ProKids

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| StateSeal.JPG | **RFP-23-73695 –System Point of Entry (SPOE)**  **Attachment F – Technical Proposal Template** | |
| **Respondent:** | | ProKids, Inc. |
| **Region(s):** | | G |
| **Instructions:**  Request for Proposal (RFP) 23-73695 is a solicitation by the State of Indiana in which organizations are invited to compete for a contract amongst other respondents in a formal evaluation process. Please be aware that the evaluation of your organization’s proposal will be completed by a team of State of Indiana employees and your organization’s score will be reflective of that evaluation. The evaluation of a proposal can only be based upon the information provided by the Respondent in its proposal submission. Therefore, a competitive proposal will thoroughly answer the questions listed. The Respondent is expected to provide the complete details of its proposed operations, processes, and staffing for the Scope of Work detailed in the RFP document and supplemental attachments. Respondents can submit one Technical Proposal for all regions they are bidding on. To the extent the Respondent utilizes different practices, structure, or procedures in different regions, please ensure that information is included in both Section 1 and wherever else applicable.  Please review the requirements in Attachment K, Scope of Work (SoW), carefully. Please describe your relevant experience and explain how you propose to perform the work. For all areas in which subcontractors will be performing a portion of the work, clearly describe their roles and responsibilities, related qualifications and experience, and how you will maintain oversight of the subcontractors’ activities.  Please use the yellow shaded fields to indicate your answers to the following questions. The yellow fields will automatically expand to accommodate content. Every attempt should be made to preserve the original format of this form. **A completed Technical Proposal is a requirement for proposal submission. Failure to complete and submit this form may impact your proposal’s responsiveness.** Diagrams, certificates, graphics, and other exhibits should be referenced within the relevant answer field and included as legible attachments. | | |

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| **1** | **SoW Sections I, II, III, IV, and V Introduction, Goals and Background, and Mandatory Respondent Qualifications/Exclusions to Bid**  Provide an overview of your proposal and describe how you currently meet and/or propose to meet the requirements in SoW Sections I, II, III, IV, and V including, but not limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe why you are best suited to provide these services to the State. * Describe any notable accomplishments for your company you feel would be relevant to this proposal. * Provide an executive summary of your proposed approach to deliver the Scope of Work and at a high level, demonstrate your understanding of the SPOE’s program goals. * Describe and demonstrate your familiarity and experience with Indiana’s Bureau of Child Development Services First Steps program, including the federal and State policy governing this program. * Describe your experience providing case management services for early intervention or related programs, including any experience specific to providing services for children. * Describe any region-specific practices you will employ for each region you are bidding on. * Describe any region-to-region differences in your operations, structure, or procedures. * Describe how you meet and/or adhere to each of the Mandatory Respondent Qualifications/Exclusions to Bid. |
| **ProKids has served as the First Steps SPOE in one or more central Indiana counties since its incorporation in 1999, and was formed for the sole purpose of meeting the growing needs of the early intervention system. ProKids has successfully served as the SPOE for the cluster G region since the current regions were defined in 2006. ProKids’ Executive Director/SPOE Director and Associate Director/LPCC Director both started their employment as First Steps intake coordinators in 1998, with the entity that later became ProKids. Every employee in a leadership or management position at ProKids started out as a First Steps service coordinator, administrative assistant, or provider. Senior leadership staff have an average of 20 years of experience with First Steps. Service coordinator team managers have an average of 16 years of experience with First Steps.**  **ProKids served as the fiscal agent for the former statewide First Steps Unified Training System (UTS) Programmatic Training grant from 2006 to 2014. ProKids served as the fiscal agent for First Steps Peer Monitoring, Focused Monitoring, and/or Quality Review grants for a combined 13 years. ProKids has also served as the fiscal agent for conferences and First Steps projects of limited scope. Examples include: Access to Success, JUMPSTART, GSEG, and the Hamilton County Legacy Fund.**  **Throughout our years of service, ProKids has been a strong partner to state First Steps staff, First Steps provider agencies, and the other clusters. Examples of this include:**   * **Continuing to provide training space and staff for state trainings to ensure continuity after the cancellation of the UTS Programmatic Training grant** * **ProKids’ SPOE was the first to move from paper to electronic files, providing a model as well as technical expertise for other clusters** * **Maintaining a strong LPCC after significant funding for the project was cut in 2011** * **Spearheading statewide public awareness initiatives, including developing materials utilized by other clusters and provider agencies** * **Designing and producing the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) annual report** * **Hosting an annual event for families in partnership with Easter Seals Crossroads that often has attendance of more than 200 people**   **ProKids is proud of the extensive knowledge, experience, expertise, and commitment to First Steps exhibited by its leadership and staff members for 23 years. It has been a privilege to serve our communities and the State of Indiana by delivering consistently high quality SPOE, LPCC, and Evaluation/Assessment services.**  **ProKids currently performs all facets of the Scope of Work included in this RFP, including:**   * **Employing an exceptionally experienced, committed, and well-trained staff** * **Receiving, processing, and responding to more than 9,000 referrals per year** * **Conducting approximately 6,000 intake meetings per year** * **Establishing/maintaining the EI record, both in the EI Hub data system where appropriate and in our electronic server files** * **Conducting approximately 8,000 evaluations/assessments per year, including determining initial and annual eligibility** * **Conducting approximately 5,000 IFSP meetings per year** * **Providing service coordination to approximately 7,000 families per year** * **Supervision and quality assurance to ensure requirements and standards of service are met** * **Professional development for staff members, including conference attendance and other training** * **Maintaining an office in central Indianapolis, including training space that is made available to First Steps entities across the state and other community partners and programs** * **Establishing and maintaining strong community partnerships through the work of the LPCC, which frequently takes the lead on statewide initiatives and shares resources and expertise with other** **clusters** * **Conducting public awareness and child find activities, including ongoing outreach to numerous referral sources and community partners throughout the cluster** * **Working collaboratively with state staff and provider agencies to attract and retain qualified service providers** * **Hosting an annual event to recognize LPCC volunteers, community partners and referral sources, exemplary First Steps staff and providers, and community members who support the First Steps mission** * **Ensuring procedural safeguards are followed, including addressing any concerns or complaints** * **Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships with local education agencies (LEA’s) and other partners through the transition committee** * **Hosting an annual transition event to help establish a connection between families and LEA’s and prepare families for the transition out of First Steps** * **Ensuring representative LPCC membership** * **Utilizing the EI Hub data system to establish and maintain timely and accurate records for approximately 9,000 families per year** * **Following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards as applicable and ensuring protection of personally identifiable information (PII)** * **Responding promptly and appropriately to any state concerns, including corrective action requirements**   **ProKids staff members have extensive knowledge and expertise in state and federal laws, policies, and rules governing First Steps, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ProKids leadership staff have frequently served as a resource to state staff in developing policies and procedures and examining historical program changes.**  **ProKids meets the Mandatory Respondent Qualifications/Exclusions to Bid as follows:**   * **ProKids provides First Steps service coordination services to the birth to three population on behalf of the state** * **ProKids has provided First Steps service coordination for 23 years** * **ProKids is not a service provider of First Steps services** | |
| **2** | **SoW Section VI. A. 1-5 – SPOE Functions of Referral and Intake, Record, Evaluation and Assessment, Eligibility Determination**  Describe how you plan to execute SoW section VI.A.1, VI.A.2, VI.A.3, VI.A.4, and VI.A.5 in their entirety and in alignment with State laws and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe how you will accept and respond to referrals. * Explain how you will conduct intake activities. * Describe how you will ensure team collaboration and communication. * Describe how you will coordinate the application and enrollment of families to other programs. * Describe how you will work with State technology and databases to ensure complete and updated electronic EI Records. * Explain how you will conduct eligibility determination activities. |
