



District Attorney of
New York County

Criminal Justice Investment Initiative

Reentry Innovation Challenge Stage 1: Request for Letters of Interest

No. 011

Expires 05/05/2017

I. Cover Sheet

A. Goal of the Reentry Innovation Challenge, Stage 1: Request for Letters of Interest

The goal of the Reentry Innovation Challenge (“the Challenge”) is to identify, support, and test new and innovative programs to address one or more of the key reentry challenges confronting people reentering communities in New York City from incarceration. This request for Letters of Interest (LOI) constitutes Stage 1 of the two-stage Challenge. The goal of Stage 1 is to seek LOIs from qualified applicants that describe high-impact, scalable interventions to be planned and piloted in New York City that aim to improve outcomes for individuals reentering the community from jail and/or prison, reduce recidivism among these individuals, and increase public safety. Upon review of LOIs, a subset of applicants may advance to Stage 2 of the Challenge, in which they will be invited to submit a full proposal for consideration for funding. One or more applicants that submit a full proposal may be awarded planning and pilot funding. **Failure to submit an LOI will disqualify an applicant from participating in Stage 2 and submitting a full proposal.** Any program funded through the Challenge will be subject to a rigorous evaluation by an independent research entity. This request for LOIs is not a commitment to fund any program.

B. Timeline and Submission Instructions

1. **Release Date of Request for LOI: March 29, 2017**
2. Any addenda to this request for LOI will be posted on the CJII website: <http://cjii.org/category/opportunities/>. It will be the responsibility of interested parties to check the website to remain up-to-date regarding all addenda issued.
3. **Submission Due Date:** Submissions are due by **Friday, May 5, 2017, at 11:59 pm EST.** Responses to the request for LOI should be submitted via the CJII application portal: <http://cuny-islg.fluidreview.com>.
4. Unless an addendum to this LOI is issued that extends the due date and time, all responses must be submitted prior to the time and date set forth above.

C. Amount and Number of Awards

Upon review of LOI submissions, the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office may invite one or more applicants to advance to Stage 2 of the Challenge and submit a full proposal for funding. Anticipated funding for any individual proposal funded through Stage 2 of the Challenge will be up to \$3,075,000, including up to \$75,000 for planning for up to six months, and up to \$1,000,000 per year for up to three years for piloting. DANY reserves the right to fund zero, one, or more than one program through the Challenge.

D. Contact Information

Questions regarding technical difficulties with the submission should be sent to cjii@islg.cuny.edu.

II. Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this Request for LOI and are defined here:

City University of New York (CUNY) Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG): ISLG is the technical assistance consultant to DANY for CJII. ISLG provides input to DANY, manages and provides guidance to CJII contractors, and conducts oversight and performance measurement throughout the lifetime of the initiative.

Criminal Justice Investment Initiative (CJII): The New York County District Attorney's Office established CJII in 2014 to invest funds^a in impactful projects that will improve public safety and promote a fair and efficient criminal justice system.

Innovation Challenge: Innovation Challenge refers to a competition designed to solicit innovative ideas for solving or mitigating intractable societal challenges and rigorous evaluation to assess their success.

New and Innovative: Programs that have no rigorous or robust demonstration of effectiveness but are designed with current best practices in mind. Such approaches could include an altogether new program or a significant adaptation of an evidence-based program to a new context. These programs could have been implemented in part or on a small scale, inside or outside of New York City, but require further investment to test their potential.

New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY): Manhattan District Attorney's Office. DANY established the Criminal Justice Investment Initiative.

Reentry: Reentry is the process of release from incarceration and reintegration into the community.

The Research Foundation of the City University of New York (RFCUNY, or Research Foundation): Under CJII, the Research Foundation of CUNY will administer all funds. The Research Foundation is a non-profit educational corporation that provides CUNY and non-CUNY clients with the administrative infrastructure to support sponsored program activities. The Research Foundation acts as DANY's fiscal agent for CJII.

^a These are asset forfeiture funds, derived from settlements with international banks that violated U.S. sanctions.

