FY27 RAS Application

Manatee County Government
Children's Services Dedicated Millage
Application Period December 10, 2025 – January 30, 2026

Organizational Strength

1. What is your mission statement?
Purpose of Question: While not scored, this is important to ensure that the program is fully within the mission. In some cases, nonprofits start work (especially if funds are offered) in areas outside of their core focus. i.e., last year Easter Seals stated they met the priority of adoption preservation when their mission is serving disabled children, some of which are adopted.
Scoring Area: Organizational Strength, this is not a scored question.
Applicant Guidance: Simply provide the mission statement you currently use.
Examples: The mission of the Davis Health Alliance is to ensure that low income and at-risk individuals in our county get and use health care services. • The Carver After School Program's mission is to change the odds stacked against kids from low-income families who are at high risk of school drop-out.

2. What does your organization know how to do especially well that contributes to this program achieving great gains for its participants?
Purpose of Question: The extent to which an agency understands what it must know how to do well reflects its performance in a number of ways, including selecting new staff to fill in gaps in know-how and capitalizing on what gives it comparative advantage over other agencies in the same space. It is far more predictive of success than a word-smithed mission or vision statement.
Scoring Area: Organizational Strength, Core Know-How
Score Range: 0-4 **4 –** They have clearly stated one or more points with specific content on knowledge and/or skills that they have and that seem critical to the success in this program. It is specific, not general. **2 –** They have stated one or more points, but they are not specific and/or critical to their success. **0 –** They did not state a specific core know-how or did so at a very vague level.
Applicant Guidance: Core know-how is often expressed in two areas: • **Knowledge** of organizational insights, including quality of services necessary to properly meet needs of clients. This includes understanding the history of need; and • **Skills** that your organization has and knows how to apply well when meeting the needs of clients who are identified as needing the services provided. Identify and describe 1-3 specific areas of core know-how (knowledge or skills) that your organization excels in and explain how each directly contributes to the proposed program's ability to achieve measurable outcomes for participants. Provide evidence or examples from program experience to support your response.
Examples: Our core know-how is in adding an element of social connection when we deliver meals to the homebound. We also know how to spot cases of strong social isolation that is inhibiting health and to refer persons to appropriate agencies that may otherwise have been left alone. We know how to find dentists that make no differentiation whatsoever between the indigent population we serve and their patients with private insurance and status equivalent to the dentist. Further, the persons we find are willing to volunteer extra hours upon occasion. These are special people, and we know how to recruit and support them.

3. What predicts leadership sustainability for the organization?

Purpose of Question: Any issues of organizational survival are important to understand in that they consume time and attention that is diverted from effective programs. This question focuses on leadership where a loss of a board chair or CEO can cause real challenges. Even if successful, programs may slow down during a transition period. Of special concern: the loss of a well-liked founder.

Scoring Area: Organizational Strength, Leadership Sustainability

Score Range: 0-4
4 – There is nothing flagged or stated to question leadership sustainability. No key person is leaving for falling short. Or, if so, they have found an impressive new person.
2 – There is a suggestion of a possible problem.
0 – There is a clear and unresolved issue with leadership sustainability.

Applicant Guidance: Describe any leadership turnover that has occurred within the past 24 months or is expected within the next 24 months—both for the organization as a whole and for this specific program. This includes roles such as CEO, board chair, executive director, or program manager. For each change, specify: the position, the reason for the change, the current status of the transition (such as whether a successor has been identified and the expected onboarding timeline), and the steps the organization is taking to prevent or minimize disruptions to operations, program delivery, and participant outcomes.

Examples:
1. Our leadership is solid. Kathryn, the CEO, anticipates remaining for at least the next five years as do all key staff. Board leadership rotates and we have identified the next two alternating chairs. We anticipate that they will be here to assume that role.
2. Jose, our program leader, is planning on retiring next year. While his leaving is a loss, he has identified and is mentoring the person who will take his place. We do not foresee any loss of momentum, services, or accomplishments with this transition.

4. What predicts financial stability for the organization?
Key Organizational Trends: Please provide financial, participant, and personnel data requested. Complete accordingly for organization.

3 Year Trend Line	1 Year Ago	2 Years Ago	3 Years Ago

Purpose of Question:
1. It is important for an organization to ensure funding and avoid financial instability or crisis in the event of a loss of funds. This question exposes the organizations methods in predicting their financial stability, how they define financial success, and what measures they use to do such.
2. Money is the second key area for sustainability. When an organization runs low on cash, much attention can be diverted from programs to staying afloat, even if the organization looks good by the end of the year. And trends toward higher expenses than incomes do not bode well for stability.

To understand the dynamics of any organization, a look at 3-year trend lines is very important. Is the organization growing or shrinking? i.e., not adding staff if they are not generating enough revenues.

Scoring Area: Organizational Strength, Financial Stability

Score Range: 0-6
6 – There are no flags indicating financial instability, the organization describes their current financial situation as well as their future predictions.
3 – The organization has shown financial stability in the past but is currently running in a deficit with no concrete plan on getting into a surplus.
0 – There is to prediction for financial stability, or the organization offers no insight on their financial reporting.

