

RFQ: #3 Triage Foster Care



Saint Francis
MINISTRIES

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SECTION I

A. **Introduction**

- B. SFM is dedicated to providing services to children and families involved in the child welfare system in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner possible. Services offered are based on family voice and choice and designed to give children and families the opportunity to safely preserve their family whenever possible, engage with both formal and informal community resources, strengthen parents' protective capacity in order to keep children safe from harm, meet the needs of children and families as identified through the assessment process, be culturally humble, and include parents, siblings, and extended family.

SFM continuum of services includes prevention activities, coordination and services that focus on the safety, health and wellbeing of the child, parental and sibling engagement, family voice and choice in service provision, respite, independent living, adoption, domestic violence, safety, mental health, substance abuse and treatment services, as well as educational initiatives. These services are provided to children and families by Saint Francis personnel or through sub-contracted vendors. Specifically, Saint Francis is seeking providers whom are able and/or willing to provide services through the provision Well-Supported, Supported, and Promising Practice evidence-based models that strengthen families and build protective factors in families, in compliance with the federal Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (H.R. 1892). Additionally, the Subrecipients will ensure services are culturally humble, trauma-informed, and engage and support the biological/legal parents in the process of family preservation or reunification.

Saint Francis is issuing this **Request for Qualifications (RFQ) #3** in order to qualify Providers to deliver **Triage Foster Care** to children and families throughout the Eastern Service Area. The Service Description detailed in this RFQ contains the mandatory minimum requirements Providers must meet in order to provide this service.

The subaward will be for the initial period of July 1, 2021 through February 28, 2023. Saint Francis reserves the right to extend the period of this subaward beyond the termination date when mutually agreeable to the Parties. The resulting subaward may not be an exclusive subaward as Saint Francis reserves the right to subaward for the same or similar services from other sources now or in the future. Under federal law, the resulting contract awarded will also be a "subaward", and the Contractor will also be a "subrecipient".

C. **Evaluation**

Responses will be evaluated based upon the criteria outlined in Section 3 of this document and scored accordingly. Providers' scores that meet the minimum standards set by Saint Francis will be presented with a contract and an offer to Join the Saint Francis Provider Network.

Contracts may be entered into with those Qualified Providers whose submissions are the highest scoring, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth herein. Saint Francis reserves the right to contact individual references and to consider other sources of information to determine evaluation scores.

Saint Francis may reject any or all responses or parts thereof and/or cancel this RFP and re-solicit, if such an action is in Saint Francis' best interest. Saint Francis may waive informalities and minor irregularities on responses received. This RFQ does not commit Saint Francis to award any contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of responses.

SECTION II

A. Necessary Documents

Providers who wish to submit a response shall complete all necessary documentation as identified in Section 4 of this RFQ.

B. Specifications

The specifications included in this RFQ provide adequate information as to whether or not Provider can meet the needs of Saint Francis. Deviations from the specifications may result in lower scores or be grounds for disqualification.

C. Questions

Saint Francis believes this RFQ contains sufficient information to respond however will allow Providers to submit questions according to the Procurement Schedule in Section 4.

D. Provider Certification

By submission of a response, Provider certifies that Provider has neither paid nor agreed to pay any person, other than a bona fide employee, a fee or a brokerage resulting from the award of the contract.

E. Preparation of the Response

Providers are expected to examine all service requirements, rules, documents, forms, specifications, standard provisions, instructions, and review its response for accuracy before submitting its response: Failure to do so may result in lower scores or be grounds for disqualification.

F. Response Requirements

Responses should be completed and submitted electronically to ProviderRelationsNEESA@saintfrancisministries.org, hand delivered, or sent via certified mail Addressed to Saint Francis 9218 Bedford Ave Omaha, NE 68134 for Appendix A, Appendix B, and Letters of Recommendation.

Copies of the forms for Appendix A and Appendix B can be found on the Saint Francis Website.

