



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



January 12, 2007

Mr. Bill Crews
Zoning Administrator
Suite 2000
941 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: 1637 E Street, NE

Mr. Crews:

At the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A monthly meeting on January 11, 2007, with a quorum present, we voted unanimously to alert the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) of a potential zoning code violation at 1637 E Street, NE.

The current certificate of occupancy is for four apartments in an R4 zone. Based upon the attached description of the planned project from Martin Pollack Project, which we have attached, the propose use of the property is for a community-based residential facility serving 17-21 year-old males, without specific consideration of disability. The relevant sections are below:

"The Martin Pollak Project is proposing to serve sixteen youth (eight male and eight female) in its Teen Bridge Program. The program will be housed in two group homes that will have space for bedrooms, staff office and public and private common areas for individual and group activities and sessions. The program will meet all requirements of the solicitation for services, federal and District law and regulations, and CFSA policies."

"The Teen Bridge Program will employ sufficient counselors to meet licensing regulations and ensure that there is at least two staff on duty and awake at all times and that staffing levels meet the requirements of Chapter 62 of Title 29 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations."

Accordingly, we request DCRA require a special exception prior to issuing the certificate of occupancy for this facility.

On behalf of the Commission,

Joseph Fengler, Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A

Cc: Uma Ahluwalia (Child and Family Services)
Eric Rogers, DCRA
Rosedale Citizens Alliance
Commander Diane Groomes
Lieutenant Renato Caldwell

The Martin Pollak Project, Inc.
Response to:
The Government of the District of Columbia
Child & Family Services Agency
Office of Contracting & Procurement's
Request for Proposal on Transitional Living Services (Teen Bridge Program)
No. CFSA-06-R-0013

Transitional Living Services (Teen Bridge Program) Technical Proposal
Item # 0001

Executive Summary

The Martin Pollak Project (MPP) is concerned with the life skills development of older youth in the specialized foster care contract with the District of Columbia Child and Family Services (CFSA). Through MPP's experience in providing treatment foster care, residential and independent living services, we have substantial experience with an identified population of youth who lack the basic skills and motivation to succeed in an independent living setting but are older than youth in other residential settings such as group homes. These youth often become disenchanted or alienated; and join the emerging ranks of homeless and incarcerated youth aging out of the foster care system.

MPP's experience indicates that these youth can experience successful outcomes using a youth-driven, peer-to-peer model of service provision. When these youth are placed in a nurturing and safe environment with wrap-around on-site services, they become actively engaged in planning, developing and taking responsibility for their own lives. MPP is pleased with the release of this solicitation since it is designed for the same youth which MPP believes have been less well served by the current constellation of programs.

The Martin Pollak Project is a licensed child placement agency in the State of Maryland and the District of Columbia. MPP has over 25 years experience of providing treatment foster care, specialized foster care, residential and independent living services. Historically, The Martin Pollak Project's core competency rests on working with older, difficult-to-place children. The

Martin Pollak Project is engaged in a twelve-year partnership with CFSA in Washington, DC. MPP's service delivery history with children from the District of Columbia reflects understanding of independent living preparation as an element of an integrated continuum of family-centered services with a shared emphasis on safety, permanency and well-being for children and youth. In the past MPP has provided Independent Living Services for CFSA children through purchase of service agreements.

The Martin Pollak Project's experience in providing an array of out-of-home placement services with successful outcomes qualifies the agency to service the population outlined in the Teen Bridge Program. MPP has provided specialized and therapeutic foster care, and independent living and residential services under contracts with CFSA and the Maryland Departments of Human Resources and Juvenile Services. Since our inception, MPP has served emotionally disabled older adolescents with a history of multiple placements in both Maryland and the District of Columbia.

MPP began providing Treatment Foster Care in Maryland in 1987, Treatment Foster Care (now Specialized Foster Care) in the District of Columbia in 1991, and Independent Living Services in Maryland in 1994. Between 1995 and 2001, MPP provided Independent Living Services to 20 CFSA youth returning from residential treatment through purchase of service agreements in our Baltimore-based Young Adult's Initiative Program. From FY 2000 to FY 2003, Martin Pollak Project was the primary contractor for Maryland Department of Human Resources' Managed Care Pilot Project, which used outcome-based measures to serve 500 Baltimore City children in out of home care in an effort to improve permanency outcomes.

The Martin Pollak Project is recognized for its ability to find and maintain placement in the community for youth who are truly difficult to place, but who can be maintained safely with the right supports in place. MPP's attention to emancipation planning (what will work and is in the best interest of the youth) and ongoing monitoring of youth who exit the MPP programs, along with the competency and flexibility of our staff and foster parents, have resulted in achieving improved permanency outcomes for the children in MPP care. MPP focus on continued connection with families of origin mitigates the multiple problems associated with family

separation and increases the possibility for reunification and/or post discharge ongoing support from family and/or relatives as youth leave foster care and seek to establish a viable life in the community of choice. MPP is committed to helping children and youth live in family-like settings as a first preference and further in communities that support and reflect their cultural origins. MPP's programs work to give youth a chance to gain life-long support systems, improve their capability for effective independent functioning in the community, develop knowledge of their needs and self resources and develop a growing sense of self-reliance and competency in meeting their needs.

The Martin Pollak Project prides itself on staying abreast of and incorporating emerging approaches to working with youth (if not serving as a leader in developing those approaches). An example is Positive Youth Development, which promotes positive peer relationship, emphasizes youths' strengths, provides opportunities to learn healthy behaviors, connect youth with caring adult, empowers youth to assume leadership roles and challenges youth in ways that build their competence.

MPP is a member agency of the Child Welfare League of America, Foster Family-Based Treatment Association, National Foster Parent Association, Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth, and the Consortium for Child Welfare. Staff social workers are members of the National Association of Social Workers. These organizations and associations offer a wealth of literature, training and networking to maintain and update knowledge of Evidenced Based Practice principles and other practice improvement developments in the field.

The Martin Pollak Project Teen Bridge Program

The Martin Pollak Project is proposing to serve sixteen youth (eight male and eight female) in its Teen Bridge Program. The program will be housed in two group homes that will have space for bedrooms, staff office and public and private common areas for individual and group activities and sessions. The program will meet all requirements of the solicitation for services, federal and District law and regulations, and CFSA policies.

Martin Pollak Project is committed to providing uniquely designed services that grow with the youth and support our mission of "enhancing the lives of families and children by building on their unique strengths and by developing community to establish productive and fulfilling lives." The MPP Teen Bridge Program is a chance for youth who have had considerable disruption and trauma in their lives to develop simple life skills, resilient support systems to move into adulthood and self-sufficiency.