Applicant Guidance: Include financial trends and events (e.g., gain or loss of a key donor). Also comment on any challenges the organization has regarding available cash to cover salaries and other expenses. An annual excess of income over expenditures is not reassuring if you can't meet payroll in the middle of the

year. If you have been operating at a deficit, provide an explanation of the plan to get out of that financial situation.

Examples:
1. The Guilford Health Group confidently predicts its sustainability over the next 5-10 years. While our financial net varies year to year, we are always "in the black" over any 3-year rolling average. Further, our government and foundation payments give us positive cash flow. Our key funders show no evidence of losing either money or interest in supporting us.
2. Learning Turnaround has been in existence since 1963 and has never been in a stronger financial position. We have built a $1.5 million endowment and have diversified our revenue to the point that 60% comes from grants and 40% is earned income from services for which we charge. Our audited financials (including management letters) show that we are in good standing for the last 3 years.

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5. Provide the following information on the characteristics of your Board of Directors:

# of board members	
# of board members who are residents of Manatee County	
# of board members who support you with annual contributions	

Provide the number of board members with significant experience in the following areas:

Finance	Personal connection to agency's mission
Nonprofit management	Field(s) in which your agency works
Law	Direct experience with kinds of people served
Business	

Purpose of Question: The ability of a board member to add the greatest possible value increases when they personally know and have experienced the problems and/or solutions that the organization addresses. This goes beyond knowing a field by reading about it.

Scoring Area: Organizational Strength, Board of Directors

Score Range: 0-6
6 – Five or more subject areas with significant experience; 90% of board members contribute dollars, and strong and clear nepotism policy.
3 – Three to four subject areas with significant experience.
0 – Two or less subject areas with significant experience.

Applicant Guidance: Provide detailed information about your board of directors. When describing board members' backgrounds:
- "Significant experience" refers to board members who have worked or held roles in the field your organization serves (for example, a board member who has professional experience in disability services, early childhood education, mental health, housing, etc.).
- "Personal connection to the mission" refers to board members who have direct lived experience with the issue your agency addresses. For example, a parent of a child with a disability serving on the board of an organization supporting children with disabilities.

Provide the agency's policy on **nepotism** at all levels.

Include whether board members may be related, board members may be related to staff, or staff may be related to staff that they supervise. If a nepotism policy is in place, an attachment is required to be uploaded in the "Required Documents" section. NA if a policy does not exist.

Program Section

6. Tell us about your program.

Purpose of Question: Before you jump right into persons and the gains they will get; you need a thumbnail on what the program is. This question is not scored in that return on county investment lies in the details contained in other questions. There is no value for a bad program clearly stated.

Scoring Area: Program Section, this is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: Provide a simple program overview.

- These details should provide what, when, where, and how the program provides their services to clients.
- Indicate whether it is year-round, school-year only program, or summer only program.
- Consider whether these details meet the client's needs and are available when needed in convenient locations.
- How does the program directly align with and support the organization's mission
- Include other good to know information, such as:
  - Provided transportation
  - Free, sliding scale, or fee-based
  - Languages offered
  - Registration process or waitlist information
  - Unique program features (i.e. evidence-based model, family engagement components, specialized staff, etc.)

You will have the option to upload a program flyer (maximum two-pages).

Examples:

- An outpatient clinic providing dental services both by appointment and a walk-in basis. We have full diagnostic capability and can do general dentistry, including crowns. We have only one dentist who does root canals and other such procedures.
- We provide meal packages for students to take home for weekend use for themselves and their family. We do this on Fridays during the school year and have a central location to which families can come during vacation weeks to access the packages. We deliver to the schools and the schools deliver to the students.

7. Program historical information

Purpose of Question: While not scored it is important to understand the program history to see the program data trends.

Scoring Area: Program Section, Historical Information. This is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: Provide the data called for as it relates to the program specifically in the past three years:

- Program Participants
- Program Staff
- Program Contractors

8. Program match funding details

Purpose of Question: While not scored it is important to ensure that the program is looking for other funding as a first source and using the millage funds as a last resort. If the programs sole funding is from the CSAB then it is pertinent that the program is looking for a match of funds.

Scoring Area: Program Section, this is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: Please provide the data called for as it relates to this program's match funding (past three years), include details of the requirements for the program to receive match funds. What is the investment amount required to receive the match, other funding sources that are also considered in the match, length of time the match funding is available for, where the match is coming from, and other necessary or relevant information.

Participant Information

9. Identified target client/audience served

Purpose of Question: To understand how many clients are anticipated to be served and who the program services focus on serving to achieve benefits or gains of the child.

Scoring Area: Participant Information, Target Audience. This is not a scored question.
Applicant Guidance: Indicate whether the client is the child, the parent/caregiver, or both the child and their parent/caregiver. Identifying the program's client clarifies who gains the skills, how progress is measured, and what changes are expected. Also share how many clients are anticipated to be served by the program during the upcoming fiscal year.

