

LOI Form

Organization Information

A Word version you can use to draft your request is available for download.

The rubric that will be used to score your LOI is available for download.

Project Name*

Please give your proposal a short, descriptive title. This is how your request will appear throughout the PCF grant portal.

Family-focused Counseling for Clearwater

Amount Requested*

The minimum grant request for this process is \$50,000.

The maximum grant request for this process is \$325,000.

If you request the full \$325,000, your organization should be able to demonstrate a *significant* impact to be made from these funds.

Please be sure that your grant request is proportional to your annual operating budget. If you have any questions about how much funding to request, please contact Jocelyn Howard at jhoward@pinellascf.org.

\$63,000.00

Annual Operating Budget*

Please provide the amount of your annual operating budget, (expenditures only) for your entire organization.

\$2,006,603.00

Grant Start Date*

PCF expects to issue a contract to approved organizations in September 2023. If awarded with a contract issuance date of September 1, 2023, when would your organization begin to spend funds?

10/01/2023

Grant End Date*

PCF expects the grant period to be between 12 and 24 months for this process. Given this range, when would your organization expect to finish expending funds if awarded?

12/31/2024

Mission Statement*

Please write your organization's mission statement below. This should be no longer than one or two sentences.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of children, youth, and families. Our vision is that all people deserve meaningful relationships.

Is your organization headquartered in Clearwater?

Why PCF asks this: Given that the City of Clearwater is the funding source for this grant program, PCF may prioritize organizations headquartered in Clearwater or those that have a strong presence in the City.

No

Programming Background*

Please describe the program that this grant would support.

Example

Peer Counseling Services Inc. offers after-school support groups for middle schoolers and high schoolers. Below, Peer Counseling Services Inc. would describe what its programming is, how its programming works, and who is served.

Why PCF asks this: PCF wants to learn about what your organization does and how it carries out its mission.

Family Enrichment Services provides in-home, family-focused, and trauma-informed counseling and related services to vulnerable youth and families throughout Pinellas County. The vast majority of the clients we serve have experienced trauma including exposure to substance abuse, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, and removal from parents. Clients are referred to us by child welfare agencies, schools, and Medicaid insurance companies. We receive a large number of referrals for families residing in Clearwater. All of our services aim to stabilize children and strengthen family relationships.

Our counselors have specialized skills that make them uniquely qualified to effectively serve children with significant trauma and attachment difficulties and their families. All of our counselors are Adoption Competent, and many have training in evidence-based treatment modalities like Child Parent Psychotherapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Accelerated Resolution Therapy. Our counselors recognize that traditional talk therapy with a child is often not adequate to address their clinical needs and that the most important relationship in therapy is between the parent/caregiver and child. Counselors provide psychoeducation to parents and caregivers about trauma, the brain, and attachment. They facilitate playful interactions between children and parents to strengthen relationship and restore a feeling of safety.

When a child is referred to Family Enrichment Services for counseling, our intake coordinator gathers all of the information we need to get started including checking Medicaid eligibility, the availability of the family for in-home visits, and the presenting difficulties. She then matches the child and family with a clinician in their area. The child and family come to our office for an initial assessment, and then all future services occur in the family's home. Because our clinicians work with the child and caregivers/parents together, their sessions mostly occur in afternoons/evenings when children are finished school and parents are home from work. We bill Medicaid for the sessions that we provide.

We currently have two full-time clinicians and one part-time clinician who cover the Clearwater area. These three clinicians have served 28 children from Clearwater and their families since the beginning of this year.

History in Clearwater*

Please describe how long you've been providing services in the City of Clearwater, and the nature of such services.

Why PCF asks this: Given that the City of Clearwater is the funding source for this grant program, PCF may prioritize organizations headquartered in Clearwater or those that have a strong presence in the City.

Although the physical location of Family Enrichment Services is in Pinellas Park, all of our clinicians work with families in their homes. We currently have two full-time clinicians and one part-time clinician serving the Clearwater area. These three clinicians have been providing counseling services to 28 Clearwater children and their families since the beginning of 2023. Family Enrichment Services has been providing counseling and related services in Clearwater since 2006. Since 2011, our clinicians have provided in-home counseling services to over 400 Clearwater children and their families.