The Teen Bridge program uses the Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) treatment modality. The program will provide intensive staffing and a variety of individual and group services and activities. Intensive wrap-around services will include substance abuse and/or alcohol treatment, employment and vocational training and support, mental health services, family support, and social and recreational activities. Because youth to be referred to this program are not highly motivated and can be difficult to engage in receiving services, MPP has designed the program to reduce enhance engagement to increase participation.

Program activities are designed to develop a positive and supportive group dynamic. Group empowerment helps motivate youth and results in decreased negative peer pressure. Youth are actively engaged in the program and in making decisions and setting goals for themselves from the moment that they are asked whether they want to be in the Teen Bridge program. This choice helps to begin to set a new pattern of youth taking responsibility for their actions to recognize themselves as capable.

Youth will participate in a rites of passage program that will guide them through a personal journey of transformation. Youth will participate in a mandatory weekly Teen Empowerment Group, which provides a therapeutic environment for identifying and processing common issues.

They will participate in a Residents' Council, which will make recommendations for program development, improved service quality, and the protection of residents' rights.

MPP's peer-to-peer model results in youth engagement, empowering them to take responsibility for defining their needs, develop resolutions, making recommendation for change, and participating in organized efforts to implement recommendations.

Intensive educational support will allow youth to experience academic and vocational success, many for the first time. Use of the Individual Child Achievement Program (ICAP) means that each youth can get the individualized attention he or she needs to build missing academic skills that are needed for success in schools or other external programs.

MPP will ensure that each youth in our Teen Bridge Program; is enrolled in a high school program; GED program or vocational program; will work diligently towards helping youth achieve stability in their educational placements; provide assistance to any youth that has the desire and demonstrated ability to attend college. Martin Pollak Project's Teen Bridge Program staff will provide the services required by each youth's ITILP, emphasizing ongoing assessment and individualized follow through.

Older youth who are not continuing in school will need assessment of motivation, a vocational/job focus, to include help with resumes, job applications, interviewing and learning on the job behaviors. They will also need motivation to believe that they can be successful on a job.

Mentors will be identified for older youth who can give them support and positive feedback and help them explore job and career opportunities. Individualized mentoring services will focus on development of relationships, positive role modeling, monitoring problem behaviors, strength-based intervention, and exploration of youths' interests and talents.

Program activities will build on CFSA programs and services. MPP will provide on-site group and one-on-one life skills training that will build on what youth learn through the Center for Keys for Life. Staff will coach youth in all areas of daily living that impact a stable transition to independence (shopping, meal preparation, accessing transportation, housekeeping, caring for

clothing, and budgeting and money management).

MPP will also support youth's participation in CFSA planning processes, including Youth Connections Conferences. Because the ESFT model is a family treatment approach and thus MPP works actively with the family of program youth. MPP helps youth identify the family and others to whom they have connections and to reestablish or maintain connections with those individuals. MPP includes family and other significant others in planning processes and make a concerted effort to reach out to and engage those individuals. Family members are included in program activities as appropriate. MPP will bring family members in for family counseling when appropriate. Having these relationships will help bring others in for Youth Connections Conferences.

A Program Director will be responsible for the overall management and operation of the program and for the development, implementation, and supervision of programmatic services. The individual appointed as the Program Director will have a master's degree in social work or a related field of study from an accredited university and at least two years of experience in the management or supervision of child welfare personnel or programs or have a bachelor's degree in social work or a related area of study from an accredited college or university and at least four years of post-graduate experience in the management or supervision of child welfare personnel or programs. The Program Director will be available to youth, CFSA, staff and youths' parents by telephone at all times. The position description and responsibilities of the Program Director position are detailed in the complete job description attached to this proposal.

The Teen Bridge Program will employ one Social Worker licensed as a LICSW. The Social Worker is responsible for the daily implementation of social services provided to the youth. The program will have a certified or licensed Addictions Counselor, who will be responsible for providing education and treatment regarding substance abuse. The Teen Bridge Program will employ one full-time Educational Specialist, who will be responsible for identifying youth's educational and vocational needs and arranging for the provision of appropriate educational services. The individual appointed to the Educational Specialist position will have a master's degree in education or a related field or a bachelor's degree in education and five years experience in counseling and guidance of high school students.

The Teen Bridge Program will employ sufficient counselors to meet licensing regulations and ensure that there is at least two staff on duty and awake at all times and that staffing levels meet the requirements of Chapter 62 of Title 29 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. The Counselors are responsible for day-to-day monitoring of youth and their activities. A counselor will have a minimum of an Associates Arts degree and at least five years experience in human services delivery preferably working with adolescents and young adults. A bachelor's degree in social work or a related field may be substituted for the experience. At no time will there be less than two staff persons in the facility when a youth is present.

The Martin Pollak Project will work with Child and Family Services Agency to develop criteria and processes for youth to be successfully discharged from the Teen Bridge program. MPP will also work with CFSA to develop programmatic and payment structures that will support the continuing involvement in the program of youth who go into abscondance or leave the program due to hospitalization or detainment. If youth are discharged from the program due to a long-term absence, MPP will continue to follow them and give them preference for replacement in the program, based on current program census.

The Martin Pollak Project will actively cooperative with CFSA on how to work with those youth who refuse program services.

Sub factor 2:

The Martin Pollak Project often partners with other agencies and organizations for the implementation of specific programs, or to meet needs of children and youth. For the Teen Bridge Program, Martin Pollak Project is not partnering with another agency; MPP will, however, be collaborating with other organizations for specific services to meet the needs of youth.

Sub factor 3:

The populations of children served, the service modalities used, and community collaborations make the Martin Pollak Project uniquely qualified to serve adolescent youth in the Teen Bridge

Program. Martin Pollak Project has extensive experience in providing dedicated services for adolescents in independent living and therapeutic foster care programs. MPP has established relationships with other organizations in the District of Columbia, some of which may be critical to the success of this program, such as the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities, DC Kids, and the CFSA Collaborative-Housing Services. MPP collaborates with other Maryland service providers to build knowledge and best practices through the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY). MPP's Chief Executive Officer serves as chair of the Independent Living Coalition that operates under the auspices of MARFY. This collaborative is coordinating an effort to share resources, identify targets for advocacy efforts; and review best practices for implementation. MPP's expertise was acknowledged in the request to participate as a member of Maryland Governor's Office of Children task force to revise levels of intensity for independent living programs.

For the past three years, the Martin Pollak Project has brought together adolescents in the Maryland and DC programs for a Youth Symposium. Presenters from a variety of organizations have led workshops on such topics as educational realities for older youth in care and realistic functioning in the community when dealing with the police. The symposium is held in conjunction with a seminar for MPP foster parents. It is designed to bring together youth to discuss common issues, build community, and help them address their status as youth in foster care. This year MPP is inviting youth from other programs to participate in the symposium.

