



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

- DATE:** August 6, 2025
- TO:** All Interested Parties
- RE:** Development of a person centered, evidence based, community-based tertiary care crisis intervention and stabilization system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and co-occurring behavioral health issues.
- SUMMARY:** The primary goal is to identify a provider who will work closely under the guidance of the National Center for START Services (NCSS) to develop and implement the START (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment) service model. The provider will be trained in the START model for crisis intervention and stabilization to support individuals with IDD and co-occurring behavioral health needs.

Access California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 17 via www.dds.ca.gov

The Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) appreciates your interest in responding to the Request for Proposal (RFP) # **STARTPROV FY2526**. The specific information that is required in the submission of this request is detailed below. Please read all of the materials and follow the guidelines accordingly. RCOC reserves the right to eliminate proposals which do not meet the minimum standards described in the proposal or those which deviate from the requested format. Start-up funding is available and will be negotiated between RCOC and selected applicant.

RCOC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to cancel the RFP process at its discretion. If negotiations fail with the selected applicant, RCOC reserves the right to re-open negotiations with the next qualified applicant or to re-post the RFP.

RCOC may elect to fund all, part, or none of the project, dependent upon funding availability as approved by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and the quality of the proposals received.

We thank you in advance for your willingness to serve persons with disabilities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

RCOC is seeking a qualified and experienced provider to develop and implement the START crisis service program under the guidance of the NCSS. NCSS, developed in 2009, is a national initiative based at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability/UCED that provides education and capacity-building services, promotes and evaluates evidence-informed practices and approaches, and facilitates START model program implementation across the United States with the aim of improving the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and co-occurring mental health (MH) needs.

START is a tertiary care research-based model of services and supports for individuals ages six and older diagnosed with IDD/MH. The START program's goal is to improve diagnosis and treatment, support effective services, create service linkages, promote health and wellness for both individuals with IDD/MH and the caregiver, decrease the need for emergency services and build capacity through relationships across service systems in order to help people remain in their homes and community and enhance the ability of the community to best support them.

The START model was developed in 1988 by Dr. Joan D. Beasley and her team to provide community-based crisis intervention and prevention for individuals with IDD/MH needs. The model is evidence-informed and utilizes a national database. It is a person-centered, solutions-focused approach that employs positive psychology and other evidenced-based practices. By implementing the START model, programs across the US and their participants experience an array of benefits including:

- Reduced use of emergency services and state facility/hospital stays,
- High rates of satisfaction by families and care recipients,
- Cost-effective service delivery,
- Increased community involvement and crisis prevention and intervention expertise in communities, and
- Strengthened linkages that enrich systems, increase resources and fills in service gaps.

The START model provides crisis intervention and prevention through crisis planning and response, education, consultation and coaching. Services are based upon a comprehensive biopsychosocial and ecological assessment. The START model conceptualizes the presenting problem within the context of the environment in which the person lives, works and interacts with those around them. Services include ongoing assessment of biopsychosocial factors contributing to challenges, a determination and assessment of strengths of the individual and team, systemic engagement and consultation, Cross Systems Crisis Prevention and Intervention planning, comprehensive service evaluations, clinical, medical and other interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration and all other planned clinical team activities. This model's Cross Systems Crisis Prevention and Intervention Plan provides a road map to providing emergency response as well as working collaboratively across the system to address emergencies as they arise. This includes a 24 hour crisis response with emergency therapeutic supports as well as assisting individuals and teams with gaining access to other emergency safety net services when clinically necessary. In addition to emergency assessment, intervention and advocacy, the START team will also provide direction and support in the achievement of stabilization and a return to prior levels of functioning in individuals' home environments.

The START program development is tailored to meet the regional needs and all programs must have the following START clinical team.

- Program Director (Master's Degree)
Provides full-time supervision and 24/7 support to the clinical team. Serves as a liaison to community provider, coordinates all training activities, develops community linkages and chairs the Advisory Council.

- Clinical Director (Ph.D.)
Provides full-time clinical oversight to clinical team and therapeutic support staff, responsible for Clinical Education Team Meetings, and provide consultation to community providers/psychologists.
- Medical Director (MD Psychiatrist)
Provides part-time consultation and training to clinical team and to START therapeutic supports staff as needed, provides consult/outreach to physicians and prescribers treating individuals supported by START.
- START Coordinators (Master's degree or equivalent)
Provides direct, community based START clinical team services to individuals enrolled in the program, completes required assessments, evaluations and plans, provides 24-hour on-call crisis support for enrolled individuals and regularly enters data into START Information Reporting System (SIRS).
- Assistant Director
Oversight of operations of clinical team and therapeutic supports staff operations. Directly supervises team leads, assist the program director as needed with the development of community linkages.
- Clinical Team Leaders
Provides day-to-day administrative support and supervision to START Coordinators, may maintain a small caseload and fills in as needed, provides back-up on-call support and coaching to Coordinators.
- Therapeutic Team Leaders
Provides day-to-day administrative support and supervision to START coaches, may maintain small caseload and fills in as needed, provides supervision and support to coaches.
- Therapeutic Coaches
Implements therapeutic interventions, training and supports in community setting to enrollees and primary caregivers, in collaboration with Coordinators and other team members.

