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Thriving Mind South Florida
Procurement Policy for Network Services
Contract # KHME2
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I. Purpose

This Procurement Policy establishes Thriving Mind South Florida's (Thriving Mind) strategy for expanding and managing its provider network. Its primary goal is to ensure the availability of high-quality, accessible services that meet documented community needs and the Florida Department of Children and Families (Department) priorities, while adhering to all applicable state and federal regulations.

II. Governing Principles

1. **Needs-Based Expansion:** Network expansion efforts will be driven by service needs identified through the Triennial Needs Assessment and Department priorities.
2. **Efficiency and Responsiveness:** The procurement process will be designed to efficiently identify, evaluate, and onboard qualified providers.
3. **Transparency:** Opportunities to join the network will be publicized, and the process for provider engagement will be clear.
4. **Quality and Compliance:** All contracted providers must meet rigorous credentialing standards and adhere to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
5. **Strategic Resource Allocation:** Provider engagement will be aligned with available funding and strategic priorities.
6. **Commitment to Competition:** While leveraging statutory exemptions for specific services, Thriving Mind values competitive procurements as a best practice to ensure cost-effectiveness and broad access to qualified providers where applicable and feasible.

III. Scope of Services Covered by Non-Competitive Procurement

This policy applies to the procurement of commodities or contractual services where a Florida statutory exemption permits non-competitive procurement, as adopted by Thriving Mind South Florida pursuant to section 287.057(3) (a) – (f). This includes, but is not limited to, the following categories:

- (1) Health services involving examination, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, medical consultation, or administration. The term also includes, but is not limited to, substance abuse and mental health services involving examination, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, or medical consultation if such services are offered to eligible individuals participating in a specific program that qualifies multiple providers and uses a standard payment methodology.
- (2) Services provided to persons with mental or physical disabilities by not-for-profit corporations that have obtained exemptions under s. 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code or when such services are governed by Office of Management and Budget. However, in acquiring such services, Thriving Mind South Florida shall consider the ability of the provider, past performance, willingness to meet time requirements, and price.
- (3) Prevention services related to mental health, including drug abuse prevention programs, child abuse prevention programs, and shelters for runaways, operated by not-for-profit corporations. However, in acquiring such services, the agency shall consider the ability of the vendor, past performance, willingness to meet time requirements, and price.

For these specific service categories, Thriving Mind South Florida may directly engage and contract with qualified providers without a formal competitive bidding process, provided all other credentialing and needs-based criteria are met.

IV. Procurement Process

1. Opportunity Identification & Outreach

- **Publicizing Opportunities:** Thriving Mind will continuously publicize opportunities for new providers to join the network through its website and targeted advertisements.
- **Expression of Interest (EOI):** The Expression of Interest (EOI) is a process for new providers interested in becoming part of the network. Through this, they convey their organizational information, service offerings (referencing Rule 65E-14 Florida Administrative Code), and attestations regarding general credentialing and compliance. This serves as an initial step to identify potential partners.

2. Needs Assessment & Provider Alignment

- **Review of Submissions:** EOI submissions (from new providers) will be reviewed to identify potential providers whose services align with current community needs as determined by the Triennial Needs Assessment or Department priorities.
- **Prequalification:** An internal prequalification assessment will be conducted based on the information provided in the EOI. This allows Thriving Mind South Florida to evaluate a provider's suitability and capacity in alignment with identified needs and available funding, prior to initiating a full credentialing process. This step is crucial when funding or community need does not immediately support the addition of a new network service provider, as permitted by the statutory exemption.

3. Credentialing & Evaluation (for New Providers)

- **Invitation to Credential:** New providers deemed suitable through the prequalification process will be formally invited to begin the full application and credentialing process.
- **Comprehensive Review:** The credentialing process will involve a thorough review of the provider's documentation, including financial stability, infrastructure, past performance (where applicable), and stringent verification of all regulatory and Level 2 Background Screening compliance.
- **Acceptance Criteria:** Thriving Mind South Florida will accept willing providers that meet standard credentialing requirements, with a target acceptance rate of 90%, contingent on available funding and identified community need.