Sub factor 4:

MPP is currently licensed to provide specialized foster care in the District of Columbia, and community-based independent living and treatment foster care services in Maryland. MPP's DC Specialized Foster Care program, created in 1991, is a community-based, foster family, out-of-home placement service. This program serves emotionally disabled and mentally challenged children and youth with responsibility for work with biological families towards reunification. Currently, MPP's DC Specialized Foster Care program serves 66 children, 90% of those are youth 14 and older. In Maryland, MPP provided has Treatment Foster Care from 1987 to present. The Maryland Independent Living Program, created in 1994, provides life skills development,

educational and vocational placement assistance, and supervised apartment-based living arrangements.

Sub factor 5:

Martin Pollak Project has experience providing Specialized Services and Treatment Foster Care, which is an Evidence-Based Practice. Serving the same population as served in residential treatment, Treatment Foster Care model is community based, family focused, and child centered. It identifies individual needs, risk and protective factors and analyzes through a treatment teaming process interventions needed to bring about changes in behavior for children and their families that makes healthy reunification possible. MPP serves older populations (ages 16 to 21) with this practice since inception with measurable results. MPP's treatment model uses Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) to work with biological and foster families to support youth while they are receiving therapeutic services and integrate youth back into their families, focusing on adaptation, functioning and progress.

Between FY2000 and FY2003, the Martin Pollak Project was the lead agency for the Department of Human Resources' Managed Care Demonstration Project. This project was the first effort in Maryland to apply a medical managed care model to a child welfare system that utilized a capitated rate. Enriched Structural Family Therapy Model provided an evidence-based practice for this project. A formal evaluation was conducted by the University Of Maryland School Of Social Work that indicated positive outcomes for children, such as a reduced length of stay in care.

Sub factor 6:

The Martin Pollak Project understands that many youth in the Foster Care System are challenged with mental health issues, family problems, and educational deficits. These youth have been disenchanted and alienated by their experiences in the child welfare system.

Based on experience, the Martin Pollak Project anticipates difficulty in getting youth in the Teen-Bridge program to engage in offered services due to a history of failed and/or inadequate

service delivery, mental health issues, family problems, and educational deficits. Another challenge is to identify and develop resources that will continue to meet the needs of individual youth as they transition out of the program. Many service providers are not prepared to face the challenges that these youth can present. While MPP's experience is an asset to the operation of a Teen Bridge Program, it is anticipated that these challenges will be met through a cadre of quality staff and innovative program strategies. For example, MPP's Individualized Child Achievement Program (ICAP) to supplement educational resources and Positive Youth Development Programming to empower youth to meet their needs have been successful strategies in meeting these challenges.

Sub factor 7:

The behaviors exhibited by youth eligible for the Teen Bridge Program can be overwhelming to a foster parent, even when the foster parent has access to comprehensive program supports and services. Often, children who have experienced multiple placements do not respond well in a foster family setting and, a traditional group setting does not lend itself to the positive youth development model.

Utilization of a positive youth development model in the Teen Bridge Program, youth will readily engage in services offered. Positive youth development promotes positive relationships with peers, emphasizes youths' strengths, provides opportunities to learn healthy behaviors, connects youth with caring adults, empowers youth to assume leadership roles, and challenges them in ways that build their confidence.

Having a full compliment of round the clock staff ensures that sufficient staff will be available to quickly address emergent issues and meet youth's needs. Having services on site increases the likelihood of youth attending and participating in programs and sessions. Staff with a variety of expertise is all available to meet the multiple needs of the youth and can support each other which will lessen burnout and better ensure continuity of care and ability of care givers to continue to enthusiastically and proactively work with youth. In addition, the ability to form a positive peer group is critical to helping these young people develop positive attitudes and to belief in their own ability to achieve goals; and adaptation that too many of these youths lack.

Sub factor 8:

The CFSA social worker will refer each youth to the Center for Keys for Life Skills Training (CKL). Some youth attend CKL regularly because they enjoy the connectedness with other youth and stay motivated by the \$25 credit into their CKL account. Others will be motivated through positive peer and adult relationships and programs and group expectations. A Buddy System will be developed to pair higher functioning with the less motivated youth to encourage attendance at CKL sessions and in building life skills. Staff will work with youth to remove obstacles to attendance to CKL sessions and will provide transportation for those who do not otherwise attend Center For Keys for Life.

MPP will build on the independent living skills taught in the Center for Keys for Life through the Teen-Bridge Life Skills Program, which consists of weekly seminars addressing particular skills, and individual one-on-one hands-on training. MPP will conduct life skills assessments with each youth that enters the program using the Ansell-Casey assessment tool. Assessments will also be provided after each group training session. Group life skill trainings will take place in the common area of our facility, another MPP DC office or facility, or at a nearby community agency that is hosting the particular seminar for our youth. (For example, sessions for youth in the areas of sex education and reproductive health services could include presentations from local community agencies such as Capital Hill Pregnancy Center, The Kellogg Birth Center, Metro Teen Aids, APRA, and Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan DC.) Holding sessions in a MPP facility will be another way to reduce barriers and ensure regular participation by program youth.

Topics addressed in life skills training will include:

- a) How to seek and secure housing;
- b) Safe and healthy trash disposal;
- c) Housecleaning and how to maintain a clean and healthy living environment;
- d) The safe and healthy storage and disposal of dangerous or combustible materials;
- e) Who to contact to maintain a residence, including how to utilize residence

- management;
- f) Simple household duties such as how to change a light bulb and how to patch a small hole;
- g) Nutrition and the importance of maintaining an adequate and balanced diet;
- h) Purchase, preparation and storage of food;
- i) Proper personal care, hygiene and grooming;
- j) Selection and purchase of clothing that is affordable and appropriate;
- k) How to do laundry;
- l) Personal safety;
- m) Money management;
- n) General health and healthy management;
- o) First aid;
- p) Reproductive health and contraception;
- q) HIV / AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases;
- r) Substance abuse recognition and prevention;
- s) Parenting skills, including child development;
- t) Problem solving and decision making;
- u) Conflict resolution, negotiation, team building, and peer support;
- v) Time management;
- w) Stress reduction;
- x) Employment seeking and maintenance skills;
- y) Consumer awareness;
- z) Use of public transportation;
- aa) Knowledge of and accessing public and private community resources;
- bb) Educational and career planning; and
- cc) How to identify situations requiring, and how to acquire, legal assistance.

On-site program staff will provide one-on-one training to ensure that the youth are able to implement the concrete skills that have been discussed or taught in on-site group in Keys For Life sessions. Youth will be coached and supported in all areas of daily living that impact a stable transition to independence, such as shopping, meal preparation, house keeping, caring for clothing and budgeting. Staff will document individual and group training in case records and

FACES.