The level of staffing leads itself to a 24/7 service model, ensuring support for after-hours crisis that can result in a reduction of Emergency Room (ER) visits and hospitalization over time.

The prospective applicant will also be expected to form a START advisory council, given the wide spectrum of individuals needing services, the changing landscape with regards to research and training, and the commitment to success across providers and systems. The prospective applicant must address a plan or strategy to form an advisory council, with consultation and supports from NCSS.

The local START team must provide:

- Whole person intake and assessment
- Consultation and therapeutic supports

- 24-hour system coordination to improve supports and service outcomes
- 24-hour urgent crisis response and intervention
- Individualized map of individual's connection to other systems
- Cross-system linkages (connecting to crisis teams, mental health providers, first responders, hospital/psych staff, schools, etc.)
- Cross-systems crisis prevention and intervention planning
- Community education
- Family/staff, provider support and education (in-home therapeutic coaching)

Once contracted, the selected applicant will receive extensive training and support from the NCSS to develop, implement and achieve program certification over a four (4) year projected timeline. The NCSS is contracted and funded separately to provide such support. This support shall include training, mentoring, technical assistance, consultation on expanding community linkages, access to the START database, coordinator and program certification, quality assurance and ongoing access to the national network. Because fidelity and quality assurance are core components of initial training and coordinator certifications, preparation for program certification begins during the initial program implementation phase. Program begins preparation by gaining an understanding and development mastery of START practices (positive psychology, biopsychosocial approach, trauma informed care, system linkage), data informed practices, documents review, supervision and interdisciplinary collaboration. During the years 3-4 of operation, programs typically begin preparing for the program certification application process, though this may vary depending on needs and development. NCSS will continue to provide services after the 4 years development with Quality Assurance and material improvements.

All START Clinical team members, except for Medical Directors, are required to achieve START Coordinator Certification. Resource Center Directors and Therapeutic Coaching Team Leaders must also achieve certification. Full-time trainees typically become certified within 12 months. Certification is valid for two years and must be renewed through the NCSS prior to expiration.

START Coordinator Certification is a rigorous training program intended to provide team members with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective specialists in the behavioral health aspect of IDD and to fully meet the mission of the START model. The purpose of certification is to ensure the participants are equipped with the necessary skills and tools to successfully implement strategies that improve supports and service outcomes for individuals served, their families, and system of supports. Certification confirms a START Coordinator's successful completion of the coordinator training curriculum and verifies a thorough understanding of the START model, practices, and principles endorsed and valued by the NCSS.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

- Must meet all applicable Title 17 regulations.
- Applicant must demonstrate fiscal responsibility by submitting two complete fiscal years and current fiscal year to date financial statements that detail all current and fixed assets and current and long-term liabilities;

- Applicant and key personnel/consultant has relevant experience and knowledge of crisis management and intervention in supporting individuals with IDD and mental health needs;
- Applicant has experience developing relationships and working collaboratively with various community partners including but not limited to the local hospitals, mental health and behavioral health agencies, local law enforcement/probation department, local educational agencies, and department of health services;
- Applicant must demonstrate knowledge of and experience in practicing person-centered thinking and planning techniques and strategies;
- Selected applicant will develop a comprehensive service design that specifies evaluation and assessment procedures, education, training, mentoring, and community outreach strategies to ensure effective implementation of the START model.
- Selected applicant will adhere to the START program development timeline to complete all required trainings and achieve all necessary certifications
- Applicant must be eligible for vendorization in accordance with Title 17 Section 54310 (d) and (e) and be in compliance with vendorization requirements; and
- Applicants who are currently vendored providers for RCOC or any other regional center must have services in “good standing” (free from Sanctions, must not be currently on any Corrective Action Plan from their vendoring regional center, must not be currently subject to any active investigation related to health and safety).

APPLICANT INELIGIBILITY

Refer to California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 17 Section 54314 for individuals who are not eligible for regional center vendorization.

