

A. Agency Information: About Lifelong Adult Education Services, Inc.

The mission of Lifelong AES, Inc. is to provide educational and psychological services to adults with cognitive or learning disorders, those with developmental delays, people who have mental illnesses, emotional problems, or physical disabilities. The goal of all programming and activities at Lifelong is to empower these high-risk individuals, build their self-confidence and esteem, and provide them with appropriate and individualized educational and psychological services. We encourage our clients toward the development of realistic self-perceptions that will lead them to personal, academic, and vocational successes.

Our clients are referred primarily by public agencies and programs such as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Colorado Works, and Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Many are receiving/applying for benefits from Social Security (e.g. SSI/SSDI) because of their physical, mental or learning disabilities. Individual or private clients from Colorado and surrounding states also refer themselves to Lifelong for assistance with educational or vocational issues. For our corporate and institutional clients we provide disability (ADA), learning disability, and mental health consultation and evaluation services. College and university disability programs (e.g., the Art Institute of Colorado, University of Denver, and the Community College of Denver) use us regularly to meet both school/systematic needs and the needs of their students with disabilities. Private business concerns with in-house literacy and training programs (e.g., Lucent Technologies), and national organizations requiring assistance with their disability documentation and/or development of disability policy (e.g., the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, and the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners) also have frequent need of our disability expertise.

Lifelong has always provided services to the highest risk clients of referral agencies. It is hard but satisfying work. We are very familiar with the needs of the TANF population and have successfully served their educational and mental health needs since before the welfare reform movement began. As specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of the learning and performance problems of adults with learning or other disabilities, we are uniquely qualified to serve TANF clients because of the high incidence of learning disorders within that population. Case managers and community based organizations providing services to TANF clients already think of us when they have questions about why a client is not succeeding or when they identify clients who participated in special education programming as children. Our group of practitioners includes therapists familiar with women's issues and violence against women, with the needs of people with disabilities of all kinds, and with the needs of individuals from diverse and multi-cultural backgrounds. Therapists and special educators at Lifelong are hired because of their particular expertise working with the unique needs of TANF clients and adults with disabilities, and for their demonstrated sensitivity to the issues inherent in serving a multicultural and hard-to-serve populations.

It is estimated that 50% or more of TANF participants have below average intellectual abilities and/or learning disabilities. Their disabilities have significantly impacted their ability to get and hold a job; because of their poor understanding of what is

expected of them by case managers and other service providers and their difficulty solving the problems that arise out of their every day lives, these clients are at highest risk for failure in the community, at work, and at home. Of the more than 600 individuals on TANF that we have performed full psychological and cognitive evaluations upon over the past seven years, some have been found eligible for services and benefits away from TANF (e.g., SSI/SSDI), but the majority has had mild to moderate difficulties that do not qualify them for these alternative sources of support. The greatest challenge for practitioners working with these clients is in helping them to recognize and follow through with their most basic and pressing responsibilities, while still showing them the respect they deserve for persevering despite their difficult histories. Flexibility and creativity are the most important qualities of service providers at Lifelong. The site of our service delivery may therefore vary with the needs of our clientele. We sometimes encourage our clients to meet with their service providers at our facility (to develop their responsibility and community involvement), but we also often meet with them in their homes, at their workplaces, and at other service provider sites as needed. By design, life events define the day's therapeutic plan.

B. Services to be Provided

1. Key Concepts and Strategies

Individual Psychotherapy for People with Disabilities: People with disabilities, hidden or otherwise, have unique issues that impede their progress toward self-sufficiency. Acceptance of disabling conditions and how these conditions might impact performance, and acknowledgement of which aspects and difficulties in life are attributable to the disability versus which are the personal responsibility of the individual are examples of the complex problems with which a person with mild or moderate disability enters therapy. People with mild to moderate disabilities not severe enough to keep them from working but who nonetheless must overcome their difficulties via accommodation and fortitude are very common among the TANF population, especially those reaching the end of their allowable time receiving support. Therapy that helps them with the emotional impacts of the disability, that helps them to focus on strengths while acknowledging and dealing with the weaknesses, and that moves them forward toward self-sufficiency, improved self-esteem, and self confidence is vital for their future adjustment at work. Individual therapy allows clients with disabilities to deal more effectively with the impacts of their disability, poverty, domestic violence, mental illness, and other physical health problems so that they can find and keep a job. After initial assessment, treatment plans are developed as a collaborative activity between therapist and client, and this helps to strengthen clients' investment in therapy.