MPP will provide each youth with bi-weekly allowance and funds to purchase clothing on a quarterly basis. Those youth who demonstrate responsibility and the ability to plan ahead and spend accordingly will be given additional financial resources to be used for more of their needs. youth will be encouraged to open a checking account or savings account that includes use of a debit card so that youth further develop their money management skills.

Sub factor 9:

Teen Bridge youth need a program that provides a variety of intensive wrap-around services. Required services will include substance abuse and/or alcohol treatment, employment and vocational training and support, mental health services, family support, and social and recreational activities. MPP will refer youth to some community services and will provide others in-house. It is recognized that these youth are not highly motivated and can be difficult to engage in receiving services; as many barriers as possible must be removed to increase participation.

An effective method to reduce the likelihood of abscondence or placement disruption is to help youth become a cohesive group. Establishing norms and helping the youth to support each other in reaching positive goals can help create group empowerment, which can be a motivating factor for youth. Negative peer pressure will be decreased, which would otherwise make it more difficult for youth to stay focused on positive goals. Group meetings will be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order. Youth are trained to use Robert's Rules, which teaches essential skills, including leadership, how to make and present a case for an action, how to argue the merits for or against an action, and how to define problems and proposed solutions.

Mental health services are needed to minimize abscondences and placement disruptions, but many are also not receptive to such services. Attendance is more regular if services are offered in-house and the youth does not have to get back and forth to a therapist's office for sessions. For that reason, MPP will provide a variety of on-site individual and group services that include therapy that addresses issues of abuse and victimization, family work (because even if the youth are not going to return home, they will need help to bridge family relationships and maintain connections after emancipation), and substance abuse treatment.

MPP will provide youth with a variety of socially and culturally enriching activities throughout the calendar year. The goal will be to keep the youth extremely active so that in addition to having fun and growing individually, they will develop a group spirit. Keeping busy and having fun will make youth less inclined to engage in the behaviors that have caused them trouble in the past. There will be at least a weekly small group activity. The Teen Empowerment Group (including all youth in the program) will engage in a recreational activity decided upon by the youth in that group. The teens' parents may participate as well. This may be an off-site activity such as dinner, bowling, skating or an on-site activity, such as a game night.

Access to individual recreational activities and development of hobbies by each youth will be encouraged. This will be facilitated through a Life Skills Program assessment of each youth and subsequent identification of community resources that adequately meet the teen's individual recreational needs. Each individual youth's social/recreational needs will be assessed during treatment team meetings and family meetings on an ongoing basis. Youth exhibiting the need for more support in this area will receive additional one-on-one advocacy to help them identify personal preferences and/or barriers relative to healthy social/recreational activity.

MPP provides youth the opportunity to attend worship of his/her choice and will arrange transportation for individual youth, as needed, to engage in or attend worship services and related activities.

The MPP Teen Bridge Program is a chance for youth who have had considerable interruption and trauma in their lives to lighten their load and develop simple life skills and resilient support systems that they can easily carry with them as they move into adulthood and self-sufficiency.

Sub factor 10:

Many youth in foster care have had limited opportunities for academic and vocational success. The Educational and Vocational Specialist will support youth in these areas. Educational support will be provided through the Individual Child Achievement Program (ICAP). ICAP provides educational assistance to improve academic achievement for youth who are performing below grade level in reading and math. Based on the results of a youth's initial assessment, they receive individualized instruction, using the web-based A+ Anywhere Learning System software

system. This system is effective for children at all levels from grades K-12 to GED. Current and former public school system teachers will guide instruction. This software is based on the standard curriculum of the Federal and State Departments of Education. ICAP will be housed in each of the Teen Bridge program facilities to minimize barriers to participation. The program will support youth and bring them to the required educational level so they can succeed in school and/or get into vocational/educational programs. Each youth in Teen Bridge will have use of a laptop as part of their participation in ICAP.

MPP will ensure that each youth in the MPP Teen Bridge Program is enrolled in a high school program, GED program or vocational program appropriate to that youth's current level of functioning. Tutoring services will be provided for youth requiring these services in order to successfully complete a given high school or GED program or vocational program. Such services will be coordinated with and accessed either through the youth's school or the District of Columbia Public Schools. The MPP social worker and Teen Bridge Program counselor will ensure that the youth's home environment remains conducive to studying and homework completion and that each youth has all needed supplies and access to computer and/or library services as necessary.

MPP structuring of the Teen Bridge program will help reduce incidence of truancy. ICAP will help youth develop their educational skills and competencies, the lack of which is a major reason that youth avoid attending school. The Educational Specialist and MPP staff will be actively involved with youth's educational institutions and will provide homework support and supervision; attend IEP and other planning meetings; and develop relationships with school personnel. Staff will be responsible for monitoring youth attendance. MPP will assess barriers and reasons for truancy and develop interventions to address those barriers or reasons.

MPP will provide transportation on an as-needed basis. Youth will be encouraged to take the initiative and find alternate means of transportation such as the Metro. Through individual youth contracts and other interventions, MPP will incentivize school attendance through positive reinforcement. The Education/Vocational Specialist will work to ensure appropriate placements for youth and develop access to training and/or apprenticeship

Older youth who are not continuing in school will need a vocational/job focus, to include help with resumes, job applications, interviewing and learning on the job behaviors. They will also need motivation to believe that they can be successful on a job. The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment of each youth will help to determine what skills the youth has already developed and in what areas he or she will need additional support.

The older youth will benefit from being matched with mentors who can give them support and positive feedback and help them explore job and career opportunities. Individualized mentoring services will focus on development of relationships, positive role modeling, monitoring problem behaviors, strength-based intervention, and exploration of youths' interests and talents. The goal of these flexible mentoring services will be to stabilize placements, decrease youths' involvement with the criminal justice system, reduce aggressive behaviors, stress the importance of building positive relationships and afford the additional support that allows youth to grow and heal during times of crisis when they are often more likely to be receptive to the services offered. MPP will seek volunteer mentors through local sororities and fraternities, local churches, and other civic groups.

Sub factor 11:

MPP Teen Bridge staff will meet with each youth upon entry into the program to explain the expectations and requirements and develop an individual youth contract that include no illegal substances and weapons, mandatory participation in services provided and adherence to rules. These contracts will be developed by and with the youth and will focus on individual needs. Youth will be encouraged to develop goals and then helped to establish concrete steps they needed to achieve those goals.

By enabling youth to focus on personal behaviors, the Teen-Bridge program will lay a foundation for them to recognize individual and group accomplishment. The expectation that they are capable of accomplishing goals they established for themselves. This would help them to buy-in to the program and become part of the positive culture is expected.