10. Client Eligibility Categories
Purpose of Question: The use of these funds is restricted to benefit children who qualify for at least one of the following eligibility criteria: abused, neglected, at-risk, or economically disadvantaged as specified in the Children's Services Ordinance (91-42).
Scoring Area: Participant Information, Eligibility. This is not a scored question.
Applicant Guidance: Provide details on how your program defines "at-risk" and determines when a client is at-risk, abused, neglected, or economically disadvantaged, as well as how the program ensures clients meet the eligibility requirements of Manatee County's Children's Services Ordinance. While many participants may be reflected in multiple eligibility categories, all participants served with this funding must fall under at least one clearly defined category. Any eligibility sections that are not applicable for your program should be marked N/A. For programs approved for investment, agencies will be required to capture and maintain documented verification of each client's eligibility throughout the fiscal year.

11. Anticipated demographics for the proposed year
Purpose of Question: Our Children's Services Ordinance states that children to be served must be between the ages of birth through age 17. Parents may be served if the program benefits children prenatal through age 17. This data may also be used later to compare proposed vs. actual data after the program year has ended.
Scoring Area: Participant Information, Demographics. This is not a scored question.
Applicant Guidance: In this section you will provide the anticipated demographics for the Manatee County clients who will be served by this program under the Children's Services Dedicated Millage during the upcoming fiscal year. • Childrens ages 0 - 17 years old • Parents or caregivers of children prenatal - 17 years old if the services benefit the child   o Increase protective factors In some cases, the applicant program may support another direct service program. This may be considered when the applicant's program benefits the whole of Manatee County. The Systems Advocate Program and Sleep Baby Safely Program are examples of these types of programs. **Note:** These numbers will be referred to in the future when comparing proposed numbers to actual numbers served at the end of each program year.

12. People most likely to use the goods or services.
Purpose of Question: This question lets you look at whether the organization believes it is equally effective with everyone who fits the need for the service. Most high performing programs understand the factors associated with various clients that most effectively gain from their services. It tells whether the program is reaching those who most need the help.
Scoring Area: Participant Information, User of Goods/Services
Score Range: 0-6   **6 –** Clear understanding of who is being served and how the goods/services benefit the client

3 – Understanding of who is being served but unsure the benefits will help in the manner described; or the client criteria for services does not clearly serve abused, neglected, at-risk or economically disadvantaged youth, yet the good or services provided clearly benefits the client as described.
0 – It is unclear if the program is serving proper clients and it is not clear how the services or goods will benefit the client in the manner described.

Applicant Guidance: Regardless of whether you help select participants, please describe the people who are most likely to use your program's services or products. While many individuals may meet the eligibility criteria, not all will seek out or benefit from the services equally. We recognize that you may have practical insight into which eligible participants are most likely to engage or gain the most. This insight does not need to be research-based, though research is welcome if available.

Example: We serve student attending Title I schools who are identified by school staff as needing the personal items we provide. We believe that our clients have less truancy which supports their academics and increases their likelihood of staying in school.

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13. Define two typical clients, reflecting between them any significant differences among your clients and describe how your program addresses specific challenges you define.

Purpose of Question: High performing agencies really know their participants. They know what the issues are, and they know what they need—not just at general levels but in the highly specific terms of actual individuals. If a young participant, for example, comes from a family with a culture that devalues education for girls, we would look for a program that addressed that critical factor—either by changing parent viewpoints or giving the child ways to move forward with other validation.

Scoring Area: Participant Information, Typical Clients

Score Range: 0-8
8 – They have identified specific individual (not group) challenges or conditions in participants and can describe how they address them with their program.
4 – Some factors identified for individual, but insufficiently specific or clear; or factors identified but with no information on how their program is designed to address them.
0 – Very little individual identification factors are provided.

Applicant Guidance: Please provide examples based on actual participants from your current client base, using no real names. If necessary, you may use composite examples drawn from real cases. Describe each participant's situation, strengths, and any characteristics relevant to defining their eligibility. Highlight key differences between the examples and explain how your program addresses the specific challenges each participant faces. Be sure to include how the program is intentionally designed to respond to those identified challenges.

Examples:
- Angela is 10 and in the 4th grade. She is at two or more grade levels behind in reading. She is sociable and seldom has a behavior problem. She is, however, distracted and does not readily focus on homework or anything else that looks to her like schoolwork. She has a single mom who is concerned about her and says she tries to limit her time on social media but is not consistently successful. Our program has elements that specifically address her attention span challenge and will make learning more engaging for her.
- Jose is 13 and in 9th grade. He has one parent who is incarcerated and is being raised by one parent with support from his grandparents. Through school counselors, it was recommended to his grandparents that he should consider participation in this program to help resolve some anger issues that have been identified during the school day. Upon intake into the program an ACE assessment was completed by his parent on his behalf, and his ACE score was determined to be a 4. Our program supports all youth with any determined risk factors and helps to establish protective factors for participants.

