



## Mississippi Qualified Residential Treatment Program Requirements

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was passed by Congress on February 9, 2018. Family First includes historic reforms to child welfare financing streams by providing prevention services to families of children who are at imminent risk of entering foster care. It underscores the importance of children growing up in families and seeks to avoid the traumatic experience of children being separated from their families and entering foster care. Specifically, federal reimbursement will be available for trauma-informed mental health services, substance use disorder treatment and in-home parenting skills training to safely maintain in-home family placement. It also aims to improve the well-being of children already in foster care by safely reducing placement of children in non-family based settings (e.g. residential treatment programs), and instead placing children in the least restrictive, most family-based setting appropriate to their individual needs. This legislation sparks a sweeping overhaul of the child welfare system, the largest seen in nearly 40 years. Opportunities for real and lasting change are available, and the physical and mental health benefits to children and families will be extraordinary.

Upon implementation of Family First in Mississippi, Title IV-E funds can only be used for non-family-based placements that are designated as a, 1. Placements for pregnant or parenting youth; 2. Supervised independent living for youth 18+; and 3. Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP) for youth with treatment needs. Family First created a specific nonfamily-based placement type, called a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) along with a structure around placing children in these types of placements. QRTPs serve children with specific treatment needs who need short term placement out of their home.

**Statement of Purpose:** This application is for the designation of a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) in Mississippi. The QRTP designation is dependent upon a program becoming properly licensed.

Thank you for your interest in becoming designated as a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) in Mississippi. Below are the requirements for QRTPs and for the placement of children in them.

### **Scope of Services:**

### **Program Description:**

**This placement is a specific category of a non-foster family home setting, for which agencies must meet detailed assessment, case planning, documentation, judicial determination and ongoing review and permanency hearing requirements for a child to be placed in and continue to receive Title IV-E FCMP's for the placement. The facility must also meet the definition of a CCI at sections 472(c)(2)(A) and (C) of the Act, including that it must be licensed (in accordance with Section 471(a)(10) of the Act and that criminal record and child abuse and neglect registry checks must be completed in accordance with Section 471(a)(20)(D) of the Act.**

Mississippi QRTP requirements:

1. QRTPs shall be licensed and nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), the Council on Accreditation, or others approved by the Secretary.
2. QRTPs shall have an agency-approved trauma informed approach applicable to the population of youth being served. All employees, volunteers, interns, and independent contractors within a QRTP must be trained in that trauma informed approach. In addition, organizations shall have a trauma informed treatment model that includes service of clinical needs.
3. QRTP shall have registered or licensed nursing and clinical staff in accordance with the following:
  - a. Provides care within the scope of their practice as defined by state law;
  - b. Are available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week
  - c. Are accessible on-site or face-to-face to meet the youth's clinical and/or medical needs.

*Note: QRTPs will be required to have nursing and clinical staff accessible in person or via telephone 24/7. These staff can be contract staff who can come on-site at any time if the child's needs warrant face-to-face interaction from these staff.*

4. QRTPs should facilitate and document family participation in the child's treatment with consideration for the child/youth's safety and development needs. The treatment should be family-driven with both the family and the child included in all aspects of care (when in the best interest of the child). Documentation of family involvement shall include:
  - a. Facilitation of regular contact between the child and family including siblings and all attempts to do so;
  - b. Ways in which family was actively involved and any support provided to the family of youth in residential treatment program;
  - c. Plans to provide outreach and six months of aftercare support for the child and (if applicable) the family must be maintained in the youth's case file;
  - d. Document any outreach with any known biological family and fictive kin of the child, how this outreach is made, and maintain contact information for any known biological family and fictive kin of the child.
5. Six months of after-care support relative to the developed plan must be documented in the child's case file and shall include any attempts to contact and engage the youth and family in after care support services.

Mississippi Qualified Residential Treatment Programs must meet MDCPS Therapeutic Group Home Licensure Requirements in addition to any relative MS Department of Mental Health Certification Requirements.

The placement requirements for children in a QRTP are as follows:

- Within 30 days of a youth being placed in a Qualified Residential Treatment Program, an assessment must be performed by a “qualified individual” to determine if a QRTP is the best fit for the child. In Mississippi, a “qualified individual” means a licensed mental health professional. (As defined in MS Code §43-15-105)
- Within 60 days of a foster youth's placement in a QRTP, a court review must take place to approve or disapprove the placement. The Court will consider the 30-day assessment and determine whether the needs of the youth can be met through placement in a foster family home or whether or not the QRTP provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the youth, as specified in the permanency plan for the youth.
- A QRTP placement must be reviewed by the MDCPS Commissioner and the US Department Health and Human Services Secretary if a foster youth 14 years of age or older has been placed in a QRTP for 12 consecutive months or 18 non-consecutive months.
- A QRTP placement must be reviewed by the MDCPS Commissioner and the US Department Health and Human Services Secretary if a Title IV-E agency places a child in a QRTP for more than 12 consecutive months, or 18 non-consecutive months, or, in the case of a child who has not attained age 13, for more than six consecutive or non-consecutive months, the Title IV-E agency must submit to HHS:
  - the most recent versions of the evidence and documentation submitted for the most recent status review or permanency hearing; and
  - the signed approval of the head of the Title IV-E agency for the continued placement of the child in that setting (section 475A(c)(5) of the Act).