III. Summary of the Request for Letters of Interest

A. Purpose of LOI

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office (DANY) has committed to investing funds through its Criminal Justice Investment Initiative (CJII) to support impactful projects that improve public safety and promote a fair and efficient justice system in New York City. Up to \$15 million total will be available to fund programs selected through the CJII Reentry Innovation Challenge, as described in this Request for Letters of Interest (LOIs), and the CJII RFP for Reentry Services and Supports. These investments are situated within DANY's broader investment strategy for diversion and reentry.

DANY is launching this innovation challenge to identify, support, and test new and innovative programs to address the most intractable challenges associated with the reentry of individuals from jail and/or prison into New York City. This request for LOIs is the first stage of the two-stage CJII Reentry Innovation Challenge. Upon review of LOIs, a subset of applicants may advance to Stage 2 of the Challenge, in which they will be invited to submit a full proposal for consideration for funding (see Sections VI "LOI Evaluation" and VII "Anticipated Reentry Innovation Challenge Timeline"). **Failure to submit an LOI will disqualify an applicant from advancing to Stage 2 and submitting a full proposal.**

The City University of New York Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) will manage the grantees funded under CJII, and provide oversight and performance measurement throughout the lifetime of the initiative. The Research Foundation of CUNY (Research Foundation) will distribute funds to grantees funded under the Reentry Innovation Challenge initiative.

B. Anticipated Contract Specifications

DANY anticipates inviting select applicants that submit an LOI through this request to submit a full proposal describing in detail their proposed reentry intervention. DANY may fund zero, one, or more than one proposals. The length of planning and pilot funding for each contract awarded through the Reentry Innovation Challenge will not exceed 3.5 years, beginning in winter 2017/18. Funded applicants will be required to provide ongoing performance data (see Section III.D "Performance Measurement and Evaluation") to ISLG and to a third party evaluator. Funded applicants will be required to continue providing performance data for two years beyond the period of the program funding, as part of their contracts.

DANY anticipates that any agreement entered into as a result of the Reentry Innovation Challenge solicitation will be with DANY as the contracting party and ISLG as DANY's agent managing the initiative.

Applicants that submit LOIs may apply independently or form partnerships with other entities to conduct the proposed work. If an applicant engages partner organizations in the work, the applicant will hold the primary contract awarded through the Challenge. The applicant will then

subcontract with the partner organization(s). Only one organization should serve as the official applicant and submit the LOI to DANY on behalf of the partnership/coalition that will conduct the work.

Applicants that receive funding through the Challenge must be willing to work with Community Navigators (see Appendix 1), which are part of a broader CJII strategy to increase access to services and to increase coordination and partnership among service providers. Community Navigators are supervised by a Community Navigator managing entity. Funded applicants may be asked to receive and process referrals from Community Navigators, share client information with the Community Navigator managing entity and Community Navigators, and/or provide programmatic information to the Community Navigator managing entity on a regular basis.

C. Anticipated Available Funding

DANY anticipates total funding for programs selected through the CJII Reentry Innovation Challenge and the CJII RFP for Reentry Services and Supports to be up to \$15 million total (to be spread across multiple awards for up to 3.5 years). Funding for Reentry Innovation Challenge grantees will be divided into planning (phase I), which will last up to six months and may include (but not be limited to) finalizing program plans or designs, hiring and training staff, setting up technology, and establishing and testing referral streams; and pilot (phase II), which will last up to three years and is intended to support a pilot of the program to test its effectiveness and assess whether it can and should be brought to scale. While funding is anticipated for up to six months for planning and up to three years for the pilot, the duration of the two phases may be negotiated during the contracting phase to allow for needed flexibility.

Grant sizes may vary across awards depending on factors including, but not limited to, the nature of the proposed program, the number of proposed program sites, and the estimated number of people to be served. The maximum planning grant is \$75,000. Available annual pilot awards may range in scale and will not exceed \$1,000,000 per year per funded applicant. Funding for piloting (phase II) will be contingent upon approval of the plans developed during the planning phase (I).

Applicants may submit up to two LOIs as a lead applicant in response to this Request for LOIs. Applicants submitting an LOI as a lead applicant may also serve as partners/subcontractors on one or more other LOIs. Applicants submitting LOI(s) as lead applicant may also submit a proposal in response to the CJII RFP for Reentry Services and Supports.

