

Request for Bids #2022-HCS-9000

Title: Researching Provider Solutions

This is a request for bids to design and conduct a research study to identify sources of services and supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who live on their own, with support in the community, or with their families. Individuals and families who participate in the Florida Consumer Directed Care + Medicaid Waiver or who are on the waitlist for the iBudget Home- and Community-Based Waiver, or who have not tried to access any funding from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, often identify and use informal networks of support to meet their needs when they have a family member with I/DD. Even before the pandemic, it was difficult for individuals with I/DD and family members who received publicly funded support services to meet their needs as identified in their service plans. That was true whether the individual and family were responsible for locating their own service providers or if they were receiving support coordination to locate needed resources. Since the pandemic, the situation has worsened. This research study seeks to identify less traditional sources of support for individuals and their families. It is anticipated that there will be a Year 2 of this project that will create and disseminate a manual for individuals with I/DD and family members to assist them in locating people to provide services and supports to them. Included in this request for bids is information relating to the Scope of Work for Year 1 of the project and how the bid information is to be submitted.

Date of Release: October 21, 2022

Due Date: Electronic bids will be accepted until 4:00 pm EDT on Monday, November 21, 2022. All submissions must be marked with Request for Bids #2022-HCS-9000. Please allow enough time to upload your bid into the FDDC's Dropbox. Depending upon the size of the bid, it may take additional time to upload. Any bids received after the date and time set forth above will be considered unresponsive and will not be considered by FDDC.

Bids shall be electronically submitted via FDDC's Dropbox at <https://www.dropbox.com/request/s2IAHQtfYHzSvuEguZxC>

Contact: Questions regarding the requirements of the Request for Bids for the Researching Provider Solutions project may be emailed to proposal@fddc.org and must be received by 4:00 pm EDT on Friday, November 4, 2022.

QUESTIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED IN WRITTEN FORMAT ONLY. THIS IS A LEGAL PROCESS AND WE CANNOT ANSWER QUESTIONS VERBALLY.

Answers to the questions received will be posted on the Council's website (www.fddc.org) by Tuesday, November 8, 2022, at 4:00 pm EDT.

Bid results will be posted on the FDDC website on December 2, 2022.

Cone of Silence: For purposes of this solicitation, FDDC has established a solicitation silence policy (Cone of Silence) that prohibits oral and written communication regarding all formal solicitations for goods or services (formal proposals, Request for Proposals, Invitation for Proposals, Request for Bids) issued by the FDDC with the exception of the formal written questions that may be submitted as described above. The period commences from the date of advertisement until award of contract.

Applicable Laws and Regulations: All applicable Federal and State laws, county and municipal ordinances, orders, rules and regulations of all authorities having jurisdiction over the services to be provided shall apply to the bid/proposal throughout, and they will be deemed to be included in the contract the same as though they were written in full therein.

Funds Available: The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (FDDC) has set aside a maximum of **\$249,900** federal funds for a period not to exceed 15 months for fiscal support of this bid request. The award will remain firm for the contract period unless addendums to the scope of work are required by the funder.

Funding Source: 100% federal funds, CFDA #93.630 from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, through FDDC.

Ineligible Entities: Federal regulations limit and restrict the ability of individuals or entities debarred or suspended by a Federal Agency from doing business with, or contracting for the use of federal funds with, the Council. See 29 CFR, Part 98; 45 CFR, Part 76.

Background

A. Statement of Need

There has been a shortage of direct support professionals to provide personal support and companion services to individuals with I/DD and their families that has been exacerbated by COVID-19. This shortage has impacted traditional service providers including agencies that provide services in the individuals' or families' homes or at agency sites (e.g., day training, group homes). Individuals who receive services through the Florida iBudget Waiver have a Support Coordinator who helps them develop their service plan and locate providers to implement the plan. For those on the Consumer Directed Care + Waiver, they have a Consultant, who helps them develop their plan of support; however, it is the person who receives services that locates and employs those individuals. Individuals with I/DD and their families who are on the waitlist for Medicaid Waiver services or who have not presented themselves to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities have had to find their own service providers, whether paid or volunteer, to provide their support. This research study will explore the issue of locating, funding, training, and retaining individuals to provide services and supports to individuals with I/DD and their families when there is no Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Waiver funding. The goal of the study is to find nontraditional sources of personnel to meet the needs of this population.

Background on the Issue:

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council contracted with the North Central Florida Health Planning Council dba WellFlorida Council to conduct a Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CRA) of state-wide and national data regarding issues facing individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Primary sources that were used to gather information included focus groups and surveys. Government reports, agency websites, and research articles served as secondary sources to provide information to the FDDC members to base their recommendations for identifying priority areas.

The Council's 2022-26 CRA findings reported that individuals who are on the Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) iBudget Waiver and Consumer Directed Care + Waiver may have significant additional needs in addition to those identified on their support plans. The CRA also found that personal supports and behavioral services throughout Florida must be improved to provide the level of support and care required for individuals with I/DD to maintain a safe quality of life. One priority in this area that emerged was the difficulty in finding enough direct support professionals (DSPs) to provide personal care and companion services.

