

Relative Caregiver Program (RCP) Grant Application Narrative
Region Proposed: Tennessee

a. History/description of applicant agency

New Visions, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by Timothy (Tim) Malone in 2001. The agency's mission is to provide quality services that reduce the number of children entering state custody in Tennessee. This mission is set forth with the overall goal of playing a proactive role in helping youth become productive citizens. New Visions seeks to enhance the quality of life for children and families by providing individualized services with a therapeutic foundation. We at New Visions believe that all children should be raised in a family environment, if at all possible, with their birth family or nearest relatives. One full-time professional staff person, Executive Director Tim Malone, M.Ed., and 25 independent contractors (counselors and therapists) carry out the organization's mission and philosophy. New Visions, Inc. received its first contract with the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County in 2002. Since then the organization has received multiple contract awards from throughout the State of Tennessee. Table 1 shows the contract history and performance outcomes. In 2004, New Visions served 175 youth and their families; in 2005, 250 cases were managed. Other major accomplishments include:

- Successful program administration has led to the agency's rapid growth and statewide recognition of service quality.
- Under the leadership of founder and visionary Tim Malone, New Visions has become a model therapeutic intervention and prevention program for children and their families in 45 Tennessee counties. Mr. Malone started the organization after more than a decade of community-based social service experience in the Nashville area.

- Fewer than 7 percent of children enrolled in New Visions programs enter state custody—a testament to the organization’s ability to keep families intact. Quality family preservation services including kinship placements, in-home counseling, therapeutic mentoring services, and therapeutic visitation between children placed in out-of-home settings and their parents or caregivers result in family reunification.

Table 1 – New Visions Contract History/Major Accomplishments

Contracting Agency/ Service Start and End Dates	Services Provided	Cumulative Quantitative Outcomes
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County/2002–2005	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring	250 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Mid-Cumberland Community Service Agency (CSA)/2003–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	300 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Southeast CSA/2003–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	55 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Hamilton County CSA/2003–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	25 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Southwest CSA/2004–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	115 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Knox County CSA/2004–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	25 Youth Served Ages 0–18

Contracting Agency/ Service Start and End Dates	Services Provided	Cumulative Quantitative Outcomes
Northwest CSA/2004–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	45 Youth Served Ages 0–18
South Central CSA/2004–Present	In-home counseling Family preservation After-school therapeutic mentoring Therapeutic visitation Parent education	160 Youth Served Ages 0–18
Memphis and Shelby County CSA/2005–Present	Therapeutic client/family-centered services Emergency residential services Transitional living services	30 Youth Served Ages 14–21
State of Tennessee Department of Health/2005–Present	After-school therapeutic mentoring	80 Youth Served Ages 8–16

b. Inventory and description of existing community services and resources

Statewide Community Services and Resources – TennHelp; TennCare; Families First;

Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (adoption assistance); Tennessee Department of Human Services (child care referral, food stamps, child support services, blind and visually impaired services); Family Resource Centers; Tennessee Resources Respite Guide; Tennessee Association for Child Care; Tennessee Association of Mental Health Centers; Tennessee Early Intervention System; Tennessee Infant Parent Services; Tennessee Department of Health; Tennessee Protection and Advocacy, Inc.; Tennessee Task Force Against Domestic Violence; Tennessee Pathfinder Project (disabled family and child self-sufficiency); Regional Intervention Programs; the Suicide Prevention Network; Vanderbilt University Child and Family Center; Tennessee Voices for Children (statewide organization of families, professionals, business and community leaders, and government representatives committed to improving and expanding services related to the emotional and behavioral well-being of children); Tennessee Bar

Association (county-based legal clinics and pro bono services for low-income individuals); Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (located in each county of the state); Tennessee Area Agency on Aging and Disability (nutrition, medication, transportation, homemaker, and other senior support services in each region); Tennessee Department of Transportation (regional elderly and disabled contracted transportation services and statewide ride-sharing program); Tennessee Department of Education (adult basic education/GED completion programs and vocational/technical skills training in each region); U.S. Social Security Administration (Supplemental Security Income assistance); and Tennessee Department of Labor Career One Stop Centers (employment and training services).

c. Methodology, including mission statement, network's approach, timeline, measurable goals, objectives, and outcomes; how program will address unmet needs of families not duplicate existing services; staffing pattern; and plans to employ relative caregivers.

