

CENTER FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN
MIS Help Desk Initiative

1. APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

History, Mission, and Programs

The Center for Families and Children (CFC) is a non-profit human service agency, which was founded in 1970 with the merger of five historical social services agencies. Known as the Center for Human Services until 1993, the organization was formed to provide a wide range of family-focused services under a centralized and cost efficient administration.

CFC's mission is to provide superior human services to families and individuals, preparing them to achieve hope, dignity, and purpose in their lives. Currently, CFC's 300 member staff serves thousands of children and families annually at 14 locations throughout Cuyahoga County. Behavioral Health Services include outpatient mental health programs and community support services, family and individual counseling, Hispanic counseling, and psychiatric services. Children, Youth and Family Services include child care, programs for at-risk youth, parenting programs, and the Fathers and Families Together program. CFC also provides employee assistance services to area businesses, unions, and nonprofits, and is the premier nonprofit human service provider in Ohio in the field of public policy advocacy.

CFC serves residents of Cuyahoga County who range in age from infants to the elderly population. They reside in Cleveland's inner city communities such as Glenville, Collinwood, and Central, the adjoining city of East Cleveland, and "inner ring" suburban communities such as Cleveland Heights, University Heights, and Lakewood. The majority of the population is low income, many with a family structure comprising single parents with children. The population is racially diverse, including African-American, Caucasian and Hispanic individuals.

Technology's Relationship to CFC's Mission

The Center for Families and Children's mission is to provide superior human services to families and individuals, preparing them to achieve hope, dignity and purpose in their lives. Technology is vital to CFC's capacity to provide superior human services, and to be able to monitor services and program outcomes.

Service integration is a critical issue, in terms of CFC's ability to provide programs and services that enable at-risk populations to achieve their potential. It is important for family units to access the diverse array of CFC services when needed, and to track the provision of these services. For example, a single mother, in need of mental health services, may have a teen who is involved in substance abuse, and a young child who needs to be enrolled in a quality day care center.

Furthermore, the capacity for strong performance -- known as "organizational capacity" -- has become the key to non-profit survival and success. Due to increasingly stringent funders'

requirements, particularly in the mental health field, it is critical for CFC to have the technological capacity to measure program outcomes, respond quickly to changing environmental needs, and to ensure proper billing for services.

Also, across the board, it is necessary for administrative and program staff, housed in 14 different sites, to share information quickly and efficiently among many departments, including resource development, human resources, and quality and compliance.

Current Use of Technology

CFC is fortunate to have a robust and stable infrastructure consisting of Dell servers, desktops and laptops. About half of our PC's have been upgraded to Windows 2000 Professional and the remainder are slated to be upgraded within the next twelve months. We have installed an enterprise medical information system to allow our clinical program staff to track clients, write electronic progress notes, generate reports and effect billing. We also have a web site and an intranet as an information "warehouse" for our staff.

Project Partners

CFC is not applying as a collaborative for the proposed project.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

Background

In 2001, CFC's current electronic "Help Desk" was created and began running on our intranet. This application (designed in-house) allows all of CFC's approximately 300 employees to submit work order requests online. A member of the MIS Staff monitors these incoming requests and assigns the appropriate staff resource to research and resolve each request. He or she must check the database for newly assigned requests, and close each request as it is completed. There is currently no tracking or reporting functionality, thus we have limited ability to use the system for more than an intake and disposition tool.

Proposed Project

Purchase and implementation of a comprehensive help desk management system will allow the MIS Department to enhance our ability to respond to needs of CFC staff members in several ways.

Because the MIS Department is accountable to our entire organization for keeping all aspects of technology running smoothly, a dedicated Help Desk system will ultimately strengthen the organization at all functional and program levels. Specifically, a new help desk system will result in the following benefits:

- Faster resolution of computer-related problems so staff can focus on their jobs and deliverables
- The ability to build and grow an incorporated knowledge base that can be used both to solve current problems as a “just in time” resource, and to dovetail into future training initiatives
- Increased reporting capabilities in regard to:
 - Identification of training needs
 - Identification of staffing needs
 - Justification of budget requests
- More efficient use of existing MIS resources and greater accountability
- Controlled environment for tracking and resolving support requests

Project’s Relationship to Meeting CFC’s Mission

As stated previously, technology is extremely important to CFC’s capacity to provide superior human services, and to be able to monitor services and program outcomes. The proposed Help Desk Initiative will further strengthen our mission by increasing staff’s capacity to use technology at an optimal level --- which is critical to our ability to serve clients and meet funders' expectations.

