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youth and families during the grant cycle. SFP is designed to provide parents with enhanced skills and tools to reduce problem behaviors by their offending child. In addition, these skills can then be applied to other children in the family, thus inoculating against future problem behaviors manifested by siblings.

- B. Relevant Characteristics of the Target Population:** In accordance with the intent of the Juvenile Justice Grant Initiatives, the Lowndes County Juvenile Court is choosing to prioritize the target population of youth status offenders, specifically those known as Children in Need of Services (CHINS), and youth who commit first-time nonviolent acts. The Court is requesting funding to support high quality evidence-based intervention in order to prevent repeat status offending and further penetration into the juvenile and criminal justice system. SFP admission will target families with youth who are first time offenders, diverted from the juvenile justice system, charged with a status offense/first-time nonviolent act, and who are appropriate for the services offered by the SFP program.

The overwhelming majority of these youth are African-American and male. Reducing further system penetration for these priority populations is consistent with the Court's mission to safeguard both long-term public safety and youth development and improve juvenile justice outcomes in Lowndes County.

- C. Rural Classification:** Lowndes County, as a whole, does not meet the definition of rural classification, as defined by the State of Georgia (e.g., a county population of 35,000 people or less) and adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 as part of the Rural Hospital Authorities Act (SB195). The US Census Bureau reports a 2020 Lowndes County population of 118,251. Source:
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lowndescountygeorgia>

II. Needs statement:

- A. Statement of the specific problem(s)/gap(s) the project will address:** Lowndes County aspires to achieve excellence by providing quality services for the positive development of children, the safety of the community, and the preservation of the family unit. Given clear research evidence that evidence-based practices can prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system, reduce recidivism and improve positive youth and family outcomes, it is a clear extension of the Court's mission to implement these alternatives to prevent further escalation of youth into the County's juvenile justice system. There are vast differences in needs between youth who commit delinquent acts, youth who commit first-time nonviolent acts, and youth who commit status offenses also known as Children