4. Re-Credentialing

To ensure quality and compliance, all network providers who have successfully completed the pre-qualification and/or full credentialing process are subject to re-credentialing. The pre-qualification or full credentialing status, once granted, shall be valid for a period not exceeding three (3) years, starting from the date of the notice of successful credentialing. After this period, a comprehensive re-evaluation will be required, including a review of ongoing performance, compliance history, and continuous alignment with network needs and available funding.

Organizations that have been successfully contracted but for whom funding is not available in subsequent years will retain their pre-qualified status within the three-year validity period. To maintain this prequalification status and remain in the active pool for future opportunities, such organizations will be required to submit updated documentation annually, as specified by Thriving Mind, to confirm their continued capacity and compliance.

5. Engagement with Existing Network Providers

Thriving Mind South Florida recognizes the value of its existing network and will maintain a pool of already-vetted, currently contracted providers for potential engagement. This engagement may occur in two primary ways:

- **Proactive Engagement for Network Expansion:** Based on ongoing needs assessments, performance monitoring, and strategic planning, Thriving Mind South Florida may proactively identify existing, high-performing contracted providers as "best suited" to:
 - Increase existing service capacities.
 - Add new service lines to address emerging needs. This engagement can be pursued through either a competitive procurement process or, where applicable and beneficial, a non-competitive process leveraging the Florida statutory exemptions listed in Section III. This ensures rapid deployment of essential services while maintaining flexibility in procurement methods.

6. Contracting & Onboarding

- **Direct Negotiation (New Providers):** Upon successful completion of the credentialing process, contracts may be directly negotiated or competitively procured with approved new providers for the specified exempt services (Section III), leveraging the statutory exemption from competitive bidding.
- **Contract Amendments/New Contracts (Existing Providers):** For existing providers, contract amendments or new contracts will be negotiated based on the chosen

procurement method (competitive or non-competitive) and successful evaluation of their capacity to meet the expanded or new service requirements.

- Onboarding: New providers will be onboarded according to established procedures, ensuring a smooth integration into the network. For existing providers expanding services, onboarding will focus on the new service lines and any updated compliance requirements.

V. Documentation and Compliance

Comprehensive documentation will be maintained at every stage to demonstrate adherence to this plan and contractual requirements:

- EOI Records: A record of all EOI submissions from new providers, including initial assessments and alignment with needs.
- Prequalification Records: Documentation of prequalification decisions for new providers and the rationale for inviting (or not inviting) them for full credentialing, explicitly referencing alignment with needs assessment and funding availability.
- Existing Provider Engagement Records: Documentation of proactive engagements with existing providers, including the rationale for selection (e.g., "best suited" determination), the procurement method chosen (competitive or non-competitive), and the alignment with needs/funding.
- Credentialing Files: Complete files for all credentialed providers (new and existing), detailing the review process and compliance verification.
- Network Growth & Acceptance Tracking: Records to track the number of new providers added to the network and the percentage of willing, qualified providers accepted, demonstrating progress towards contractual performance measures.

VI. Relationship to Other Policies

This Procurement Policy for Network Services specifically governs the processes for identifying, engaging, credentialing, and contracting with providers for the Thriving Mind network. It is one component of a broader suite of internal policies and procedures that collectively ensure compliance with all state and federal expectations for grantees and the effective use of public funding. These include, but are not limited to, policies governing financial management, accounting procedures, audit requirements, cost principles, financial reporting, comprehensive subrecipient monitoring, and any state or federal governing rules for services. All procurement activities conducted under this policy shall adhere to these overarching financial and administrative compliance policies.

VII. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this procurement policy shall be continuously monitored to ensure it supports network expansion, quality service delivery, and compliance with all contractual obligations.

VIII. Policy Approval and Publication

This policy is developed in compliance with Florida law, specifically referencing section 287.057(3) (a)-(f), F.S. The Thriving Mind's comprehensive policy framework, which includes this Procurement Policy for Network Services and other related internal policies, collectively addresses state and federal expectations for grantees and the effective use of public funding. and addresses state and federal expectations for grantees and effective use of funding.

In accordance with the terms of our contract, this policy was submitted to the Florida Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office for review. As of August 6, 2025, the policy is considered approved, and it is now being made publicly available on the Thriving Mind's official website.

Date of Approval by the Florida Department of Children and Families: August 6, 2025