Results measurement
  3. Program goals
  4. Family engagement strategies
- Project team member organization, reporting structures and collaboration
- Proposed services to be implemented and historical success metrics for similar initiatives
- Services currently provided by the agency, noting services that currently provide benefit to CYS and the County of Lawrence

9.5 Subcontractors
Subcontractors will not be allowed.

9.6 Insurance
All agencies must provide CYS and the County of Lawrence a sample of their insurance certificate as evidence of coverage types and levels. The County of Lawrence will maintain updated and accurate at all times for the awarded agency.

10. Financial Proposal
Financial Proposals must be submitted to include all requested documentations for the RFP as well as a complete budget expectation forms for the program start-up and expected yearly cost of operation.

RFP RESPONSE DEADLINE: MARCH 11, 2016
CYS CONTACT: WILLIAM BETZ - DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES - COUNTY OF LAWRENCE
10.1 Proposed Project Budget

The anticipated budget should include:

- Itemized list of all direct and indirect costs
- Total number of hours (at various hourly rates)
- Direct expenses
- Payroll (Salaries)
- Supplies
- Employee overhead expenses
- Employee Dedicated Time percentage

*Note this is not an exhaustive list - CYS requires a complete budget proposal noting all anticipated expenses to execute the proposed program properly and efficiently.

The contract resulting from the award of this RFP will be for a fixed fee amount, based upon the needs of the financial proposal. The County of Lawrence will make payment to the agency following receipt of a properly prepared invoice for services satisfactorily performed. Progress payments may be determined as set by the County of Lawrence so long as the agency maintains a satisfactory review from CYS during quarterly reviews. The timing and percentage of such progress payments shall be mutually agreed upon by the during the contract negotiation.

CYS and the County of Lawrence reserve the right to cancel the contract with 60 days’ notice if at any time the agency fails to meet the terms of the contract.

11. Evaluation Criteria and Process

11.1 Review Process

CYS Director will facilitate the creation of a review Panel to review all proposals to determine the most qualified agency. Communications should be directed to William Betz, Director, CYS.

11.2 Evaluation Criteria

In order to identify the Agency that meets the needs of CYS and Lawrence County, all proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria by the review Panel and scored appropriately:

- **Proposed Project Plan – 25%**
  - The Agency’s plan of action in establishing program in the County of Lawrence and work in collaboration with CYS. CYS is seeking both quality of the plan and a realistic approach to implement the plan successfully.

- **Proposed Financial Plan – 20%**
  - Review of the proposed finances needed to successfully implement a program as well as detailed descriptions of use of funds to be provided.
• **Dedicated Resource Commitment – 15%**
  - The Agency’s workforce devoted to executing the plan in a timely and efficient manner. This would include the proposed project administrator and team members slated to work on this project.

• **Project Team/Personnel Qualifications – 10%**
  - The Agency’s proposed workforce qualifications in the area of Social Work/Child Welfare. CYS is seeking skilled, qualified and experienced personnel to be assigned to the project team.
  - *If selected, Agency’s should be prepared to provide proof of education, training, certificates and background check data to CYS.*

• **Agency Experience/Past Performance – 15%**
  - The Agency’s experience in the area of social work and child welfare as it relates to the HOMEBUILDERS® model or similar projects. Historical performance creating and implementing similar projects, as well as references verifying successful performance, will provide sufficient data.

• **Financial Stability – 10%**
  - Review of Agency provided historical records and financial review to determine that the Agency is currently in good standing to manage a contract of this scope to fulfill the contract.

• **Proposal Content/Format – 5%**
  - Review of final proposal content and formatting in compliance with the requirements noted in the RFP.

11.3 **Interview Invitations**
During the evaluation process, the Panel may at its discretion, request any one or all agencies to discuss, in person, the Agency’s qualifications with the Review Panel. Such presentations will provide agencies with an opportunity to answer the questions from the Review Panel and provide clarification as needed.

11.4 **Agency Acknowledgement**
Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the agency of the conditions contained within this request for proposal. Agencies must clearly and specifically note any terms in which revisions are requested within the proposal. Unless otherwise noted in the proposal, Agencies understand that terms provided within the proposal submitted and agreed upon will be the baseline for a contract between the selected Agency and CYS.
Additional information on the HOMEBUILDERS® program can be found at the website for The Institute for Family Development

http://www.institutefamily.org/

Agencies are encouraged to research the program requirements before submitting proposals.