



## **Request for Letters of Interest**

2025 CSE Youth Quality Improvement Cohort

January 15, 2025

The Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (The Center), in partnership with the Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT), seeks to support provider organizations, nonprofits, and multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) serving either youth survivors of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) or children/youth at risk of CSE through a CSE Youth Quality Improvement Cohort. Youth in the child welfare system who have experienced any form of abuse or neglect are considered to be youth-at-risk for CSE.

Direct service provider organizations serve and support the most vulnerable Texans, including children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited or who are at risk of being targeted by a trafficker. Providers of all types tell us they have limited resources available to meet the needs of this population. If these needs are not addressed, circumstances may arise in which service capacity and quality is insufficient to meet the demand, or in which services rendered do not have the desired impact.

This is where The Center can help via this **free** opportunity, made possible through a generous grant from the Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team.

### **Who We Are**

The Center is a 501(c)(3) and a supporting organization of the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS). The Center strives to equip agencies with the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality support and services to children, youth, and families in their communities. For more information, please visit <https://tacfs.org/about/the-center/>. <http://www.tacfs.org/thecenter>

TACFS is a network of mission-driven organizations that have embraced the call to serve vulnerable children, youth, and families. Our mission is to work collectively to support and strengthen children, youth, and families in communities across Texas. Please visit [www.tacfs.org](http://www.tacfs.org) for more information and to read our [Inclusion Statement](#).

The Center's work to support organizations responding to CSE is survivor-led, evidence-based, and grounded in emerging best practices in the field. The Center strives to form strong relationships with provider organizations to help develop and refine approaches to serving youth through a trauma-informed lens, balancing innovation with evidence-informed methods to improve outcomes at all levels.

### **Request for Letters of Interest: CSE Youth Quality Improvement Cohort**

The Center seeks Letters of Interest from direct service provider organizations that want to be a part of our 2025 CSE Youth Quality Improvement Cohort. The Center encourages letters from all eligible organizations, especially those led by or serving historically under-represented populations. The

Center is committed to nondiscrimination in all of our activities, including the selection of awardees and provision of services described in this request for applications.

Organizations eligible for this opportunity can consist of, but are not limited to, the following types: community-based residential organizations, General Residential Operations, Child Placing Agencies, youth mentorship,



CSEY Advocacy, Care Coordination, medical or counseling services, Multi-Disciplinary Teams, and others. State Agencies and Law Enforcement organizations are not eligible for this opportunity. If you have questions about your program or organization type and eligibility, please contact [csey@tacfs.org](mailto:csey@tacfs.org) for help.

The current services offered do **not** need to be specialized CSE services.

Agencies providing residential care to minors must have a current Texas residential childcare license that is in good standing (i.e., not on probation or in process of revocation). Heightened Monitoring is an acceptable status for application.

While project timelines may differ from organization to organization, we anticipate engagements to begin in March of 2025 and end in September of 2025.

To be considered for the CSE Youth Quality Improvement Cohort, organizations must be willing to:

1. Receive priority access to register for a variety of high-quality **CSE Youth Trainings**, ranging from basic to advanced, at no cost, offered throughout 2025. Trainings are developed and facilitated by national, state, and local experts, including Center staff subject matter experts and those with lived experience.
2. Receive priority access to register for the one-day, in-person **2025 CSE Youth Services Symposium** (date and location TBD), where providers and subject matter experts will gather together to learn additional advanced skillsets and engage in cross-sector collaboration to increase organizational capacity for meeting youth needs.
3. Participate in an **Introductory Site-Visit** with Center staff to kick off the project in March/April 2025, at which time organization and Center staff will collaboratively determine CSE quality improvement goals, objectives, and timelines. (Organizations and Center staff may collaboratively opt to schedule more site visits throughout 2025 to meet goals and objectives).
4. Identify a **Focus Project** to sustain best practices in supporting this population, develop or sustain program-level improvements, or help plan for growth, expansion, and sustainability. Examples of focus areas may include screening, developing CSE youth programming or program-level improvements, CSE youth best practice recommendations for clinicians and staff, individual and program outcome evaluation, stakeholder engagement to facilitate funding to expand and/or sustain CSE youth capacity, navigating CSE youth regulatory issues, vocational and life skills services development, risk management, and survivor-leadership.
5. If providing or seeking to provide residential placement services, identify a limited number of key staff to participate in the **My Life My Choice Advanced Residential Institute**, the first and only intensive virtual course designed specifically for congregate care settings seeking to create a safer and more engaging environment for girls who have been, or are at risk of, CSE. This highly interactive course is comprised of six 75-minute live sessions with a national expert trainer, and up to 60 minutes of asynchronous content/assignments between live sessions. Participants will hear from young people impacted by CSE, as well as experts in the fields of congregate care, CSE, and law enforcement. This is offered at no cost to cohort participants and valued at \$650/person.

If your key staff have already participated in the My Life My Choice Advanced Residential Institute via a



previous engagement with The Center, your organization can elect to send other staff members who would benefit from this opportunity.

6. Identify key staff members with clinical licensure to participate in the **Survivor-Centered Approaches To Treating Complex Trauma: A Training for Mental Health Care Providers**. Participants will learn and explore traditional and non-traditional approaches for working with survivors of CSE. Spanning evidence-based modalities, best practices in building and maintaining effective client relationships, understanding the impact different forms of oppression have on clients with histories of commercial sexual exploitation, and the frameworks and approaches for creating equitable and inclusive therapeutic relationships with clients. This is offered at no-cost to participants and is valued at \$1000/person.
7. Participate in **Outcomes for Human Trafficking Survivors (OHTS)** Instrument training and technical support with instrument developers/experts. The OHTS Instrument is designed to help organizations track youth recovery and development across 14 different life domains. With high reliability and validity, this tool tracks both individual and aggregate outcomes over time for survivors of CSE. This training and technical assistance will outline how to use the tool, how to utilize the data obtained from the tool, and how to integrate in other forms of information you may already be tracking to analyze outcome trends.
8. Deliver feedback to The Center at the end of the engagement period via a survey.

This opportunity is open to any organization meeting the criteria. The Center does not discriminate. Awardees will be decided based on qualifications, merit, and need.

### **Cost**

This opportunity is made available at **no cost** to organizations through a generous grant from the Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Division.

## Timeline

- Request for Letters of Interest announced: January 15, 2025
- **Letters of Interest due: February 26, by COB. Must be submitted via email to [csey@tacfs.org](mailto:csey@tacfs.org)**
- Review conducted from: February 27-March 5, 2025
- Organizations notified by: March 5, 2025
- Agreement signed by: March 15, 2025

Please submit a 2–4-page Letter of Interest that includes and addresses the following:

1. Name of your organization.
2. Name and title of person submitting the letter.
3. Description of your organization (history, mission, programs offered, structure of your leadership team, how you support a culture of belonging for various types of diversity, etc.)
4. Names and titles of core staff who will be involved in this project.
5. One word you would use to describe your organization.
6. How your organization will benefit from having access to this opportunity, including what needs this would meet.
7. How participation will contribute to the growth of quality services at your organization to youth-at-risk of CSE or survivors of CSE.
8. Confirmation that your organization can meet the participation requirements (see pg. 2).
9. Identify one to three CSE training topics of most interest to your organization.
10. Identify one to three initial ideas for a Focus Project (adjustments can be made if selected).

## Point of Contact

Please submit all questions, inquiries, and Letters of Interest to [csey@tacfs.org](mailto:csey@tacfs.org)