Difference Made

14. Select the priorities your program directly strives to support/achieve.
Purpose of Question: While unscored, this is important because it confirms that the agency is attempting to measure one of the identified priorities and demonstrate meaningful progress. Second, although selecting a priority does not add value to the score, reviewers can assess whether the program is achieving outcomes or broader impacts that also support other priorities. Be aware that some agencies may select a priority without measuring performance related to it, and those applications should not be considered as meeting the priority.
Scoring Area: Difference Made, Program Priorities. This is not a scored question.
Applicant Guidance: Selecting a priority is optional and does not affect your eligibility for funding from the Children's Services Dedicated Millage. No additional points are awarded for choosing a priority. However, if your program advances one or more of the county's priorities, please indicate which one(s) below. This information helps reviewers understand the specific outcomes your agency is working to achieve, how your program contributes to measurable progress for children and families in Manatee County, and whether your outcomes align with county priorities or address other important community needs. Programs that do not align with any listed priority are still fully considered for investment. Selecting "Not Applicable" is an option; scroll to the bottom of the list to find the available choices. Please review the priority descriptions carefully before selecting one.   - Do not try to make the program's goals and services fit into a priority if they don't naturally fit.   - If your program does not address any of the priorities or related targets, select "No Priority Applicable".   FY26 Children's Services Priorities: - Priority A: Children are safe in their homes, free from abuse or neglect.   - Priority B: Children develop literacy skills necessary to be successful in school.   - Priority C: Children have the skills necessary to function appropriately in all environments.   - Priority D: Parents and caregivers have the skills and resources needed to stop preventable child death.

15. Goods or Services Provided
Purpose of Question: Given that the result is the service, understanding the standards that the service must meet for certification or approval is important. Of further interest are the additional quality standards added by the organization.
Scoring Area: Difference Made, External Requirements/Internal Standards
Score Range: 0-8 **8 –** The agency specifically defines the good or service and goes beyond quality standards from regulators or funders to add its own requirements that clearly forecast successful use of their product or service. **4 –** The agency generally defines the good or serve and meets all standards and requirements from all regulators and funders. **0 –** The agency does not clearly define its good or service and/ or does not meet external quality standards
Applicant Guidance: Please define the goods or services you provide and note any quality standards that are required by local, state, or federal government, as well as those set by external accrediting bodies. Also include any internal quality standards or practices your organization uses to enhance the value and benefit clients receive.
Examples: 1. <u>Good or service:</u> We provide a sufficient supply of food to feed a family of four for the weekend. 2. <u>External Standards Given Us:</u> We comply with USDA standards on calories, sugar, and sodium content as well as other criteria such as freshness.

3. <u>Internal Standards We Set</u>: We select vendors who make the food appealing and selected for what kids like to eat as well as what is healthy. We also use a criterion around ease of food preparation for the families. Recipes are included and all items provided can be used in the meals. Most other food suppliers do not include recipes or provide planned meals.

16. How do the goods or services provided positively impact your clients' lives?
Purpose of Question: Given that the result is the service, understanding the standards that the service must meet for certification or approval is important. Of further interest are the additional quality standards added by the organization.
Scoring Area: Difference Made, Positive Impacts

Score Range: 0-8
    8 – The answer provides clear evidence that the goods/services provided directly impact the clients' lives in a positive way.
    4 – The explanation provides a potential or partial positive impact on the clients' lives.
    0 – It is not evident that the goods or services positively impact the clients' lives.

Applicant Guidance: Provide how your clients' lives are impacted by the goods/services that are being provided. Be clear as to what the good or service is, how frequently it will be provided, and the anticipated impact on the clients' lives.
Examples: The gain is a healthy mouth and elimination or substantial reduction in pain from cavities and other dental issues addressed in our one-day clinic.

17. Broader (additional) impacts county-wide or client focused
Purpose of Question: Nonprofits often want to say more about broader values. This gives them a chance to do so while retaining the discipline of focus on the services provided for those who demonstrate the need. We are not open to vague statements of collaboration or empowerment, rather, the agency must say what is achieved by the goods or services received.
Scoring Area: Difference Made, Broader Impacts

Score Range: 0-8
    8 – The answer defines some important broader impacts.
    4 – Minimal broader impacts are stated.
    0 – Unimpressive or not broader impacts are stated.

Applicant Guidance: In addition to the primary outcomes you track for this program, what other benefits are expected for participants and for Manatee County as a whole? Please describe any additional positive changes that may occur when participants achieve your program goals. Include both cost-related impacts and other meaningful gains. Be specific about the benefits to participants, the community, and the organizations that support them.
Examples: The broader impact is higher school attendance and achievement by children who are no longer suffering with real pain while trying to learn.