Structured Group Psychotherapy for People with Disabilities: Group experiences provide opportunities for TANF clients with disabilities to build positive interpersonal communication skills and to develop their self-reflection, self-direction, and interpersonal skills. Lifelong's structured group experiences focus on a single topic or content area over the course of eight to twelve weeks, and include individual sessions with a therapist. For our TANF clients, we would like to offer two groups: "Getting Your Needs Met", intended for people with learning and other disabilities, and "Building Blocks for Success", aimed specifically at women who are somewhat slower than their peers but who do not have disabilities (e.g., IQ's between 72 and 85). The purpose of these groups is to develop and reinforce essential life skills across a variety of areas through participation in exercises,

discussion, and social exposure in a supportive group environment aimed at enhancing self-sufficiency, vocational stability, and personal success. The modular design of the groups allows entry to occur during any week, as each session is a separate and complete unit. Each participant will have the opportunity to complete all sessions in any order. If a session is missed, it can be made up during the next rotation. Please see the outlines of the groups in Attachment XX.

Life Skills/Behavioral Therapy for People with Developmental Disabilities or Low Cognitive Abilities: Life skills training and behavioral therapy focus on those individuals identified via psychological evaluation as having cognitive and/or developmental delays. This surprisingly large sub-population of TANF clients is at even greater risk than other populations because of their history of, and penchant for, poor decision-making and problem solving. Traditional psychotherapy is not effective with these, more limited, clients because they tend to have under-developed verbal cognitive abilities that cause many of their problems. It is much more effective with these clients to use a behavioral approach that emphasizes here-and-now events and problems. *Demonstrating* how to interact with others appropriately, *showing* how to be a better parent, and supervising *practice* of interpersonal skills in real-life situations are examples of behavioral approaches used for teaching life skills. With the therapist, the client processes emotional experiences while they are fresh in mind and more easily identifiable and solvable.

Goals of life skills training vary with the needs of the individual. The intent is to produce an independent, self-aware navigator of life's obstacles. No action is taken without the full participation of the client; all of life's challenges are considered teaching and therapeutic opportunities. Examples of the goals and objectives of our current clients in life skills therapy have recently included helping them to abandon unobtainable career goals; improving understanding of limitations imposed by developmental cognitive disabilities and knowing when to ask for help; and improving familial relationships by clarifying roles in the home. Goals always include the opportunity to learn new coping skills and develop better ways of dealing with the environment. Learning how to ask appropriate questions of professionals such as doctors and pharmacists, learning how and why to use an appointment book, understanding basic safety issues at home, and learning how to budget, do the grocery shopping, and prepare healthy meals for the children are other real-life goals. For those who are eligible for services provided by agencies such as Denver Options (for people with developmental disabilities) and the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, every effort is made to assist the client in accessing the services available outside the TANF system, and in learning how to use them effectively in the future. Assistance obtaining supplemental income from the Social Security Administration and facilitating the transition from TANF to Denver Options and SSI as the primary sources of assistance are among the most important long-term goals and objectives of our clients who have developmental disabilities.