Part of ensuring a positive peer culture is not admitting youth who will place other youth at risk. MPP understands that most of the youth to be served are high risk due to their histories of abuse,

and neglect. While others may be working hard to avoid or to unlearn victimizing behaviors, youth who would be put at risk or who would put others at risk would not be appropriate for the Teen Bridge Program. This population includes those youth who are active fire setters, have exhibited pedophilia, are actively psychotic, or have untreated addiction issues (who would need to receive treatment before they can enter the program).

MPP will have youth participate in a rites of passage program that will guide them through a personal journey of transformation, removing the destructive barriers from a youth's development and replacing them with constructive tools to build a strong community. The rites of passage program promotes the value of interdependence between self, family, community and the world. The program builds character, promoting self-discipline and the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions and choices.

All Program youth will participate in a mandatory weekly Teen Empowerment Group, facilitated by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker aided by another program staff. The Teen Empowerment Group will provide a therapeutic environment to enable participants and staff to identify and process issues common to youth in foster care transitioning to emancipation. Issues addressed in this forum will include: stress and anger management, decision making and problem solving skills, job search issues, planned activities, interpersonal communication, mutual support common to grief and loss, sex, relationships, and family planning. The Teen Empowerment Group is a forum that will build skills such as improved communication, problem-solving, restructuring and modeling social skills, addressing life skills issues and supporting and showcasing the strengths of youth in transition. The therapeutic and service needs will be identified in this forum and staff will follow up to ensure development and implementation of resources to meet these needs. The Empowerment Group will be used to pair higher functioning with the less motivated, lower functioning youth to encourage program buy-in and skill building.

The Martin Pollak Project Teen Bridge Program will establish a Residents' Council, which will make recommendations for program development, for improved service quality, and for the protection of residents' rights. The Residents' Council will include all residents of the facility. The Residents Council will be run with staff assistance. MPP will provide appropriate space for Resident Council meetings and will give adequate consideration to all recommendations,

respond in writing to those recommendations, and maintain a record of all recommendations and responses. Recommendations will be reviewed approved, as prudent, by MPP's CEO and the Teen Bridge Program Director before implementation. A member of the Teen Bridge Program Residents' Council will serve on the MPP Youth Advisory Board, made up of representatives from all MPP youth programs. The Youth Advisory Board makes recommendations regarding all MPP services for youth and their families. One member of the Residents Council will be asked to meet quarterly with the MPP Executive Team to report progress of the Residents' Council.

MPP's peer-to-peer model of service provision will result in youth engagement in the program, empowering them to take responsibility for defining their needs, developing resolutions, making recommendation for change, and participating in organized efforts to implement recommendations. With increased responsibility for meeting their needs, youth will be responsive to service provision with increased likelihood of successful transition to adulthood.

Sub factor 12:

The Martin Pollak Project is committed to ensuring that all youth live successful and productive lives after they leave the foster care system. Utilizing Youth Connection Conferences will bring together family members and significant others to assist youth in planning and taking ownership of their lives. Youth will be oriented from program intake to recognize Youth Connection Conferences as key events to be used to affect their Participation will be included in each youth's individual contract. MPP will provide transportation and accompany youth to their conferences. MPP will collaborate with CFSA to ensure that Youth Connections Conferences are held in the community at times and places that are convenient to all participants. When needed, MPP will provide transportation to the youth's significant others to ensure that they can attend.

Youth Connection Conferences will be used to plan discharge of youth from the Teen Bridge Program based upon the request of the teen or the staff of the Teen Bridge Program. Discharge may be appropriate for several purposes such as, the need for residential treatment, incarceration, hospitalization, lack interest in program participation, AWOL's, reunification, transition to independent living programs, or emancipation. Discharges will be planned with youth being

connected to other programs and services. Youth may return to the program upon request by CFSA based upon space availability and continued eligibility criteria. Youth will be accepted from other programs into the Teen-Bridge Program based upon this criteria.

Staff of the Teen-Bridge Program will assist youth in identifying family members and significant others in their lives and what roles that these individuals have played in their past or could play in the future. Assistance will be provided in mending broken relationships and in facilitating contact between the youth and these individuals to seek participation in planning with and for the youth at Treatment Team meetings, Youth Connections Conferences, in family therapy, and with staff on an as needed basis to meet individual needs and for crisis intervention purposes. Staff will assist the youth, family members, and significant others in identifying barriers to their participation in the planning process and make efforts to address those barriers.

Healthy Families/ Thriving Communities (HF/TC) is a community-based resource that assists biological families with resources to facilitate reunification, provide aftercare services to youth aging out of foster care, and other programs. The South Washington HF/TC and others in communities where biological parents and aging out youth live have provided and continue to provide services to families and youth served by MPP's Specialized Foster Care Program. The Georgia Avenue Collaborative has also been instrumental in providing these services to families and youth in MPP's Specialized Foster Care Program. MPP expects to maintain and foster relationships between these Collaboratives and the Teen Bridge Program.

Sub factor 13:

MPP recognizes the importance of family bonds for youth, whether their permanency plan is reunification, placement with relatives, or emancipation. MPP will facilitate family visitation, as appropriate and in line with court orders, between the teens and their parents, extended family members/significant others. Visitations will occur in the least restrictive setting, including the visitation centers located in one of the seven collaborative, in the DC office visitation rooms, or at the facility. Visits will be unsupervised unless otherwise ordered by the court or deemed necessary by the CFSA social worker or staff of the Teen Bridge Program. Family members, relatives and significant others who comprise the teen's support system will be included in program activities as appropriate (such as MPP's annual family picnic and holiday open house).

MPP will assist all participating parties in identifying and removing obstacles to attendance. Many aspects of the service components of the Teen Bridge Program are based on the treatment modality of Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT). This service model is facilitated by a team of workers and family that includes the youth as an active member in decision-making and identification of goals and timeframes. Using the philosophy of ESFT, family meetings are the vehicles for healing, growth, and team communication. The family gathers around the youth whose input is integral to any decision made by the team. Members of a youth's "family" or team typically include all persons who have important history or input to share that could make a difference in a youth's ability to function in the community at large. At any given time, a family meeting might include: the youth, MPP's case manager, peer, CFSA workers, private therapist, teacher, significant others, biological family members, the youth's attorney, and other staff of the Teen Bridge Program.

Management Experience

To manage the Teen Bridge Program, Martin Pollak Project will hire a full-time Program Director who will be exclusively focused on overseeing the operation of the Teen Bridge program. The Program Director will report to the MPP Chief Executive Officer. This direct relationship to top management provides the avenue for guidance, support and ensures successful program outcomes. (See Teen Bridge Program organizational chart included in Management Experience section of proposal). Initially, the Director will be supported by the knowledge and experience of the Chief of Program Services in DC. After the initial start-up phase of the Teen Bridge Program implementation has been completed, the Program Director will fully assume his/her role as a member of MPP's executive team. This initial hands-on support will ensure that MPP will be able to integrate Teen Bridge into the organization and coordinate with our other services for DC youth.