Individuals with I/DD who are on the Consumer Directed Care + Waiver are responsible for finding and hiring their own service providers. If they have a provider who is temporarily unavailable (e.g., goes on vacation, becomes ill themselves or needs to provide care to their own family member temporarily), the self-advocate or family may be left without service. Although agencies have felt impacts of service provider shortages, individuals with I/DD, who are receiving supported living services in their own home or family home, have faced more serious challenges. When their hours are reduced or they can't find a provider, they are often "locked" into homes, and other family members may have to provide the services. This may result in a family member having to reduce their work hours or resign their employment altogether. Miller (Kaiser Health News, 9/28/2021) found that there was a 40% higher incidence of health and safety events.

There are also many people with I/DD who are on the Florida Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services Waiver waitlist (i.e., approximately 22,000 at the current time) and many more individuals with I/DD, who are not identified by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities who may need services that they receive from community home health agencies that also serve the aging population. Those agencies often do not provide training for their staff in the needs of individuals with I/DD.

Seventy-five percent of people with I/DD live with their families. Of those, 32% were over the age of 60 years. In another FDDC project targeting aging caregivers, survey respondents ranked companion aide and personal care aide as the second and third most needed services after case management.

There are foundational variables that impact the availability of the direct support professional labor pool. These include the low rate of pay (many earn minimum wage or

slightly above that level), as well as the lack of a career ladder. There is also a 40-45% turnover rate in this field (Bloom, The Sacramento Bee, 7/28/21), requiring a consistent group of people to be recruited and vetted. This workforce must pass background checks and receive mandated training, which may include Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), behavior management, health and safety, and teaching skills. The Florida Legislature has recently approved a \$15.00 per hour rate for DSPs in a variety of settings; however, other employment opportunities exist that now pay more than the \$15.00 per hour rate.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exaggerated the impact of personnel shortages. Many agencies have had to reduce the number of clients they are serving, reduce hours of care provided, or have managerial staff provide direct service. Miller (Kaiser Health News, 9/28/2021) found that individuals with I/DD are only receiving 50% of their assigned hours of care. More DSPs have left the field, either temporarily or permanently, having to provide care to their own children due to lack of childcare or school closing. They also may not want to have such close physical proximity to individuals who need close, physical care.

B. Project Description

This research study will explore the issue of locating, funding, training, and retaining individuals to provide services and supports to individuals with I/DD and their families when there is no Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Waiver funding. It is expected this project will lead to solutions to the difficulty that individuals with I/DD and their families/caregivers have in accessing direct support workers to provide personal care, companion, and respite services. Research will be conducted to determine how significant the problem is in Florida and perform an environmental scan to learn how other states and service delivery systems address this need. A mixed-methods research project that uses surveys and either structured interviews or focus groups will be implemented to investigate the ways people on Consumer Directed Care + or without waiver funding fulfill their needs for services and support.

Scope of Work to Be Provided

1. Appoint a stakeholder workgroup that will minimally include individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and family members/caregivers who are enrolled in the Consumer Directed Care + (CDC+) Waiver, who are on the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Waiver waitlist, and who are unknown to APD. Other members serving on the stakeholder workgroup should minimally include a representative from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Disability Rights Florida, and the Family Care Council.

- a. Select stakeholder workgroup members with input from FDDC staff. (January 3, 2023-January 31, 2023)
- b. Hold virtual stakeholder workgroup meetings at least once each reporting period. (5 total). (February 13, 2023-March 15, 2024)
- c. Develop meeting minutes and document input from stakeholder workgroup. (February 13, 2023-March 15, 2024)

- d. Submit minutes of stakeholder workgroup meetings with appropriate quarterly deliverables. (March 31, 2023, June 30, 2023, September 29, 2023, December 29, 2023, March 15, 2024)
- e. Issue social validity survey to stakeholder workgroup members. (June 30, 2023, March 15, 2024)

2. Conduct an environmental scan in states that are comparable to Florida in that they have a self-directed waiver similar to the Consumer Directed Care + Waiver and/or a waiting list for waiver services.

- a. Conduct environmental scan of states similar to Florida. (March 1, 2023-June 30, 2023)
- b. Submit draft of environmental scan report with information about procedures and policies other states use to help individuals with I/DD and families procure services and supports at home and in the community. (June 30, 2023)
- c. Submit final report of environmental scan. (July 31, 2023)

3. Conduct a research study including surveys, and focus groups or structured interviews with individuals and family members/caregivers who are on the CDC+ Waiver, those on the iBudget Waiver waiting list, and those who are unknown to APD to gather information about how they find, employ, train, and retain people to provide personal services and supports in their homes and communities (i.e., personal care, companion, respite).