SECTION III

RESPONSE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responses will be evaluated through in depth analysis and will be based on the following criteria:

1. Provider's demonstration of understanding the Service Description requirements. (max of 30 points)
2. Provider's demonstration of experience, knowledge and education (or a combination thereof) in the following: (max of 30 points)
 - Family engagement
 - Wraparound principles
 - Trauma informed care
 - Skill training with directed practice
 - Engaging ongoing support in natural communities
 - Community resources and ability to collaborate
 - Child development
 - Skill building
 - Ability to incorporate FFPSA models
3. Provider's demonstration of experience with child welfare-involved youth and coaching and skill building in order to effect positive outcomes for youth and families. (max 30 points)
4. Provider's Rate Proposal (30 points)
5. Provider's Letters of Recommendation, reputation, professionalism, and completeness of response to this RFQ. (max 18 points)

The total possible scoring points per scorer is 138. There are 5 scorers and the total possible points is 540. Providers must score a minimum of 690 points to become a Qualified Provider for **Triage Foster Care**.

SECTION IV

TIMELINE/SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTS

A. Timeline

1. Provider Submittal Documents are due no later than 4:00 p.m. Central Standard Time ~~April 23, 2021~~ **May 14, 2021**.
2. Responses will be evaluated from ~~April 26, 2021~~ **May 14, 2021** through ~~May 7, 2021~~ **May 21 2021**. During this time, Saint Francis may require Provider to accommodate further discussions with evaluation team. Provider will be notified in writing or by phone if this is requested.
3. Discussion may be conducted with Provider(s) for the purpose of clarifying responses to ensure the evaluation team has a full understanding of the responses to this RFQ. In conducting discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any information derived from responses submitted by competing Providers. However, once this competitive procurement process is complete, all records and associated contracts are considered public record and may be released to third parties upon appropriately submitted public records request(s). Saint Francis reserves the right to conduct discussion if determined necessary. Discussions shall not constitute a contract award nor shall they confer any property rights on a Provider. Ward may be made without discussions, therefore, offers shall be submitted complete and on most favorable terms.
4. Providers selected to provide **Triage Foster Care** will be contacted by end of business on ~~May 1, 2021~~ **May 21, 2021**.
5. Providers not selected to provide the services, but that meet the minimum score threshold, are put on the Qualified Provider Listing and will remain on that Listing for the full RFQ cycle. Should there be a need for additional Providers to provide **Triage Foster Care** a Qualified Provider will be contacted, unless a Qualified Provider is unavailable for that service in ESA.

B. **Submittal Documents**

- a. Appendix A – Submittal Letter and Provider Profile
 - i. Appendix A is required by each provider. Provider will include a list of all services provider is seeking a contract for. This document is only required once per provider regardless of the amount of services the provider is seeking to contract for.
- b. Appendix B – Services Response Form
 - i. Appendix B is required for each individual service provider is seeking a contract for.
- c. Letters of Recommendation
 - i. Each provider requires three letters of recommendation. No specific format is required however the response should support the provider's ability to provide the service(s).

C. **Responses must utilize the printed Submittal Forms (do not submit handwritten forms) located on the Saint Francis website.**

1. Email submittal documents with the following attachments to:
 - a. Electronic submissions must be sent in the pdf. Format.
 - b. The Subject Line in the email for submissions must include the name of the Organization and Procurement April 2021. (e.g. ABC Company – Procurement April 2021).

- c. Submittal documents should be attached to the email and named pursuant to the naming conventions listed below.
 - Appendix A Submittal Letter and Profile: Providername-AppendixA.pdf
 - Appendix B-Service Response Form(s): Providername-AppendixB.pdf
 - 3 References: Providername-References.pdf

Example: When ABC Company responds to this RFQ, the Provider shall attach the following submittal documents to the email:

1. ABCCounseling-AppendixA.pdf
 2. ABCCounseling-AppendixB.pdf
 3. ABCCounseling-Recommendations.pdf
- 2. If submitting documents via hand delivery or certified mail, utilize the following instructions:
 - a. Ensure all documents are in the following order
 - i. Appendix A Provider Submittal Letter and Profile
 - ii. Appendix B-Service Response Form(s)
 - iii. Three (3) Professional Letters of Recommendation
 - b. Ensure all documents are submitted at the same time.

