



***REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:***  
***EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES***  
***FOR CAREGIVERS***

**Procurement Manager:**

Susan Lowe  
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**Issue Date:** July 31, 2019**RFP Name:** Caregiver Emotional Support Services**RFP Number:** FY1920-CESS-001

**Response Due Date:** August 30, 2019 no later than 3:00 pm Eastern Standard time. Please limit responses to **twenty (20) pages**.

**Information will not be provided by telephone.** Any information received through oral communication shall not be binding on Embrace Families CBC and shall not be relied upon by any respondent.

Please consider this communication a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) for Caregiver Emotional Support Services in which responses will be thoroughly reviewed and used to determine the best-qualified agency(ies) for these services and will be the basis for contract negotiation.

Embrace Families CBC encourages participation by smaller businesses and organizations, minority firms, women's business enterprises and labor surplus area firms certified as such by the State of Florida, if possible. Any entity or person is eligible to submit a response and Embrace Families CBC is committed to an open, competitive and fair procurement process. Embrace Families CBC shall not discriminate against a potential provider or any person on the basis of race, creed, sex, religious orientation, or affiliation.

All costs and expenses incurred by any respondent or party in responding, preparing or participating to this Request for Proposals and any re-submittals, are the sole responsibility of the respondent. All other postings are secondary to the electronic posting on [www.embracefamilies.org](http://www.embracefamilies.org), which is the sole official posting for this advertisement. Communication of any protest regarding this advertisement must be made to the Procurement Manager and documented within 72 hours of the first official posting of the award.

Any contract or agreement with Embrace Families CBC will require respondent's performance to be in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, agency rules and procedures, and CBCCF policies and procedures.

Please carefully read this RFP in its entirety, including Attachment I and Exhibits.

## **A. Introduction & Background**

Embrace Families Community Based Care, Inc. (formerly Community Based Care of Central Florida) was created as a direct response to the Florida Legislature's and Department of Children and Families' (DCF) initiative to improve child welfare services by developing solutions to care for children and families in their home communities. Embrace Families CBC is the non-profit child welfare lead agency charged with developing community-based services and supports for children and families in Judicial Circuits 9 and 18, serving Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties.

We have been committed to serving the children and families of Central Florida who have been victims of, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or abandonment since 2004. Our ongoing goal includes providing the necessary services to more than 5,800 children we serve annually by strengthening the relationships between our families, caregivers, case management and network of local service providers who deliver a multitude of direct services to children and families. We envision a community that embraces vulnerable children and families with support – so that every child has a safe, stable and loving home and a path to a bright future.

Embrace Families CBC has developed a local system of care based upon the belief that child welfare services should be focused on children and families and embedded in the communities in which they live. A vital part of our system of care is ensuring that all caregivers including biological parents/guardians, relatives, non-relatives, foster parents and group home providers have the emotional support they need to, in turn, support our children and families.

## **B. Statement of Need**

In October 2018, Embrace Families CBC commissioned an independent research study by Marketing for Change to explore how our caregiver experience could be improved to ensure that children have greater stability and normalcy in their day-to-day lives while also meeting state and federal child welfare requirements.

The three (3) month research process sought feedback and insight from key stakeholder groups, including adoptive, foster and group home parents; relative/non-relative caregivers; licensing specialists, case managers, supervisors, Guardians ad Litem, Embrace Families CBC and DCF staff. In addition, two consensus-building workshops were organized to bring a broad group of stakeholders together to develop a shared understanding of priority problems and potential solutions. Based on the study's recommendations and new State of Florida requirements and additional benefit opportunities for relative caregivers, Embrace Families CBC would like to redesign our system of care to better serve and support our children, caregivers and biological parents.

The study's recommendations included four priority areas of focus:

1. Increase emotional and practical supports for caregivers.
2. Increase emotional and practical supports for case managers.
3. Improve communications between all elements of the system.
4. Put the "Reasonable and Prudent Parent" standard into action.

Specifically, under increasing emotional supports for caregivers, the following detailed recommendations were highlighted:

- Provide a welcome basket. Celebrate the formation of a new family with practical help for settling a child in a new home.