D. Performance Measurement and Evaluation

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office is committed to measuring outcomes for CJII initiatives and disseminating that information so that others may learn from and build on those outcomes. Contractors will be required to provide ISLG with program and process information on a regular basis. These metrics will be finalized during the contracting phase or during the term of any contract awarded from this Challenge.

A key component of the Challenge is the evaluation of the funded approaches. Contractors funded through the Challenge will be required to coordinate regularly with a third-party evaluator contracted by DANY (through a separate solicitation process) to examine the effectiveness of the intervention funded through this Challenge. Funded applicants will be expected to work with DANY and ISLG to tailor their proposed intervention as necessary to support a rigorous evaluation.

IV. Anticipated Scope of Services

A. Background

Each year, approximately 75,000 people return to New York City following a period of incarceration in jail or prison.¹ The challenges associated with reentry from incarceration are well known. Individuals who are incarcerated often enter jail or prison with complex needs across many social service sectors, such as employment, education, housing, family, and behavioral health. The experience of incarceration—conditions of confinement and removal from one’s family and community—can initiate new and exacerbate existing needs. And, far too often, individuals reentering the community are challenged by the collateral consequences of incarceration and encounter significant barriers in meeting their basic needs.

Although city and state agencies and numerous providers work tirelessly to support the successful reentry of incarcerated people in New York City, their efforts often do not reach certain populations and/or are unable to address all of an individual’s reentry needs and prevent further involvement with the justice system. According to recidivism data compiled by New York City’s Criminal Justice Agency, more than half (51.2%) of defendants sentenced to jail or prison citywide in 2009 were re-arrested within a year, and nearly a quarter (22.9%) of them were re-arrested for a felony offense.^{2b} Additionally, a recent recidivism study found that 38 percent of people released from the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) who were originally committed from New York City returned to DOCCS custody within three years of their release.^{3c} In interviews conducted by ISLG to inform the CJII strategic plan,^d stakeholders overwhelmingly noted outstanding needs for improved engagement, assessment, and service linking processes for people reentering the community from incarceration, and tailored services to meet their housing, education, family, healthcare, and employment needs. While many services exist, it is clear from ongoing service gaps and high recidivism rates among formerly incarcerated individuals that additional, new ideas are worthy of solicitation and investment.

This innovation challenge seeks to elicit, support, and test *new* and *innovative* strategies to fill key gaps in the NYC reentry landscape and ultimately to improve outcomes for individuals reentering the community from jail and/or prison and increase public safety in New York City. In addition, DANY aims through the Challenge to support the development and contribution of new

^b The re-arrest rate calculation does not take into account the time a defendant is incarcerated, and it does not include re-arrests that take place outside of New York City or re-arrests for violations or infractions.

^c Releases include individuals who were released from parole program facilities as well as those released from correctional facilities. Returns include recommitments for parole violations as well as new felony convictions.

^d ISLG conducted more than 250 interviews with NYC experts, service providers and government agencies as part of the CJII planning process.

evidence to the field of “what works” in reentry. DANY is especially interested in identifying programs that effectively support the population that reenters from jail, since reentry from jail presents as a largely unmet and unique challenge across the nation given the myriad reasons people are held in jail, their often short lengths of stay, their often high levels of service needs, and the challenges associated with the provision of programming and services in jail.⁴

B. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the work solicited in this LOI will help achieve CJII’s goals of improving public safety and promoting a fair and efficient criminal justice system in New York City by:

- improving outcomes for individuals reentering the community from jail and/or prison (including, but not limited to, improved engagement in education and/or employment, improved physical and mental health, improved access to stable housing, improved family functioning, and reductions in criminal thinking);
- reducing recidivism and increasing public safety; and
- reducing reincarceration among formerly incarcerated individuals.

C. Program Description

This request seeks LOIs from qualified applicants that describe new and innovative programs for addressing one or more key reentry challenges for individuals reentering New York City from jail and/or prison. Proposed programs should be for high-impact, scalable interventions.