Success Factors

18. Share your program's past success.
Purpose of Question: This brings awareness to whether the program is expanding, holding even, or decreasing the number of clients who receive the goods or services. It provides evidence that an agency will achieve at a high level. What they achieved last year is more predictive than what they say they will achieve next year. It ensures that clients are being served in a manner that meets their needs and in locations that are accessible. Further it provides evidence of need for the goods or services.
Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Successes and Challenges
Score Range: 0-6

6 – There is an increase in the number of clients being served or an increase in the number of goods/services provided. They are being served where they can access the goods/services.
3 – The number of clients being served has remained rather steady or the number of goods/services provided has remained steady. The services are mostly provided in areas where clients can access them.
0 – There has been a decline in the number of clients or goods/services provided. The clients are not getting what they need or in accessible locations, or there is a reduction in the need for these goods or services.

Applicant Guidance: For the 12-month period ending September 30, please describe the individuals served by this program. Include the number of participants served and the reasons they sought or were eligible for the goods or services. In addition, describe key outcomes or successes experienced by participants, including any applicable examples of progress or achievement.

Examples: The information requested for this is primarily objective program information.

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19. Program changes and the difference it made in clients' achievements.

Purpose of Question: The most attractive investments you can make are to agencies that grow and change based on experience. As noted in the applicant guidance this will provide insight on program efficacy. This question looks at the most vital skill needed to learn, acknowledging that something is not working.

Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Successes and challenges

Score Range: 0-6
6 – The current method in use is fully meeting the needs of the clients, there doesn't seem to be any challenges in delivering the goods or services, or changes have been implemented to further meet the needs of clients needing goods or services.
3 – The current method doesn't meet the needs of all clients, there seems to be challenges that need to be overcome in successfully providing the goods or services.
0 – The goods or services are not reaching the clients in need. The organization has not successfully implemented any changes to resolve the issues.

Applicant Guidance: Reflect on your program's progress over the past year to show how it has evolved and improved to better meet participants' needs by truly starting where they are. A steep, positive learning curve is the strongest predictor of long-term success. When comparing two programs currently at the same level of achievement:

- One that has remained steady is likely to stay at that level.
- One that has rapidly improved from a lower level in the past 1-2 years is far more likely to continue rising and reach even higher, achieving greater impact throughout the community.

Real learning is not just about what you know today—it is about how effectively experience and knowledge are used to intentionally adapt and change in ways that drive greater success for the program's clients.

Even when using a fixed core curriculum or approach, there is still control over key variables such as the people who deliver it and how they interact with clients. Focus response on improvement efforts there.

Examples: We have learned that there are many potential clients who are not having their basic needs met, therefore we have worked with the schools, library, and community center that is within walking distance of many neighborhoods for these students to pick up the goods. For those who are unable to do this, we have found volunteers willing to deliver the items directly to the homes.

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20. Evidence that your program director can and will guide the program to achieve its goals.

Purpose of Question: The right person is more important than the plan. The question is important in going beyond resume factors or degrees, certifications, and experience to look at the attributes that a program leader need. The leader's ability to hire, keep, and motivate a great staff is easily as important as what they know.

Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Program Director

Score Range: 0-4

4 – Response clearly shows that the program director is strong in both areas (1) credentials/degrees/ experience, and (2) skills and attributes.

2 – Response clearly shows that the program director is strong in at least one of the areas.

0 – Response does not show that the program director is strong in either area.

Applicant Guidance: Selecting the right people is often more critical to a project's success than program design or funding levels. Begin by clearly stating the required **credentials or degrees**, then describe any preferred qualifications that exceed those minimum standards. When addressing experience, ensure it directly relates to the responsibilities the individual will hold within the project.

The second area, **skills and attributes**, acknowledges that effectiveness comes as much from a person's character and competencies as from formal education. Describe who the people in these roles in ways that matter to the success of the program and identify the specific skills they bring. Avoid vague statements such as "a good people person," which do not provide meaningful insight into a candidate's actual capabilities.

Example:
- **Credentials/Degrees/Experience:** Suzie Johnson, our program director, has the required domestic violence certification and has an MSW, a degree beyond the required bachelor's degree for this role. She has worked in this field for 15 years and fully understands and applies both the legal and procedural framework in her daily work and melds well with the kinds of persons in our program.
- **Skills and Attributes:** Suzie is the opposite of burned out. She is fresh every day when it comes to engaging with participants and giving them the hope and confidence, they need to be successful. She has a remarkable track record in helping our participants—well above state of local "averages" for achievement. We think this is largely due to who she is as a person.

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21. Evidence that program staff or contractors will guide the program achieve its goals.

Purpose of Question: The persons who directly interact with participants are often seen as the program by participants, who care little about plans, missions, logic models or anything else. What they know and what helps them is a person. Factors such as engagement, resourcefulness, and optimism are known to matter. Sadly, traditional funders ignore this factor almost entirely.

Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Program Staff

Score Range: 0-4

4 – Response clearly shows that all staff interacting with participants are strong in both areas (A. credentials/degrees/experience & B. skills and attributes).

2 – Response clearly shows that all staff are strong in one area.

