**Organizational Background & Qualifications**

Insert agency’s background and mission information.

**Capacity-Building Efforts To Serve LGBTQ Youth and Families**

Over-Representation & Disparities in Care for LGBTQ Youth

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are over-represented among the foster care population. Many LGBTQ youth enter foster care after experiencing family rejection because of their gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. A recent study in Los Angeles conducted by the Williams Institute found that nearly 1 out of 5 (19.1%) LA-based foster youth are LGBTQ and the percentage of youth in foster care who are LGBTQ is between 1.5 and 2 times that of youth living outside of foster care.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Other studies in the past have revealed several disparities in the experiences of LGBTQ youth in foster care compared to their non-LGBTQ peers in foster care. These disparities included a higher average number of foster care placements and a higher likelihood of living in a group home setting.[[2]](#footnote-2) LGBTQ youth are more than twice as likely as their non-LGBTQ peers to report being treated poorly by the foster care system.[[3]](#footnote-3) These disparities are directly related to the non-affirming nature of foster placements for LGBTQ youth and the high level of bias and discrimination LGBTQ youth face from both their peers and the very professionals tasked ensuring their well-being.

The stories of LGBTQ youth in care illustrate the severity of these experiences of bias and discrimination. One young person explained his experiences of being blamed for his experiences of being harassed: “I got jumped by a bunch of guys in my group home, and when I told the Director he said, ‘Well, if you weren’t a faggot, they wouldn’t beat you up.’” And another explained experiences of rejection from her foster family: “My foster family took away my clothes, called me a ‘dyke,’ and tried to remake me.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

LGBTQ Adults: An Untapped Resource for Finding Permanent Families For Youth In Need

Even the most LGBTQ-inclusive agencies can struggle to find qualified foster parents who are ready and willing to welcome LGBTQ youth into their homes. Recognizing that LGBTQ adults are one potential group that could provide affirming foster homes to youth in need, including LGBTQ youth, agencies must intentionally increase their ability to engage LGBTQ adults who may be interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents. In fact, an estimated two million LGB adults are interested in adoption across the U.S.[[5]](#footnote-5) The LGBTQ community represents an untapped resource for agencies seeking to expand their pool of potential resource families. Successfully engaging the LGBTQ community requires an intentional effort to ensure agency staff members are prepared to welcome and support these families. Opportunities to recruit same-sex couples in particular are growing as legal recognition of same-sex marriages is now nationwide.

Partnership with Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s All Children – All Families Project

In recognition of the facts outlined above, Agency Name is participating in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s (HRC) All-Children All Families (ACAF) project with the goal of becoming a “Leader in Supporting and Serving LGBTQ Youth and Families.” ACAF provides a framework for agencies across the United States to achieve safety, permanency and well-being by improving their practice with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and families.

Agency Name is evaluating and updating policies in order to achieve ACAF’s ten benchmarks of LGBTQ Cultural Competency which range from client non-discrimination policies and inclusive agency paperwork, to staff training and creating an LGBT-inclusive agency environment.

To date, our success in this area includes:

* Insert examples

Agency Name is now focusing on LGBT-specific staff training efforts. LGBTQ cultural competency training is an essential component to building Agency’s capacity to serve LGBTQ youth and families. Policies of non-discrimination, for example, are ineffective if staff members do not have the knowledge and skills to adequately abide by them. Successful LGBTQ training initiatives should mandatory, comprehensive, and ongoing. The most impactful trainings include opportunities for staff to clarify their values and build specific skills.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Agency Name is seeking financial support for staff training provided by the All Children – All Families expert training team. The All Children – All Families’ training program meets each of these criteria for effective training efforts outlined above. The ACAF training curriculum provides the foundational knowledge on key topics related to the LGBTQ community and concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This basic knowledge is necessary in order for participants to go deeper into the content and build the skills necessary to improve their practice with LGBTQ youth and families. The ACAF training curriculum includes the research, best practice recommendations, and skills-building exercises that allow participants to learn strategies to engage LGBTQ resource families and LGBTQ youth. To date the project has trained more than # child welfare professionals. Evaluations consistently show significant increase in participants’ LGBT-related knowledge and more than 90 percent agreed that the training quality is excellent and that they can directly connect training content to changes in their practice.

**Proposed Training Program**

In Fiscal Year (20XX-20XX), Agency Name will partner with All Children – All Families to host a training session for # child welfare professionals in Location. The proposed training will be a # day format covering many important topics including:

* Becoming LGBT-culturally competent in all spheres of organizational activity
* Improving safety, permanency and well-being for LGBTQ youth
* Welcoming and supporting LGBTQ foster and adoptive parents including-but not limited to-the recruitment, home study and matching processes.

Webinars covering these and other LGBT-specific areas will be available to those participating in the training session.