Methodology – New Visions, Inc. will implement a Family-Centered Approach Network in the region. The Family-Centered Approach is a process for delivering services to families in which families are recognized as having unique concerns, strengths, and values. This approach offers strategies to build and promote the strengths that families already have and to understand and improve the match between the needs of children and their families with community resources and support. Parents and other family members are involved as peers and collaborators, rather than as clients. The relationship is based on mutual responsibility and participation. Two-way communication and advocacy strengthen both the community support network and family functioning. The key components include:

- Creating partnerships and helping relationships
- Building the community environment

- Linking families and community support

Family-centered programs are planned to strengthen families so they nurture their children. The programs recognize and build on family strengths, and create working partnerships between agencies, schools, and families to respond to needs of children.

Mission Statement – The New Visions, Inc. Relative Caregiver Program will serve children who are at risk or have been the victim of abuse, dependency, or neglect, and whose parents are unable to provide for their care, by identifying appropriate and willing relatives to become caregivers.

Network’s Approach to Address the Unmet Needs of 200 Families in the State of Tennessee:

Marketing/Outreach – New Visions will work with regional judicial, human and social services agencies, faith-based organizations, and education providers to access existing child and family referral networks. The Program’s administrator, Tim Malone, will make telephone calls, develop and distribute informational brochures, and issue public service announcements about the new Relative Caregiver Program and its eligibility requirements, services, and regional contact information.

Plan to Collaborate with Local and Regional Community Agencies and Non-duplication of Existing Services – On notification of a grant award for the Relative Caregiver Program, New Visions will implement the following plan in each county of the region:

Step 1 – Contact all existing child and family service agencies (human, social, faith-based, judicial, and education) to provide orientation to the Relative Caregiver Program, New Visions’ role, and the information and referral system process and logistics to ensure non-duplication of

existing services. New Visions will work with local partners to assess the gaps in services and will develop a customized implementation plan for each specific county/region.

Step 2 – Develop regional Advisory Board consisting of staff from the regional offices of the Departments of Children’s Services and Human Services, relative caregivers (enrolled in program services), and other community stakeholders. Each regional Advisory Board will have 12 members. The New Visions administrator, Tim Malone, will schedule and attend all regional Advisory Board meetings. Meetings will be held quarterly.

Step 3 – Coordinate regional kinship care and other program outcome-related training for local public entities connected with the Department of Children’s Services.

Step 4 – Develop, in collaboration with regional network partners, a Regional Relative Caregiver Program Resource Manual. New Visions will also help agencies already having such a manual update information and print new copies for program families.

Step 5 – Begin and monitor referral and intake process to ensure all approaches are culturally competent.

Step 6 – With assistance from regional Advisory Boards, conduct quarterly Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to maintain program’s initial intent, approach integrity, and families’ respect/confidence in interventions and services implemented.

Assuring Cultural Competency and Client Confidentiality in all Program Services – Cultural competence is the capacity to relate with persons from diverse cultures in a sensitive, respectful, and productive way. Sensitivity to a child and family’s culture will be emphasized and embraced by New Visions staff throughout the child and family’s experience with the Relative Caregiver Program. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be in place to improve levels of cultural competency in communications, Family Service Plan goals and objectives, and in all program

services, publications, and activities. New Visions, Inc. has incorporated the following comprehensive procedures to protect the privacy of clients who receive our services. The client has the right, within the law, to personal and informational privacy, as is manifested by the following rights:

1. To refuse to talk with or see anyone not affiliated with New Visions, Inc.
2. To be interviewed in surroundings designed to ensure reasonable visual and auditory privacy.
3. To expect that any discussion or consultation involving the client's case will be conducted discreetly and that individuals not directly involved in the client's care will not be present without the client's permission.
4. To have the client's record read only by those directly involved with the client's care. Other individuals can only read the client's record upon the client's written authorization or that of a legally authorized representative.
5. To expect all communications and other information pertaining to the client's care be treated as confidential.
6. To understand that under certain conditions New Visions, Inc. may be required legally to disclose confidential information. This may occur if there is any evidence of child abuse, if there is evidence one may harm others or oneself, or if a court orders that information be disclosed.

Family Advocacy/Family Service Plans for Short-Term Case Management – The region's families will have access to a Family Advocate (staff person) to help assess family needs, provide accurate easy-to-follow information, and serve as an advocate on behalf of the family with the school system, courts, and other public systems—as well as help the kinship caregiver

work with the biological parent(s) and child. The Family Advocate will be the lead case management team member for the Family Team Meetings. Family Advocates will make referrals to community services to address needs and issues of the birth parent(s). Family Advocates will also be responsible for implementing and managing Family Service Plans that include goals to keep the child safe, assist the caregiver in providing the best care for the child, and work with the birth parent(s) to maintain a positive relationship with the child. All Family Service Plans will be developed with the input of the family member that is involved with the child.

