



Project Proposal

Rhode Island Youth Guidance Center Family Mediation Program

The Rhode Island Youth Guidance Center, a statewide leader in the provision of counseling, prevention, and school-based services, is combining its strong background in mediation programming with the success of its current pilot programs in Victim-Offender Mediation and Family Mediation to propose the establishment of an expanded multi-community program in Family Mediation. The program would serve as a resource in metropolitan Providence and northern Rhode Island for the growing number of families who are seeking an efficient, flexible, user-friendly resource to help them work their way through the upheavals associated with adolescent children. Referrals to the Family Mediation Program would be made by the RI Family Court, local Juvenile Hearing Boards, the police, schools, state and local agencies, and by families themselves in response to outreach about the program through dissemination of program materials, face-to-face contact by program coordinators, and publicity through the media.

Over the course of a year beginning in July, 2017 the Family Mediation Program proposes to serve 100 families who will meet at the Youth Guidance Center offices or other convenient local sites with a mediation coordinator and co-mediator to explore the dimensions of family conflict, determine areas of compromise and agreement, and fashion a written agreement based on these understandings. Over the course of the next six months, follow-up through telephone contact and additional mediation sessions will occur to help family members adjust to new roles, strengthen their relationships, and reinforce or modify the agreements as circumstances dictate. Successfully implemented, it is anticipated that the project will achieve the following goals during the period between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018:

- Families will find that communication between family members is easier.
- Families will experience less conflict and a higher degree of family functioning.
- Families will experience less need for continuing involvement with external services.

The design for the program is based on the program model which has worked well for the agencies current efforts in statewide Victim-Offender Mediation with the RI Family Court and with Family Mediation in the city of Central Falls which is supported by a mini-grant through the RI Division of Substance Abuse. With continued success in mediation work with families and continued flexibility in how juvenile justice and child welfare funds are programmed in the future, it is expected that the program will be well supported by alternative revenue streams and core funding support following the conclusion of the proposed program which will solidly establish the Family Mediation program model based on the pilot and this proposed “growing to scale” effort in the coming year.

Toward an overall budget of \$35,000 to serve 100 families over the course of the year, the Rhode Island Youth Guidance Center is requesting a grant of \$25,000 from the William Bingham Foundation.