1. Eligible Applicants: Applicants may be for-profits, nonprofits^e, or governmental entities. Asset forfeiture funds (i.e., the source of the CJII Reentry Innovation Challenge funding) cannot be used to fund government staff salaries. CJII is committed to funding community-based initiatives and helping community-based organizations to develop capacity where needed. As such, organizations of varying sizes and capacity are eligible and encouraged to apply. Applicants, however, should have the staff, relationships, and resources necessary to plan and pilot their proposed reentry intervention or should demonstrate the ability to acquire and develop them in a timely manner upon being funded for a Reentry Innovation Challenge award. Applicants must be willing to work with DANY and ISLG to structure the proposed intervention to support a rigorous evaluation.

2. Reentry Program Design: The Challenge areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- a. *Immediate Engagement and Service Connection:* What are scalable and cost-effective ways to implement or improve the *immediate* engagement, assessment, and service/opportunity linking for individuals reentering the community from jail or prison?
- b. *Sustained Services and Opportunities:* What are scalable and cost-effective ways to promote successful reintegration of individuals reentering the community from jail and/or prison through the delivery of *ongoing* and *tailored* workforce, education, housing, family reunification, and/or health services and opportunities?

^e Nonprofits without 501(C)3 status may apply but are required to have a fiscal sponsor in place upon submission of the full proposal, should the applicant be invited to submit a full proposal.

Applicants may propose to address one or both of these areas of interest, and/or another pertinent and pressing reentry challenge not included here.

- 3. System and Community Partnerships:** Applicants are encouraged to, and funded applicants will be expected to, work with appropriate system partners (e.g., state and city agencies) and community partners (e.g., service providers, faith-based organizations, Community Navigators) to support the planning and implementation of pilots, as appropriate. Funded applicants may be expected to work with other CJII-funded organizations that are serving the same or similar populations and have participants who are seeking reentry support (e.g., Social Enterprises, College-in-Prison Reentry Program; see CJII.org for information).

D. Focus Neighborhoods and Populations to be Served

The focus population of this initiative is people reentering New York City from jail and/or prison. While proposed programs may serve individuals citywide, all proposals must propose to serve at least some individuals reentering communities in Manhattan.

V. LOI Content and Format

Applicants are asked to structure their LOI submission as a single document, which applicants will upload to the CJII Application Portal. Applicants submitting two LOIs should submit them as separate documents within a single application.

A. Elements of Submission

LOI submissions should address the following:

- Description of the reentry challenge the intervention seeks to address; include any relevant data to support the magnitude and scope of the challenge and likely demand for the intervention;
- Description of the proposed intervention and focus population(s), including the anticipated numbers of individuals served by the intervention;
- Discussion of how the intervention will address the reentry challenge, improve outcomes for participants and increase public safety. Include any supporting research or evidence;
- Identification of the applicant submitting the LOI (designate a “lead” applicant in cases where multiple organizations and/or agencies are collaborating);
- A list of agencies and/or organizations that would partner in the intervention (if applicable);
- A project timeline for the planning (up to 6 months) and pilot of the proposed intervention (up to 3 years); and
- An estimate of the cost to plan and pilot the intervention broken down by year. Planning costs should not exceed \$75,000 and annual costs to pilot the intervention should not exceed \$1 million and should not include the cost of the evaluation.

B. Submission Format and Length Requirements

Applicants should adhere to the following formatting requirements:

- All submissions should be single-spaced, using standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with 1-inch margins.

- Pages should be paginated.
- The submission should not exceed 3 pages (single spaced).
- Submissions should not contain hyperlinks. All relevant information should be included in the body of the submission. Reviewers will not visit external websites when evaluating submissions.

VI. LOI Evaluation

A. Evaluation Procedures

LOI submissions accepted by DANY will be reviewed to determine whether they are responsive to the requisites of this LOI request. Submissions that are determined to be non-responsive will be rejected (see VI.C. Minimum Requirements). Responsive submissions will be reviewed by DANY and ISLG staff, and DANY will advance a subset of submissions to a panel of experts (“the Panel”) for review. DANY may invite applicants selected for advancement to the Panel for review to make presentations and/or demonstrations to the Panel as part of the Panel’s review process. The Panel, comprised of policymakers and experts in the field of reentry, will recommend one or more applicants to DANY for further consideration. Informed by the Panel’s recommendation, DANY may invite one or more applicants to advance to Stage 2 and submit a full proposal.