START-UP FUNDING

RCOC is able to offer start-up funds through the Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) approved for fiscal year 2025-2026. The amount of start-up funding will be negotiated, but shall not exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00). A contractual agreement will be entered into between the selected applicant and RCOC, which will detail the conditions under which start-up funds may be utilized as well as a repayment penalty if the applicant fails to meet agreed upon timeframes for the completion of this project, including the ongoing delivery of services for a minimum period of ten (10) years.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step 1: Interested applicants must register with RCOC no later than Friday, _____, 2025.

Step 2: An Information Conference will be held on _____, 2025. All applicants are encouraged to attend.

Step 3: RFP applications must be submitted to RCOC no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, _____, 2025.

Step 4: Applications will first be screened for eligibility based upon RFP requirements. It is anticipated that this process will take place within one (1) week following the application due date.

Step 5: Applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be evaluated by an RFP Review Committee.

Step 6: Following evaluation of applications, all eligible applicants will be asked to attend an interview with the RFP Review Committee. The RFP Review Committee will have the opportunity to modify their scoring sheets following the interviews.

Step 7: Final scores will be tallied and presented to RCOC's Executive Director for approval within one (1) week of completion of interviews.

Step 8: If the start-up funds awarded are Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) or more, the proposed start-up contract with the recommended applicant will be presented to RCOC's Board of Directors for approval at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Step 9: The selected applicant will be required to submit a full program/service design and vendor application. RCOC will collaborate with the vendor to achieve an acceptable program to best meet the needs of the persons served.

Step 10: Following submittal of the vendor application and approval of program design, a vendor number will be assigned.

APPLICATION AND CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Each proposal must include the information and documents identified below, in order. Proposals must not exceed twenty (20) pages in length, excluding the Face Sheet and Attachments 1 through 5. **Proposals exceeding the 20 page limit will not be reviewed past the 20th page.**

1. Face Sheet (Must serve as the Face Sheet of Proposal)

Complete the attached Face Sheet with Applicant name and contact information.

2. Proposal Section I – Experience and Background

- a. Mission, Vision, and Value Statement:** A brief description of your philosophy, values, exceptional, and innovative service approaches toward providing the indicated service for the targeted group of clients. Please provide agency mission, vision, and value statements related to proposed project.
- b. Background:** A brief description of your background and experience in providing the training and certification of the program to eligible providers. Include any current or past

collaboration with other regional centers. Include a description of your knowledge and understanding of the START model and how this model might enhance the function of the applicant's current organization. Explain how the applicant perceives this model will be successfully implemented for the targeted population.

3. Proposal Section II - Implementation Plan

- a. **Outcomes:** Describe anticipated outcomes of posed service for people participating in the program and how achievement of outcomes will be measured.
- b. **Collaboration:** Briefly describe how the applicant will collaborate with the NCSS and RCOC during the development and certification process for START services and share the qualities that the applicant encompasses to ensure a cohesive partnership. Describes plans to collaborate and create linkages with community partners and how to maintain those collaborations.
- c. **Staff Recruitment and Training:** Provide a description of the plan to recruit, train and retain qualified staff. Describe the topics to be covered in staff training, types of training that will occur (i.e. Crisis prevention training, trauma informed practices, in home coaching, provider support, etc.), who will provide the training, roles of project staff, identified provider staff, RCOC staff, community providers etc. as you see the model successfully implemented. Include all specialized training you foresee as it relates to mental health treatment, behavior support and crisis intervention.
- d. **Advisory Council:** Provide a description of the plan to identify and recruit START advisory council members. Share what the compilation of the advisory council should be and how the applicant's organization will engage the advisory council in the implementation of the START model.
- e. **Program Evaluation:** A description of your plan for evaluating program services and your plan for quality improvement.
- f. **Timeline:** Provide a proposed work plan/timeline for completion of this project that covers all major steps in the process leading up to the targeted opening date of services.
- g. **On-going Monthly Budget:** A budget that indicates the anticipated operating costs of your new program. Please note that, if selected for this project, a more comprehensive, detailed budget tool will be used.
- h. **Equity and Diversity:** Each proposal will include a section on issues of equity and diversity. The plan will address diverse populations, including, but not limited to culturally and linguistically diverse populations. You must also include examples of your commitment in addressing the needs of those diverse populations, and include any issues you deem relevant to equity and diversity. Projects developed specifically for identified clients will require plans to provide culturally and linguistically competent services and supports to those specific individuals.

4. Attachments

Attachment #1: Organizational Structure

An organizational chart for the project must be included (full names), identification of the governing or advisory board, administrative and supervisory hierarchy. A list of proposed Program Consultants, salary paid and estimated hours per month for start-up and on-going consultation. Resume demonstrating evidence of applicant's qualifications such as: education, experience, and skills demonstrated in working with people with developmental disabilities (at least one year of providing direct supervision and special services to people with developmental disabilities) and those with mental health, behavioral, and health issues.

