1. Project Title More Foster Families - Family Finder Technology

2. Senate Sponsor Joe Gruters

3. Date of Request 02/15/2023

4. Project/Program Description

There has always been a shortage of recruited, trained and vetted foster parents and the number of children in foster care continues to increase. The Heart Gallery of Florida is requesting funding for a digital transformation of the foster and adoption recruitment and licensing process. Using Family Finder, a digital technology platform created and managed by the Heart Gallery of Florida, the number of foster parent licensing requests in 2020 - 2022 increased by more than 300% above the Community Based Care lead agency's (CBCs) traditional recruitment methods. Increases in the number of children in foster care, high cost of group homes and increases in annual recruiting costs of CBCs reported to the state will be decreased with the implementation of Family Finder technology.

5. State Agency to receive requested funds Department of Children and Families

State Agency contacted? Yes

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	250,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
Total State Funds Requested	**250,000**

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	250,000	100%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2023-2024	**250,000**	**100%**

8. Has this project previously received state funding? No

Fiscal Year (yyyy-yy)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. Is future funding likely to be requested? Yes

  a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year. 250,000

  b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.

Private funding from philanthropies has supported the technology that has been in place in Judicial Circuit 12 since 2020. In order to expand to all areas of Florida, state funding is needed.

10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

No

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

○ Planning ○ Design ○ Construction

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Director to scale the program and technology integrations for a seamless handover to DCF.	60,000
Other Salary and Benefits	Project Manager to coordinate date retrieval and reporting outcomes for one year in order to hand over to DCF.	30,000
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/ Other	Marketing and webinar training for each of the Community Based Care lead agencies and corresponding Heart Galleries to manage the inquiries.	60,000
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Recruitment costs, technology implementation, support and administration of technology. Fees to developers and cloud platform migration. Finalization of the technology software development for daily use and support.	100,000
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/ Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/ Planning Engineering		0
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		**250,000**

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

Traditional foster family recruitment practices are not filling the shortage in recruited, trained & licensed foster parents and the increase in the number of children in foster care caused by the opioid crisis. Additionally, COVID 19 isolation has placed foster children in more danger from neglect and abuse that will go unnoticed. Using Family Finder, created & managed by the Heart Gallery, a target hyper-reach digital technology platform, the number of foster parents registered for licensing increased by 300% in 2021, above the CBCs' traditional recruitment methods.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

Family Finder creates efficiency, provides quantitative data of matches, and exposes areas of opportunities in the current system of care. Services provided to child welfare organizations include:
- Implementation of single website page for conversions in each Judicial Circuit;
- Optimization of ad reach and conversions with Google and Facebook;
- Set up a client portal;
- Implementation of Florida Foster Family dedicated website; and
- Implementation of chat feature on the website.

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

Wrap around service support for foster and adoptive parents, decreasing wait time for licensing and home studies.
The project will:
• Decrease the average wait time in foster care for children involved in Termination of Parental Rights proceedings from 2.5 to 1.4 years;
• Generate a 20% savings in the CBCs' annual recruiting costs and an 8% reduction in the CBCs' cost of care for children under their care.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

Family Finder has the ability to find and match families for the 19,000 children in foster care in Florida using algorithmic prioritization and category/item weighting for characteristics of foster families, including: Race, Health, Academic, Behavioral, and Developmental characteristics.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

•Family Finder will create efficiency, provide a quantitative data of matches, and expose areas of opportunities in the current system of care.
•A 6-month pilot for a Central Florida child welfare organization yielded 8000 new families vs 200 candidates using traditional methods
•A 6-month pilot in Judicial Circuit 12 yielded 1926 families seeking foster parent licensing or adopting from foster care vs. 100 candidates using traditional methods, providing a 321% increase.
•The cost for a child in a group home is $3,000 per month vs. $650 for a child placed in an adoptive or foster home.

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?

The Heart Gallery's Family Finder technology initiative will meet any requirements to avoid penalties and will adhere to standard practices that insure deliverables.

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name   Matthew   **Last Name**   Straeb

b. Organization   Heart Gallery of Florida

c. E-mail Address   mstraeb@gmail.com

d. Phone Number   (954)854-6606   **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization   Heart Gallery of Florida

b. Municipality and County | Statewide

c. Organization Type

☐ For Profit Entity

☑ Non Profit 501(c)(3)

☐ Non Profit 501(c)(4)

☐ Local Entity

☐ University or College

☐ Other (please specify)

d. First Name | Matthew | **Last Name** | Straeb

e. E-mail Address | mstraeb@gmail.com

f. Phone Number | (954)850-6606

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name | LaToya Sheals

b. Firm Name | Becker & Poliakoff PA

c. E-mail Address | Lsheals@beckerlawyers.com

d. Phone Number | (954)364-6094