| **ProKids currently accepts and responds to more than 9,000 referrals per year in cluster G. The current process, described below, will continue if ProKids is selected as the provider of First Steps SPOE services.**  **Referrals are accepted Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, 52 weeks per year. The SPOE assigns the receipt and processing of referrals to administrative staff members to ensure the most timely response. The SPOE telephone is answered by an administrative assistant during business hours. A Spanish speaking staff member is available to take phone calls from Spanish speaking families, and is assigned to regularly check and respond to any voice mail messages left by Spanish speaking families. The SPOE utilized the Language Training Center (LTC) language line when needed to communicate with families speaking languages other than English or Spanish. The SPOE telephone is answered by an auto-attendant, including a Spanish language option, outside of business hours. The SPOE also accepts referrals by fax, email, and through the local website. Referrals are entered into the EI Hub statewide database and the Teamwork case management system immediately upon receipt, or as soon as possible (no longer than four hours) after receipt. SPOE management staff provide administrative assistants with updated service coordinator rotations for assigning referrals. The rotations are based on geographic area, availability, and need for specialized skill sets (e.g., a family who speaks ASL will be assigned to a coordinator who speaks ASL regardless of location). Service coordinators are required to respond to referrals as soon as possible, but no later than two business days from receipt. Service coordinators are provided a number of tools and supports to ensure they are able to respond to referrals and schedule intake meetings in a timely manner, including written procedures, form letters, access to LTC language line as needed, administrative support, and responsive supervision. Because ProKids responds to such a high volume of referrals, processes are continually reviewed by management staff to ensure requirements are met in the most efficient manner possible. Management staff routinely files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met.**  **As required by the Child Abuse and Prevention Act (CAPTA), a collaborative relationship has been established with the Department of Child Services (DCS) in an effort to provide screening for all children younger than three years who are involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect. DCS provides a monthly list of all children appropriate for screening, and an LPCC coordinator mails a screening tool designed to be administered by caregivers (the Ages and Stages Questionnaire) to each family. Upon return, ASQ’s are scored by LPCC staff, and referrals for evaluation are made to the SPOE when indicated. Additionally, a ProKids LPCC Coordinator routinely attends local DCS staff meetings to ensure continued collaboration.**  **ProKids conducts approximately 6,000 intake meetings per year. The current process, described below, will continue if ProKids is selected as the SPOE for cluster G.**  **Intake meetings are offered in-person, at the family’s preferred location, or virtually over video call, based on the family’s preference. Intake meetings are conducted in the family’s native language, either with a bilingual coordinator or with the assistance of an interpreter. The service coordinator works to establish rapport with the family and utilizes the family handbook developed by the LPCC to help explain First Steps services. The service coordinator utilizes the voluntary family interview to help the family identify their unique strengths, priorities, and needs, and collects/completes required enrollment information and consents. The service coordinator explains the eligibility and IFSP process, contacts the eligibility determination (ED) team scheduler to set the evaluation appointment, tentatively schedules the IFSP meeting, and assists the family in selecting an ongoing agency in the event the child is eligible for services. The service coordinator leaves the family with the required written prior notice form and information including the evaluation date/time, contact information, next steps, and any additional resource information needed. First Steps is currently undergoing a transition to the EI Hub data system, and coordinators are utilizing the system to collect/input information collected during the intake meeting in real time as the meeting occurs. Once complete, this transition will provide increased efficiency and elimination of duplication by streamlining a multi-step process (coordinator completes document, submits for data entry, document is entered and filed) into a one step process. ProKids looks forward to the continuation of this significant project. Because ProKids conducts such a high volume of intakes, processes are continually reviewed by management staff to ensure requirements are met in the most efficient manner possible. Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met. Managers also observe coordinators at least once annually to ensure meetings are conducted in a professional, family friendly, culturally competent manner.**  **Team collaboration and communication are central to early intervention services delivered under Part C of IDEA, as service decisions are required to be family guided and consensus driven. The service coordinator role is legally required and serves as the central point of contact for the early intervention team. ProKids equips service coordinators to fulfill this critical role by providing formal and informal training on the importance of team collaboration and communication, facilitating team consensus, conducting team meetings, conflict management, and professional communication. ProKids also ensures that these principles are modeled to service coordinators through responsive supervision and by maintaining a respectful, collaborative, professional work environment. ProKids purchases a subscription-based online data service (Teamwork) annually to facilitate team collaboration and communication among service coordinators, ED team providers, ongoing providers, and administrative staff members from the SPOE and provider agencies. This service streamlines the referral process between the SPOE and ongoing provider agencies to help ensure timely service delivery. It is expected that the EI Hub system will support a similar communication process in the near future, and the SPOE will transition from Teamwork at that time.**  **Service coordinator are trained to assesses whether a family would benefit from Hoosier Healthwise and/or Children’s Special Health Care Services (CSHCS), and to discuss eligibility and enrollment for those programs. Service coordinators are also trained and knowledgeable about other programs/services, including: TANF, SNAP, WIC, SSI, Medicaid Waiver, Family to Family.**  **SPOE staff members utilize the EI Hub data system to establish and maintain the EI file for each child referred. As this system is still being developed, a secure, electronic record, including any documents that cannot be uploaded to EI Hub, is also maintained on the ProKids secure file server. SPOE management staff routinely review files to ensure complete and updated electronic EI records.**  **ProKids conducts approximately 8,000 evaluations/assessments per year. The current process, described below, will continue if ProKids is selected as the SPOE for cluster G.**  **Initial evaluations are scheduled with the family during the intake meeting. The ED team scheduler works with the service coordinator and family to identify the most appropriate multi-disciplinary team to conduct the evaluation, and utilizes mapping software to identify the best appointment day/time. The scheduler adds the assigned ED team providers to the child’s Teamwork record so they have access to the intake information. An administrative assistant confirms the appointment one day prior, and assists with rescheduling when necessary. Prior to the evaluation, the providers review the intake information, including any medical records obtained. Evaluations are conducted utilizing the AEPS (Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children). The team completes a report and scores the tool during the evaluation, and briefly confers following the appointment to reach consensus on whether eligibility criteria appear to have been met. The team sends the evaluation to the service coordinator as soon as possible following the evaluation, within one business day at the latest. The service coordinator reviews the report, contacts the family to discuss the results, and along with the family determines whether to proceed with an eligibility/IFSP meeting. If the child does not meet eligibility criteria and the family does not wish to proceed with an eligibility meeting, the service coordinator will offer any resources needed, complete the eligibility documentation, and close the record. If the child does meet eligibility criteria, the service coordinator confirms whether the family wishes to proceed with an IFSP meeting. In either case, the service coordinator ensures the family understands their rights and the procedural safeguards put in place by IDEA, Part C.** | |
| **3** | **SoW Section VI. A. 6-8 – SPOE Functions of Ongoing Service Coordination, and Quality Assurance, and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)**  Describe how you propose to execute SoW Sections VI.A.6, VI.A.7 and VI.A.8 in their entirety and in alignment with State laws and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe how you will educate and assist families in the identification of services and supports that best meet the unique needs of the child and family as well as the identified IFSP outcome(s). * Describe the strategies that you will utilize to ensure team participation and collaboration among IFSP team members. * Explain how you will conduct IFSP activities. * Describe how service coordinators will be assigned to meet the needs of families. * Explain your plan to ensure access to timely and appropriate services that will meet the needs of families. * Describe what procedures will be implemented to ensure families are contacted regularly. * Describe your plan to maintain any records, note, or files that are not housed in the State’s EI Hub. * Describe any tools you will provide to staff. * Describe what strategies you will utilize to support ongoing communication among early intervention professionals, families, and State staff. * Explain your plan to address inquiries, concerns, and complaints. * Describe the strategies you will utilize to monitor quality assurance for each of the following SPOE functions: a) referral, b) intake, c) record, d) evaluation and assessment, e) IFSP, f) ongoing service coordination, and g) administration. * Explain how you plan to collaborate and communicate with BCDS regarding quality improvement activities. |
