

The Department for Children, Youth and Families
Justification for a Contract Renewal Authorization with Parsons Child and Family Center
for the Provision of Clinical Prevention Services with Community and Recreational
Supports

The Department for Children, Youth and Families respectfully requests legislative authorization to enter into a contractual agreement with Parsons Child and Family Center for the provision of Clinical Prevention Services with Community and Recreational Supports. The requested contract term is for January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026 for the amount of \$1,755,365. The total prevention contract amount for Parsons Child and Family Center is \$1,755,365. The Department desires to exercise its first of two (2) options under the contract, to renew the agreement.

The Department, in collaboration with the Department of Probation, issued a Request for Proposals for Prevention Services—*RFP-2024-085-- PREVENTION SERVICES* on July 4, 2024 with responses due August 2, 2024. Prevention programming focuses on either preventing children from entering foster care, detention or shortening their stay if placed in either. Children enter care either as a result of abuse, neglect and/or Juvenile Justice involvement.

The Department recognizes the importance and necessity for the development of effective collaborations in order to meet the complex needs of families and children within the shrinking fiscal resources. As such, the RFP issued promoted innovative, creative approaches to meet the needs of children and families and allowed much flexibility for agencies to propose how to most effectively do so. It does require a formal collaborative, whereas the prevention service has a reciprocal relationship with either a Youth Bureau funded, and/or community agency for the children and their families to have diverse, holistic programming of formalized and recreational/community based services. It also requires that all children in the family that are five (5) years and older, must be engaged in at least one consistent recreational or community support activity. The parent/guardians must also be engaged with a community support activity. The idea is that these supports will remain in place for the family when the formal services have ended.

Many families and their children have been impacted by complex trauma, suffer from mental health issues, substance abuse issues and domestic violence. These children are either at significant risk of foster care placement or have been placed in foster care. It is necessary for Albany County to have creative and strategic programming that intervenes with the family immediately, assists the children and works with the foster care system inclusive of Family Court and Child Protective Services to expedite permanency and increase family functioning.

Clinical Prevention Services with Community and Recreational Supports include: assessment, diagnostic testing, case and specialized therapies provided by a person who has received a Master of Social Work degree, Master of Mental Health Counseling degree or is a licensed Psychologist. Assessment and clinical services include family and individual interviews, contact with collateral agencies, schools, extended family and natural supports and diligent communication with Albany County staff. The therapist meets with the family/family members a minimum of once per week, for a minimum of 1 hour, and are available to the family during any crisis situation. Clinical Services occur in a variety of locations, but the family need dictates this. Clinical services occur in the family residence at least twice per month. All professionals schedule appointments at the convenience of the family.

Parsons Child and Family Center's Clinical Prevention Services Program with Community and Recreational Supports provides comprehensive clinical, case management and family support services to Albany County residents to effectively address the issues that place children and youth

at risk for foster care, residential placement and detention. Services span the spectrum from in-home assessment, treatment, and discharge planning. Masters-level clinicians receive training in engagement and family systems, attachment, permanency, the impact of trauma on children and families, culture and diversity in service planning, building resiliency in children and families as well as innovative evidence-based practice models proven as effective therapeutic interventions. Service providers work with families in their home, offer flexible scheduling, collaborate with other service providers and provide innovative treatment. Assistance is provided to the family in developing a discharge plan, which builds on their achievements, encourages them to stay connected to community and familial supports while providing any needed information and/or ongoing referral. An overarching goal of the program is to prepare the family for discharge, leaving them better equipped to manage their stressors and connected to the enduring relationships and resources that will help propel them forward.

The program will facilitate social and community connections by assisting families in exploring the innovative resources that exist in the community, and help families build a wrap-around network of support. Parsons has developed an array of collaborations that can enhance a family's stability and community connection, which contribute to the collective impact of preventive services. They will create a new Family Resource Center that will bring these resources directly to youth and families in an exciting and creative way. This Center will be a drop-in space to host local programs who offer classes, workshops, and connections in a multitude of areas that will engage and stimulate the imaginations of our youth and families. It will be located conveniently in the city of Albany and house an expanded and enhanced Food and Supplies Pantry to support clients' basic needs.

Parsons will also provide the opportunity for Prevention youth to participate in the PATH juvenile justice diversion program, prior to Probation involvement, in order to mitigate their risk of entering the justice system. This will be an innovative new intervention to offer our families.

This program will serve up to seventy-five (75) Albany County families at a time.