0 – Response does not show strength for all staff in either area.

Example:
- **Credentials/Degrees/Experience:** Suzie Johnson, our program director, has the required domestic violence certification and has an MSW, a degree beyond the required bachelor's degree for this role. She has worked in this field for 15 years and fully understands and applies both the legal and procedural framework in her daily work and melds well with the kinds of persons in our program.
- **Skills and Attributes:** Suzie is the opposite of burned out. She is fresh every day when it comes to engaging with participants and giving them the hope and confidence, they need to be successful. She has a remarkable track record in helping our participants—well above state of local "averages" for achievement. We think this is largely due to who she is as a person.

Examples:
- **Credentials/Degrees/Experience:** Melanie Davis is our lead childcare worker and has all required certifications. This is her second year in the field (which she entered after getting her associate degree) so she has limited experience. On the other hand, she has no "old school" thinking and has many ideas that have already proven of great value.

- **Skills and Attributes**: Melanie is very inquisitive. She asks questions and gets our participants to ask questions. Her curiosity is infectious in a very good way. We have found that when our kids shift from making statements to asking questions, engagement goes up significantly.
- **Credentials/Degrees/Experience**: We will hire two new staff to help in our afterschool reading program. No credentials are required, and we do not find degrees important as is knowledge of our kids. The people we hire have the experience of having "been there". These staff are under direct supervision of certified teachers.
- **Skills and Attributes**: Our new staff selected will be very interested in actual student achievement, whether passing next weeks' vocabulary test of completing a paper that gets compliments from teachers at school. They will do whatever it takes to make the 6-8 students in their group to get on grade level in reading.

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22. Requirements for any external entity or individual whose commitments are essential to your program's success.

Purpose of Question: Nonprofits are often rewarded for having partners and collaborations. Many are simply a listing of persons who attend meetings together. This question goes deeper to ask if the agency is dependent on other organizations, person, or system to be successful. The first great data point is whether they know who is essential and who is not. The second is if they have commitments, not just nice words about cooperating.

Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Key Support for Success

Score Range: 0-4

4 – Response names an outside entity or individual with clear commitments to play the specified role and the corresponding document (not an MOU) is uploaded; or the applicant is credible in stating they do not have or need anyone to play a role.

2 – Response identifies an outside entity or individual but without clear commitments to play the specified role and the corresponding document (not an MOU) is uploaded; or the applicant is not persuasive that they need no external partner.

0 – Response is unclear on role and/or commitment is not specific, no commitment is stated; or the applicant is not credible in stating it needs no external partner. There is no uploaded document; or the uploaded document is an MOU in spite of the instructions.

Applicant Guidance:

Many programs rely on outside partners to complete essential tasks or provide key resources. For example, an out-of-school-time program may require a school to share academic data, or another organization may need to supply theater tickets, books, mentors, or other critical items. If your program depends on an external entity to succeed, you must identify that partner and provide evidence of their commitment. Your submission must include a one-page written commitment letter from each partner you rely on. The letter must:

- State exactly what the partner will do or provide, and
- Describe the specific outcomes or responsibilities they are committing to fulfill for your program's success.

These letters must contain **specific commitments**, not general endorsements or statements of support. Only include letters from partners who provide support that is essential to the success of your program. Each letter must include at least one clear sentence beginning with "We commit to…" or equivalent wording that states the partner's concrete contribution.

Example: Many programs rely on outside partners to complete essential tasks or provide key resources. For example, an out-of-school-time program may require a school to share academic data, or another organization may need to supply theater tickets, books, mentors, or other critical items. If your program depends on an external entity to succeed, you must identify that partner and provide evidence of their commitment.

Your submission must include a one-page written commitment letter from each partner you rely on. The letter must:
- State exactly what the partner will do or provide, and
- Describe the specific outcomes or responsibilities they are committing to fulfill for your program's success.

These letters must contain **specific commitments**, not general endorsements or statements of support. Only include letters from partners who provide support that is essential to the success of your program. Each letter must include at least one clear sentence beginning with "We commit to…" or equivalent wording that states the partner's concrete contribution.

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23. Does this Program utilize Unite Us to provide and receive referrals for families and children in need of various services? If yes, provide the details on use. If not, provide what is preventing its use.

Purpose of Question: The County is partnering with Unite Us to gather Manatee County data. Unite Us will provide better data with more partners aligning to provide and receive referrals for those in need. Among other data, we will see where there is a breakdown in referrals and services, where there are additional or emerging needs and service gaps.

Scoring Area: Program Success Factors, Unite Us

Score Range: 0-2
- **2 –** Response is the program fully utilizes the Unite Us platform to regularly provide or receive referrals for Manatee County children and families.
- **1 –** Response is the program uses the Unite Us platform occasionally but has not fully embraced its use as a regular practice within the program.
- **0 –** Response is the program hasn't registered or doesn't use the Unite Us platform.

