

SGMY Program Model 2024

1.0 PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Sexual and Gender Minority Youth (SGMY) Services are part of the aligned services within the SUN Service System. The SUN Service System is a unique city-county-school-nonprofit partnership designed to align and integrate key social and support services for children, youth and their families toward two long-term outcomes: increased academic success for all youth, and an overall reduction in poverty in our community. The services and this System are aligned with the Theory of Change that was developed to guide the System's approach and investments, and is a critical mechanism for reaching these long-term community outcomes.

SUN Service System Guiding Principles

The vision and mission of the SUN Service System:

Vision: A community that effectively engages and supports all children and families so they are healthy, educated and prosperous.

Mission: Collaborate to create an efficient system of supports that provides equitable opportunities for every child and family to thrive.

Theory of Change: The services and the SUN Service System are aligned with the Theory of Change, which was developed to guide the System's approach and investments, and is a critical mechanism for reaching these long-term community outcomes. The Theory of Change document outlines our commitment to equity with a focus on racial justice and can be found at

<https://multco.us/file/46379/download>. The Theory of Change states that:

We will improve the wellbeing of our entire community by collaborating and integrating strategies and services that have been shown to improve educational and economic outcomes for people of color and those living in poverty.

Partnerships: The success of the SUN Service System rests on establishing, nurturing and maintaining relationships between all the provider entities and key system partners. Building and sustaining the relationships and troubleshooting issues within a system of care is the responsibility of all involved in the System. The expectation is that contractors will adhere to best practice around collaboration and relationship building that includes the elements of a common vision and an established communication system. DCHS supports the idea that there are developmental stages in relationships as they head toward true collaboration.

The System works particularly closely and collaboratively with school districts and community based organizations to provide the support to families that are outlined in the SUN Service System Program Model. The SGMY provider will be expected and supported to connect with school districts and the community organizations that are contracted to implement the SUN Service System services in order to

collaboratively support LGBTQIA2S+ youth, and to deliver training to staff in districts and community organizations.

SGMY Service Overview

LGBTQIA2S+ youth experience discrimination, violence, and harassment that puts their safety at risk. These youth are more likely to experience homelessness due to unsupportive family and caregivers. SGMY youth participants describe experiences of anxiety and fear as they try to access basic needs services, including health and mental health resources. Without access to these supports, LGBTQIA2S+ youth are three times more likely to attempt suicide. The pandemic further exacerbated the isolation faced by SGMY youth and they are in even greater need of affirming adults, supportive peers, and safe gathering spaces currently.

Sexual and Gender Minority Youth (SGMY) Services and Technical Assistance services connect youth to resources that help them meet their goals. The program works to create an environment where youth can build positive relationships with peers and adults. Services are designed to address the developmental, emotional, mental health and safety needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning youth, and any youth who self identifies as a sexual or gender minority youth.

SGMY centers youth voice and leadership by providing opportunities for youth to provide input to what they need from the space and adults. SGMY also educates the community so that LGBTQIA2S+ youth can have better experiences and feel safer.

SGMY focuses on 3 areas of support for LGBTQIA2S+ youth:

1. Counseling and basic needs support
2. Creating a safe and supportive space
3. Providing training and education to the community so that they may provide competent and relevant services to these youth.

1.1 GOALS, VALUES AND OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

SYSTEM WIDE APPROACHES

As described in the SUN Theory of Change, the SUN Service System consists of a set of core services as well as several key overall approaches that are employed across the System. The system wide approaches that are expected to be utilized by all SUN Service System contractors in the implementation of all services or strategies are outlined in this section.

1. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

Culturally responsive services are general services that have been adapted to honor and align with the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse populations and

communities whose members identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home.

At the contractor level, it is expected that all SUN Service System contractor agencies (lead agencies and subcontractors) will engage in organizational assessment around their organization's progress to become fully culturally responsive, develop plans for deepening capacity and responsiveness, and take action during the course of the SUN contract period to execute those plans.

2. APPLY THE PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS OF EQUITY, EMPOWERMENT, RACIAL JUSTICE AT ALL LEVELS THROUGH:

- **A Whole-Family Approach** for impacting both child and adult success. The SUN Service System supports children holistically so they complete school, thus improving the long-term economic success of our community. Contracted and partner agencies also provide resources and opportunities to parents and other adults so they are healthy and successful, thus supporting children's development and learning, and contributing to the broader well-being of the community.
- **Universal and Inclusive Strategies** that address the needs of both the dominant and marginal groups, ensuring that the universal system is culturally responsive and equitable.
- **Focused Services** that offer context-specific support to those most affected by structural racism and disparities. Focused services within the SUN Service System include those that are specific to communities of color, people living in poverty, and sexual and gender minorities.
- **Accountability** to the community with clear measures and reporting mechanisms.

3. ASSERTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Assertive Engagement is the approach to social service engagement used in the SUN Service System. Assertive Engagement is an approach to helping relationships based on research into human behavior and particularly what promotes positive behavior change. Assertive Engagement principles will guide system design as well as all services offered to parents, families, teens and youth who engage in services through the System.

Assertive Engagement builds hope, leadership and community by:

- Articulating a clear hierarchy in which the people needing or seeking help are seen as the experts with power over their own choices and lives
- Viewing the people needing or seeking help as capable of choosing the

solutions to their own problems

- Using hope as a source of motivation and strength for finding solutions
- Requiring persistence and creativity on the part of anyone in a helping relationship
- Recognizing that how helpers offer help is far more important than what help they offer
- Employing active listening and empathy as a powerful resource

In Assertive Engagement, services are offered using trauma informed and strengths based practices in a persistent and creative way so people can draw on their unique strengths and resources and select the level of support they desire. Helpers work to keep people engaged in a process that supports them in making changes in their lives that move them towards goals they have set for themselves. Assertive Engagement services are not passive. Assertive Engagement demands that helpers see both asking for help and making life changes as difficult processes that are the job of the person served. The helper's job is to work creatively and persistently to make those processes easier even for those most impacted by trauma and systemic oppression.

