



## Request for Applications: DFPS Regions 4 & 8

### **Strengthening positive permanency across Texas through the development and expansion of Heart Gallery programs.**

In partnership with the Center for Societal Impact at the University of Texas Austin, the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (the Center) seeks applications to develop and establish or expand and operate regional Heart Gallery programs. Selected organizations will receive 2-year grants through the Heart Galleries of Texas project.

The Heart Galleries of Texas project is focused on strengthening Heart Gallery programs as tools for positive permanency in communities by developing strong and thriving local Heart Galleries that serve communities across Texas to increase the number of children and youth in positive and permanent placements. The project received funding in the 88th Legislative Session to expand the Heart Gallery programs to all 11 DFPS regions in Texas. This allows the project to expand adoption efforts statewide to generate better outcomes for the hardest cases, finding homes for teens, sibling groups, and children with special healthcare needs.

#### **Program Overview**

The Heart Gallery was born with the purpose of utilizing the power of photography to capture the individuality and dignity of children experiencing foster care, to advocate for their permanency, raise public awareness about their needs, and obtain support to help meet those needs. In Texas, Heart Gallery programs assist caseworkers in what many consider to be their hardest cases when parental rights have been terminated.

#### **Application Requirements**

The Center invites applicants from community-based organizations interested in leading a regional heart gallery program to apply. The following objectives will be required for consideration:

1. Must be a nonprofit having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
2. Have current involvement with a Heart Gallery program or reason for interest in becoming involved.
3. Have a positive standing in community with key stakeholders.
4. Have a proven history of a good working relationship with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or Single-Source Continuum Contractor (SCC) staff in the region.
5. Develop and submit (per application) a clearly outlined plan of how your organization proposes they would run the program and the needs in the community that could be met by the start-up or expansion of the Heart Gallery program.
6. Develop and submit a sustainability plan for continued programmatic health and growth post funding.

7. Identify how you or a local community partner organization might provide support to families formed by adoption and/or guardianship to prevent disruptions.
8. Be willing to engage and be part of a statewide network of local Heart Galleries to foster innovation, provide peer support, and inform best practices for system and practice improvements statewide.
9. The amount requested must not exceed \$500,000.

In order to ensure success of the project, adherence to expectations outlined below will be required for any community-based organization applying (organizations will be asked to agree to expectations on RFA application):

1. Maintain a current MOU with both DFPS and the Heart Galleries of Texas and adhere to the requirements listed in each.
2. Maintain compliance with the DFPS Confidentiality agreement for all staff and volunteers to keep all client information confidential.
3. Maintain consistent participation in all Heart Galleries of Texas collaborative meetings and events.
4. Build a network of community support to act as a Board of Directors and/or a Heart Gallery committee to promote community engagement, build sustainability, and act as an oversight agent for the program.
5. Ensure that the printed and virtual representation of both the photograph and narrative are of the highest quality and best represent the individuality and dignity of each child in collaboration with their case manager.
6. Maintain and report-out the required outcomes and data as requested in contract.
7. Staff program appropriately to maintain full representation and coverage of the entire region for which you are funded.
8. Maintain positive working relationships with DFPS and/or SSCC leadership within your region.
9. Maintain positive working relationships with the TARE team within your region.
10. Facilitate the development of a collaborative group that consists of area CPAs, DFPS, SSCC, CASA and other stakeholders focused on permanency and post adoption supports in your region.
11. Dedicate efforts and resources to sustainability beyond the RFA funding and be prepared to share 2-year and 5-year plans for these efforts.
12. Maintain equal opportunity amongst CPA partners for all recruiting events and information sessions involving the Heart Gallery program and/or funding from this RFA.
13. Maintain community engagement partners to assist with outreach and awareness initiatives through Heart Gallery displays at various locations in the community, such as local businesses and restaurants, libraries, or places of worship.

### **Components of Application**

Applications must be submitted using the [online application](#) that can be found [here](#) and will require the following information:

1. Name of the organization and contact information; DFPS region you are applying to serve through a Heart Gallery program.