Investments

24. Total investment amount being requested from Children's Services millage

25. Investment amount awarded in the current fiscal year

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26. Is the request for an increased investment?

Purpose of Question: The Children's Services Dedicated Millage states funds shall not replace or supplant existing funding and may be expended only for funding additional programs and services for children (Sec 2-2-254).

Funds shall be used to develop and provide for the operation of programs which shall include the enhancement and expansion of existing program as well as new and innovative programs for the prevention and treatment of Manatee County's neglected, abused, at-risk, or economically disadvantaged children and provide essential and necessary programs to serve such children (Sec 2-2-252)

Scoring Area: Investments, Increased Investment. Not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance:
A request for an increased investment will be considered in accordance with the Children's Services Advisory Boards' Increased Funding Tier System and the Decision Making Guide. Links to these documents can be found on the Children's Services Funding pages on Manatee County's website.

Increased investments cannot be used to supplant funds. Supplanting occurs when grant funds are used to replace, reduce, or take the place of funds that an agency is already spending—or is required to spend—from other local, state, federal, or private sources. County investment may not be used to cover costs that are currently funded by another source or to backfill a loss of funding unless the loss is unrelated to the grant request and properly documented.

The agency must ensure that all requested county funds are used only to supplement and expand existing program resources, services, or capacity. They may not be used to supplant or replace current funding streams, budgeted allocations, or previously committed organizational spending.

27. Are you seeking investment from sources outside of the Children's Services Millage? Provide details.

Purpose of Question: It is important that applicants seek other sources of investment as this demonstrates diversification of funding, which signals a more robust and viable business model to potential investors. This approach reduces the overall risk associated with relying on a single source of capital, indicating resourcefulness and a stronger chance of survival and growth

Scoring Area: Investments, Other Sources of Funding. This is not a scored question but is used in scoring the budget.

Applicant Guidance:
Is the program seeking other sources of investment outside of the Children's Services Dedicated Millage? If an increase has been requested, is there an equal request being made with another source as well? Provide details below.

28. How will an increased investment benefit the children who are served? If the request is not for an increased investment, simply state "NA".

Purpose of Question: From an investor perspective, requests for increased investment should be tied to an expansion of services that benefit the community or demonstrate a clear need to Improve or expand existing service levels and program performance. In some cases, increased investment allows an agency to serve more participants; in others, it strengthens the depth, quality, or reach of services provided to the same number of individuals. In limited circumstances, an agency may need to show that current revenues are insufficient to sustain essential program operations. While all requests for increased investment may be considered, they must be supported by specific information and relevant data. Reviewers should refer to the "CSAB Decision Making Guide – Request for Increased Investment" and the "CSAB Tier Process for Requested Increases" when evaluating these requests.

Scoring Area: Investments, Increase Consideration. This is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: A request for an increase in investment will be considered in accordance with the CSAB's Increase Funding Tier System and the CSAB Decision Making Guide. To access the *CSAB Decision Making Guide* and *CSAB Tier Process* please visit www.mymanatee.org, search for Children's Services Funding.

If the request will support your program serving those on the wait list, include that information here. Clients served from the wait list should also be reflected in the anticipated number of clients to be served (demographics).

A new or increased investment cannot be used to supplant funds.

Example: We are requesting an additional investment of $20,000 to provide service packages to an additional 100 families with children who are aged 0-17 years. To accomplish this, we will increase outreach and advertising to the community, requests for donations and volunteers, and open two new sites for distribution.

29. How is it anticipated the program will utilize the increase?

Purpose of Question: It is important for investor to understand how an increase in investment will support the clients as well as the program and its staff.

Scoring Area: Investments, Utilization of Increase. This is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: Describe how the increased investment will be utilized within the program. Specify whether the funds will be used to hire additional staff, extend program hours, provide staff training, obtain an objective assessment tool, reduce the waitlist, retain current staff, or support other capacity-building

needs. Include detailed information such as the number of new staff to be hired, the extended hours to be offered, the type of staff training to be provided, and the specific assessment tools to be obtained. Finally, explain how these enhancements are expected to positively impact program effectiveness and overall client outcomes.

30. Waitlists

Purpose of Question: This unscored question tells you about demand. If an agency has a waiting list, it tells you that there may be unmet needs. If the agency has no such list and has capacity to serve more, the reverse is true. The waiting list also lets you ask great questions, such as "What would it take to eliminate or cut the list in half". The costs per person are likely to be much lower than those now served. If the agency is asking for an increase, they should be explaining in the prior question, how it affects their waiting list, if applicable.

Scoring Area: Investments, Waitlist. This is not a scored question.

Applicant Guidance: Please note the number of persons on a waiting list for the proposed program in each of the years listed (previous year, current year, and the anticipated for the proposed year).

31. Name two other providers that provide similar programming.

Purpose of Question: Agencies and their funders often consider one nonprofit at a time, assuming they are all distinct. Realistically, in almost all fields, there are multiple groups addressing a need. This information helps you look at your options and at least some comparative information as the applicant sees this. The second reason is that the response tells you if the group is aware of and learning from others with similar focus. High performing groups are always benchmarking and exploring possible collaborations based on different strengths.