Family Enrichment Services has always been committed to providing high-quality counseling services to the most vulnerable families. The vast majority of the families that we serve qualify for Medicaid either because of their low-income status or the child's involvement in the foster care system. These families cannot afford to pay out of pocket for counseling services, and their needs are often more extensive than what telehealth can provide. Our clinicians support the entire family in their homes in the evenings when children and caregivers are home from school and work. Our clinicians have stabilized family units, keeping children in their homes and preventing costlier services like Baker Acts and residential treatment. They have prevented involvement in the juvenile justice system. They have prevented the compounding of trauma that comes from removal, disruption, and adoption dissolution. Healthy children living in healthy, stable families are less likely to experience problems like homelessness, joblessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and incarceration in adulthood. Healthy families build healthy communities.

Outcomes*

Define one to two outcomes already being measured by your organization in relation to the programming this grant would support. This is not the outcome of this specific funding, but of the programming itself. **Outcomes are not the number of people you will serve, but how they or their situation will change.**

"Outcomes - are specific, measurable statements that let you know when you have reached your goals. Outcome statements describe specific changes in your knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors you expect to occur as a result of your actions. Good outcome statements are specific, measurable, and realistic."

(W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide)

Example

80% of youth involved in peer counseling will show increased emotional intelligence after six months of participation.

Why PCF asks this: PCF considers measurable outcomes to be a cornerstone of effective social service programming. Tracking outcomes allows both an organization and its supporters to know how effective its programming is and helps an organization improve its programming over time.

OUTCOME #1 - 80% of clients receiving at least 5 hours of services will report a decrease in the child's presenting problem behaviors.

OUTCOME #2 - 80% of clients receiving at least 5 hours of services will report an increase in the child's usage of positive and healthy coping skills to manage distress.

Measurements*

Explain what measurement tools you will use to evaluate the stated outcome(s) above. That is, how will your organization know it is achieving or not achieving the outcome(s) stated above? Stronger requests will use a validated tool or method of data collection.

Example

Peer Counseling Services administers the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test before counseling begins, and in six-month intervals thereafter.

Why PCF asks this: PCF would like to know how the outcome(s) you've specified are measured, and if you used a validated tool that has been proven in usage outside your organization. If you've developed your own tool, please describe how it was made.

All of our counseling clients work with their clinician to develop a treatment plan at the beginning of services. All treatment plans have specific and measurable objectives that relate back to decreasing problem behaviors and increasing usage of healthy coping skills. For example, a child who hits his foster parents every time he is angry might have an objective to refrain from hitting others 8 out of 10 times when angry (measuring a decrease in presenting problem behavior). The same child might have an objective to use calm words to express anger 8 out of 10 times (measuring an increase in usage of healthy coping skills to manage distress).

Together with the family, the clinician tracks and records the child's progress on each treatment plan review over the course of treatment. All treatment plans are reviewed and updated every five months. At the time of case closure, progress is captured on a discharge summary and uploaded to the client's Electronic Health Record. An objective is marked as successfully achieved when there has been at least a three point increase in the progress rating over the course of services.

This data is collected by the Performance and Quality Specialist who prepares a report for the entire PQI (Performance and Quality Improvement) committee to review. The PQI committee is comprised of representatives from each program and meets quarterly to discuss data collected, trends in service delivery, and ways we can improve and strengthen services for families.

In addition to treatment plans, clients are offered a satisfaction survey at the time of every treatment plan update. Families are encouraged to provide specific feedback that we can use to strengthen our programs.

Depending on the age of the child, we may use other validated tools to capture progress over time. These include Ages and Stages Questionnaires and Parenting Stress Index. All measures used inform us of the outcomes listed above.

Grant Impact*

How would this grant help your organization and its clients achieve the outcomes stated above? That is, what would you be able to do with this funding that you otherwise could not?

Why PCF asks this: The intention of this grant is to fund organizations providing support for individuals and families in Clearwater with emergency housing and social services needs. How that support happens, and how this grant could help, differs from organization to organization. PCF would like to know specifically how this grant would help your organization and the clients you serve.

