



Connecting YOUth

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness Federal Project Component 1-Connect to Family and Connect to Well-Being

Bidder's Conference
January 14, 2016



Request for Proposals (RFP) YARH Connect to Family and Connect to Well-Being *Background and Overview*

- **Connect to Family**-Radical permanency initiative to expedite and improve legal and relational permanency for youth in foster care.
- **Connect to Well-Being**-Skill-building intervention that redesigns traditional life skills program in a flexible, youth-friendly, and comprehensive format that allows for the development and strengthening of protective factors and skills at the youth's pace.

Background

- **Adoption and Safe Families Act passed in 1997 to promote safety and well-being for youth in care. This Act also limited the length of time children and youth remained in foster care. There has been less impact on the permanency needs of older adolescents and young adults.**
- **Aging out of care without a permanent family increases the risk of dropping out of school, early pregnancy and parenthood, criminal involvement, homelessness, and lack of employment.**
- **YARH data findings indicated that youth who aged out without achieving legal permanency were more at risk for homelessness.**

Background

- Youth need supports, relationships, and connections that are sustainable and are not attached to an agency, provider, or service. These unconditional supports help youth to grow and thrive and are the best strategy to raising children and helping youth to develop critical skills.
- Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 articulates the need to provide independent living skills services, there continues to be a lack of documented evidence of achieving positive outcomes for these services.
- Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 outlines mandates regarding placements with siblings, youth driven transition planning, normalcy, child and youth rights, and not using IL goals for youth under the age of 16.

Program Overview

- **DCF service and federal funding will be used to support permanency and well-being activities.**
- **Youth in the pilot counties ages 14-17 will be the priority population for permanency services with exceptions for youth 18-21.**
- **Youth in the pilot counties ages 14-21 will be eligible for the well-being services.**

Program Overview

- **Three programs will be awarded, one in Burlington, Mercer and Union counties.**
- **Each awardee will receive \$240,000 in service funding per pilot county (\$720,000)**
- **Trauma-informed, evidence-supported services must be integral components of the model.**

Selected Counties

- **Burlington County**

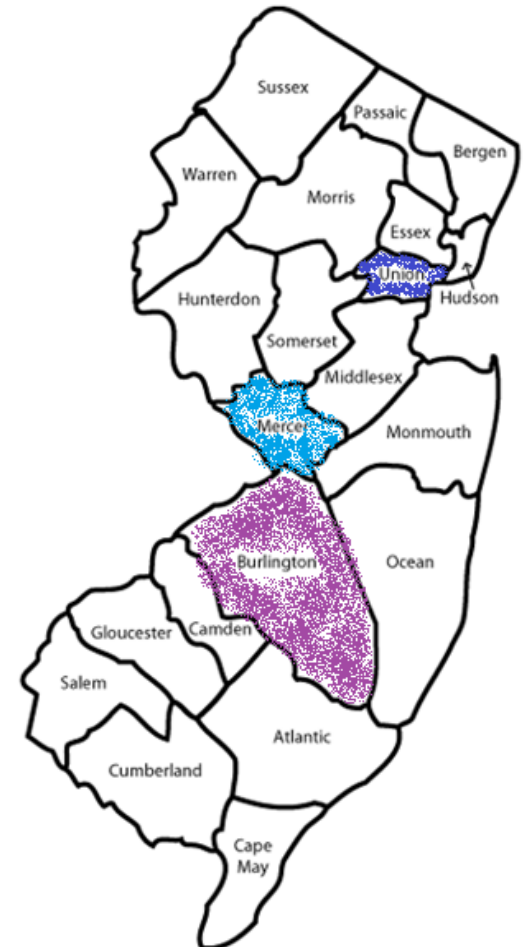
- Burlington West Local Office
- Burlington East Local Office

- **Mercer County**

- Mercer North Local Office
- Mercer South Local Office

- **Union County**

- Union Central Local Office
- Union East Local Office
- Union West Local Office



Program Principles

1. Youth driven and informed
2. Trauma informed
3. Youth Thrive Framework
4. Permanency at the forefront, *always*
5. Racially & Culturally informed
6. Urgent, energetic, and mandatory
7. Accountability

Connect to Family (1A)

Program Overview

5 Part Program Overview

1. **Convene Radical Permanence Teams-monthly meetings with the goal of expediting permanency; alternating monthly meetings (one month with system partners and alternating month with and driven by youth). Review data, monitor progress, identifying barriers and strategies to achieve permanency for youth in the program.**
2. **Conduct aggressive family finding using the six-step family search and engagement process.**

Connect to Family (1A)

Program Overview

3. **Make realistic decisions and expedite permanency.**
 4. **Provide intensive support to families leading up to and post-permanency**
 5. **Provide in-home trauma-informed services and relationship building activities with youth.**
- **Awardees will be expected to use information from the Transitional Plan for YOUth Success (5-43) to guide discussion and planning.**

Connect to Well-Being (1B)

Program Overview

- 1. Redesign life-skills training: provide youth with flexible and ongoing life skills workshops, activities, and group events on a more flexible schedule allowing them to access these services at their own pace and when they need it.**
- 2. Promote positive group identity through quarterly activities to be celebratory and in conjunction with other supports (i.e. mentors and Youth Advisory Boards).**

Connect to Well-Being (1B)

Program Overview

3. Utilize educationally based incentives that promote attendance to groups and activities (i.e. cell phones, scholarships, savings accounts).

4. Facilitate information sharing and resources through technology to share “just in time” information, create an easy registration process for workshop and events (preferably online), and make connections between youth and concrete supports.

Youth Screening and Referral

- Youth in foster care between the ages of 14-21 in the three pilot counties (Burlington, Mercer, and Union) will be eligible for programming.
- Connect to Family is targeting youth 14-17. Connect to Well-Being will target youth 14-21. Youth with a goal of adoption will not be eligible for Connect to Family services.
- Youth will be identified by DCF staff and the Connecting YOUth project team using the “early warning system” on page 5-6 of RFP.
- Identified youth will be further screened by CP&P and awarded agency for appropriateness for services.

Assessment Tools

- **Each awarded program will be required to use the following assessment tools:**
 - **DCF Transitional Plan for YOUth Success (TPYS)**
 - **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)**
 - **Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)**
 - **Youth Connections Scale**
- *DCF will provide training on utilizing these tools.**

Training and Staffing

Awarded programs will:

- **Have Two Full-Time Success Coaches and One Youth Coach**
- **Be deeply familiar with services in their county.**
- **Participate in the County Based Implementation Committee.**
- **Each awarded program will endorse the Youth Thrive framework.**
- **Each awarded program will participate in trainings as required by DCF.**
- **Participate in evaluation activities, adjust program as needed.**

Staffing

- **Success Coaches**
 - **Master's Degree required (social work or similar profession)**
 - **Will provide and coordinate Connect to Family Services (pages 8-11, 14-15)**
 - **Will supervise and support Youth Coach**
 - **Will maintain a Connect to Family caseload of approximately 15 youth**

- **Youth Coach**
 - **Bachelor's Level Staff**
 - **Experience or familiarity with child welfare system and services; effective at engaging and leading young people**

RFP Submission

Deadline for receipt of proposals:

February 17, 2016

by 12:00 PM

Questions