2. Increasing the Personal and Economic Self-Sufficiency of TANF Clients and Promoting Family Stability

Among those clients who have learning disabilities and cognitive deficits, the goal of improving and increasing self-sufficiency is complex and multifaceted. Independent living

among people with these disabilities has a different meaning than when this term is applied to other adults. People with developmental disabilities will require assistance throughout their lifetimes and there is no “cure” for the problems their disabilities pose for them. A secondary goal of Lifelong’s work with this population, then, is to ensure they have been connected to the appropriate lifelong support services (e.g., Denver Options or the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security). The primary goal, for all Lifelong’s clientele, is to enable and empower them so they can identify sources of support on their own in the future, and learn how to access and use them well. Families become more stable because with the appropriate problem solving tools in place, there no longer needs to be an upheaval with every life decision. The term “work ready” must be defined differently for this sub-population of TANF clients. “Work ready” might mean they are ready to leave TANF to enter other systems of support (e.g., Social Security, mental health or developmental disability systems) or have located an appropriate supported work environment.

3. Service Delivery Methods and Mechanisms

Disability and Life Skills/Behavioral psychotherapy may be conducted anywhere it is deemed appropriate: at Lifelong’s offices, at the client’s place of work/community service, and at the client’s home. Therapy sessions may be one to three hours in length depending on the goals set for each session. Therapists use both behavioral and cognitive approaches to their therapeutic interventions, and each therapy session has a clear and obtainable goal intended to help the client develop transferable coping skills.

4. Staffing

Flexibility of staffing is one of Lifelong’s strengths as an agency. With increased referrals or contractual obligations, we add staff as needed from our list of very competent and experienced providers with proven records of accomplishment for providing quality and client-centered service. Four people currently comprise the core of our service provision and will be both directly involved in and supervise service provision:

Gary Macdonald, Ph.D., is a co-founder of Lifelong and serves as the Director of Psychological and Disability Services. Dr. Macdonald previously coordinated the learning (Special Learning Support Program) and developmental disability (The College for Living) programs on the Auraria Campus. Dr. Macdonald has provided counseling and both psychological and psycho-educational evaluations to clients from a wide variety of referral agencies and individuals along the front range of Colorado and neighboring states. He is widely recognized as an expert in adult learning problems and disabilities that interfere with work, training or school, and, since 1985, has provided both psychological and disability consultation services to local and national organizations.

At Lifelong since 1997, David Kalis’ expertise working with clients who have low cognitive abilities and/or developmental disabilities has contributed to the improved welfare of numerous Lifelong clients whose deficient intellectual functioning has led to poverty and poorly developed independent living skills. Mr. Kalis, who is currently in the final stages of completing his doctorate in clinical psychology, has developed the developmental disability services at Lifelong into a well respected and sought after program serving agencies and

community centered boards within the developmental disability system. He currently serves clients with developmental and other disabilities from Developmental Pathways, Denver Options, Inc. and Imagine! in Boulder County, in addition to his work with clients from the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and TANF clients at the Denver Department of Human Services and Arapahoe/Douglas Works! programs.

The primary owner and co-founder of Lifelong Adult Education Services, Inc. is Mary Costa, M.A. Since 1980, Ms. Costa has been a program coordinator and instructor for adult education and postsecondary institutions including the Community College of Denver in Denver, Colorado, and the University of the Americas and the National Autonomous University in Mexico City. Ms. Costa is the Director of Educational Services at Lifelong. An applied linguist by training, she has expertise in learning problems and disabilities, limited English proficiency, bilingual education, and workplace literacy.

5. Multi-Cultural Responsiveness

Equal access, fair treatment, and sensitivity to the issues confronting people who come from differing socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds are high priorities within our organization. Lifelong values the diverse nature of all the cultures that comprise our society. Unlike many other agencies, we also recognize the unique contributions to our culture made by people with disabilities. We have staff members who are bilingual, who have disabilities, and who have spent substantial time in other countries. All Lifelong staff members have been trained to recognize the sensitive cultural components that influence relationships and interactions.

6. Transportation

As needed, Lifelong staff travels with clients via bus, light rail, and/or automobile to meet client needs when this fits with the particular goals of therapy.