3. PROJECT SPECIFICS

The following provides an overview of the project’s activities and estimated time for implementation.

Implementation Plan	
Timeframe	Activity
September 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase, Install and Configure Software • Train MIS Staff • Pilot core functionality with selected users
October 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train Managers and Supervisors • Roll out to end users
November 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine and generate any new reporting • Begin providing metrics to management

After a thorough investigation of available options, the MIS Department has narrowed the scope of the search for a suitable system to two packages. The packages are (1) **Track It! V6.0 - Blue Ocean/Intuit** and (2) **PowerDesk -V6.4 0 Frontrange/HEAT**. Costs for each product are almost the same.

As we evaluate software for our Help Desk initiative, we will consider the following lists of musts and wants:

”Musts”

- Populate call records automatically
- Route tickets to appropriate service provider with escalation capabilities
- Provide reporting on key metrics such as call volume, category, and completion time
- Allow end users to begin creating a ticket for completion by MIS
- Capture call or service duration
- Include training and tracking tools
- Notify users of service request status by email

“Wants”

- Document caller’s history for diagnosis and remediation purposes
- Link to maintenance records
- Allow customizability for later growth of options or services
- Integrate with knowledge base
- Allow remote access via Internet to check ticket status
- Perform escalation alarms
- Track the new establishment process

Project Budget

Please see the following page for budget information.

CFC MIS Help Desk Budget	
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:	\$
AMOUNT APPLIED FOR:	\$
Name of Organization:	Center for Families and Children
Budget Period:	9/2003-11/2003
Technology	
Data Comm. Services	
Hardware	
Software	\$6,718
Technology Training	
Personnel (consultant)	\$6,700
Application Development	
(A) Total Technology	\$13,418
Other Project-related Expenses	
(B) Total Other Project-related Expenses	\$
TOTAL DIRECT COST (A+B)	\$13,418

Notes:

- Software cost reflects the Help Desk software and first year maintenance fee
- Personnel cost reflects three days of implementation consulting to install and configure the software and train the MIS team.

Project Sustainability

The only ongoing expense will be annual maintenance fees that will be added to the MIS budget beginning with the 2004 budget year. We have chosen a solution that fits a small to medium-sized organization, and one that can be upgraded in future years if CFC substantially increases its technology platforms, infrastructure, or head count.

4. PROJECT OUTCOMES

Specific Outcomes

The implementation of a Help Desk system will allow the MIS Team at CFC to become more accountable for timely service and support to all PC users as they increase their effort to provide service to our clients.

Outcome Measurement

The new Help Desk system will provide numerous reporting capabilities, allowing us to capture the following type of metrics:

- Number of help desk calls received, escalated, and resolved in a given time period
- Types of calls received [hardware, software, training, etc.]
- Length of time taken to resolve calls.

With the included reporting capability plus the ability to create our own reports, we can use the metrics to help identify areas where MIS needs to add services, change focus, or create new training programs.

Data Collection Intervals

Metrics from the system are available on-demand through views, or available through regular reporting. Data will be used to provide monthly reports to senior staff at CFC, as well as to our board members or other members of CFC management, either at regularly scheduled board meetings, or on demand.

5. PROJECT COMMUNICATION

The benefits to the agency will be captured and used in all communications to help CFC become excited about the potential increase in MIS service. We will use a variety of communication sources including CFC's internal newsletter that is distributed to all staff agency-wide. The project will also be presented in more detail at leadership meetings, managers and supervisors meetings, staff meetings, and email communications. The MIS Director and MIS staff will be responsible for information content and coordination of information regarding the HelpDesk Initiative. We will also take opportunities to demonstrate the new system and its use to CFC staff as we visit our various sites as part of ongoing MIS service and support initiatives.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Grant Cover Sheet**
- **Determination of Non-Profit Status**
- **Board of Directors**
- **Audited Financial Statements**
- **Annual Report**