| **ProKids is committed to providing families with the resources and information that empowers them to make the best choices for their child and family. Frequent formal and informal training on how to conduct family centered interviews and meetings, cultural competence, team facilitation, outcome development, and community resources is provided to service coordinators on an ongoing basis. ProKids supports the state’s initiatives to utilize the LifeCourse framework and Family Guided Routines Based Interviewing (FGRBI) service delivery model. Managers and service coordinators have participated in introductory training sessions on these initiatives, and the SPOE is working to incorporate the principles into policies and procedures. Service coordinators are trained to utilize the family assessment tool, evaluation report, and other available information to assist the family in developing outcomes for their child and family. The service coordinator then helps the family identify the best services and supports to meet the desired outcome(s).**  **Team collaboration and communication are central to early intervention services delivered under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as service decisions are required to be family guided and consensus driven. The service coordinator ensures that IFSP team members provide input via reports or participation in the IFSP meeting. ProKids equips service coordinators to promote strong team participation by providing formal and informal training on the importance of team collaboration and communication, facilitating team consensus, conducting team meetings, conflict management, and professional communication. ProKids also ensures that these principles are modeled to service coordinators through responsive supervision and by maintaining a respectful, collaborative, professional work environment. ProKids purchases a subscription-based service (Teamwork) annually to facilitate team collaboration and communication among service coordinators, ED team providers, ongoing providers, and administrative staff members from the SPOE and provider agencies. It is expected that the EI Hub system will support a similar streamlined communication process in the near future, and the SPOE will transition from Teamwork at that time.**  **ProKids conducts approximately 5,000 IFSP meetings per year. The IFSP meeting is offered as a face to face meeting or a virtual (video conference) meeting, based on the family’s preference. The meeting is conducted in the family’s native language, at a time and location convenient to the family. ProKids utilizes enrolled interpreters and works with The Language Training Center, Inc. to provide translation services as needed. The service coordinator explains the purpose of the meeting, reviews procedural safeguards, reviews the assessment report, and discusses the child’s eligibility. The service coordinator then guides a discussion of the family’s priorities, strengths, concerns and upcoming transitions. The service coordinator assists the family in developing functional, measurable outcomes that address the family’s concerns and priorities. Once the outcomes are established, the service coordinator discusses possible service recommendations and options available to the family. The family and service coordinator decide what services, frequencies, intensities and providers will be included in the IFSP. The service coordinator leaves the family with a clear understanding of the next steps. Following the meeting, the service coordinator communicates with the provider agency on services selected and uploads the IFSP to the ProKids file server. An administrative assistant then enters the IFSP information, including service authorizations, into EI Hub, sends the IFSP to the physician for signature, and uploads the document to Teamwork. Once the EI Hub IFSP component is available, service coordinators will complete the process within that system instead of uploading a document for data entry.**  **SPOE management staff provide administrative assistants with updated service coordinator rotations for assigning referrals. The rotations are based on geographic area, availability, and need for specialized skill sets (e.g., a family who speaks ASL will be assigned to a coordinator who speaks ASL regardless of location).**  **Service coordinators and ED team providers are trained to help the family identify the most appropriate services to meet their needs through family centered and culturally competent intake, evaluation, and IFSP meetings. ProKids works closely with provider agencies to ensure timely and appropriate services are available to meet the needs of families. Service coordinators are trained on community resources on an ongoing basis. Clear guidelines for required timelines are provided to all staff members and provider agencies. Files are routinely reviewed by management staff to ensure services are timely and appropriate. File review data on timely start of services is shared routinely with provider agencies to assess compliance and identify/solve barriers to timeliness.**  **SPOE managers review files routinely to ensure families are contacted regularly. Managers look specifically for contact logs, emails, and/or letters that indicate regular contact has been made with each family. In order to promote quality contact with families, managers provide guidance on helpful discussion points, such as transitions, service quality, cost participation, etc.**  **SPOE staff members utilize the EI Hub data system to establish and maintain the EI file for each child referred. As this system is still being developed, a secure, electronic record, including any documents that cannot be uploaded to EI Hub, is also maintained on the ProKids file server. SPOE management staff routinely review files to ensure complete and updated electronic EI records.**  **ProKids will continue to provide the following tools to equip service coordinators in performing their duties:**   * **iPad, including file management system for working file documents** * **Laptop computer** * **Access to office equipment (copier/printers, postage meter, office supplies, etc.)** * **Detailed training manual** * **Procedure guidelines**     **In addition to the list above, service coordinators will be provided with a mobile phone, including wireless hotspot capability, in order to access the EI Hub from family homes/in the field.**  **The SPOE and LPCC prioritize providing opportunities for ongoing communication and team building among SPOE staff, provider agencies, providers, families, and state staff. The Family Outreach and Transition Committees of the LPCC host several functions per year in which families, providers and SPOE staff members are invited to participate. The Provider Issues Committee serves as a forum for ongoing communication between SPOE staff and provider agencies, and often facilitates communication between provider agencies and state staff. SPOE staff members have established positive relationships and maintain open communication with state staff.**  **Programmatic concerns or complaints will be addressed via the cluster G LPCC complaint/concern process. The cluster G LPCC has divided complaints and concerns into three categories, True Complaints, Contract Violation Concerns, and Quality Assurance Concerns. True Complaints are issues of fraud and IDEA, Part C violations. True complaints are reported directly and immediately to the State per state and federal guidelines. Contract Violation Concerns occur when providers violate their Provider Agreement. Providers and agencies involved in this type of concern will be contacted by the LPCC in writing to correct the situation. If after three attempts the situation is not remedied, the concern is escalated to the State. Quality Assurance Concerns occur when there is a question of quality and/or when the concern does not fall into either of the two prior categories. Quality Assurance Concerns will ultimately be brought before the Executive Committee of the cluster G LPCC utilizing the steps outlined in the “Quality Assurance Concerns” section of the cluster G Complaint/Concern document (see attachment IX, LPCC Complaints and Concerns Procedures).**  **ProKids will utilize the following strategies to monitor quality assurance for each of the SPOE functions listed:**   * **Referral: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Monitoring components for referral include, but may not be limited to: timely/accurate data entry, timely assignment to service coordinator, adherence to contact timelines/procedures, adherence to CAPTA referral screening procedures.** * **Intake: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Management staff conduct meeting observations to ensure family centered, culturally competent practices are being followed. Family surveys will be offered to allow opportunities for family input; survey data will be reviewed and responded to as warranted. Monitoring components for intake include, but may not be limited to: timely intake meeting, complete/timely data entry, completion of family interview, quality of family meeting.** * **Record: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Monitoring components for record include, but may not be limited to: timely and complete data entry and filing of documents.** * **Evaluation and assessment: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Management staff conduct observations to ensure family centered, culturally competent practices are being followed, as well as competent administration of the AEPS. Family surveys will be offered to allow opportunities for family input; survey data will be reviewed and responded to as warranted. Monitoring components for evaluation and assessment include, but may not be limited to: timely evaluation, complete evaluation report, appropriate recommendations, timely and accurate data entry, quality of family interaction.** * **IFSP: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Management staff conduct observations to ensure family centered, culturally competent practices are being followed. Family surveys will be offered to allow opportunities for family input; survey data will be reviewed and responded to as warranted. Monitoring components for IFSP include: timely completion, timely and accurate data entry, quality of outcomes based on family interview and evaluation report, appropriateness of services based on outcomes, timely physician signature, timely referral for services, timely start of services.