SECTION V

Triage Foster Care Service Appendix

DEFINITION

Triage Foster Care is designed to provide youth with a safe, home-like environment while an ongoing placement is being identified. The Triage Foster Care service must be provided in a licensed foster home, but is intended for short-term stays while an appropriate short-term or ongoing placement is identified. Contractor will ensure that this service and all interventions will be provided with a culturally humble and trauma-informed approach.

The Contractor will provide a staffing ratio consistent with all applicable licensing and public health requirements, the unique supervision and safety needs of youth, as well as their basic needs to include food, personal hygiene and shelter. Triage Foster Care will ensure that youth are supervised and monitored at all times, to include an awake staff or foster parent, 24 hours per day when youth are in service. The Contractor will provide support for youth utilizing Triage Foster Care, to include being readily accessible and responsive in meeting their needs, intervening as necessary to stabilize crisis episodes, and being available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week including holidays and weekends. The Contractor will adhere to the Safety Plan and any support plan in place for the youth referred. If transportation is provided the service will adhere to all relevant safety standards, licensing standards, and provisions of the child welfare services agreement.

Support of foster parent(s) will include ongoing communication that will be delivered by phone, email, or text message and will include being available to foster parents 24 hours a day, 7 days per week including holidays and weekends.

Support of foster parent(s) shall also include transporting foster children when the foster parent(s) are unable to do so, or ensuring that foster children are transported, to their currently enrolled school, to activities, and to services as needed. The Contractor shall transport foster children at no additional cost to Saint Francis.

As part of supporting the foster parent(s), the Contractor shall communicate all known information about the child to the foster parent(s), including information regarding the child found on the referral for placement. The Contractor shall assist and support the foster parent(s) in making contact with the child's parent(s) from whom the child was removed, within 24 hours of being made aware of the placement into the foster home, to connect and initiate building an alliance to promote the child's well-being. If Saint Francis determined there was a safety reason or some other reason that this contact should not occur, Saint Francis will share that determination with the agency and contact pursuant to this section will not be required. The Contractor shall also provide input to planning processes for youth in placement (i.e. Family Team Meetings, Independent Living Plans and preparation of Case Plans and Court Reports, as well as attend Family Team Meetings), when requested by Saint Francis or by the child's family.

The Contractor, when alerted to a concern about a licensed foster home where the Triage Foster Care service is being provided by Saint Francis, shall explore the concern with the foster family and provide to Saint Francis, within 10 business days of notice of concern, written documentation on a format approved by Saint Francis, stating the cause of the concerns and efforts to resolve the concerns. If a licensed foster home providing the Triage Foster Care service is placed on hold by DHHS due to placement concerns, the Contractor will identify a different licensed foster home(s) where their Triage Foster Care capacity can be met.

The Contractor must have a medication policy identifying proper and safe ways of administering medication to youth in their care. The Contractor must retain an individualized medication log per youth and have this available upon Saint Francis request.

The Contractor shall recruit, train, license and support foster and adoptive parents who accept placement of, and will meet the needs of, children referred by Saint Francis.

Recruitment of agency supported foster and adoptive families includes active and ongoing efforts to solicit families who are invested in meeting the unique and special needs of the children and youth served by Saint Francis. Recruitment includes undertaking targeted and diligent efforts to locate foster and adoptive families for specific children upon request by Saint Francis. Recruitment efforts will include, but not limited to, engaging communities across the state through outreach and education activities to increase awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children served by Saint Francis. Recruitment activities may include but not be limited to: organizing special events, speaking engagements, advertising, and networking.

