



Strengthening Individuals,  
Families & Communities

## Strengthening Families

A proposal to the South Dakota Department of Corrections  
From Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota

***Due June 7, 2024***

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### ***Overview***

“Strengthening Families” is an evidence-based early intervention program that involves parents, teens, and children in learning and practicing positive interactions, communication, and effective discipline.

The group curriculum is held over 11 weeks. After families join in a group meal, parents, teens, and children split into separate groups to learn about a skill, and then come back together to practice their new skill.

Over its 40 years of being implemented around the world, “Strengthening Families” has been shown to significantly reduce problem behaviors, delinquency, and alcohol and drug abuse in children; improve children’s social competencies and school performance; and reduce child maltreatment.

### ***Implementation Plan***

In June and July 2023, 19 staff from multiple existing LSS programs were trained in the Strengthening Families curriculum. Since that time, LSS has facilitated two 11-week Strengthening Families groups, with the first starting in November 2023 and the second in March 2024. A third group starts June 7, 2024. In the two completed groups combined, 8 families with 12 youth started the program, and 4 families with 6 youth completed the Strengthening Families Program. Strengthening Families groups have been held only in Sioux Falls at this time.

Referrals have primarily come from the Department of Corrections. LSS has worked to share information and make connections with community partners and referral resources about Strengthening Families in an effort to increase referrals to the program. A flyer was developed to share information about the Strengthening Families Program with referral sources and in the community. We have received community referrals from the Department of Social Services and other LSS programs including Arise and CARES Wraparound. Each Strengthening Families group could include up to 8 families. To date, LSS has had a maximum of four families attend a group.

LSS staff continue to work with the Department of Corrections and other referral sources to identify and reduce barriers to participation in the Strengthening Families

Program. We have worked to schedule groups at times that work well for the families. We are offering the group on various days and various times throughout the year to provide multiple schedule options for families.

## **Results**

The Strengthening Families curriculum uses a retrospective pre- and post-survey evaluation instrument. Parents along with each youth who attends the group complete the survey. The survey includes 10 demographic questions and 45 survey questions. Data from the surveys gathered from those that completed the curriculum with LSS showed the following results:

- Reduction in delinquency: 60% of parents and 71% of youth saw improvements
- Reduction of alcohol and drug use: 60% of parents and 29% of youth saw improvements
- Social competencies: 60% of parents and 57% of youth saw improvements
- School Performance: 20% of parents and 43% of youth saw improvements
- Reduction of child maltreatment: 40% of parents and 43% of youth saw improvements

## **Next Steps**

LSS plans to facilitate four groups in the next 12 months. While each group could include up to 8 families, based on referral trends and current group attendance, we are planning an average of 4 families per group.

Each group requires 5-6 staff to facilitate the curriculum to fidelity. This staffing requirement is more significant than LSS initially planned for; therefore, staff costs for Strengthening Families have been higher than planned. The proposed budget takes into account staff time for facilitation based on an average of 4 families per group. The budget also includes an estimate of interpreter costs if the need is present for a family attending the group. To date, we have had one family referred to Strengthening Families that has requested an interpreter.

We would like to train additional LSS staff as Strengthening Families facilitators to ease in scheduling and staff coverage of the proposed groups. Due to staff turnover and position changes, several of our initial facilitators are no longer available to support Strengthening Families groups. The cost to bring the Strengthening Families facilitator on site for curriculum training is included in this grant. LSS has secured a grant to cover a large portion of the staff time required for pre-training and training attendance, and we are pursuing additional grants to fully cover the additional costs of staff time for facilitator training attendance.

**Cost Proposal**

The cost proposal consists of the costs associated with facilitating the Strengthening Families Program to fidelity. Each group session will be billed to the state at the agreed-upon rate. Interpreter costs will be billed only as used and at the actual cost billed by the interpreter. Facilitator training costs will be billed only when a Strengthening Families trainer is on site to train and will be billed at actual costs.

Program Budget

<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>SFP Facilitation</b>	<b>Additional Costs</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Curriculum Sessions			
Facilitator(s)	\$37,940		
Materials/Supplies/Meals	\$15,451		
Operating Expenses / Overhead			
Staff Position, Supervisor	\$16,640		
Occupancy	\$1,500		
Other Expenses			
Interpreters – for 2 sessions (Estimate)		\$5,280	
Evaluation	\$1,000		
New Facilitator Training		\$6,500	
Indirect Costs	\$9,750		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$82,281*</b>	<b>\$11,780**</b>	<b>\$94,061</b>

\*Billed out with a per session per family rate

\*\*Billed at actual amounts, only when expense occurs

Implementation Rates

Rate per Strengthening Families session per family	\$463
Rate per hour of interpreter service	\$60

**Original Signatures are Required**

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Date 6/6/2024

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