** * **Ongoing service coordination: Management staff routinely review files to ensure requirements and ProKids’ standards of service are being met; individual deficiencies are addressed as needed; systemic issues are identified and addressed through training and/or policy/procedure updates as appropriate. Family surveys will be offered to allow opportunities for family input; survey data will be reviewed and responded to as warranted. Management staff conduct observations to ensure family centered, culturally competent practices are being followed. Monitoring components for ongoing service coordination include, but may not be limited to: regular contact with family, timely six-month review, timely response to change requests, accurate and complete log notes, timely transition activities (30 month notice, transition meeting), timely and accurate record closure.** * **Administration: Quality of administration will be monitored by assessing the above monitoring components to determine overall quality of SPOE operations. Complaints, concerns, and other feedback will be carefully assessed and responded to. Exit interviews are conducted with staff members who leave ProKids’ employment, and the results are routinely reviewed to identify needed adjustments/changes in policies, procedures, and/or practices.**   **The SPOE will follow all BCDS guidelines for quality review/improvement, and proactively communicate with the BCDS staff when issues are identified. SPOE staff will maintain a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the BCDS staff and respond quickly and appropriately to recommendations for improvement.** | |
| **4** | **SoW Sections VI. A. 9, VI. B., and VI. C. – Conference Attendance and Professional Development, Community Presence, and SPOE Staff Requirements**  Describe how you propose to execute SoW Section VIA.9, VI.B.1, VI.B.2, VI.B.3, and VI.C in their entirety and in alignment with State laws, and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe your annual professional development plan, including any conferences you plan to attend during the fiscal year. * Describe how you will ensure that the SPOE’s presence is known and available in the community, including whether you plan to maintain a physical or virtual office presence.   + If you plan to maintain a virtual office, describe your approach to developing a Virtual SPOE Presence Plan. Please specify the outreach methods you will utilize as part of your Virtual SPOE Presence Plan.   + If you plan to maintain a physical office, explain how your proposed office location(s), functions, and staffing will support the responsibilities of the SPOE. * Describe your overall staffing plan to fulfill all SPOE roles and responsibilities outlined in the Scope of Work. * Please submit an organizational staffing chart and job descriptions for each of your proposed positions, including how activities will be supported by each position and where the positions will be stationed, if applicable. * Please describe your staff’s experience with providing case management services for early intervention or related programs, including resumes for all key or leadership staff. * Describe your plan to recruit, hire, and retain qualified staff. * Describe your plan for onboarding, training, and monitoring service coordinators. |
| **All service coordinators, LPCC coordinators, and ED team providers will be encouraged to attend the annual Indiana Early Intervention conference. Management staff will be required to attend. Management staff will attend at least one national conference, such as the Division of Exceptional Children (DEC) annual conference, and at least one training event related to management/supervision annually. In-service trainings will continue to be conducted routinely as part of monthly staff meetings, and/or as separate trainings. Additional professional development opportunities will be pursued as a strategy for improving staff retention through enhanced job satisfaction. In-service trainings will continue to be conducted routinely.**  **ProKids will maintain the current physical office in Indianapolis. This location is centrally located and easily accessible by staff and community members. The office will be staffed full time and open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. ProKids will continue to allow flexibility to work from home or the office for staff members who are performing at a high level. Staff members in training and those who need performance improvement will work from the office. Management staff will be available in the office at all times. Staff meetings and trainings may be conducted at the office or virtually. LPCC meetings may be held at the office or virtually. Training space at the ProKids office will continue to be offered to state training partners and other community programs as a way to build community partnerships and increase the visibility of the cluster G SPOE within the community. The SPOE will also continue to enhance and expand long-standing, positive relationships in the communities served through ongoing LPCC outreach activities.**  **The following positions will be utilized to fulfill all SPOE roles and responsibilities outlined in the Scope of Work (see also attachment X ProKids Job Descriptions and attachment XIV Cost Proposal Narrative):**   * **Service coordinators: 90.5 full time equivalents (FTE’s)**   **The service coordinator position is central to the successful implementation of the SPOE. According to a joint position statement by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children and the IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association, “service coordination is unique compared to other EI services because it is the only federally mandated service to be provided to all eligible children at no charge to families.”\* The piece also states: “It is, therefore, imperative that leaders acknowledge the strain that high workloads place on service coordinators and...determine and monitor manageable levels that lead to better retention of these professionals and higher quality services.”\* Indiana requires that every child referred to First Steps be assigned a dedicated service coordinator. The high volume and fluctuation of referrals in cluster G (referrals typically range from 650 to 950 per month) creates a unique challenge for staffing coverage. In addition, referrals continue to increase at a steady pace, typically between 4% to 7% year over year. In order to maintain required timelines and quality of service coordination, staffing plans must account for the fluctuation in referrals, the expected rate of growth, and reasonable workload demands. SPOE’s around the state along with state First Steps staff have agreed that best practice supports a target caseload of 60 families from referral through record closure. ProKids’ proposal of 90.5 service coordinator FTE’s will enable service coordinators to carry an average caseload of 60 families. This represents a significant workload reduction (current caseload average is 87, ranging from 45 for newer coordinators to 96). This number also considers 4% growth in referrals over the two-year contract period. ProKids is confident that this staffing plan for service coordination will enhance service delivery by improving the recruitment and retention of qualified service coordinators, and providing the workload capacity to meet or exceed requirements.**   * **SPOE Supervisors/Managers: 11 FTE’s**   **SPOE supervisors/managers provide leadership and supervision to staff members to ensure high quality standards are met. Five service coordinator team managers will supervise an average of 18 service coordinators. The assistant SPOE director supervises Team managers, and provides additional support to service coordinators as needed. A management level training coordinator is included to support onboarding with new staff members and ongoing training needs for all SPOE staff members. The Executive Assistant provides supervision and support to four administrative assistants, as well as technology support and planning for all SPOE staff members. The associate director for ProKids/LPCC director provides executive leadership to ProKids’ staff, supervision to two LPCC coordinators, as well as oversight, planning, and execution of LPCC activities. The accounting/HR manager will provide supervision to two assistants as well as oversight of financial affairs, including federal grant compliance, and human resources. The executive director/SPOE director provides executive leadership to ProKids and oversees all facets of SPOE service delivery, including service coordination, LPCC, and eligibility determination; oversees financial management for the organization; and provides supervision to the associate/LPCC director, assistant SPOE director, executive assistant, Accounting/HR manager, and ED team manager.**   * **LPCC Coordinators: 2 FTE’s**   **ProKids is proud to have maintained a strong and active LPCC throughout our 23 years of providing First Steps SPOE services. The central Indiana region is dense with social service agencies, physician offices/hospitals, FS provider agencies, childcare facilities, school districts, and other potential partnering entities. Adequate staff are necessary to conduct outreach, public awareness, and collaboration activities. To address state objectives effectively, there will be two full time LPCC Coordinators. LPCC staff coordinate all aspects and functions of the LPCC, will work with volunteers to achieve state and federal outcomes, and will be responsible for coordinating LPCC events and activities for all areas of the cluster G region.**   * **Support Staff: 5 FTE’s**   **Four SPOE support staff members will ensure that administrative tasks are completed in a timely and efficient manner. Duties include: answering the telephone, taking telephone/fax/email/website referrals, including entering into the EI Hub data system and assigning to service coordinators, assisting with follow up to physicians’ offices, assisting with data entry tasks as needed.** **One support staff member will provide assistance to the accounting/HR manager, including routine bookkeeping tasks, accounts payable, and ED team billing.**  **Please see attachment II, ProKids Organizational Chart, and attachment X, ProKids Job Descriptions. All positions support the activities within the Scope of Work, and all positions will be stationed within the cluster.