- Provide mentorship and community. Assign a caregiver advocate and/or mentor before (whenever possible) or immediately after children are placed in the home. Make sure new families know about, and are welcomed to, organized caregiver meetings.
- Develop an easy-to-update, user-friendly list of resources, including support and services available to caregivers and information on how to access them. This list could be housed online or could be included as part of the welcome basket.
- Provide respite care options. Caregivers need better and timelier access to other caregivers who can step in during an emergency or give them a much-needed break. Potential solutions include:
  - Develop a program that uses families who are waiting to adopt. These families are already background checked, in the system, and ready to welcome children into their home.
  - Develop "foster flocks," which are faith-based communities who can provide licensed and trained respite care.
- Treat all caregiver families as families. Support normalcy in as many ways possible, including treating foster and caregiver families as the family unit that they are.
- Develop a support network and emotional connections that all caregivers need. Caregivers face many real challenges, from finding adequate child care, to buying safety equipment, to coping with transportation issues and emergency respite care. Engage caregivers in an ongoing process that incorporates their perspective as problems are identified and solutions are prioritized.

### **C. Purpose of RFP**

The purpose of this RFP is to receive written narrative proposals from qualified and experienced respondents to provide emotional support services to all caregivers in our System of Care located in Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties. Embrace Families CBC is interested in providers with expertise in the delivery of child welfare services who have also demonstrated an ability to improve outcomes for the children and families they have served. Interested providers must illustrate that they have established relationships with local community partners, advocacy groups, non-profit agencies, churches, faith-based, and state and local social services agencies and other stakeholders so that they can emotionally wrap and support each family to promote stability and retention of homes.

Respondents must be prepared to provide caregiver emotional support services in the tri-county area (preferred) or specific county(ies). The proposal must demonstrate cultural and linguistic competency and sensitivity to the population being served. The proposal must be specific to each county's individualized needs, offering tailored services for our caregivers, including: bi-lingual, faith-based, non-faith-based, LGBTQ+, limited income, employment and housing problems, aging and health concerns and other emotional needs.

We anticipate multiple providers being approved for this service, which will allow caregivers to select the emotional support agency that best meets their individualized needs and concerns when they enter our system of care. Caregivers can also elect to not receive support services, select a provider later, or change providers after appropriate due notice.

Average number of children by caregiver placement type over the last fiscal year (July 2018-June 2019).

Orange County	Average # of Children	Osceola County	Average # of Children	Seminole County	Average # of Children
In Home	565	In Home	98	In Home	163
Relative	562	Relative	102	Relative	182
Non-Relative	192	Non-Relative	30	Non-Relative	57
Foster Home	251	Foster Home	55	Foster Home	99
Group Home	93	Group Home	22	Group Home	26

Emotional Support providers will be reimbursed at an estimated rate of \$100.00-\$120.00 per enrolled caregiver home per month. The final reimbursement rate and other specifics, including maximum enrollment numbers, will be determined at contract negotiations.

Responses will be thoroughly reviewed, evaluated and used to award a vendor or subcontract award(s) to the successful applicant(s). The vendor or subcontract award(s) will include required deliverables and performance outcomes; however, it is anticipated that it will include caregiver satisfaction and customer service data. The expected time frame for any subcontract resulting from this RFP will be thirty-six (36) months to begin January 1, 2020. This time frame is contingent upon availability of funds, and agency performance, as well as Embrace Families CBC's continued subcontract with the Department of Children and Families. Resulting subcontracts or vendor agreements may be renewed for up to three (3) additional years.

#### **D. Service Requested**

Please respond thoroughly and specifically to the requested information listed below in your proposal.

1. Please describe in detail your agency's experience, knowledge and skills in providing in home emotional support services to each type of caregiver listed below:
  - a. Biological parents or guardians
  - b. Relative and Non-Relative Caregivers (Level I license or unlicensed)
  - c. Foster Home Caregivers (Level II – V license)
  - d. Group Home Caregivers
2. At a minimum, Embrace Families CBC expects the below type of services. Please explain, in detail, how your agency will provide these community based services:
  - a. Peer to Peer Navigation and Mentorship
  - b. Transportation Assistance
  - c. Respite and Babysitting
  - d. Sense of Community and Family
  - e. Support Groups and Resource Manuals
  - f. Caregiver Appreciation Activities and Special Events, including Health & Wellness Activities
  - g. Assistance with Meals, Clothing, School Supplies, Welcome Baskets and Other Small Needs
3. An essential component of Caregiver Redesign is effective communication and collaboration with all partners listed below. Please explain how your agency's emotional support services will be communicated to them.
  - a. Case Management Agency (primary responsibility for biological parents interactions)