Family Team Meetings – New Visions will use Family Team Meetings for making child welfare decisions and developing meaningful child and kinship caregiver Family Service Plans. The Family Team Meeting is based on family group conferencing concepts founded on the belief that the best way to aid and protect children over time is to strengthen and support families in understanding and carrying out their responsibilities. The intent of the Family Team Meeting process is to ensure the long-term well-being of children through the provision of services and supports that complement the family's unique strengths, challenges, and goals. The process affirms family members as the best qualified and most knowledgeable about their needs. The monthly Family Team Meeting will provide family-focused plans that meet the needs of the children and their families. The Family Team Meeting also will ensure that children and families receive the best and most appropriate services and supports to promote long-term changes. Through this process, the Family Advocate will engage the family and establish caring relationships that are characterized by mutual respect and dignity. The product of the Family Team Meeting will be a comprehensive Family Service Plan. The plan will identify each family's Risk Factors (problems, concerns, needs); Behavioral Objectives (goals: what the

family wants to accomplish); Plan (how the goals will be accomplished); Projected Completion Dates; and Responsible Parties.

Caregiver Support Groups – New Visions will have trained facilitators lead monthly kinship caregiver support group meetings, during which feelings, concerns, and problems facing relative caregivers will be discussed.

Youth and Teens Support Groups – New Visions will facilitate monthly support groups for youth and teens (at the same time and place as the Caregiver Support Groups are held) in each county to provide children an opportunity to express their fears, problems, situations, and thoughts about kinship care and their biological parent(s).

Children’s Activity Groups – New Visions will facilitate monthly children’s activity groups in each county to provide an opportunity for kinship care children to build a sense of community and belonging with other children in relative care, and to address attachment issues evolving from separation, loss, and grief. The Children’s Activity Groups will be provided for children of all ages in relative care.

Support Services for Birth Parents Including Legal Options Counseling – New Visions will refer birth parents in need of psychological counseling and mental health support services to existing community agencies that already provide family preservation/separation services. All families (birth parents and kinship caregivers) will receive counseling on legal options, including family planned care, power of attorney, legal custody, kinship foster care, adoption, and permanent guardianship.

Educational Workshops – New Visions will use Relative Caregiver Program staff or other qualified personnel to facilitate monthly workshops for relative caregivers on topics of concern to them, such as: (1) Parenting Skills; (2) Problem Solving within the Family; (3) Communicating

Effectively with the Public System; (4) Responding to Family Emergencies; (5) Creative Ways to Approach Budget Problems; and (6) Working with Birth Parents. Other kinship care-related workshops will be developed, as needed, to help biological parents and kinship caregivers achieve the objectives of their Case Management Action Plan.

Information and Referral – Using existing networks of community, county, and regional human and social services providers, New Visions will provide oral and written information and referral services needed by kinship families, including services not directly provided by the regional Relative Caregiver Program.

Respite and Recreation – New Visions will link kinship caregivers with all community, county, and regional caregiver respite services in order to give the relative caregivers scheduled or emergency “time off” from child-rearing responsibilities.

Cluster Meetings – New Visions will facilitate twice yearly cluster meetings for children, birth parents, and relative caregivers in each county. A special event, such as a recreational outing to a park, a trip to the circus, holiday party, or other seasonal event will be used as a venue to bring all families in the regional Relative Caregiver Program together. New Visions will provide transportation, if needed, in order to ensure high attendance rates.

Financial Assistance – New Visions will provide emergency one-time financial or start-up assistance for family needs, such as security deposits, transitional child care assistance, and assistance with purchase of clothing or furniture, so the family can adapt to taking care of the child. This assistance will not be made available to families who are receiving any other type of kinship subsidy beyond the regular child-only grant.

Material Assistance – New Visions will work with existing community and regional family resource agencies to help families meet their basic needs of shelter, food, and clothing. Donated

items from the community will be the first source of material needs. Public housing, food and clothing banks will be utilized to help stabilize families lacking basic needs. Where needed, one-time financial assistance will be provided.

Access to Entitlement Services – All kinship caregivers will be given information on how to use Families First, obtain food stamps, and utilize the TennCare system for child health care needs.

Exiting Services – New Visions will not place a time limit on Relative Caregiver Program services. There is no participant graduation/exit process. Services will end when the child turns 18 years old or when the goals and objectives of the Family Service Plan have been met—the family is stable.