The Martin Pollak Project is committed to the success of the Teen Bridge Program, and views it as a logical continuation of the work and services we have provided to date for older youth in foster care who face special challenges due to their emotional and social needs. It is for this reason that we will have the Program Director report to the MPP Chief Executive Officer. This direct reporting relationship to top management provides the avenue for guidance, support and ensures successful program outcomes. The Program Director will also be able to call upon the knowledge and experience of the Chief of Program Services in DC, as well as other DC based staff. This will ensure integration across MPP programs and full knowledge of and compliance with DC requirements. The Teen Bridge Program Director will also function as a member of the Martin Pollak Project executive team

As discussed above, the Martin Pollak Project has over twenty years experience providing therapeutic foster care, residential and independent living services in and for Maryland and the District of Columbia. Services provided in our Teen Bridge program will reflect cultural competency. Staff employed for all MPP programs will continue to be representative of the ethnicity of the population served. All staff are trained to reinforce positive cultural practices and values of the children in our care. MPP pre-service/orientation training and on-going clinical

supervision and staff trainings address issues that support staff's familiarity and respect for the child's family-of-origin's culture and the ability to intervene in a manner that supports ethnic, socio-cultural and linguistic strengths of each child in MPP's care.

Staff will be observed and evaluated on their demonstrated respect of and support for positive cultural practices and strengths related to the children in MPP care. To the extent possible, The Martin Pollak Project agrees to comply with the First Source Employment Agreement, and recruit and hire appropriately qualified staff from the communities served.

Staff will receive regular and ongoing staff training, which will be specific to the ages and characteristics of the residents served by the Teen Bridge Program. New staff members will receive at least twenty hours of pre-service training before beginning employment and forty hour of annual of in-service training that will include:

- a) The Teen Bridge Program administrative structure, procedures, and overall program;
- b) The Teen Bridge Program's emergency plan;
- c) Communicable diseases and universal precautions;
- d) Conflict resolution; and
- e) An introduction to daily living skills for adolescents and young adults.

All staff will receive at least forty hours of annual in-service training, which will include:

- a) The Teen Bridge Program's emergency plan;
- b) The principles and practices of residential care, including appropriate training on age-specific and special physical, emotional, and medical needs;
- c) Life skills;
- d) The Teen Bridge Program's administrative structure;
- e) The Teen Bridge Program's policies and procedures;
- f) For program staff, appropriate techniques of behavior management and discipline;
- g) For program staff, techniques and methodologies of crisis management;
- h) Child development;
- i) Methods of working with adolescents and young adults that take into account their culture and interest;
- j) Manifestation of and techniques for working with abused, neglected, and traumatized

residents;

- k) The discipline policy, including acceptable methods of discipline;
- l) Recognition and prevention of abuse, neglect, and risks to the resident's health or safety;
- m) Program procedure for reporting actual or alleged resident abuse or neglect, and actual or alleged risk to the resident's health or safety, including training on mandatory reporting, and policies and procedures relating to child abuse or neglect and risks to residents' health or safety;
- n) Recognition of substance abuse symptoms and treatment resources;
- o) Universal precautions;
- p) Recognition of mental health disorders and treatment resources;
- q) Suicide prevention;
- r) Depression; and
- s) Topics determined jointly by the Teen Bridge Program and CFSA.

At the time of employment, MPP will give a staff member a written description of his or her position that defines the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of the position and the salary.

At the time of employment, new staff will also be given a written of MPP's of personnel policies. The personnel policies will include:

- a) Provisions for paid vacation, sick leave, and policy regarding holidays;
- b) A description of other employment benefits; and
- c) Provisions for periodic evaluations of work performance.

The Teen Bridge Program will maintain an accurate personnel record on each staff member, which will include:

- a) A written application showing qualifications and experience;
- b) Reports of medical examinations;
- c) Reports of criminal records checks;
- d) Reports of child protection register checks;
- e) Dates of employment;
- f) Date of separation from employment with reason for separation;
- g) Documentation of training received including the type, duration, and date of training

- and the person or agency conducting the training;
- h) Annual performance evaluations; and
- i) Documentation of all required certifications and licenses.

All instruction and training given to staff members will have a central theme of youth empowerment. At the core, MPP's programs will have family-centered practices and community-based services. MPP will insure the empowerment of our youth and their successful transition.

The Martin Pollak project is licensed as a child-placing agency in the District of Columbia and Maryland. MPP is also licensed to provide independent living services in Maryland. MPP has been previously licensed for and provide group home services in Maryland. MPP have identified appropriate properties in both the District of Columbia and Maryland that would be available to this agency upon contract award. Because a youth residential facility or group home license is specific to a property and Martin Pollak Project has not yet been awarded a contract (which would justify making the financial commitment to a long-term lease), MPP does not currently have these properties licensed. However, MPP has been successful in getting a group home license in Maryland and have been assured by the Maryland licensing agency that we would not have difficulty in obtaining a license because we have a history of running successful residential programs in Maryland and this would further develop our continuum of services. Due to our qualifications MPP believe that we would be successful in obtaining a license in the District of Columbia as well, but could start with a Maryland property to ensure speed of program implementation.

The Martin Pollak Project understands what is required to obtain the appropriate license(s). MPP is prepared to apply for a DC Youth Residential facility license and/or MD group home license within five working days of written notification of contract award.

Sub factor 1:

The key personnel who will be responsible for the start-up of the Teen Bridge Program include: Richard Norman, CEO, Linda Studevent-Ward, Chief of DC Program Services, and William Jamison, Community Resource Specialist. Ten percent of Richard Norman's time will be allocated for the start-up activities in the Teen Bridge Program. Fifty percent of Linda Studevent-Ward and William Jamison's time will be allocated for the start-up activities.

Richard Norman holds a Masters Degree in social work and is a licensed clinical social worker by the State of Maryland. Mr. Norman has been employed with the Martin Pollak Project for over four years in which he has served in many leadership capacities including Deputy Executive Officer. For the past two years, he has served as the CEO of The Martin Pollak Project, Inc. Mr. Norman is an experienced program consultant, therapist and trainer. Mr. Norman has many years of experience in the supervision and administration of child welfare programs in both Maryland and the District of Columbia. Linda Studevent-Ward is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social worker in both the State of Maryland and Washington, DC. Ms. Ward serves as the Chief of Program Services for The Martin Pollak Project in the District of Columbia. Inc. Ms. Studevent-Ward has many years experience in the supervision and administration of child welfare programs including congregate care. William Jamison has over 15 years experience working as a Rehabilitation/Addictions Counselor working with both adults and adolescents. He holds a masters certification in job development/placement for people with disabilities. Mr. Jamison currently serves as the Community Resource Specialist for MPP.