**  **ProKids has provided First Steps service coordination in one or more central Indiana counties since its incorporation in 1999, and for cluster G since the current regions were defined in 2006. The current Executive Director/SPOE Director and Assistant Director/LPCC Director both started their employment with as First Steps intake coordinators in 1998, with the entity that later became ProKids. Every employee in a leadership or management position at ProKids started out as a First Steps service coordinator, administrative assistant, or provider. Senior leadership staff have an average of 20 years of experience with First Steps (see attachment XI, Leadership Staff Resumes).**  **ProKids plans to recruit candidates through a combination of the following: job ads in traditional job posting sites (e.g. Indeed), social media posts, job fairs, and college and university recruiting activities. ProKids has a well-established reputation in the community as an employer who supports and cares about employees. Managers frequently receive resumes/applications from current employee contacts. Our cost proposal supports enhanced recruitment/retention by ensuring competitive staff salaries/benefits.**  **Through experience, ProKids has developed an onboarding protocol that allows new staff members to become oriented to ProKids and First Steps over time. This includes new employee orientation, delivered by the accounting/HR manager, and First Steps orientation training delivered by the training coordinator. New staff members work through onboarding progressively by learning first, then observing/shadowing more experienced staff, completing tasks with the experienced staff person or manager to provide guidance, and gradually taking over a full caseload. The training coordinator is knowledgeable on the DEC recommended knowledge and skills\* for service coordinators, and embeds these into trainings where applicable. The training coordinator also ensures SPOE staff members complete required state trainings and have sufficient training opportunities to complete annual credentialing. In-service trainings routinely occur as part of a semi-monthly meeting, and other times as needed. SPOE managers identify training needs through supervision, and the training coordinator either conducts a formal training in response or provides targeted training to individual service coordinators upon request. Experienced staff members are frequently asked to assist with training topics of interest. SPOE managers also host informal topical discussions to facilitate peer learning and support (topics have included: transition, challenging team dynamics, and cost participation). SPOE managers provide supportive and responsive supervision by employing an open-door policy. Managers also routinely review files to ensure requirements are met, and address deficiencies as they are identified.**  \*Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children; IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association (2020). Service Coordination in Early Intervention. Retrieved from https://www.decdocs.org/service-coordination. | |
| **5** | **SoW Section VII – Local Planning and Coordinating Council (LPCC) Requirements**  Describe how you propose to execute SoW Section VII in its entirety and in alignment with State laws, and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Detail your specific goals related to public awareness and child find as well as your plan to meet them. * Describe the strategies you will utilize to conduct public awareness and child find activities within the region. Please include an activity calendar with the narrative response. * Explain how ongoing communication will be facilitated with parents, service providers, local referral sources, and local education agencies to increase awareness of local resources and program information. * Describe how you will maintain the regional website. * Describe how you plan to increase access to family resources. * Outline the types of transition activities you will conduct and when the activities will occur. Please include an activity calendar with narrative response. * Describe your plan to maintain and staff the LPCC. * Describe the experience and qualifications of your fully dedicated LPCC coordinator(s). * Describe your plan to conduct recruit LPCC recruitment activities, including how you will build relationships with local schools and higher education institutions, and participate in career fairs |
| **The primary goal of the ProKids LPCC is ensuring that the Central Indiana community is aware that Early Intervention (EI) services exist for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. Another major goal of the ProKids LPCC is to locate children potentially eligible for First Steps services. The ProKids LPCC will operate a broad-based public awareness program that informs cluster G residents about the type of EI services available for infants and toddlers. The ProKids LPCC will promote early identification of potentially eligible children. Additionally, the ProKids LPCC will make the public aware that children potentially in need of EI services can be referred to the System Point of Entry to begin the evaluation process and support the SPOE’s efforts to ensure timely evaluations. ProKids’ LPCC’s specific goals and targets related to public awareness/child find are aligned with targets and Key Objectives generated by the State of Indiana and Federal EI requirements.**  **The ProKids LPCC has longstanding, well established relationships with various health, social service, and parent support organizations. The ProKids LPCC’s public awareness program will continue to offer ongoing informational activities throughout the cluster with regularly scheduled information sessions (see attachment XII, Public Awareness Child Find Activity Calendar). These activities will facilitate understanding of the program’s referral processes, eligibility criteria, and available services. Public awareness activities will be directed toward organizations that serve young children. Some groups that will be targeted for information sharing are physician offices, child care centers, parent groups, the Department of Child Services, local hospitals, Health Department sites, and other social service agencies. Collaborative and reciprocal referral relationships have been and will further be established with various community organizations that serve children and families. The following are strategies currently utilized to conduct public awareness and child find activities within the region and will continue should ProKids be selected as the fiscal agent:**   * **The ProKids LPCC has a Public Awareness/Child Find (PACF) Committee that addresses information sharing and executes public awareness activities. The PAÇF Committee will meet quarterly to review data regarding referrals, referral sources, website and social media analytics, and participant demographics. The committee will use this information to make data driven recommendations about how to focus public awareness efforts.** * **Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) with referring agencies will be established and maintained. The Cluster referral source MOA will be mailed out as needed to community organizations, establishing guidelines for the local First Steps referral process.** * **New state brochures updated with cluster specific information will be made available to groups serving young children and their families. The brochure will be available on the cluster website, distributed at events, and mailed directly to organizations that serve children and families.** * **A cluster website will be maintained. The cluster website provides information about available services, eligibility criteria, referral procedures, provider agency information, LPCC information, transition information, and cluster contact information. The cluster website also allows referrals to made online and sent directly to SPOE staff. The PACF Committee (along with other LPCC committees) will provide input on website content and review website analytics on an ongoing basis.** * **In keeping with the Child Abuse and Prevention Act (CAPTA), a collaborative relationship has been established with the Department of Child Services (DCS) in an effort to provide screening for children undergoing the child protection process. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) will be mailed to families with children younger than three years of age with an open DCS case. Returned ASQs will be scored by LPCC staff, and referrals will be made to the SPOE when indicated. Additionally, a ProKids LPCC Coordinator currently attends/will continue to attend DCS staff meetings to ensure continued collaboration.** * **ProKids’ staff and LPCC volunteers will conduct informational presentations with community organizations. These trainings are tailored to the group to which the information is being presented. However, core information about developmental red flags, referral procedures, eligibility criteria, and available services will be included in each presentation. These presentations will be conducted for physician offices, childcare centers, and other social service groups like Julian Center, Mother Connection and Toddler Time Parent groups.** * **Since physicians generate the most referrals in cluster G, a “Physician’s Packet” that outlines program specifics, referral guidelines, eligibility criteria, and available services will be distributed to physician offices around the cluster. A monthly information session will also take place with cluster physician residents during their community rotation from both IU Health and St. Vincent Hospital. Information sessions will soon start with Community Hospital residents as well.** * **A log of sites visited and information distributed to groups that serve young children will be maintained and reviewed periodically by the PACF Committee. Review of this log will help the committee determine which community groups to target with First Steps information and where gaps might remain.** * **To educate the general public about First Steps services, LPCC staff and volunteers will participate in community fairs and events as resources permit. Some examples include the Covering Kids and Families Back to School Day, the North Arlington Eskenazi Health Clinic Provider Fair, Family Outreach Nights at the Children’s Museum, and the DCS Provider Fairs. Also, information about the FS program and services will be included in various publications as resources and opportunities permit. For example, Central Indiana First Steps was featured in *Special Needs Living Indy Magazine* highlighting success stories from parents who participate on the LPCC.