Program Goals:

- 1) The New Visions Relative Caregiver Program will promote family stability for children who are at risk or have been the victim of abuse and neglect by providing supportive services to them and the relatives caring for them.
- 2) The New Visions Relative Caregiver Program will create a separate support network, outside the formal child welfare system of foster care.

Program Measurable SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timebound) Objectives:

- 1a) To demonstrate that supportive services help ensure permanent placements and reduce the need for juvenile court jurisdiction and formal involvement in the child welfare system for 50% or more of children in the program by the end of the contract year (will be measured using statistical analysis).

1b) To enable 90% or more of relative caregivers by the end of the contract year (will be measured using pre- and post-attitudinal and awareness surveys) to recognize themselves as resources for maintaining and strengthening family ties for the sake of the children in their care.

1c) To establish collaboration, understanding, and cooperation among 100% of relative caregivers by the end of the contract year (will be measured by interim interviews, Family Service Plan notes, and staff observations) that enables them to provide for and protect the children in their care.

2a) To increase the effectiveness and collaboration of family service providers in each county by 50% or more by the end of the contract year (will be measured using pre- and post-community collaborations assessment comparisons) through involving them in Advisory Boards and in the development of the Regional Relative Caregiver Program Resource Manual.

2b) To increase awareness among regional family services agencies by 50% or more by the end of the contract year (will be measured using pre- and post-caregiver awareness surveys) that relative caregivers are providing homes for children who are otherwise at risk of entering the foster care or juvenile justice systems and being separated from their family network.

2c) To increase the safety and well being of children in relative care by 50% or more by the end of the contract year (will be measured by interim information and referral feedback, Family Service Plan documentation, Judicial Court reports, family interviews, and staff observations) through mandated reporting of any further abuse or neglect .

Program Outcomes:

- Over 50% of referrals to the regional Relative Caregiver Program will come from the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services, the Department of Human Services, and the regional juvenile courts.

- 85% or more of children serviced will stay out of state custody and will remain with a relative caregiver who will assume and maintain responsibility and care for abused and neglected children without involvement with the formal child welfare system.
- 15% or fewer children will enter state custody.
- 85% or fewer children will enter more restrictive placements such as non-relative foster and group care.

Support Group Caregiver Goals:

- 1) Caregivers attending support groups will develop a strong sense of belonging and involvement with people who really care.
- 2) Caregivers will bond quickly and will willingly provide respite, transportation, and a “just being there” attitude for each other emotionally.

Support Group Caregiver SMART Objectives:

1a) 60% of more of each county’s caregivers will attend the monthly group support meetings (monthly attendance rosters).

2a) 40% or more of each county’s caregivers will form their own respite and special needs support network (facilitated by program staff) by the end of the contract year (staff observations and Family Service Plan documentation).

Support Group Caregiver Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of how to provide a stable and safe environment for at-risk, abused, and neglected children in their care.
- Reduced numbers of children entering state custody.
- Reduced numbers of children being placed in state custody after being placed in relative care.

- Increased likelihood that relatives can assume and maintain responsibility and care for abused and neglected children without involvement with the formal child welfare system.

Support Group Child/Teen Goals:

- 1) Support group activities will help children and teens heal from the impact/trauma/isolation of separation from their birth parent(s).
- 2) Children and teens will meet in a venue where they can talk and bond with others who have had similar experiences.

Support Group Child/Teen SMART Objectives:

- 1a) To increase incidences of relative care stability for relative caregiver and child/teen by 50% or more by the end of the contract year.
- 2a) To increase participation in activity groups and cluster meetings by 50% or more due to child's/teen's influence on relative caregiver involvement by the end of the contract year. (When child/teen friendships are formed, it will be the child/teen who constantly reminds the kinship caregiver of the need to see their new friends at group support meetings and other planned events).

Support Group Child/Teen Outcomes:

- Decreased anger over separation from birth parent(s).
- Increased bonding with relative caregiver.
- Increased sense of belonging and situation indifference (no longer feels stigmatized for living with a relative versus biological parent(s)).

Data to be Collected:

- 1) Demographic description of household, including ages, relationships of household members, special needs, incomes, gender, and ethnic background.

- 2) Information regarding prior placement.
- 3) Reasons for caregiving arrangement.
- 4) Information regarding birth parents, including status of relationship.
- 5) Potential for permanent placement.
- 6) Satisfaction of caregivers.
- 7) Changes in legal status.
- 8) Legal relationship of caregiver to children.
- 9) Copies of legal orders.
- 10) All other data relevant to SMART objectives and outcomes for overall program and subpopulations served.

