



BAYS works in partnership with individuals, families, and communities to inspire change, growth, and success.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BAYS Awarded Circuit 5 Contract to Deliver Functional Family Therapy Services Under the Family First Prevention Services Act

TAMPA, FL — Bay Area Youth Services (BAYS) is proud to announce that it has been selected by LSF Health Systems to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT) services in Florida's Fifth Judicial Circuit following a competitive solicitation process. The award expands access to FFT for children and families across Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties and further strengthens BAYS' position as the largest provider of Functional Family Therapy services in Florida. The contract, which began on July 15, 2026, represents a significant expansion of BAYS' family preservation services throughout Central Florida.

FFT is a nationally recognized intervention that helps families improve communication, strengthen relationships, reduce conflict, address behavioral health concerns, and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placements. The model aligns closely with the goals of the Family First Prevention Services Act by providing effective support before challenges escalate into deeper child welfare involvement.

BAYS brings extensive experience implementing FFT across juvenile justice, behavioral health, and child welfare systems. The organization operates the state's largest FFT network, helping youth and families achieve lasting positive outcomes.

"This award represents an important step forward in our mission to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children across Florida," said Robert Patterson, President and CEO of BAYS. "LSF Health Systems has recognized the value of Functional Family Therapy, and we are honored to expand this proven model into Circuit 5. We are uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality services that help families remain safely together while building stronger, more resilient communities."

The Family First Prevention Services Act aims to prioritize prevention efforts by investing in programs that help families remain intact whenever safely possible. Through this partnership with LSF Health Systems, BAYS will collaborate with child welfare professionals, behavioral health providers, schools, and community organizations to ensure families have timely access to effective support.

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"This opportunity allows us to extend the reach of Functional Family Therapy to more families who can benefit from its proven approach," said Christine Krolikowski, Vice President of Behavioral Health Services for BAYS. "We are excited to partner with LSF Health Systems and stakeholders throughout Circuit 5 to strengthen family relationships, promote stability, and create brighter futures for children."

The addition of Circuit 5 expands BAYS' statewide reach and reinforces the organization's leadership in delivering services that improve outcomes for youth and families.

About Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is an evidence-based, family-focused intervention designed to improve family functioning and reduce behavioral and emotional challenges among youth. FFT works by strengthening communication, increasing family support, and building practical skills that help families successfully navigate challenges and remain connected. Program monitoring and fidelity are provided by FFT, LLC.

About BAYS

BAYS is one of Florida's leading nonprofit providers of behavioral health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and family support services. For 44 years, BAYS has delivered evidence-based programs that help children and families overcome challenges, strengthen relationships, and achieve lasting success. Serving communities throughout Florida, BAYS is committed to building stronger families, improving outcomes for youth, and creating healthier, more resilient communities.

About LSF Health Systems

LSF Health Systems is the managing entity responsible for overseeing publicly funded behavioral health and substance use services throughout its service region in Florida. Through strategic partnerships and community collaboration, LSF Health Systems works to improve access to quality care and strengthen outcomes for children, families, and communities.

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