** * **LPCC staff will participate on community organization advisory boards and information sharing networks. LPCC Staff participate on multiple Head Start and Healthy Families Advisory Boards in each cluster county, the Covering Kids and Families Coalition, the Partnership for a Healthier Johnson County, Nurse Family Partnerships, Indianapolis Healthy Start, and Heart Change. The LPCC will facilitate a networking meeting for Hamilton and Tipton Counties known as the Tipton Hamilton Intervention Network for Kids (THINK). Information and resources about the program will be shared at these meetings.** * **See Attachment XII, Public Awareness Child Find Activity Calendar**   **One primary way that ongoing communication will be facilitated with parents, service providers, and local referral sources is through local meetings of the LPCC. The Full LPCC meets quarterly. Additional separate committee meetings occur at various times. The Executive Committee meeting two times per year. The PACF Committee, the Transition Committee, the Family Outreach and Quality Assurance (FOQA) Committee, and Provider Issues Committee all meet quarterly. Information sharing occurs at every meeting of the LPCC with a standing agenda item being “announcements” from stakeholders. Complaints and Concerns are reviewed at both the Full LPCC meetings as well as at the Provider Issues Committee meetings to identify and implement cluster-specific improvement strategies.**  **Another primary way that ongoing communication will be facilitated is through the current cluster G website and social media outlets. The website directs information in a specific way toward families, providers, and stakeholders. Drop down menus at the top of the website direct visitors according to their role or interest. Corresponding information can be located under each tab. A cluster Facebook page and a Twitter account are also maintained as additional online avenues for communication.**  **The LPCC also maintains an email list of all cluster G Provider Agencies. The LPCC emails providers and agencies with information about relevant trainings and resources.**  **In addition to providing website information, the Family Outreach and Quality Assurance Committee (FOQA) responds to the needs of families by providing educational opportunities and helps maintain resource information for families. The FOQA Committee will meet quarterly to review information that supports families in the program and to plan informational events for families. Some past examples of events are Waiver Parties, book groups, and topical trainings offered to First Steps Families. Every cluster G family also has the opportunity to receive information at the *First Steps to Reading Fun Family Event*. Families attending this event can receive free books, information about resources in the community, information about transition to the school system, and therapy/activity ideas. Family contact information is solicited from state FS staff to mail postcards and invitations to events.**  **Families receive a family handbook at the time of their IFSP. The FOQA committee and the Transition Committee contribute information to the handbook. The family handbook provides information about family rights and responsibilities within the program, transition information, program information, and a list of regional and statewide resources. Supplemental communications are also included in the family handbook as needed, such as parent surveys or information to recruit more parents to participate on the LPCC. Also, a resource directory, designed to be a “directory of directories” has been developed for families that do not qualify for EI services.**  **First Steps families with children older than two years are also invited to attend the *Next Steps: Life After First Steps Parent Forum*. Here, families receive information about services in the school setting after their child exits the First Steps Program. There are also booths with information from other community organizations that share resources with the families that attend.**  **The current ProKids LPCC Director created and designed the cluster G website with input from each committee of the LPCC. Each committee will continue to review the areas of the website that pertain to their function and make recommendations for updates and changes. The PACF Committee will review website analytics and make recommendations for changes in accordance with that information. LPCC staff members will be responsible for updating the website.**  **The FOQA Committee will continue to make plans for family events that increase access to family resources. The committee relies heavily on parent volunteers to articulate the needs of families. This information is gathered through participant focus groups, parent surveys, and via parent participation on the LPCC (especially the FOQA Committee). With the help of parent volunteers, the committee has planned informational events such as a Waiver Party which assisted First Steps families in completing the applications for Medicaid Waivers. The committee also established the Connections Parent Support group that provided topical information to families about various resources.**  **LPCC staff also participates on and collaborate with various family support organizations and initiatives like Special Kids Can’t Wait, Family to Family, Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, VIPS, and the Indianapolis Fire Department (car seat safety).**  **Information about community resources is also provided directly to families enrolled in FS through the family handbook which provides information about family rights and responsibilities within the program, transition information, program information, and a list of regional and statewide resources.**  **Also, a lending library maintained by the LPCC is available for families to access resources and books regarding their specific developmental concerns. The Lending Library is free and open to all families.**  **To assist with informing families about the transition from First Steps Services, the following activities are currently conducted and will continue should ProKids be selected as the fiscal agent for cluster G:**   * **A Transition Committee composed of parents, therapists, ProKids SPOE and LPCC staff, and Local Education Agency representatives (LEAs) exists and will meet on a quarterly basis. The committee will examine data regarding transition issues in the cluster and foster a collaborative relationship between SPOE staff and LEAs.** * **The committee will organize parent meetings facilitated by the LEAs, the School for Blind and Visually Impaired, the School for the Deaf, and Head Start. These meetings, the *Next Steps: Life After First Steps Parent Forums*, take place annually and are held at a different school districts in the cluster, offering specific transition information to families. At the forum, families are able to explore the preschool setting, understand transportation services, hear about additional resources, receive information from their local school district representative, and witness a mock case conference.** * **The LEAs are also encouraged to attend SPOE team meetings with the service coordinators to discuss local transition processes and specific school system practices.** * **The Transition Committee develops and maintains transition information placed in the family handbook. Included is information about preschool special education services, the differences between First Steps services and school system services, and information about transition options other than those offered in the school setting.** * **The Transition Committee also provides input on transition information posted on the cluster G website.** * **The Transition Committee assists with providing information about other transition options to SPOE staff. Representatives from various community groups that provide options for families that do not access school system services are invited to attend all staff meetings to share information about those programs and services.** * **Collaboration among LPCC committees will take place to provide transition information at various family events like the *First Steps to Reading Fun event*.** * **A Transition MOA has been developed for cluster G. The document is reviewed annually and is signed by all special education planning districts. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of both First Steps and the school districts and can be found on the cluster G website.** * **See Attachment XIII, Transition Activity Calendar**   **The central Indiana region is dense with social service agencies, physician offices/hospitals, FS provider agencies, childcare facilities, school districts, and other potential partnering entities. Adequate staff are necessary to conduct outreach, public awareness, and collaboration activities. To address state objectives effectively, there will be one full time LPCC Director and two full time LPCC Coordinators. These staff members will coordinate all aspects and functions of the LPCC, will work with volunteers to achieve state and federal outcomes, and will be responsible for coordinating LPCC events and activities for all areas of the cluster G region.