7. Outreach Methods to be Used

Lifelong staff members are well known among TANF caseworkers and support staff at the Denver Department of Human Services. It is our habit to “make the rounds” of caseworker desks to touch bases with them about their clients and keep them informed. Case managers usually feel we are accessible to them and this is the primary marketing tool we use: good customer service drives our practice. Outreach to clients is accomplished via our participation in resource fairs and in our monthly participation in group services where we let new TANF participants know about what we offer and to whom. Our frequent collaboration and contact with other service providers and contractors is another source of referrals we try to maintain so that those who are in need of our services can be identified throughout the network of TANF providers and activities. Lifelong staff members make regular visits to employers and spend time with both individuals and groups of case managers and service providers so that we can share our expertise regarding high-risk clients; we are knowledgeable regarding the special needs of their employees/clients, and tend to focus primarily on assisting TANF case managers and service providers with their most difficult cases. Gaining the confidence of other service providers and encouraging them to call with their questions about individual clients maintains a steady flow of referrals to our agency without much need for other means of promotion.

C. Program Outcomes

1a. Goals/Outcomes Required by this Denver Department of Human Services RFP

- Outcome 1: Within 10 days of referral, at least 90% of clients will be contacted and an appointment scheduled.
- Outcome 2: TANF caseworkers will be provided with case closure recommendations and relevant reports pertaining to job readiness within 30 days of termination.
- Outcome 3: All relevant staff meetings with DHS will be attended by the appropriate Lifelong staff members.
- Outcome 4: 75% of TANF clients referred for services will complete their services as determined in treatment plans.
- Outcome 5: At least 50% of referred TANF clients will be stabilized and considered work ready at the completion of services.
- Outcome 6: Collaboration with service providers will be reported to TANF caseworkers and FCP staff via monthly and quarterly reports in addition to termination summaries.
- Outcome 7: Client satisfaction will be measured, monitored, and reported on a quarterly basis using the instrumentation suggested or provided by FCP staff.
- Outcome 8: The progress of “family unit stabilization” will be reported in the context of the required monthly and quarterly contacts with case management and FCP.

1b. Goals/Outcomes in Addition to Those Required by the DHS RFP

- Outcome 9: 600 hours of behavioral therapy and life skills training will be provided to at least 20 individuals with developmental disabilities and up to 450 hours of psychotherapy will be provided to people who have other types of disabilities.
- Outcome 10: 100% of our developmentally disabled and other clients with disabilities who have followed through with their therapy will access appropriate sources of long-term support outside of TANF (if needed), and in so doing, develop independence and self-sufficiency. Specific goals of life skills training and psychotherapy vary with the needs of the individual client.
- Outcome 11: 75% of individuals referred for structured group therapy will complete at least 75% (6 of 8) of the group sessions and 100% of these will attend an individualized session with a Lifelong therapist.

2. Evaluation of Goals and Objectives

Successful engagement of 80% of those referred for life skills/behavior therapy will be an important criterion for evaluating our ability to impact TANF clients positively. Lifelong evaluates the progress of its clients on a continual basis and will incorporate the use of FCP progress forms every 30 and 90 days and customer satisfaction questionnaires at termination. Clients’ levels of self-sufficiency and self-reliance will be assessed at termination; we feel the best measure of self-sufficiency is their progress toward exit from the TANF system into more appropriate long-term support systems (e.g., Social Security and Denver Options). Short forms of adaptive behavior measures may be used and these will be re-administered to measure progress. By definition, however, progress among individuals classified as slower learners or developmentally disabled will be slow and difficult—actual gains may not be readily apparent. Lifelong expects to have the most problematic and

difficult of clients referred to us because that is who we are here to serve. Program completion (i.e., obtaining the goals set initially in therapy) and attendance are the primary criteria for evaluating success with these clients.