- b. Caregiver Support Agency (primary responsibility for caregiver and child(ren) interactions)
  - c. Embrace Families CBC's Operations, Utilization Management, Network Support and other support teams
  - d. Other Emotional Support Agencies
  - e. Guardian Ad Litem
  - f. Other Partners and Stakeholders
4. The role of the emotional support provider will have clearly defined limits. These limits include, but are limited to: non-attendance at confidential case staffings or meetings, treatment team meetings or dependency court. Please explain how your agency will accept and communicate these limitations in a positive and supportive manner?
  5. The emotional support agency will need to have the ability to assist caregivers in understanding permanency and case goals identified by the team of professionals working with the families. The emotional support agency will be required to support the identified goals of the case, to work with the caregivers to aid in understanding, and to effectively support identified goals as needed and/or as requested by caregiver. Describe how your agency will work to support case goals and assist caregiver in understanding goal outcomes and changes.
  6. When working with substitute caregivers (Level 1-5 homes), how will your agency work to help the caregiver interact with the biological parents or guardians?
  7. Embrace Families CBC would expect all involved in this emotional support initiative to be background screened. Please describe the mix of staff, volunteers, interns or other non-traditional staff who will provide emotional support?
  8. Peer to peer emotional support - including staff and volunteers who are current or former biological parents or guardians, relative or non-relative caregivers, foster or group home parents - will be given priority. Please detail how your agency will recruit and retain "peers" with the unique perspective of having experienced the same challenges and successes of caring for our children. Please detail how your agency will recruit and retain this invaluable human resource.
  9. Caregivers will have the ability to select the emotional support provider that best meets their needs. Please explain how your agency will market and advertise your agency and its available emotional support services. Please provide a copy of a draft flyer, introduction letter or presentation that the caregiver would receive to help in making their selection.
  10. What types of additional trainings or information will your agency provide, initially and/or ongoing, to each type of caregiver to help provide emotional support through real-life parenting situations, including dealing with all types of behaviors (ages 0-21), education delays or school issues, parent/sibling visitations and separations, placement moves and transitions, medical/mental health/substance misuse, etc.?
  11. How will you assist the caregiver in building their individual network of informal and formal supports designed to sustain their family once their involvement with the dependency system ends?
  12. How will your agency guide and provide emotional support to caregivers as they exercise their right of Reasonable and Prudent Parenting; and how will you better promote involvement in normal childhood activities, such as: extracurricular activities including sports, dance, theatre, sleep overs, attending school events on their own (dances, prom, athletic events, etc.), going on dates, getting driver's license, etc.?

13. An essential requirement of all emotional support providers is to provide excellent customer service by being professional and respectful in each and every interaction. It is expected that all providers are timely and responsive in their communication with others, especially caregivers. Please explain how your agency will train staff/volunteers and provide excellent customer service to everyone they come in contact with including during times of disagreement? How would your agency monitor the quality of their work? How should Embrace Families CBC hold your agency accountable, including how, when and what should be reported to us monthly?
14. Please confirm in detail your agency's experience and knowledge, in working with local caregiver advocacy groups, including: Federation of Families, Wraparound (Seminole, Orange and Osceola), NAMI of Greater Orlando, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, UCF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), and others.

#### E. Schedule of Events

**All Times Eastern Standard Time. Time and Locations Subject to Change.**

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	COMMENT
RFP posted to Embrace Families website	July 31, 2019	3 pm	<a href="https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers">https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers</a>
RFP written inquiries submitted by providers	August 7, 2019	3 pm	Email: <a href="mailto:susan.lowe@embracefamilies.org">susan.lowe@embracefamilies.org</a>
RFP written inquiries responses posted to Embrace Families website	August 14, 2019	3 pm	<a href="https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers">https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers</a>
Responses received by Embrace Families	August 30, 2019	3 pm	Delivered in person or email: 4001 Pelee Street Orlando FL 32817 <a href="mailto:Susan.Lowe@embracefamilies.org">Susan.Lowe@embracefamilies.org</a>
Award selection(s) posted to Embrace Families website	September 11, 2019	3 pm	<a href="https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers">https://embracefamilies.org/make-a-difference/prospective-providers</a>