- a. Develop the research protocol to gather quantitative and qualitative information regarding how these individuals and their families' services and support needs are met when they are not on the iBudget Waiver. (February 13, 2023)
- b. Develop surveys for each of the three conditions: individuals on the CDC+ Waiver, individuals on the iBudget Waiver waiting list, and individuals who are unknown to APD. Easy Read and Plain Text formats will be translated for use with all reading levels by the Council. (March 17, 2023)
- c. Develop interview protocols for the six groups: CDC+ individuals with I/DD, CDC+ family members/caregivers; Waiver waitlist individuals with I/DD, Waiver waitlist family members/caregivers; Individuals with I/DD unknown to APD, Family members/caregivers unknown to APD. (April 14, 2023)
- d. Obtain Institutional Review Board approval if necessary. (May 12, 2023)
- e. Implement survey research activities with the six groups. (May 31, 2023-June 16, 2023)
- f. Implement qualitative research methods with the six groups. (May 31, 2023-July 28, 2023)

4. Analyze quantitative and qualitative findings and develop a research-study-findings report for distribution with follow up recommendations to increase the pool of people available to provide personal services and supports.

- a. Analyze survey data and present findings through numerical and visual means. (June 16, 2023-July 31, 2023)
- b. Analyze qualitative data to identify common themes. (July 31, 2023-September 29, 2023)
- c. Triangulate the data to see the relationship between quantitative and qualitative findings. (October 2, 2023-October 20, 2023)

- d. Draft a report of the study findings. (October 23, 2023-November 10, 2023)
- e. Finalize a report of the study findings for distribution. (November 13, 2023-January 26, 2024)
- f. Work with FDDC Consultant to develop a plain text document for families and individuals with I/DD that summarizes research findings for distribution through the Council. (February 28, 2024).

5. Fulfill Council programmatic requirements.

- a. Complete and submit an updated workplan. (March 31, 2023; June 30, 2023, September 29, 2023; December 29, 2023; March 15, 2024)
- b. Participate in a mid-term review of the project. (No later than July 12, 2023)
- c. Complete an Executive Summary with the final deliverable that provides all components set forth in the contract (e.g., overview of major activities, outputs, outcomes, summary and analysis of data, recommendations for future action) (March 15, 2024)

Timeline

The timeline for the work for the Researching Provider Solutions project is January 3, 2023, through March 29, 2024.

Bid Submission Instructions

Interested individuals must submit the following Bid Information by 4:00 pm EDT on Monday, November 21, 2022:

• **The bid must include the following:**

- A signed Letter of Transmittal confirming that you understand the Scope of Work required; confirming that you will be able to perform all the work specified in the Scope of Work within the specified timeframe; and providing your name, the name of your organization (if applicable), your address, phone number, email address, SAM Unique Entity ID (if available), and SAM.GOV registration status including expiration date or date registration was submitted.
- A completed Budget Request Form, which must include the requested FDDC budget funds, including FTE and/or hourly rate information for all personnel and/or consultants.
- A narrative description of your experience in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities including knowledge of state and federal funding programs that support this population and needs of this population, as well as experience conducting quantitative and qualitative research with individuals with I/DD. Include information about the personnel and/or consultants who will be engaged in implementing all facets of the Researching Provider Solutions project.
- A completed Researching Provider Solutions Bid Work Plan Template to include Person(s) Responsible and Bidder's Qualifications to Deliver Planned Scope of Work and Services.
- A sample of a research study report of findings you have developed, preferably on this or a related topic.

Bid Selection

The lowest and most responsive bid will be selected contingent upon a Letter of Transmittal confirming that the bidder can (1) perform all the work outlined in the Scope of Work within the specified time frame, and (2) demonstrate responsiveness in meeting the minimum requirements described within this bid request as indicated through the narrative description, Researching Provider Solutions Bid Work Plan Template, and sample research study findings report. The Council reserves the right to select the next lowest bid if the lowest bid is not found responsive in meeting the minimum requirements. The FDDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids. Verification of mandatory terms and conditions must be met prior to contract execution. No work shall begin until a contract is executed by the FDDC.

Minimum Requirements to Determine Responsiveness

- **Budget narrative:** Sufficiently supports FDDC funds.
- **Collaboration with diverse stakeholders:** Identifies experience in collaborating with and facilitating diverse stakeholder groups, including individuals with I/DD.
- **Contextual knowledge of need and population:** Identifies sufficient experience with individuals with I/DD and their families to understand their needs for support at home and in the community.
- **Research experience:** Identifies experience in designing and conducting both qualitative and quantitative research.
- **Evaluation experience:** Demonstrates experience with data analysis and presenting results in a way that is understandable to the general public and policy makers.
- **Organizational capacity:** Identifies sufficient and qualified staff and resources to fulfill the Scope of Work as prescribed in the work plan and/or narrative.
- **Product review:** Product submitted is professionally written and demonstrates high quality academic writing skills.