Attachment #2: Financial Statement

Applicant must demonstrate fiscal responsibility by submitting current audited financial statements that include current and fixed assets, current and long-term liabilities.

Attachment #3: Start-up Budget

A proposed Start-up Project Budget. Start-up funds are intended to assist in the development of new community resources. Start-up funds are not intended to cover 100 percent of the development costs. It is expected that the applicant will identify funds that their agency will provide, along with CRDP funds, demonstrating financial capacity to complete the project.

Attachment #4: Consultants & Qualifications

Applicants are expected to hire and retain various consultants based upon the individual needs. Such consultants, their name, address, and telephone number must be identified. The qualifications/credentials must be identified with each consultant's function(s), role, and/or purpose articulated in the brief program design.

Attachment #5: References

The proposal must include a list of at least two (2) references with addresses, email, and telephone numbers. Applicants should be aware that the selection committee will contact references. References should be able to discuss the applicant's strength within the context of the proposed project. References shall not include current or former employees of RCOC, and should not include individuals associated with the business applying for this project.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

Proposal must meet the following formatting requirements:

- Standard size (8 ½ x 11) white paper
- Typed, using a standard font (12), single-spaced pages with one (1) inch margins
- Table of Contents indicating each of the Sections and Attachments to be evaluated
- Each page must be numbered in consecutive order for each Section and Attachments
- Clearly label each Section

- Clearly label each Attachment
- **Do NOT place in ring binders or folder; but, rather use binder clips or compressor clips**

A completed RFP response must contain the following:

- Face Sheet
- Proposal
 - Section I through II identified above
- Attachments:
 - #1 Organizational Structure
 - #2 Financial Statements
 - #3 Start-up Budget
 - #4 Consultants and Qualification
 - #5 References

Applicants MUST submit an ORIGINAL proposal and four (4) copies to RCOC.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the needs of individuals to be served and the issues involved in providing quality services.
- Applicant demonstrates an understanding of current “best practices” and has incorporated them into the design.
- Proposal outcomes are realistically attainable and can be expected to produce desired outcomes and a higher quality of life for individuals receiving services.
- The applicant’s philosophy and values are consistent with RCOC’s mission, vision, and guiding principles.
- Applicant demonstrates the financial resources necessary for completion of the project.

In addition to the proposal and interview, RCOC will consider prior dealings with the applicant. Input from stakeholders, including RCOC and other regional centers, for the past two (2) years may be reviewed and considered.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

- Applicants intending to submit a proposal **must register with RCOC no later than Friday, September 5, 2025** by sending an email to tta@rcocdd.com, which includes name, email address and telephone number. This will allow RCOC to provide any updated information to all applicants.
- An Information Conference will be held at **10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 10, 2025**, via Zoom conferencing. All interested applicants are encouraged to attend. A link will be provided upon registering with RCOC with the intent to submit a proposal.

- Questions regarding this RFP may also be submitted via email to tta@rcocdd.com. Questions must be submitted no later than **Thursday, September 11, 2025**. Answers to questions will be distributed to all registered applicants via email.
- **RCOC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to cancel the RFP process at its discretion. If negotiations fail with the selected applicant, RCOC reserves the right to re-open negotiations with the next qualified applicant or to re-post the RFP.**
- **Completed proposal for this RFP must be submitted to RCOC no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 19, 2025.** Proposal received after 4:00 p.m. on the due date will be returned unopened.

Proposal may be sent via U.S. Mail to the following address:

Theresa Ta, Manager of Safety Net & Resource Development
Regional Center of Orange County
P.O. Box 22010
Santa Ana, CA 92702-2010

The proposal may also be **hand delivered** to the following address:

Theresa Ta, Manager of Safety Net & Resource Development
Regional Center of Orange County
1525 North Tustin Ave.
Santa Ana, CA 92705

FACE SHEET

(Must be used as the cover page for the proposal)

RFP#: STARTPROV FY2526	RFP Due Date: 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 19, 2025
Applicant (Agency) Name (If the applicant is a corporation, list the principle members of the corporation.)	
Contact Person:	
Contact Phone Number:	
Mailing Address:	
Site Address	
List name of consultant and/or individuals involved in writing the program design: Any proposal written by a consultant or grant writer must demonstrate a commitment by the writer to provide ongoing technical assistance during the implementation stage, which should be reflected in the budget.	
List any and all vendor number(s) and the vendoring regional center. Use additional sheets if needed.	
Vendor number: Regional Center	Vendor Number: Regional Center:
Vendor number: Regional Center	Vendor Number: Regional Center: