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Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 11:06 AM

To: Marisa Button <Marisa.Button@floridahousing.org>

Subject: RFA 2022-102 Comments

Hello Marisa,

Abundant Life Ministries-Hope House, Inc., has been a provider of residential group home care for teen boys in foster care for 18 years. As a direct care provider, we are positioned to offer a valuable perspective regarding the unique needs of youth in foster care transitioning into independence. Youth aging out of foster care can fall into one of several categories: 1. A youth who have maintained relationships with the biological family and has plans to return upon turning 18; 2) Youth who have developed forever family connections; 3) Youth who are disenchanted with the system and no longer desire any resemblance of "DCF"; 4) Resilient youth whom have maintained stability within foster homes and group homes and are ready to transition with supports; and 5) Youth who have extensive juvenile criminal backgrounds and/or significant mental health needs.

The requirements of RFA 2022-102 are extremely restrictive and does not permit for a true transition from "the system" into "normalcy". As youth approach "aging out" one of the common reactions we experience is "I don't want anything to do with the system". This statement is also accompanied by feelings of fear and uncertainty about transitioning. However, the desire to leave the system couple with the desire to live "a normal life" often leads to homeless teens upon aging out. We must develop an RFA that is empowering and desiring; to create a "Campus" like environment and limiting it to youth aging out and youth who have aged out is likened to creating a setting of concentrated poverty. A model similar to an "Inclusionary Zone" with the supports provided in a permanent supportive housing model is a better model, in my opinion.

Thank you in advance for considering my suggestion; I am very interested in participating in an advisory group to assist with drafting an RFA that is truly conducive to the needs of youth aging out of foster care into successful adulthood.

Determined In Christ,
Sandra Shank CEO/Founder

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"Strong communities are made up of strong families; strong families are made up of healthy individuals."

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24

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