A grant of \$63,000 would enable us to hire two additional full-time clinicians to serve children and families in Clearwater. Although we bill Medicaid for the counseling sessions our clinicians provide, our clinicians do many other things for our families that are not billable to Medicaid. This includes driving to client homes, documenting sessions and other correspondence with families, attending staffings and accompanying clients

to court, providing crisis support over the phone in between sessions, staying longer than an hour for a session during a crisis to prevent law enforcement calls and Baker Acts, preparing summaries for clients, and linking families to other needed resources.

Since the pandemic, we have noticed both an increase in mental health needs and referrals as well as a decrease in the number of clinicians applying to do this crucial work with us. We have lost several of our clinicians to new private practices and small agencies serving families who can afford to pay out of pocket for services. The addition of telehealth has made mental health services more accessible for a lot of people; however, the clients we serve largely have greater needs than what telehealth can provide. Along with billing Medicaid for counseling sessions, a grant of \$63,000 will enable us to be more competitive in hiring two high-quality, highly trained clinicians to provide counseling services to vulnerable children and families in Clearwater.

Full-time clinicians typically carry a caseload of around 35 children and provide between 22-25 hours of counseling per week. Two full-time clinicians designated specifically for Clearwater would be able to provide counseling services for 70 children and their families. As children and their families demonstrate improvement, our clinicians reduce the frequency of services, ultimately ending services and empowering parents to use the skills they've learned to continue to manage behaviors as they arise. As children and families complete counseling services, our two full-time clinicians for Clearwater will be able to incorporate additional families into their caseload.

Preliminary Budget Narrative*

Please write a brief breakdown of line items showing how your requested funds would be used. You may add context to the expenses if needed (for example, if salaries are requested, state how that position supports the programming described in your proposal). A more detailed, formal budget will be required if your request is moved forward in the funding process.

Small equipment purchases are permitted under this grant provided they are directly tied to service delivery. You may include those purchases in this narrative.

If your organization will be requesting indirect costs, please include this in your narrative. Note that the indirect cost rate for this grant is capped at 5% of the grant.

Why PCF asks this: PCF would like to gain a general understanding of the proposed programming costs for this grant.

\$30,000 - This covers part of the salary for one full-time clinician. We will continue to bill Medicaid for billable services like therapy sessions, but this additional funding will cover services that Medicaid does not reimburse for. These services include driving to client homes, documenting sessions and other correspondence with families, attending staffings and accompanying clients to court, providing crisis support over the phone in between sessions, staying longer than an hour for a session during a crisis to prevent law enforcement calls and Baker Acts, preparing summaries for clients, and linking families to other needed resources.

\$30,000 - This covers part of the salary for one full-time clinician. We will continue to bill Medicaid for billable services like therapy sessions, but this additional funding will cover services that Medicaid does not reimburse for. These services include driving to client homes, documenting sessions and other correspondence with families, attending staffings and accompanying clients to court, providing crisis support over the phone in between sessions, staying longer than an hour for a session during a crisis to prevent law enforcement calls and Baker Acts, preparing summaries for clients, and linking families to other needed resources.

\$3,000 - This covers some indirect administrative costs like HR and payroll.

Reduction in Funding*

Due to limited funding, your request amount may not be fully awarded if it is moved forward in the grant process. How would reduced/partial funding impact your proposed program?

Why PCF asks this: The review committee that ultimately recommends proposals for funding may consider partial funding. PCF would like to know upfront what impact this would have on your proposal.

All of our current clinicians bill Medicaid for their sessions. Full-time clinicians bill approximately 22-25 hours of counseling per week. The money that Medicaid reimburses pays for our clinicians' salaries as well as overhead costs like clinical supervision, checking Medicaid eligibility, and gathering paperwork from clients. It also covers administrative costs like HR and payroll. Unfortunately, Medicaid has not increased their rates of reimbursement in many years. Mental health needs have increased since the Covid-19 pandemic, and clinicians have found opportunities to work online providing telehealth services to families who can pay out-of-pocket. The families that we serve largely have needs greater than what telehealth can address and often cannot afford to private pay for services. Although Family Enrichment Services has learned how to maintain quality and enrich lives with a limited amount of resources, there are fewer clinicians willing to work with challenging and vulnerable families for Medicaid rates of reimbursement. The impact is that the most vulnerable children and families are having to wait for services, sometimes for months. This additional funding would give us the opportunity to hire highly skilled clinicians specifically designated for vulnerable families in Clearwater.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

No files were uploaded