



## A Request for CARES Support for South Carolina's Network of Group Homes

### Executive Summary

A network of 88 group homes, licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) continue to deliver essential services to the 698 children in foster care and under the guardianship of DSS in spite of extreme financial hardship and great risk brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Allowing this network to collapse would create an extreme shortage in appropriate housing and care for children that would compromise South Carolina's foster care system creating a desperate situation where placement and housing shortages result in youth sleeping in hotels and DSS offices or remaining in juvenile detention facilities because there was simply no place for the children to go. As schools reopen and referrals from teachers and other mandated reporters rebound, it is critical that SC's group homes are ready and waiting to accept South Carolina's abused and neglected youth in desperate need of safety and care.

In order to protect this statewide network of licensed providers and ensure the continued availability of critical care for youth in South Carolina's foster care system, a total allocation of \$9,597,500 of CARES Act Funding is needed to cover the increases in costs brought on by the coronavirus pandemic from March 15, 2020 through December 15, 2020 (a total of 275 days).

This request is respectfully submitted on behalf of South Carolina's network of 88 licensed group homes by:

**Ryan Taylor**  
Executive Director  
Nancy K. Perry Children's Shelter  
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York County, SC

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Executive Director  
Pendleton Place  
Greenville County, SC

# Request for CARES Support for South Carolina's Network of Group Homes

## Snapshot of Youth in Foster Care in South Carolina Group Homes

Last year a network of 88 group homes, licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide care for youth in foster care across the state of South Carolina served approximately 1,340 children. These children are in the legal guardianship of the State of South Carolina, removed from their homes by the DSS and placed in group care until the child can be reunited with family, another family member can be identified to care for the child, or the child can be placed with a foster family.

## The Challenge

South Carolina's network of licensed group homes provide unique services for youth in the state's care.

Today, there are 4,200 youth in South Carolina's foster care system, 698 of whom live in group homes. These youth come into the state's care with unique and complex needs and require specialized services and support that only group care facilities are prepared and licensed to provide.

**South Carolina's network of licensed Group Homes are in distress.** Almost all of SC's licensed group homes are nonprofit organizations who match state funds dollar-for-dollar with private fundraising to deliver quality care to SC's youth in foster care. The coronavirus pandemic has left this network of essential workers with extreme and crippling hardships as the costs associated with the care of these youth in foster care continues to increase.

- The costs associated with caring for youth in foster care is high. All of the youth living in SC's licensed group homes have experienced abuse and neglect and require high-quality, trauma informed care and services. As the coronavirus pandemic continues, mental and physical health costs continue to increase. As a result of the coronavirus impacts and additional costs 2020-2021 budgets are being stretched and group homes need help to continue providing these specialized programs and services as well as the additional costs resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.
- Front line staff are overburdened. At the onset of COVID-19 key staff members with underlying health concerns or age-related fears were sent home, granted leave of absences or resigned. Group homes scrambled to replace this critical workforce, screen and train new hires to maintain staffing patterns and quality services and programs. For more than five months, these teams of essential workers have continued to bravely endure extreme circumstances, and put themselves at great risk to their own safety and well-being to provide care for South Carolina's youth.
- Limited referrals due to school closures have been a precursor to spikes in other states. In neighboring states like Florida, the number of youth in care have skyrocketed as schools reopen and signs of abuse and neglect become identified. Experts and agency officials have warned that South Carolina may experience a similar trend. In fact, according to DSS, reports of child abuse are down nearly 40 percent in South Carolina from this time last year, making it urgent for group homes remain open and able to provide robust services to children and youth in crisis.

## **The work is vital:**

Group homes are essential safe havens for South Carolina youth who have nowhere else to go.

Throughout the pandemic and despite heavy financial losses, the doors of group homes have remained open to welcome the youth who need warm, safe beds and caring, trained adults to help them heal and recover from the trauma they have experienced.

South Carolina's network of group homes is at risk of collapsing. An extreme shortage in appropriate housing and care for children would compromise South Carolina's foster care system. The result would be a desperate situation similar to the crisis faced during the onset of the Michelle H. class action lawsuit when placement and housing shortages resulted in youth sleeping in hotels and DSS offices or remaining in juvenile detention facilities after completion of their sentences because there was simply no place for children to go after their release.

As schools reopen and referrals from teachers and other mandated reporters rebound, it is critical that SC's group homes are ready and waiting to accept South Carolina's abused and neglected youth in desperate need of safety and care. The cost of keeping this network operational and ready to serve the youth who need safe haven and care is great and additional funding is crucial.

**Without South Carolina's network of licensed Group Homes, who will care for these children?**

## **The Solution**

South Carolina's network of licensed group homes respectfully requests an allocation of CARES funding to ease existing financial hardships and support the return to ready status, fully prepared to care for the children who are enduring abuse and neglect as the pandemic continues.

For the currently struggling residential childcare facilities licensed by DSS, **a total allocation of \$9,597,500 in CARES Act funding is needed to meet the increased demands of providing 24/7 care for youth in foster care during the coronavirus pandemic from March 15, 2020 through December 15, 2020 (a total of 275 days).**

This funding will be allocated across the network of licensed DSS providers delivering services to youth in DSS' guardianship at a rate of \$50 per day, per child x 698 children in residence on August 20, 2020 x 275 days of the pandemic.