**  ***LPCC Program Director***  **Education: Bachelor of Science in Psychology; Master of Social Work**   * **LPCC Program Director, Central IN First Steps-20 years (Current)** * **Marion County First Steps- Intake Coordinator for NICU through the Friendly Access Program-2yrs** * **Marion County First Steps- Intake Coordinator-2yrs** * **Parent Liaison Practicum with the Indiana Parent Information Network** * **African American Family Life Education Program Fellow** * **Foster Parent and Family Relationship Specialist for Youth and Family Services** * **Youth Care Specialist for Villages of Indiana** * **Property Ownership Proofing Staff for Wayne County Auditor**   ***LPCC Coordinator 1***  **Education: Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science, Chaminade University of Honolulu**   * **Council Coordinator, Central IN First Steps-17 years** **(Current)** * **First Steps Provider Liaison and Training Specialist- 3yrs** * **First Steps- Intake Coordinator-4yrs** * **Director of Social Services at Oakwood Healthcare Center** * **Family Support Worker for Healthy Families in Henry County** * **Preschool Teacher at Baxter YMCA** * **Youth Manager for the Henry County Youth Center**   ***LPCC Coordinator 2***  **Education: Bachelor of Science, Purdue University**   * **Council Coordinator, Central IN First Steps (Current)** * **28 years of experience with early intervention beginning as a volunteer with First Steps in 1994** * **Council Coordinator, Hamilton Co. First Steps for 8 years** * **Community Engagement Specialist, Be the Match** * **Founder, Buddy Walk** * **Founder, Down Syndrome Indiana** * **Down Syndrome IN, Board of Directors** * **GiGi’s Playhouse, VP Board of Directors** * **Parent of an adult child with special needs**   **The following are strategies currently utilized to address recruitment and availability of service providers in the region to ensure availability in all service areas. These strategies will continue should ProKids be selected as the fiscal agent for cluster G:**   * **The LPCC currently has a Provider Issues (PI) Committee composed of representatives from all state approved provider agencies in the region, ProKids staff, and other interested community members. The committee will meet quarterly.** * **The PI Committee will review the data around recruitment and retention with this being a standing agenda item. The committee will review information such as lists of newly enrolled providers, state profile reports, survey question results, responses from providers regarding reasons for exiting the system, data from the QIP process, and data submitted by the SPOE regarding provider availability needs in each service area.** * **A workgroup has been created to address concerns about provider recruitment. Some strategies derived from this group are to offer trainings about effectively implementing virtual therapy, recruit therapists using therapy licensing lists, use the DEC provider video to recruit therapy students, conduct outreach activities at universities using a speaker’s bureau of current FS providers, mentor new grads, and offer a 1099 expert to help with business protocol.** * **Information about provider enrollment will be developed and posted to the Central Indiana First Steps website** * **LPCC staff will connect with therapists completing the Direct Service Provider training to become an enrolled First Steps provider, sharing information and resources with potential new providers.** * **As the PI Committee deems appropriate, staff and/or LPCC volunteers will attend local job fairs, association conferences, and university job search events.** * **LPCC staff will also assist provider agencies with shadowing opportunities for potential providers. Staff will facilitate mentor/mentee relationships by pairing potential providers with currently enrolled providers for information sharing.** * **Another aspect of ensuring adequate provider availability is focusing on provider retention. In an effort to demonstrate gratitude toward current providers, the ProKids LPCC will hold an annual awards ceremony to honor outstanding service providers. The ProKids LPCC will also recognize the good work of current providers through the “Pat on the Back” process where families can submit information acknowledging providers that go above and beyond. When a “Pat on the Back” is received, the LPCC sends a certificate to that provider and informs his/her agency. These providers are also honored at the annual awards ceremony.** | |
| **6** | **SoW Section VIII – Data Requirements**  Describe how you propose to execute SoW Section VIII in its entirety and in alignment with State laws, and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe how you will ensure initial early intervention files and electronic records are uploaded to EI Hub within two (2) days of an activity occurring. * Describe the process you will use to ensure that the data and documentation entered into EI Hub are both accurate and complete. * Describe your plan to monitor data entries and report errors to the State within seven days, if necessary. * Describe how you will safeguard any records not uploaded to EI Hub in accordance with State guidelines, Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA) regulations, and Protected Health Information (PHI) regulations. |
| **SPOE staff members will be trained to upload files to EI Hub as they are collected, when possible, or as soon as possible, but no later than two days from the activity. Management staff will routinely review records to ensure timeliness, accuracy, and completeness. Errors will be reported to the State as soon as identified, but no later than seven days after identification. Records not uploaded to EI Hub will be stored on ProKids’ secure file server. Employees will be trained on privacy policies related to FERPA and data security policies/procedures. All devices used by ProKids employees are password protected and ProKids has to ability to remotely disable and wipe content from devices if they are lost or stolen. s** | |
| **7** | **SoW Section IX and Attachment B1 – Corrective Action and Key Objectives**  Describe how you propose to execute SoW Section IX in its entirety and in alignment with State laws, and all other applicable Federal laws, updates, and guidance. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Please demonstrate your understanding of and indicate that you agree to comply with the corrective action requirements described in Section IX. * List any corrective actions that you have been subject to in the past five (5) years for services similar to those described in this RFP. Additionally, please describe what measures you will take to address and prevent corrective action throughout the Contract term. * Please describe any lessons learned from previous Corrective Actions, sanctions, or formal complaints. * Describe how you plan to meet each of the five Key Objectives described in Attachment B1. * For each Key Objective, describe your ability to perform each of the SPOE Project Activities, LPCC Project Activities, and meet the associated Metrics. * Outline your data collection practices, including any software utilized for data collection, cleaning, and analysis. |
| ProKids understands and agrees to comply with the corrective action requirements in Section IX. ProKids has not been subject to corrective actions in the past five years.  ProKids plans to maintain a high standard of work and thus prevent corrective action throughout the contract term. If corrective action is requested or required, ProKids will respond promptly, professionally, and with a willingness to learn and improve.  ProKids leadership staff maintain positive working relationships with state staff, community partners, and provider agencies, and feedback is both proactively sought and appropriately received when offered. ProKids welcomes opportunities to improve services and strives to provide the best possible services to families.  ProKids will meet the five Key Objectives described in Attachment B1 as follows:  Objective 1: Increase the number of infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services   * SPOE will accurately enter primary referral source information into EI Hub and will work with state staff and PCG to obtain primary referral source reports * SPOE and LPCC staff will work together to ensure alignment between policies/procedures and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) with local referring agencies * The LPCC will continue to encourage strong community partnerships and participation on the LPCC by various groups that serve young children and families. * The LPCC will employ staff who are knowledgeable about the local communities and community organizations, participating on advisory boards, partnerships, and coalitions. * The LPCC will continue its longstanding history of public awareness activities and broad-based child find strategies in the region. * The LPCC will distribute the new state brochures to referral source agencies. * The LPCC will review available referral source and public awareness data sets.   ProKids has consistently demonstrated the ability to meet this key outcome and associated metrics as the fiscal agent for the cluster G SPOE. Our cost proposal and staffing plan included in this RFP will help ensure continued success with this objective.  Objective 2: Ensure that the First Steps program is responsive to the needs of children and families   * Responding to all referrals within two (2) calendar days of receipt. * Maintaining a fully functioning evaluation/assessment team for the cluster(s) and ensure timely eligibility determination in accordance with state policy and state and federal regulations. * Ensuring that each eligible infant or toddler has a single ongoing service coordinator who will maintain face-to-face contact with families at least once quarterly and maintain regular, ongoing communication with families via phone or email between face-to-face visits. * Providing service coordination in accordance with state policy and state and federal regulations. * Ensuring that the ongoing service coordinator coordinates continuous IFSP team communication and discussion according to state policy and state and federal regulations and works to increase and support whole team collaboration. * Implementing all IFSPs within the required timelines, including initial IFSP development meetings held within 45 days of referral to SPOE, 6-month IFSP reviews, and annual IFSP development * Sending referral information to provider agencies and conducting follow up in a timely manner to help ensure that services are delivered within the required timeline (30 calendar days from parent signature on initial IFSP or change page; 30 days from IFSP start date for annual IFSPs). * Ensuring that all infants and toddlers with an IFSP primarily receive early interventions services in natural environments. In the event EI services are not provided in a natural environment, the identification of the appropriate setting for services must be an individualized decision made by the IFSP team (including the family) based on the child’s unique needs, family routines, and developmental outcomes. Ensuring that, in the event services are not provided in a natural environment, justification is provided in the IFSP. * Addressing concerns received by the SPOE within 60 days of receipt and forward complaints to the State office within two (2) business days. * Utilizing surveys, focus groups, and the FOQA Committee as a means to cultivate information that helps the LPCC identify needs for children and families. * Utilizing the Complaint/Concern process and recognition practices provide avenues for families voices to be heard. * Recruiting additional families to participate on the LPCC.   