The objectives of the HRC’S ACAF training include:

* Participants will improve their understanding of appropriate terminology relating to the LGBTQ community, and will explore common experiences of LGBTQ people.
* Participants will learn to distinguish between sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
* Participants will acknowledge their own beliefs, values and assumptions in relation to LGBTQ people, and will build awareness of how personal bias may impact their work.
* Participants will have accurate information about LGBTQ people and be able to distinguish common myths and stereotypes from facts.
* Participants will be knowledgeable about how to interact with LGBTQ individuals in an affirming, welcoming manner.
* Participants will feel prepared to adapt their parent recruitment practices to be more inclusive of LGBTQ families.
* Participants will understand the value of actively engaging their local community as partners in finding and supporting an expanded pool of qualified, loving foster and adoptive homes for children who need them.
* Participants will develop strategies for eliminating bias against LGBTQ parents in the child matching process, and will identify ways to support LGBTQ families while they search and are selected for the right children to join their family.
* Participants will become familiar with existing resources that address the needs of LGBTQ youth in care.
* Participants will gain a greater understanding of the impact sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression have on foster youth safety, permanency and well-being.
* Participants will examine the diversity of LGBTQ foster youth and explore ways to engage them with respect to the multiple identities and challenges they face.

Participating agencies will include:

List agencies

The estimated training cost is Total Cost. This includes the following:

* Training consultant fees of $#
* Event supplies including food, marketing and advertising costs, printing costs, postage, telephone and internet costs.
* Travel expenses totaling an estimated $#. The session will require # trainers who will need transportation from Origin City to Destination and # nights in hotel rooms.
* Several members of the agency‘s staff will be needed to coordinate the training, develop marketing materials, advertise the opportunity through mail, email and social media and to work at the event itself.

**Community Impact**

Available research has consistently shown that LGBTQ youth are over-represented in foster care – as many as 1 in 5 youth in care in Los Angeles is LGBTQ, for example. In Location, # youth are currently in foster care. Considering the available research, this means as many as # youth in care are LGBTQ. Insert anecdotal evidence.

Too many of these young people exit care without ever being placed in a permanent, loving family. Children who are not matched with an adoptive family and are forced to exit the foster care system upon their 18th or 21st birthday without the support of a caretaker are less likely to stay in school, maintain employment or have health insurance. They are also more likely to experience homelessness and incarceration. In 2013, 23,090 youth aged out of the foster care system in the U.S. and were left to survive adulthood with no permanent support system. Locally, insert local stats.

As stated previously, an estimated two million LGB adults are interested in adoption.[[7]](#footnote-7) By bridging the gap between qualified LGBTQ adoptive parents in Area Name and the young people in need of permanent homes, Agency Name has the potential to drastically improve permanency outcomes for the most vulnerable young people in this community. Furthermore, adopting youth from foster care has a major impact on the economic health of a community:

* Less cost: The costs to government agencies decrease when a child moves from foster care to adoption. In fact, “every dollar spent on adoption for a child from foster care yields three dollars in benefits.” [[8]](#footnote-8)
* Fewer children in poverty: Fewer children aging out of the system means fewer children at risk of poverty and homelessness as adults.
* Less likely to be incarcerated: With a supportive and loving family, children are less susceptible to substance abuse disorders, domestic violence in their relationships and incarcerations.

The training will also greatly benefit child welfare professionals in the Area Name. Continuing Education Units will be available for their participation in this training. These professionals will gain much-needed knowledge and skills that most have not yet had in other professional trainings.

**Measuring Success**

Agency Name will measure success of this training program by administering pre-training and post-training surveys to training participants. These surveys will cover key aspects of LGBTQ knowledge, practice experience, skills, and attitudes and will be tied to the individual completing them by a unique ID code. Follow up surveys will also be distributed three months later. Success of Agency Name’s overall LGBTQ capacity building efforts will be measured through the All Children – All Families “Leader Renewal” requirement two years after the agency is first awarded Leader status through the program. This process ensures that the agency is continuing to assess its LGBTQ Q competency in policies and practices as well as measure the project’s impact on efforts to ensure safety, permanency and well-being for youth in care.

1. Wilson, B.D.M., Cooper, K., Kastansis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and Gender Minority Youth in Foster care: Assessing Disproportionality and Disparities in Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law. Available at http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LAFYS\_report\_final-aug-2014.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jacobs, J.; Freundlich, M. (2006) Achieving Permanency for LGBTQ Youth. Child Welfare, 85(2), 299-316. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Woronoff, R., Estrada, R., Sommer, S. *Out of the Margins: A Report on Regional Listening Forums Highlighting the Experiences of LGBTQ Youth in Care,* 2006. Available at: https://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/out-of-the-margins.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Gates, G.J., Badgett, M.V.L., Macomber, J.E., Chambers, K. *Adoption and Foster Care by Gay and Lesbian Parents in the United States.* 2007. Available at http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gates-Badgett-Macomber-Chambers-Final-Adoption-Report-Mar-2007.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. CWLA & Lambda Legal (2012), Recommendations for Training & Education on LGBTQ Issues. Available at http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/gdtb\_2013\_14\_toolkit\_training.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Katz, Jeff*. Eliminating barriers to the adoption of children in foster care*. 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)