Agency Supported Foster Care Contractors shall work collaboratively with Saint Francis local staff to develop a Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Plan that is reflective of the types of foster and adoptive parents needed to meet the unique and special needs of children referred by Saint Francis and who are reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children served in the Service Area. The Contractor shall report data as requested or established through the Recruitment and Retention Plan. The Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Plan must identify specific strategies designed to support and improve the retention of foster and adoptive families. The Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Plan must also include timelines for strategy implementation, and specific measurable goals for increasing the Contractor's number of newly licensed foster and adoptive families.

Retention is defined as keeping both prospective and current foster, adoptive, and kinship families interested and invested in accepting placement of foster children by treating people well, meeting their needs, and providing encouragement and individualized support, beginning with pre-service training and continuing through post-placement services.

Training is defined as the following: (1) providing or ensuring that foster and adoptive parents complete the necessary pre-service educational curriculum required for foster care licensure; (2) providing or ensuring that foster and adoptive parents receive ongoing training to maintain licensure and to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide a stable home environment for children referred by Saint Francis and placed in their care; and (3) providing or ensuring that ongoing training is completed, and that the training is relevant and enhances the foster or adoptive family's ability and capacity to meet the unique needs of children age 0 to 5 years old, and all other youth for whom they are providing care, including training to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard [Preventing Sex Trafficking & Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-183/HR 4980)] . The Contractor shall train all affiliated foster and adoptive homes within 60 days of affiliating with the Contractor, and provide ongoing training on the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard and Human Trafficking, with a curriculum approved by Saint Francis. The Contractor shall also train all foster and adoptive parents affiliated with their agency on how to talk with children placed in their home about setting healthy physical boundaries and how to talk to children about healthy boundaries.

The Contractor shall distribute the Youth Care Bill of Rights to age appropriate children in foster homes as established by the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee within 72 hours of a youth's initial placement into out-of-home care.

Initial pre-service training curricula required for licensure of foster and adoptive parents shall be a model approved by Saint Francis. Ongoing training can be offered through a combination of face-to-face training, classroom training, web-based training, and reading materials that meet the above criteria.

Triage Support

For youth utilizing the Triage Foster Care service who are not able to attend school, or do not have a pre-established day supervision plan Monday-Friday, the Contractor will provide Triage Support to ensure the youth's supervision needs are met, as well as assist in providing interventions to ensure child well-being. Such interventions can include, but are not limited to:

- Mobility Mapping and Ecomaps: identifying informal supports, placement options, etc.
- Physical and Mental Health: coordination of ongoing providers, transportation to/from appointments, scheduling assessments, etc.
- Educational Advocacy: assisting in school enrollment, completion of remote learning work, identification of educational needs, tutoring, etc.
- Independent Living Skills: job seeking, obtaining ID, money management, applying for benefits, looking for housing, completion of Ansell-Casey, etc.
- Behavior Management and Skill Development: improving behaviors, identifying triggers, encouraging use of coping skills, creating self-care or safety plan, etc.
- Social and Recreational: developing social and recreational skills, participation in recreational activities, identifying positive peer supports, positive communication of needs, healthy boundaries, etc.

TARGET POPULATION

The Contractor shall accept and serve youth who are age 10 through 18 years old and who are referred by Saint Francis Ministries on a no eject, no reject basis for their established Triage Foster Care capacity. The Contractor may accept additional youth for Triage Foster Care above their established capacity, and will receive a reduced daily rate for these youth.

LENGTH OF SERVICE

Triage Foster Care length of service will vary depending on the need of the youth referred, and time required to locate an appropriate short-term or ongoing placement.

ACCEPTING & RESPONDING TO REFERRALS

The Contractor shall be available to accept Saint Francis Ministries Triage Foster Care service referrals five (5) days per week during all open business hours. Additionally, the Contractor will ensure on-call staff are available for admission needs that arise outside of business hours.