Table 2 – Regional Relative Caregiver Program Implementation Timeline

Implementation Tasks	1 st Quarter			2 nd Quarter			3 rd Quarter			4 th Quarter		
	Sept/Oct/Nov	Dec/Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr/May	Jun/July/Aug	Sept/Oct/Nov	Dec/Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr/May	Jun/July/Aug	Sept/Oct/Nov	Dec/Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr/May	Jun/July/Aug
Finalize contract with funding agency	✓											
Marketing/outreach/orientation	✓	✓	✓									
Gaps assessments	✓	✓	✓									
Advisory Boards formations		✓	✓									
Contract with Family Advocates			✓									
DCS community training (Family Advocates will attend, also)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Resource manual development			✓	✓								
Referral and intake process			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Family Service Plan development			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Information and referral			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family team meetings			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caregiver support groups				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Youth and teen support groups				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Children activity groups				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support services for birth parents including legal options counseling				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Implementation Tasks	1 st Quarter			2 nd Quarter			3 rd Quarter			4 th Quarter		
	Sept/Oct/Nov	Dec/Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr/May	Jun/July/Aug								
Educational workshops				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Respite and recreation				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cluster meetings						✓			✓			
Financial assistance			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Material assistance			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to entitlement services			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Program SWOT analysis and approach corrections					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Invoices to funding agency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reporting to funding agency (quarterly schedules and Evaluation Plan outcomes)			✓			✓			✓			✓

Table 3 – Staffing Pattern

Position	Description	Qualifications	FTE
Program Administrator (1)	Provides management and fiscal oversight to all aspects of program implementation.	Over a decade of experience assessing and counseling at-risk youth and families who have severe behavior problems, mental health issues, problems with substance abuse, and anger management challenges, as well as those who have been abused or neglected. Knowledgeable about Kinship Care goals, objectives, and outcomes. Holds a master’s degree in related field.	0.5
Program Coordinator/ Outreach Worker (1)	Carries out day-to-day supervision, outreach efforts, and monitoring tasks to ensure successful program implementation.	Experience and related education in implementing and supervising family preservation or kinship care or other reunification programs that focus on keeping children out of state custody. Knowledgeable about Kinship Care goals, objectives, and outcomes.	1.0
Family Advocate (3)	Assesses family needs, provides easy to follow information, serves as an advocate on behalf of the family, assists in developing Family Service Plan, facilitates Family Team Meetings, makes referrals, and conducts follow-up.	Licensed social worker with experience in child and family counseling, case management, and small-group counseling facilitation. Five or more years of experience working with at-risk youth, birth parents, and out-of-home placement situations. Knowledgeable about Kinship Care goals, objectives, and outcomes.	1.0 each

Position	Description	Qualifications	FTE
Program Assistant	Provides clerical support to Program Administrator and Family Advocates.	Experience in working with a nonprofit organization, reading funded grant proposals and contracts, and determining type of staff paperwork needed for case management, reporting, fiscal accounting, and other reporting areas. Ability to compile statistical and qualitative evaluation results provided by program staff.	1.0

Plan to Employ Relative Caregivers – New Visions will employ relative caregivers, part-time, who are enrolled in the program. Their role will be to facilitate group support meetings (peer and child/teen, as well as lead the children’s group activities, where deemed appropriate by the case management staff [Family Advocates and Program Coordinator]).

d. Planning processes used to develop program. Include any collaboration between courts, school systems, community-based agencies, public agencies, and national kinship organizations.

In preparing the response for this grant application, New Visions founder Tim Malone sought input and approaches from regional juvenile court judges, county departments of social services staff, community-based human and social services agencies in each county, Vanderbilt University Child and Family Center staff, the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services, and national kinship care professionals and organizations, including Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (University of Wisconsin Extension Center), the Children’s Defense Fund (Dr. Marion Wright Edelman – Washington, DC), and Casey Family Programs (William E. Casey Foundation – Seattle, Washington). The largest share of regional-relevant input came from the juvenile court judges from throughout the region and from previous New Visions family preservation clients (with successful outcomes).

e. Fundraising ideas and plans.

In 2006, New Visions, Inc. retained the services of a grant writing consultant who has been assisting with identifying public and private sector funding opportunities to sustain existing grant-funded programs as well as to start new programs to meet the needs of Tennessee families and their children. New Visions plans to work with the region's Advisory Boards members to identify local and regional grant and contract funding opportunities. Our organization is in the process of developing a long-range strategic plan that will include a funding plan. Finally, New Visions will work with its Board of Directors to identify the best types of fundraisers and recruit volunteers to plan and carry out fundraising activities (golf competitions, black tie dinners, and more).

f. If proposal is submitted by a network...

NOT APPLICABLE.