This level of financial support would fortify this essential workforce, ensure the well-being and health of staff and all children in care and fund necessary health and safety measures now required as a result of COVID-19. Additionally, it would help ensure that the state's network of group homes are ready to care for the children currently enduring unreported abuse and neglect as a result of school closures and quarantines.

South Carolina's network of licensed group homes are trained and equipped to deliver trauma-informed care, help youth stabilize and facilitate the healing process, and foster positive growth and development. Support South Carolina's network of 88 group homes in their recovery from the damaging blows dealt by COVID-19 so that they can continue to provide much needed safety and safe haven to South Carolina's kids.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Ryan Taylor**  
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**Beverly Hardin**  
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Berkeley & Charleston Counties, SC



**Emily Parrish**  
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**Jed Dews**  
Executive Director  
Pendleton Place  
Greenville County, SC

## Appendix A:

### South Carolina's Network of Group Homes

*Information provided by South Carolina Department of Social Services*

<b>Facility</b>	<b>County</b>
Helping Hands, Inc.	Aiken
W.W. Long Youth Development Center	Aiken
Calvary Home for Children	Anderson
Helping Hands of Clemson	Anderson
New Foundations- Male Pathways	Anderson
New Foundations- Standridge	Anderson
AMIkids Beaufort	Beaufort
Open Arms Children's Home	Beaufort
Carolina Youth Development Center- Callen Lacey	Berkeley
Eagle Harbor Boys Ranch	Berkeley
Carolina Youth Development Center- Ledford (Bldg D)	Charleston
Carolina Youth Development Center- Nu House (Bldg E)	Charleston
Carolina Youth Development Center- PAL (Bldg G)	Charleston
Carolina Youth Development Center- Shelter	Charleston
Florence Crittenton Programs of SC	Charleston
Florence Crittenton Programs of SC	Charleston
Jenkins Institute for Children	Charleston
New Beginnings- Clearview	Charleston
Windwood Farm Home for Children, Inc.	Charleston
Cherokee Children's Home	Cherokee
AMIkids Sand Hills	Chesterfield
Connie Maxwell- Adams Campus	Chesterfield
Turning Point Boys Home, Inc	Chesterfield
Broadstep Behavioral Health	Clarendon
New Horizons Family Center	Clarendon
Turbeville Children's Home	Clarendon
The Place of Healing	Darlington
Trent Hill Center for Children and Families	Darlington
Doors to Freedom	Dorchester
New Beginnings- Cloverleaf	Dorchester
Pinelands Group Home	Dorchester
Cambio Academy SC, LLC	Fairfield
Connie Maxwell- Pee Dee Campus	Florence
Wise Care Services, Inc.	Florence
AMIkids Georgetown	Georgetown
Tara Hall Home for Boys	Georgetown
Church of God Home for Children	Greenville
Connie Maxwell- Marie Younts Campus	Greenville
Excalibur Youth Services, LLC	Greenville
Generations- Hartwell House	Greenville
Generations- Jocassee House	Greenville
Generations- Murray House	Greenville

Generations- Russell House	Greenville
Miracle Hill Boys' Shelter	Greenville
Pendleton Place, Inc.	Greenville
Bowers-Rodgers Children's Home	Greenwood
Connie Maxwell- Cooper Nixon Campus	Greenwood
Connie Maxwell- Main Campus	Greenwood
Sea Haven, Inc.	Horry
Seacoast Opco LLC, dba SYA	Horry
Waccamaw Youth Center, Inc.	Horry
Pine Grove Opco LLC dba Pine Grove YA	Kershaw
Family Choice Center	Lancaster
Lancaster Children's Home, Inc.- Boys (L1)	Lancaster
Lancaster Children's Home, Inc.- Boys (L2)	Lancaster
Lancaster Children's Home, Inc.- Girls	Lancaster
New Directions, LLC	Lancaster
AMIkids Piedmont	Laurens
Thornwell Home for Children	Laurens
Nancy K. Perry Children's Shelter	Lexington
Palmetto Place- Campus B	Lexington
AMIkids Bennettsville I	Marlboro
AMIkids Bennettsville II	Marlboro
Boys Farm, Inc.	Newberry
Cherokee Creek Boys School	Oconee
Collins Home and Family Ministries	Oconee
Fair Play Wilderness Camp School	Oconee
Wilderness Way Camp School	Oconee
Connie Maxwell- Brookland Campus	Orangeburg
Alston Wilkes Youth Home	Richland
Camp Aspen	Richland
Epworth Children's Home	Richland
Epworth Children's Home- Trenholm Campus	Richland
Lighthouse for Life- Karis Home	Richland
Palmetto Place Children & Youth Services	Richland
Cross Road Youth Center	Spartanburg
Dominion Family Services, Inc.	Spartanburg
Hope Center for Children	Spartanburg
Hope Center for Children- Lindsay House	Spartanburg
Southeastern Children's Home- Green House	Spartanburg
Southeastern Children's Home- Lyman	Spartanburg
Southeastern Children's Home- Senn	Spartanburg
Southeastern Children's Home- Smith	Spartanburg
John K. Crosswell Home for Children	Sumter
AMIkids White Pines- Camp I	Union
AMIkids White Pines- Camp II	Union
Hampton Transitional Academy	Williamsburg
Children's Attention Home	York