Sub factor 2:

The Martin Pollak Project employs a broad and diverse strategy for the continuous recruitment of staff, which includes compliance with the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services First Source Employment Agreement.

The Martin Pollak Project employs a full-time Human Resources Director who manages staff recruitment. MPP utilizes professional placement agencies, newspaper ads and professional publications, as well as a network of Internet posting sites. The Agency utilizes professional networks to advertise position openings: the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth, the District of Columbia Consortium for Child Welfare, and sister human service agencies. MPP has ongoing relationships with local universities Schools of Social Work for both the recruitment of interns and staff.

MPP has a continuous recruitment policy, maintaining contact with qualified candidates, and placing them when positions become available. The Martin Pollak Project will screen and rank resumes of job applicants based on education and experience. The best ranked applicants undergo a series of interviews by the experienced staff at all levels. Satisfactory employment

references and background checks are required. Staff hired for the Teen Bridge Program will demonstrate knowledge and/or experience in: Positive Youth Development, conflict resolution, group dynamics, and extensive experience with at-risk-youth in community-based and residential settings. Job offers will be made to the most qualified staff.

The Martin Pollak Project prides itself on its strength and success in retaining staff. The Agency offers an excellent benefit package which includes tuition reimbursement, payment of 80% of all medical care (offered through a PPO, not a HMO), dental, employment assistance program, pay for short term and long term disability, death insurance policies for all employees, a 403(b) plan to which we contribute 5% regardless of the employee's participation and to which all employees are vested in 2 years, and a very generous leave policy (for which employees are eligible from the day they start).

The Martin Pollak Project offers broad based training opportunities for the development of skills and knowledge enhancement of professional, support and administrative staff. Training for both staff and foster parents is coordinated through the Martin Pollak Project Training Institute. MPP help Social Workers and other professionals on staff to develop the additional skills needed in the performance of their duties. Administrative leave is allowed to employees to participate in professional activities.

Under the auspices of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners, the Martin Pollak Project is a continuing education units granting agency. In addition to the ongoing CEU in-services, MPP provides financial resources for staff to attend outside conferences of their interests and their program responsibilities. MPP supports staff with professional memberships in organizations such as the National Association of Social Workers and for license renewal.

Sub factor 3:

MPP is experienced in serving youth in programs similar to the Teen Bridge Program. MPP's experience allows for the anticipation that there will be challenges, such as youth buy-in and youth academic performance levels. These challenges will be met through a cadre of quality staff and innovative program strategies. For example, MPP's Individualized Child Achievement

Program (ICAP) and Positive Youth Development Programming have been successful strategies in meeting these challenges for other youth.

MPP staff will be supported through supervision, training and collaboration with a continuum of supportive agencies identified to address the needs of the youth.

Sub factor 4:

MPP is known for having a family treatment approach. The basis of MPP's work is that the child, no matter how extreme his or her problems, is a member of a family. The Martin Pollak Project uses a family treatment approach utilizing the Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) model service provision. This includes case presentations, treatment team meetings and presentations that integrate family and individual work through the use of electronic communication. ESFT is a family meeting model and includes the participation of the youth's family. Martin Pollak Project has explicit policy to reach out to family. Regardless of physical distance, MPP networks to engage a youth's family to the fullest extent of their capability to support progress, adaptation and treatment.

MPP provides ongoing staff training that uses outside professionals who are experts on ESFT to continuously train all case managers and engage in structured meetings with staff on family work. This includes case presentations, treatment team meetings and presentations that integrate family and individual work, consultation on family work to support the individual work being done with youth, and observation of individual youth work.

MPP has a history of conducting Birth Parent Support groups in the Specialized Foster Care Program in the District of Columbia. This is an example of the depth of commitment and experience in fostering change and building ongoing support systems for birth families. The Foster Parent group, Families United, serves as a support/mentoring system for birth and foster parents, as well as an advocacy group for the children in Martin Pollak Project's care.

Youth in the MPP Teen Bridge Program live in a "constructed family" setting as a means of facilitating their emergent need to experience and learn the skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. A youth's support system or "constructed family" might include the youth's CFSA social worker, attorney, community and volunteer advocates, the MPP social worker, counselors

and Educational Specialist, biological family, kinship relations, close friends, and other support persons or agencies providing services.

Physical distance between youth and family will not be a barrier to family participation in the youth's treatment plan. MPP maintains regular contact with families and encourages youth involvement. MPP provides transportation as needed and ensures planning and other meetings are held in locations and times that are conducive to family members' participation.

MPP staff provides aftercare for youth who age out of foster care or are reunified with family for a period of three months. Support is available through telephone calls, visits, linkage to further community services and other time-limited concrete services.

Sub factor 5:

MPP ensures that children maintain a connection to their family and community of origin. The Teen Bridge Program will provide intervention and community connections to build new relationships leading to life-long support systems while maintaining safe, purposeful connections with biological families and significant others. MPP will assess and identify linkages as embodying risk or protective factors and act in accordance with the youth's best interest to encourage or discourage involvement.

MPP agrees with and supports CFSA's decision to ensure that children maintain a connection to their family and community of origin. The Martin Pollak Project endeavors to access service and programs within the youth's current community of residence, or as close to the community as possible, while continuing to give due consideration to individualized intervention. As staff identifies individual needs of youth, neighborhood-based providers who are able to appropriately and efficiently address those needs become a permanent part of MPP's service network.

MPP will help youth identify the linkages (whether to family, friends, place of worship, school or other) that are important to them and help the youth identify barriers to maintaining those connections. MPP will assist youth in overcoming those barriers, whether through providing transportation, time, support or encouragement to the youth to maintaining connections. When appropriate, program staff will include youth's identified significant others in planning meetings and/or program activities.

Each youth's individual needs are addressed through effective assessment and integrated, in-house and neighborhood services that are easily accessed, culturally competent, outcome based and, thus, cost effective. Program interventions and community connections in the neighborhood support each youth's need to build new relationships leading to life-long support systems while maintaining safe, purposeful and meaningful connections with biological and extended family members. Youth in the program and staff attached to the program will be expected and encouraged to find opportunities to volunteer in the neighborhood or participate in local community events to give back and feel connected to the community in which the program is located.

MPP will establish and maintain a Local Advisory Council, consistent with licensing regulations. The Local Advisory Council will make recommendations to improve the quality of the program. MPP will give adequate consideration to all recommendations made by the Council, respond in writing to those recommendations, and maintain a record of all recommendations and responses. The Local Advisory Council will reach out to other local neighborhood committees and associations, City Council members, ANC Representative, local churches and service organizations to ensure their awareness of our presence, and the community service needs of the youth in the Teen Bridge program.