2. Confirm your organization meets the objectives outlined in the RFA and agrees to adhere to the expectations also outlined in the RFA.
3. Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Regions your organization serves, number of children served in conservatorship in 2020, and if your organization serves rural or urban counties.
  - a. Each county in Texas is either part of a metropolitan (urban) or non-metropolitan (rural) area. According to this list of metropolitan/urban and non-metropolitan/rural counties: [www.tdhca.state.tx.us/pmcdocs/95counties.pdf](http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/pmcdocs/95counties.pdf), you will be asked to if you serve urban, rural, or both types of counties.
4. Organizational components:
  - a. Describe your organization's history and mission.
  - b. Describe the governance and leadership.
  - c. Describe membership in professional associations, and other community involvement and support.
5. Services and programming: Describe the services your agency provides, including your core programming and the populations you serve.
6. Describe your organization's commitment to best practices, including:
  - a. Specific evidence-based practices you use.
  - b. How you measure and track progress and outcomes.
  - c. How you measure the success of your programs.
7. Proposed project for funding: How will this funding help support your work to stand up and/or expand a local Heart Gallery program in your targeted region? This includes, but is not limited to, the creation of new programming or resources and support or expansion of existing programming or resources.
  - a. The project description should include, but is not limited to:
    - i. Project summary, if applicable
    - ii. A clear narrative that explains all components of the project as they relate to the outlined objectives of the funding
    - iii. Goals and activities
    - iv. Identifying measures of success (outputs and short-term outcomes)
8. Feasibility and financial position: Organizations must complete the budget requests and financial outlook sections of the application.
  - a. Upload a copy of the Heart Gallery program 2-year budget with narrative for all highlighted portions of the budget that will be funded by this grant.
  - b. Enter the gross revenues and total expenditures for your organization's most recently ended fiscal year.
  - c. Upload a copy of audited, reviewed, or compiled financial statements for the most recently ended fiscal year. If not available, upload your internally prepared financial statements for the most recently ended fiscal year.
9. Certifications: confirm the statements by entering your initials into each of the boxes to complete the application.

## **Funding Opportunity**

The Center will fund proposed projects, up to \$500,000. Organizations may submit one application per organization. **Funds must be fully spent no later than February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026.** The intention is to distribute

this funding to one community-based organization per region in the state, for this reason we intend to limit most award amounts to \$500,000 and under.

Grant awards will be announced via grant acceptance letters and project funding will be paid in two installments upon execution of the grant acceptance letter. All requirements within the grant acceptance letter must be met by the end date of the contract, including spending down funds and carrying out activities according to the approved application and established timelines, or organizations could risk having to pay back funds received.

Should an award organization need to make changes to the grant project described and budgeted in an application post approval by the Center, an amendment for approval must be submitted. Amendments must also comply with all applicable grant requirements and are subject to negotiation for approval.

### **Application Evaluation**

The Center will use a systematic scoring process by a panel of internal and external reviewers to select applicants for awards. Applications which do not include all the required information, or which do not meet the minimum qualifications, will not be scored. The Center will score the applications using a rubric based on the project plan components noted above.

### **RFA Submission and Contact**

The online application can be accessed [here](#).

Applications are due by 5 pm Central Time on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Direct any questions to [info@tacfs.org](mailto:info@tacfs.org). The Center will not respond to questions received after 5 PM Central Time on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **Timeline**

<b>Timeline</b>	
RFA Release Date	October 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Applicant Questions Due (No later than 5 PM Central Time)	October 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
<b>Applications Due</b> (no later than 5 PM Central Time)	October 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Tentative Award Announcements	November 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Anticipated Contract Start Date	November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
Anticipated Contract End Date	February 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2026

\*Additional RFAs in the other DFPS regions of the state will be released during the remaining months of 2023 and we are anticipating the release of a phase two RFA in early 2024 that will be focused on post-adoption supports and resources. More details to follow about these collaborative proposals.