D. Collaboration

Lifelong has developed an extensive referral network, and we actively work toward building and maintaining collaborative relationships with case managers and other service providers and agencies participating in TANF, FCP, and WIA programming. As a current vendor of mental health and educational services to TANF and WIA clients, clients of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Denver Options, Inc., and TANF programs outside of Denver County (e.g., TriCounty, A/D Works!), we are able to provide continuity of service provision in the event a client moves to another county or becomes ineligible for TANF but eligible for services provided by other agencies. We often can hasten the client's transition between agencies by using our good relationships with other service providers to open doors and locate appropriate resources. Because we usually intend our services to supplement the efforts of other programs, our efforts to coordinate activities and communicate with other providers and agencies are ongoing. Vital to the clients we serve is our belief that communication among agencies provides stability and continuity and we often initiate/request staffings that include all current providers and the client so that responsibilities and roles are clear.

E. Experience and Effectiveness

1. Similar or Related Services

Lifelong is currently under contract to provide psychological and educational services to TANF clients by the Family Counseling Program (FCP) at the Denver Department of Human Services and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD). Lifelong also has agreements to provide these services to TANF clients and case managers in the A/D Works! Program in Arapahoe and Douglas counties, and in the TriCounty Colorado Works program in Jefferson, Clear Creek, and Gilpin Counties. We are an approved vendor of psychological and special educational services at the Savio Management Unit, Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Pathways, Denver Options, Inc., and Imagine! (the three community centered boards serving people with developmental disabilities in the areas surrounding Boulder and Denver). We have provided a variety of integrated educational and psychological services to these agencies (and many others) and their clients since the 1980's, including learning disability, mental health, and cognitive evaluations, individual and group counseling, self-advocacy training, disability and mental health consultation, and specialized instruction.

2. Capability to Provide Services

Lifelong has provided the proposed and other services to welfare recipients and other high-risk clients since 1993. Before being hired, all of our staff had prior experience providing similar services to the target population outlined in this proposal. The owners/directors of Lifelong are former special program directors at the Community College of Denver and are experienced in program administration, development, and budgeting. As

needed we add to (or subtract from) our staff depending on the needs of our larger clientele—we have never turned work away except when limited by agency budgets.

3. Administrative Structure and Systems

Lifelong is comprised of two distinct units that serve different yet overlapping functions. Mary Costa, M.A. is the Director of Educational Services at Lifelong, while Gary Macdonald, Ph.D. is the Director of Psychological and Disability Services. Counseling, evaluation, and life skills/behavioral therapy all fall under the Psychological and Disability Services unit, while instructional, job coaching and workplace consultation fall under the Educational Services unit. The work of this proposal will be supervised by Dr. Macdonald.

4. Other and Prior Contracts

Lifelong is currently under contract with the Denver Department of Human Services (DHS) Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Family Counseling Program (FCP), and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD). Our first contracts with FCP were executed in 1998 when we were asked to provide counseling for people with disabilities; we later added specific services for people with developmental disabilities and this was the only category funded following the last RFP two years ago (although we of course requested funding for people with other types of disabilities). Last year's budget was \$40,000. We still receive numerous referrals for disability counseling because this is a unique service we provide, and this continued demand is the reason we are asking for reinstatement of these services in the current proposal. We have had few problems administering our contracts and remaining within our contracted budget amounts because most of our contracts are on a fee-for-service basis. Once our limit is reached as specified in our contracts, we do not submit additional invoices and have, therefore, never been "over-budget" as this is impossible in this type of contract. Agencies often have under-funded our services, however, and have been disappointed when we cannot accept new referrals due to their own fiscal limitations or priorities. We currently have contracts in place to work with MOWD's WIA Youth program, TriCounty Colorado Works! and Arapahoe/Douglas County Works! Programs. Lifelong also provides services to clients in Boulder and El Paso counties, and we are an approved vendor of psychological services at the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

F. Record Keeping and Reporting

1. Accounting procedures

Lifelong's books and accounts are managed by the directors under the direction of an independent Certified Public Accountant. Billing and reporting systems are devised according to program requirements, and we can track costs, clients, and billing quite easily. Few if any problems have been encountered in our accounting and reporting systems in our previous contracts with the Family Counseling Program and none are anticipated.