#### F. Response Contents

1. **Detailed Written Response** to all questions listed in **Section D**.
2. **Detailed Budget** to include paid full and part time staff, volunteers and student interns based on the per member per month reimbursement rate proposed in **Section C**.
3. **Presentations/Demonstrations:** Embrace Families CBC may or may not request presentations by some or any of the respondents based on their narrative RFP response score. Should this opportunity become available, Embrace Families CBC will contact you with dates and times that are convenient for both parties.
4. **Attachment 1 Response Cover Sheet.** Respondent's information, which includes contact information: name, title, mailing address, email address, signature and phone number of the contact person for questions relating to the RFP.

#### G. How to Respond

1. Submit seven (7) copies of the RFP response in PDF or Word format.

2. Submit your response no later than the day and time indicated on the **Schedule of Events in Section E.**
3. Submit your response in person or electronically, via email, to the Procurement Manager listed on the **Schedule of Events in Section E.**

**H. Confidential / Proprietary Information**

Do not submit anything considered by you or your agency to be confidential or proprietary. Do not indicate confidential or proprietary on any submission documents.

**I. Attachment & Exhibits**

Attachment 1: Response Cover Sheet

Exhibit A: Conflict of Interest

Exhibit B: Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion

Appendix I: Marketing for Change Report

Appendix II: Embrace Families CBC Caregiver Redesign



**ATTACHMENT 1  
RESPONSE COVER SHEET**

**Agency or Person Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address (if different):** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Respondent:**

**Agency:**            **Individual:**

**Other (Specify):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Person Completing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Person Completing:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT A**  
**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. Do you, your immediate family, or your business partner have financial or other interests in Embrace Families Community Based Care, affiliated entities or the recipient(s) of the proposed services?		
2. Have gratuities or anything of monetary value been offered or exchanged between you, your immediate family, or your business partner and any employee of Embrace Families Community Based Care or affiliated entities?		
3. Within the last 24 months, have you been employed by, or do you plan to seek or accept future employment with, Embrace Families Community Based Care, affiliated entities or the recipient(s) of the proposed services?		
4. Are there any other conditions which may cause a conflict of interest?		

**If you checked “YES” after any of the above questions, please explain your answer below. Please attach additional sheets as necessary.**

I declare that my answers and any related explanation(s) are true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency

**EXHIBIT B**  
**DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION**  
**SUBCONTRACTS/VENDORS**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, signed February 18, 1986. The guidelines were published in the May 29, 1987 Federal Register (52 Fed. Reg., pages 20360-20369).

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Each provider whose subcontract/vendor equals or exceeds \$25,000 in federal moneys must sign this certification prior to execution of each subcontract/vendor. Additionally, providers who audit federal programs must also sign, regardless of the contract amount. Embrace Families Community Based Care and Affiliated Companies cannot contract with these types of providers if they are debarred or suspended by the federal government.
2. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when this subcontract/vendor is entered into. If it is later determined that the signer knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, the Federal Government may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The provider shall provide immediate written notice to the Embrace Families Contract Manager at any time the provider learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "debarred," "suspended," "person," "principal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this certification, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the department's Embrace Families Contract Manager for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
5. The provider agrees by submitting this certification that, it shall not knowingly enter into any subcontract with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this subcontract/vendor unless authorized by the Federal Government.
6. The provider further agrees by submitting this certification that it will require each subcontractor of this subcontract/vendor, whose payment will equal or exceed \$25,000 in federal moneys, to submit a signed copy of this certification.
7. Embrace Families Community Based Care and Affiliated Companies may rely upon a certification of a provider that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from contracting/subcontracting unless it knows that the certification is erroneous.
8. This signed certification must be kept in the Embrace Families Procurement or Contract Manager's contract file. Subcontractor's certification must be kept at the provider's business location.

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**CERTIFICATION**

- (1) The prospective provider certifies, by signing this certification, that neither he nor his principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this subcontract/vendor by any federal department or agency.
- (2) Where the prospective provider is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective provider shall attach an explanation to this certification.

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Signature

Date

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Name and Title of Authorized Signee