ProKids has accomplished this key outcome and most of the associated metrics consistently. We are confident that the cost proposal and staffing plan included in this RFP will help ensure continued success with this objective.  Objective 3: Ensure each eligible infant, toddler, and their family experiences a smooth exit from early intervention services, including a smooth transition when children move from First Steps to preschool or other services.   * Ensuring that every child enrolled in First Steps has a completed transition packet, along with a transition conference, in accordance with State policy and State and federal regulations. * Initiating transition activities for eligible infants and toddlers in accordance with timelines set in State policy. * Ensuring that each IFSP contains a completed transition page that includes transition steps and services with input from the family. * Ensuring that SPOE policies and procedures align with LPCC memorandums of agreement (MOA) regarding transition. * Working with the LPCC to identify transition training needs for the cluster(s). * Holding transition conferences in conjunction with the initial IFSP meeting when a child is referred at 29 months of age or older. * Maintaining a LPCC Transition Committee that helps inform families about the transition process through events held in partnership with local school districts. * Maintaining memorandums of agreement (MOA) for the transition process with each local school district. * Ensuring parent participation on the Transition Committee   ProKids has accomplished this key outcome and the associated metrics consistently. We are confident that the cost proposal and staffing plan included in this RFP will help ensure continued success with this objective.  Objective 4: Increase and improve communication and collaboration among all early intervention stakeholders in the cluster(s)   * Identifying community resources and engage in ongoing communication and collaboration with families, early intervention service providers, SPOE staff, LPCC members, transition committee members, referral sources, and community partners. * Ensuring that at least one (1) SPOE staff participates in LPCC meetings. * Ensuring that at least one (1) SPOE staff participates in local First Steps provider agency meetings. * Developing policies and procedures for working with First Steps provider agencies, including but not limited to how families are provided information about available service providers and internal SPOE protocol when an agency doesn’t have a provider available. * Ensuring service coordinators are trained on available community resources and transition options at least once per year. * Ensuring at least one (1) SPOE representative attends State Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) meetings. * Participating in ICC workgroups and other committees/groups relevant to early intervention and the broader early childhood system. * Maintaining a cluster LPCC with a diverse group of community participants   ProKids has accomplished this key outcome and the associated metrics consistently. We are confident that the cost proposal and staffing plan included in this RFP will help ensure continued success with this objective.  Objective 5: Adhere to operational requirements; maintain documentation to meet State policy and State and federal regulations; and support First Steps program improvement.   * Submitting information and reports to the State office as requested. * Ensuring that SPOE staff have working knowledge of the First Steps system, system policy, and all State and federal regulations governing the Part C program. Compliance with all regulations and policies is required. * Ensuring all SPOE staff adhere to the Professional Conduct Guidelines as outlined in the First Steps Early Intervention Personnel Guide. * Collaborating with Quality Review teams and the BCDS to address any areas in need of technical assistance and support. * Maintaining an independent First Steps identity exclusive of an affiliation with any other entity. * Maintaining a community presence as described in Section VI.B that is available to the public at least five (5) days per week, fifty-two (52) weeks per year or in accordance with a State-approved calendar during normal business hours and indicate SPOE hours of operation on the phone system and post them in the office (if applicable) and online. * Ensuring SPOE staff meet early intervention credentialing requirements in accordance with the First Steps Early Intervention Personnel Guide. Ensure that all intake and service coordinators receive direct programmatic supervision from a SPOE or service coordination supervisor. * Performing clerical functions related to authorization(s) for IFSP services. Assist the Eligibility Determination Team to maintain and update paper or electronic EI Records not uploaded to the State’s EI Hub. * Maintaining any EI records and electronic files not uploaded to the State’s EI Hub. * Ensuring accurate and timely data entry and record-keeping, including maintaining comprehensive child records not uploaded to the State’s EI Hub, in accordance with State policy and State and federal regulations. This includes maintaining all records not uploaded to the State’s EI Hub in a manner compliant with FERPA and that safeguards against any potential breach of Personally Identifiable Information. * Maintaining original files for all enrolled children that contain documentation, including the AEPS, to support eligibility as determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation in accordance with State eligibility guidelines. * Maintaining LPCC presentations and files * Maintaining and posting LPCC meeting minutes on the cluster G website * Updating the LPCC participation roster and encouraging completion of the LPCC participation form by each member.   ProKids has accomplished this key outcome and the associated metrics consistently. We are confident that the cost proposal and staffing plan included in this RFP will help ensure continued success with this objective. | |
| **8** | **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**  Describe how your company will prioritize DEI across all considerations and decisions made. Your response should include, but not be limited to, the specific elements highlighted below:   * Describe your understanding of the demographics of each region in which you are proposing services. * Demonstrate your experience meeting the unique needs of under-resourced populations. * Describe how you will identify under-resourced populations and detail how you will provide services to support those identified. * Describe the specific methods you will employ to promote services to under-resourced populations. |
| Cluster G is composed of a diverse racial, socio-economic, and geographical population. Marion County is a densely populated, metropolitan area making up slightly more than 55% of the cluster G region’s population with about 14% of its residents living in poverty, according to 2021 Census Data.\*\* This is much higher than the overall percentage of residents living in poverty in Indiana. Marion County also has a much higher population of minorities than many other counties around the state. Conversely, there are pockets of extremely rural areas within the cluster in Morgan, Hendricks, and Tipton Counties. ProKids has extensive knowledge and understanding of the demographics in cluster G. Profile data reports are utilized to ensure the demographics of families served mirror the demographics in the cluster or county. ProKids also relies on the expertise of partnering agencies that participate on the LPCC, like Covering Kids and Families, Indianapolis Healthy Start, Head Start, Healthy Families and Community Partners to further prioritize DE&I.  ProKids has successfully served families from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. To do so, ProKids proudly employs a diverse staff with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences to help address the varied needs of the population in cluster G. The SPOE employs several staff members who speak Spanish in order to better serve families who speak Spanish. The SPOE also employs a service coordinator who speaks Burmese. Additionally, the SPOE employs staff from the local community who are intimately familiar with the needs of the community and function as local ambassadors. For example, the service coordinator who serves Tipton County grew up in and currently lives in that county. Service coordinators are assigned to work in particular zip code areas and consequently become very familiar with the population and available resources. Service coordinators also participate on the LPCC and its committees to help identify issues faced by under-resourced populations in the areas they serve. Participation of parents on the LPCC assists with identifying needs in the local communities as well.  Multi-faceted strategies are used to promote services to under-resourced populations. Management staff routinely review policies and procedures to ensure families across the cluster have equal access to services and equally positive experiences with First Steps. For example, during the pandemic when service coordination and evaluation services were being conducted remotely, a few experienced service coordinators noted that they were having far fewer “no shows” than they typically had. Upon investigation, it became clear that requiring three in-person meetings (intake, evaluation, and IFSP) prior to beginning services was a barrier to entry for some families, especially those with more social challenges. This was an important reason for continuing the flexibility allowing some meetings to be held remotely. Presentations at all-staff meetings often include information from organizations that help vulnerable populations so that staff can learn about resources available to the families they serve. The LPCC supports information sharing among local community members through networking opportunities like the Tipton Hamilton Intervention Network for Kids (THINK) where local groups hear presentations from other local resource organizations.  \*\*U.S. Census Bureau (2021). Quick Facts: Population. Retrieved from [https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/tiptoncountyindiana,johnsoncountyindiana,morgancountyindiana,hamiltoncountyindiana,hendrickscountyindiana,marioncountyindiana/PST045221]. | |