The Contractor will be available to provide a safe, home-like environment where the youth's supervision and safety needs can be met within 2 hours of referral from Saint Francis Ministries on a no eject, no reject basis for their established Triage Foster Care capacity. The Contractor may submit a written request to increase their Triage Foster Care capacity to Saint Francis at any time. The Contractor must provide a thirty (30) day written notice to Saint Francis if they wish to decrease their Triage Foster Care capacity.

DISCHARGE

The Contractor will collaborate with Saint Francis for the discharge of youth from Triage Foster Care to their short-term or ongoing placement. The Contractor will assist in making the youth available for, and preparing them for any pre-placement visits or moves to placement. The Contractor will use a trauma informed approach to prepare youth for transitions and will collaborate with Saint Francis to ensure a transition that ensures the youth's well-being.

MINIMUM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Contractor shall provide Daily written reports of youth admitted to the program via email to the Case Manager, Case Manager Supervisor, and Placement Coordination Team. The daily report shall include

information regarding the youth's care, strengths, identified needs, and any information that may assist in locating a short-term or ongoing placement.

The Contractor will complete and submit a discharge report to Saint Francis within seven (7) business days of client discharge. Required documentation for discharge reports are as follows:

- a. Case Information:
 - i. Name and date of birth (age) of youth
 - ii. Master Case
 - iii. Date of Discharge
 - iv. Updated contact information for the reporting month
- b. Placement Information:
 - i. Date of placement
 - ii. Name of placement
 - iii. Placement contact information
 - iv. Name of staff member and their supervisor approving placement
- c. Youth and Case Plan/Safety Plan Information:
 - i. Provide a brief progress or lack thereof synopsis on the actions and circumstances enabling the identified goals
 - ii. Provide achievements, positive attributes and/or strengths of the youth during the reporting period (Observed or recognized by the Contractor and must refrain from providing identical information from the previous month. This should show youth progress)
 - iii. Provide observed or recognized areas of improvement for the youth during the reporting period.

Contractor will participate in any and all case consultation processes developed by Saint Francis Ministries, as related to utilization of Triage Foster Care.

STAFF CREDENTIALS

- All new Contractor staff hired to provide direct services to the Short Term Foster Care foster families and to foster children and their families, shall have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a human services related field; or, a Bachelor's Degree in a related field with experience delivering foster care related services.
- Staff providing supervision or intervention within the Triage Foster Care or Triage Support must have a minimum of two years' experience in the human service field or working with children and families and possess either a high school diploma or GED.
- At the Subrecipient's request, Saint Francis may consider a potential employee's High School Diploma or GED and at least 5 years of job related or lived experience to be the equivalent of a bachelor's degree for the performance of Triage Foster Care duties.
- If an employee does not meet the standards outlined above, the Contractor shall notify the Saint Francis Provider Relations Department, and provide the name of the employee, their job function, and education deficiencies which prevent them from meeting the contractual standards. This will be reviewed for an Educational Exception which the Contractor will document in their HR file.
- The Contractor shall have a written, detailed training plan for Triage Foster Care staff that includes both pre-service and ongoing training requirements. The Contractor will provide their staff with access to training in Well Supported, Supported, or Promising Practices in alignment with the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018, from which to establish a foundation from the appropriate teaching. The Contractor shall make the training plan available to Saint Francis upon request.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES

Contractors are responsible for reporting outcome data to Saint Francis Ministries via the current identified process by the 10th calendar day of the following month.

1. 100% of youth served will not experience maltreatment or care concerns that would result in the removal from the foster home.
2. 100% of children/youth in Triage Foster Care will have 24-hour access to crisis intervention.
3. 60% of youth served will discharge to short-term or ongoing placement within 3 days.

ESTABLISHED RATE

1. Hourly Rate: for youth who utilize Triage Foster Care for less than 5 hours
2. Daily Rate: for youth who utilize Triage Foster Care for 5 hours or more
3. Reduced Daily Rate: for youth above established capacity who utilize Triage Foster Care for 5 hours or more.
4. Triage Support: for youth who utilize Triage Foster Care and require daytime supervision or programming provided by the Contractor (to be billed Monday-Friday only)