Scoring Area: Investments, Similar Programs of Providers

Score Range: 0-4
   4 – Response is very clear on both similarities and difference of groups most like them. No judgment on what this means, simply look for clarity.
   2 – Response is not clear on both similarities and differences—or not fully clear on one.
   0 – Response is not clear on similarities and differences.

Applicant Guidance: While most programs share at least some common elements with others in their field (e.g., similar goals, target populations, or service types), we ask all applicants to objectively compare their program with two others—even if the similarities seem minor. This helps us understand the local service landscape and your program's positioning within it. Focus on factual similarities and differences without any value judgments (e.g., avoid implying one is "better" or "more effective"). If no similar programs exist in Manatee County, please compare them with programs in nearby counties (e.g., Sarasota, Hillsborough, or Pinellas) or elsewhere in Florida. Please structure your response to address the following:

Provider 1 & 2

- Name of the provider/program and its location (city/county)
- Key similarities (e.g., shared target population, service types, or delivery methods)
- Key differences (e.g., variations in scale, eligibility criteria, focus areas, or partnerships, curriculum, practice method)

Comparisons

- How you identified these providers (e.g., directories, partnerships, or public website) and provide links
- List similarities and differences

Example: Children for Success and Parker Youth Center are two providers we see as similar in that they serve K-12 students with before and after school programs. We are similar in an intent to not only keep children safe and happy but experiencing more academic success and character development. We are different in two ways:

1. We serve a much more defined neighborhood. Our youth come from just two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school.
2. We have defined character development in specific terms--including intentional behavior and giving and getting from others. We track these in terms of observed and self-reported behavior changes. We do not believe other providers in this area do that, although they may do something of that nature.

32. Name any steps taken to reduce program costs.

Purpose of Question: The best way to get money is to need less of it. This question lets you see how the applicant is using all possible approaches to reduce its costs. This question is most relevant for high performing programs. There is little value in reducing costs for a group that achieves at a low level.

Scoring Area: Investments, Cost Reductions or Resource Leveraging

Score Range: 0-6
   6 – Response reflects they are taking active steps that significantly lower costs in at least one or two areas.
   3 – Response reflects some cost reductions, but with limited dollar gains.
   0 – Response reflects no evidence of cost reduction.

Applicant Guidance: We want to understand how much your program benefits from free or deeply discounted resources, and exactly how much these resources reduce your real cash budget (not theoretical "value of volunteer time").

Please provide the information below as a simple bullet or numbered list (no table required). For each resource you receive at no cost or significantly reduced cost, tell us the real dollar impact on your cash budget.

- Resource Type: Volunteers, in-kind goods or services, donated or discounted equipment or vehicles, reduced-fee contracts, other
- Brief description of the resource and what it replaces
- Full market or retail cost. The amount you would have to pay in cash if this resource were not donated or discounted
- Amount you pay for the goods or services (usually $0 or a small fee)
- Dollar savings and the percentage this savings represents the total program budget (How to calculate: Dollar Savings / Total Program Budget x 100)

Use realistic replacement costs (what you would truly have to pay a staff member or vendor). Only count work or items that genuinely substitute for a cash expense.

Example:
- We have 30 volunteers playing key roles in enrollment, transportation, and verifying goods obtained by clients. Their accomplishments would cost us about $15,000 if we had to pay people to perform those functions. This lowered our budget by 5% for the year.
- We work out of 1,000 sq. ft. of donated space in the Universal Church. In that immediate area, the annual lease price for that space would be, conservatively, $7,200. This lowered the annual budget by 15%.
- Our last two vans we bought through lease for a discount of 40% average from their reasonable actual purchase price. Counting anticipated maintenance, the savings for buying used is $8,000. We also had 25 computers donated by the Acme Company, which considered them outdated, but were fine for our use. The cost to buy those computers at a used market rate would have been $7,500. The combination of these reduced our annual budget by 5%.

NOTE - BUDGET

Purpose of Question: Reviewers will be used to ensure the program plan is fiscally sound and demonstrates appropriate use of funds to achieve the program goals as they were provided.

Scoring Area: Investments, Uploaded Program Budget

Score Range: 0-6
    6 – Response reflects they have diversified revenue through grants and other funding sources. The program is less than 25% fiscally dependent upon the Children's Services millage.
    4 – Response reflects they have diversified revenue through grants and other funding sources. The program is less than 50% fiscally dependent upon the Children's Services millage.
    0 – Response reflects the program is 100% dependent upon Children's Services millage.

Applicant Guidance: The projected/anticipated program budget for the proposed year will be reviewed and considered along with the other financial information provided in this section. ***There is a scoring range that reflects the anticipated program budget.***
Example: • While there is no example for the budget all programs are required to use the FY27 Anticipated Program Budget Form as well as the itemization forms (Administrative, Professional, and Miscellaneous).