2. & 3. Record Keeping and Confidential Information

Lifelong has a record keeping and reporting system in place that meets reporting requirements outlined in this RFP and that complies with both HIPAA and Colorado law. Individual case files contain biographical information, relevant assessment information from current and previous service providers, and detailed case management notes. Contact hours

and attendance, progress reports, samples of client work, special testing applications, requests for accommodation and other relevant data are kept in each file. Every client receiving psychological services must sign the mandatory disclosure statement required by the State of Colorado that details grievance procedures, client rights, and limits of confidentiality, and this document is in each client's file. According to state laws and the professional, legal, and ethical standards of psychologists and practitioners in related fields, all files must remain confidential unless written permission from the client is provided for release of this information. If necessary, arrangements will be made with TANF program monitors so that they can evaluate Lifelong's record keeping system within the legal requirements for confidentiality. Please see Attachment XX for a sample of a current release form.

G. Reporting Requirements

Lifelong will comply with all required reporting requirements on participant and program progress. This includes the monthly reports required for each client and the cumulative quarterly reports requested and required by the FCP. Additionally, we provide integrated participant progress reports to TANF case managers (when appropriate) that describe activities in which a client is participating at Lifelong.

1. Methodology for Tracking Client Data

Client data is tracked internally and externally via monthly reports to FCP and via case notes and summaries completed at termination of client services. Although our access to Job Link has been limited due to our status as a vendor (e.g., we can only enter activities participated in and cannot initiate new clients in the system) for the City and County of Denver, we use that system to determine eligibility and services provided.

2. Methodology for Tracking Outcomes

Outcomes can be tracked via client tracking systems provided to contractors by MOWD (e.g., Job Link) and the Denver Department of Human Services. Information is provided to the Family Counseling Program administrators monthly and quarterly regarding outcomes and success rates. We will rely on Denver Department of Human Services' new computer system to provide us with data regarding client success as well.

H. Budget

All Lifelong's counseling and behavioral therapy services are provided to agencies and individuals on the same fee-for-service basis. Estimated numbers of participants who might be referred for our services are based on our experience with the TANF population since 1998, and it is understood that Lifelong is not guaranteed these referrals under any contract with DHS. We adhere to the fee structure required by the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for the services it purchases from vendors, and that agency, in effect, sets all our fees. We do not charge different rates to different agencies unless a prior contract has fixed the fees we charge them below the levels of the current fee structure (i.e., if a contractual agreement pre-dates changes to the fee requirements of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation). Units of service for individual psychotherapy for people with disabilities and life skills/behavioral therapy are one 60-minute hour each, and are billed at the rate of \$70 per hour. Group therapy ("Building Blocks" and "Getting Your Needs Met") is \$25 per hour and the entire amount for the ten sessions (18 hours) is billed at once (like

tuition). To our knowledge, all these services are unique to Lifelong and do not duplicate the services provided to FCP by other programs unless otherwise specified in this proposal. It is estimated that 40 people with developmental disabilities or low cognitive abilities will be referred during the next year and will follow through with services, and an average of 20 hours will be spent with each of them. A total yearly cost of \$56000 (800 hours) is expected based on current referral levels and a current request for \$42000 (600 hours of service) is made for the nine-month term of this contract. Thirty people with other types of disabilities are expected to be referred for counseling services and will average 20 hours of service for a total yearly cost of \$42000 (600 hours) and current nine-month request of \$31500 (450 hours). Structured groups will alternate between Building Blocks and Getting Your Needs Met and 10 people for each of the four, three-month long groups are expected to participate for a total cost of \$18,000 over nine months. The total cost of services to be provided to people with disabilities (developmental and/or other disabilities) is \$91,500. Please note that the administrative costs of a fee-for-service budget are absorbed by the proposer and are neither billed nor added to the final budget.