Sub factor 6:

Over the past twelve years, the Martin Pollak Project has successfully collaborated with the Child and Family Services Agency to serve the same population as identified in this solicitation through Specialized Foster Care Program. Through purchase of care agreements MPP has already serviced the population described in the proposed Teen Bridge Program with the use of community-based independent living and the External Respite Program. In addition, to meet the needs of MPP youth, MPP collaborates with a variety of agencies and organizations, to include mental health providers, the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) system, and the DC Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services. These collaborations have provided MPP the opportunity to identify and link children and youth to appropriate service providers.

MPP collaborates with consortiums such as Foster Family Treatment Association (FFTA), Consortium for Child Welfare (CCW) and Maryland Association for Resources for Families and Youths (MARFY) for the purposes of advocacy and program planning. MPP is also collaborating with other child placement residential and educational programs for the purpose of advocacy and resource development. MPP will utilize the Center for Keys for Life.

MPP has learned that successful collaboration requires continuous communication with the referring agency and other partners. Programmatic teaming and planning must be ongoing via a regular feedback mechanism. MPP recognizes through past collaborations that services to children must be consistent, integrated, and user friendly to achieve outcomes for this population. These youth are vulnerable because they have problems engaging and utilizing services and are at high risk for juvenile justice involvement.

Sub factor 7:

The Martin Pollak Project has provided therapeutic foster care and independent living services to children and youth in the State of Maryland and in the District of Columbia for over 25 years. MPP's experience in the child welfare system includes the provision of permanency services as the lead agency to 500 children in the first Managed Care Child Welfare Demonstration Project in the State of Maryland. Collectively, MPP's experience has prepared the organization to work with the same population described in the Teen Bridge program.

MPP is committed to providing services that are integrated and tailored to meet the needs of individual children and their families; grounded in family, neighborhood, and community; culturally competent; and of high quality. The Agency's mission statement identifies these values and emphasizes the building of community around each child as the means to a fulfilling future. Examples of MPP's commitment to these key values include the use of a family therapy model for intervention with the youth's constructed family and/or family of origin; the inclusion of children and their support systems, as able and appropriate, in treatment planning; the inclusion of stakeholders in agency oversight and planning, such as biological parents, a board of directors and staff that are representative of the ethnicity of the children served by our programs, a focus on ongoing assessment, individualized treatment and purposeful intervention. MPP has a strong commitment to safety, well-being and permanency that leads to improved, stable

outcomes for children in care. MPP has an excellent track record in reunifying CFSA children with their families and in supporting the adoption process, especially for older youth. MPP has provided Specialized Foster Care, Independent Living, and aftercare services that transition youth to independence as they exit the foster care system.

MPP offers individualized services designed to promote a continued sense of well-being, meet a variety of needs, utilize and develop innate and acquired strengths and talents, and model important life skills. Wrap-around services, such as 24 hour/7 day a week staff support and crisis intervention, facilitation of individualized education plans, linkage to vocational training, one-on-one advocacy and community support groups and services, are available to further support these youth as they meet program expectations to finish their education, pursue vocational training, work part or full time, and identify appropriate social outlets. The multiple levels of intervention built into our programming help youth gain experience in negotiating relationships and developing life skills that will sustain them.

MPP's current staffing structure directly reflects the assessed needs of this population for culturally competent professionals, appropriately trained in federal, CFSA and MPP regulations and standards and child welfare best practices. MPP's overall experience with this population has prepared us to successfully implement the Teen Bridge Program.

Sub factor 8:

The system of care of the MPP Bridge Program emphasizes the following values:

Youth Centered: care is individualized according to the unique strengths, challenges and personal resources of each youth. This maximizes the opportunities for the youth to utilize the bridge program for growth, change and achieve realistic levels of self-reliance.

Strength-Based Family Driven Approach: The treatment model used in all MPP programs is Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT). ESFT promotes a strengths-based family centered approach that includes biological families, significant others, and the youth to plan and implement regularly scheduled team meetings. The youth is enabled to reach goals towards independence in a structured supportive setting.

Least Restrictive Setting: The Teen Bridge Program provides an environment in which youth can receive independent living services and acquire skills with appropriate wrap-around services to meet their mental health needs. As youth are ready, they will be transitioned to independent living, family reunification, or movement to adult support programs.

Community-Based: The ultimate goal is to help youth develop the ability to live in their community of origin or choice. Receiving services in the community and being linked to the social, cultural, educational and employment resources prepares them for more adaptive post discharge lives.

Culturally Competent: Services must be responsive and attuned to the cultural, racial and ethnic identity of the youth and her/his family to maximize their ability to engage and utilize services to meet their needs.

Sub factor 9:

The Martin Pollak Project is an active member of both the Consortium for Child Welfare (CCW) and Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY). The MPP Chief Executive Officer serves on the Board of MARFY and is a member of the Consortium for Child Welfare Board.

The Martin Pollak Project is committed to continuing the ongoing development of linkages to an integrated network of community-based, neighborhood service providers, to include the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities (HF/TC) and Georgia Avenue Collaboratives. MPP has a strong relationship with the South Washington, West of the River HF/TC Collaborative that has provided services for birth families and their children in our DC Specialized Foster Care program.

MPP has relationships with local community colleges and school associations, churches and radio stations. The Community Resource Specialist assigned to the Teen Bridge program will use these community-based relationships to identify and develop supportive resources to meet individual needs of youth in the program.

Sub factor 10:

The outcome data for the Teen Bridge Program is inclusive of Federal child welfare outcomes of safety, well being and permanency. Input into FACES will be reported via the mechanisms of individualized service planning, incident reporting, and multi service assessments to produce outcome data. Youth outcomes will be monitored on a monthly basis.

Youth will be engaged to participate in setting positive outcome goals and objectives. Outcomes will be measured in terms of reduction in truancy, critical incidents, substance use/abuse, abscondences, and law enforcement involvement. Data will be collected from all service provision and reported weekly.

Quality assurance and quality improvement will be monitored by the ongoing supervision of staff, regular team meetings with youth and family involvement, FACES reporting, and regular record review. MPP will comply with all monitoring and licensing requirements set forth by CFSA and DC government. Monthly performance reviews for the program including staff, youth, program services and agency support reflects the high-risk background and heightened needs of Teen Bridge youth that MPP will address.

In-house policies, procedures, and protocol have been implemented that ensure high standards and ongoing quality improvement in all program areas. The Martin Pollak Project commits to providing program services that meet all federal and District of Columbia laws, rules and regulations, including relevant District and local jurisdiction licensure requirements, and consistent with policies, procedures and standards promulgated by the Child and Family Services Agency and which are in full compliance with the requirements of this solicitation.