4. TRAUMA AND HEALING-INFORMED PRACTICE

Trauma and Healing-Informed Practice recognizes the signs of trauma and incorporates strategies to create safe environments and relationships, and to nurture resiliency and hope. Trauma-Informed Practice is based on research on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which shows that as traumatic experiences increase in a person's life, the risk for negative short- and long-term outcomes increases proportionally. The additive effect of multiple ACEs can hamper executive function, physical health and learning ability in both adults and youth. Moreover, marginalized communities are at higher risk for exposure to ACEs due to a number of factors, including the experiential reality of institutional racism, historical oppression and poverty. Trauma-Informed Practice includes: (1) the ability to recognize signs and impacts of trauma in SUN participants; (2) the capacity to respond to trauma through intentional policies, practices and procedures that heal, build relationships and build resistance to re-traumatization; (3) engaging in proactive program design that anticipates some of the potential needs of program participants who have experienced trauma, and (4) support staff who may have experienced trauma themselves and/or who are supporting program participants who have experienced trauma.

5. Youth Adult Partnership (YAP) and Centering Youth Voice

Youth Adult Partnership is an intergenerational approach where adults work in complete authentic partnership with youth where there is shared decision-making, responsibilities, and power on issues, programs, and policies that directly impact youth. The purpose of Youth Adult Partnership is to relinquish and shift power and control from existing solely with adults to being shared between youth and adults. To be able to

partner with youth in an empowering way, it is crucial that adults respect the opinion and experiences of the youth and provide them with youth development when necessary. Youth Adult Partnership works to integrate youth perspective and skills with adult expertise and knowledge. Creating and maintaining authentic Youth Adult Partnerships with youth in the SGMY program is essential to creating a climate of culture and safety that allows youth to feel safe to share their experiences and skills knowing that the adults they work with will work to center their voices, experience, and needs.

ALIGNMENT WITH KEY PARTNERS

SGMY services are integrally linked to other systems supporting the wellbeing and stability of youth. As such, SGMY services are expected to establish and maintain strong working relationships within the SUN Service System and with other partners. This includes school district McKinney Vento homeless student liaisons, the Homeless Youth Continuum, the Youth Stability and Homelessness Prevention program, Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) Homeless Families System of Care, and Student Health Centers.

1.2 POPULATION SERVED

This program will serve youth ages 12-24 who are experiencing academic failure and disconnection from school, and who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and any youth self-identified as a sexual or gender minority youth.

1.3 GEOGRAPHIC BORDERS/LIMITATIONS & SERVICE AREAS

Services must be provided within the geographic borders of Multnomah County.

1.4 FUNDING

The County has budgeted approximately \$350,000 annually for this RFP.

As of the time of this procurement, there are some unresolved questions relating to funding for services within the SUN Service System overall. In particular, the County is engaged in an effort to understand and achieve increases in funding to address nonprofit staff wages. This may mean, either during the procurement process or during contracting, changes to funding amounts for services. We will communicate these changes as soon as they are known.

Funding of the work described in this RFP is not guaranteed. Fluctuations in funding year to year should be expected. The County cannot assure that any particular level of work will be assigned and the contract will permit the County to add or remove work as necessary depending on availability of funding.

1.5 MATCH REQUIREMENTS

N/A

1.6 SCOPE OF SERVICES

The primary program focus is on providing outreach and direct service support to sexual and gender minority youth in Multnomah County. However, technical assistance to adult service providers in various

systems to support access, safety, engagement and culturally responsive service delivery is an important component of the contract.

SOCIAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The majority (85%) of the service contractor's time will be dedicated to the provision of social and emotional support services for sexual minority youth who are identified as at-risk, as indicated by poverty, academic failure, truancy, mental health needs, social marginalization, and alienation and isolation due to institutional, intrapersonal, and internalized oppression, racism, homophobia and transphobia. These services include, but are not limited to:

- **Support groups** to provide safe and supportive environments for positive socialization, peer support, leadership and discussion of an array of topics of interest and concern to sexual and gender minority youth.
- **Individual support**, including advocacy, emotional support, safety planning, and referrals to affirming counseling resources. Based on the feedback received, SGMY has prioritized connecting one on one with youth weekly. This occurs either virtually or in-person and includes social support meet ups as well as wellness check-ins. SGMY advocates help youth with things like food boxes, gender affirming clothing, and hygiene supplies. They also help youth create goals and connect to other resources. For many LGBTQ2IA+ youth, the one on one check-ins and social support are an essential part of their safety plans, especially during the pandemic.
- **Counseling services** focused on sexual minority youth (who may be referred by SUN Service System staff, including mental health consultants and staff associated with school-based and school-linked entities) that emphasizes areas such as crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The remaining 15% of the service contractor's time will be dedicated to technical assistance supports that service contractors and schools need to build proficiency in service delivery for sexual and gender minority youth. These trainings and technical assistance supports aim to expand the number of affirming spaces and experiences LGBTQIA2S+ youth have in their communities. Technical assistance supports include, but are not limited to:

- **Training** for group facilitators and school-based and school-linked staff, as well as all case managers and mental health consultants who provide case management and counseling to sexual and gender minority youth.
- **Consultation services** for case managers, mental health consultants, school-based health clinic staff and others associated with school-based entities to develop expertise in sexual and gender minority youth issues and culture.