DANY reserves the right to fund zero, one, or multiple programs, based on the proposals received in Stage 2 of the Reentry Innovation Challenge.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria, alongside other goals and priorities of CJII and this initiative stated in this Request for LOIs, will be used to identify LOI submissions for advancement to the Panel for review and for advancement from the Panel Review to Stage 2:

- Demonstrated significance of the reentry challenge the intervention seeks to address;
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed reentry intervention;
- Anticipated impact of the proposed reentry intervention; and
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed intervention.

C. Minimum Requirements

LOI submissions must meet minimum requirements to be reviewed by DANY and ISLG and advanced to the Panel for review. Specifically, applications must:

- identify a reentry challenge;
- propose a new and innovative intervention to address the identified reentry challenge; and
- propose to serve (directly or indirectly) people returning to New York City from jail and/or prison, including at least some individuals returning to Manhattan.

Submissions that do not meet these minimum requirements will be disqualified.

VII. Anticipated Reentry Innovation Challenge Timeline

- March 29, 2017: Request for Letters of Interest (LOIs) announced

- May 5, 2017: LOI submission deadline
- Mid-June 2017: Panel Review (possible applicant presentations/demonstrations)
- Late-June 2017: Full proposals invited
- Mid-August 2017: Proposals due from selected applicants
- Winter 2017/2018: Winners Announced

DANY reserves the right to adjust this anticipated timeline as needed to best meet the goals of this initiative and of CJII.

Appendix 1: Description of the Community Navigator Pilot

As part of CJII, DANY is making investments to ensure that people receive services to support positive outcomes and prevent any future contact with law enforcement. Therefore, DANY is investing in a pilot program to create Community Navigators, which will connect individuals to resources and services they need to prevent future crime and re-victimization in order to make a strong impact on public safety over a long period of time.

The Community Navigator pilot will begin to develop a network of trained peers and social workers—Community Navigators—to work with individuals to locate, connect, and engage with services they need. Navigators will be mobile and meet people where they are and serve as the bridge to guide individuals across different systems, city agencies, and organizations to ensure they are connected with the services and resources that meet their needs and achieve their goals. Additionally, Community Navigators will have the opportunity to participate in an educational fellowship program that will allow them to advance their education and support their career development through meaningful work in social service fields.

A managing entity will be responsible for managing the Community Navigator pilot (including recruiting, hiring, training, and managing individuals to work as Community Navigators) and the fellowship program. The managing entity will also collaborate with city agencies and community-based service providers to explore needs and to facilitate cooperation and coordination among stakeholders.

During the pilot, Community Navigators will focus on working in East Harlem with survivors of domestic violence and with young people (ages 14 to 21) who are at risk of becoming involved in the justice system. After the pilot, the network of Navigators will expand to other Manhattan neighborhoods that experience many factors that have an impact on crime. Navigators will also work with survivors of other types of crime as well as youth and adults who are involved in the justice system and people returning to neighborhoods from incarceration.

Community Navigators are independent of programs funded through the Challenge. They are, however, likely to have interaction with programs funded through the Challenge as part of their work connecting individuals to the services they need. Community Navigators will identify and connect with individuals from various city and social service agencies. They will connect those individuals with the services they need. Those services may be found within one or several agencies or organizations. The Community Navigator will work with individuals to determine what is needed, help them figure out how to access the services, work with them to make appointments (if necessary or desired), and accompany them to those appointments (if necessary or desired).

Programs funded through the Challenge *may* be asked to receive and process referrals from Community Navigators. Funded programs will also be encouraged to refer clients, as appropriate, to work with Community Navigators to support their ancillary needs.

Programs funded through the Challenge *may* be asked to share client information with Community Navigators and the managing entity to facilitate program implementation. The managing entity will also ensure that the process and procedures for sharing client information among the various stakeholders will be informed by best practices in working with survivors of

crime and with individuals at risk of violence. The Community Navigator pilot and initiative will comply with all federal, state, and city legal requirements including those of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Appendix 2: References

- ¹ New York City Department of Corrections (NYC DOC). Releases in 2015. Provided by DOC to ISLG on January 25, 2016.
New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYS DOCCS). Releases to New York City in 2014. Provided by DOCCS to ISLG on December 3, 2015.
- ² New York City's Data Analytics Recidivism Tool. New York City defendants sentenced to jail or prison in 2009. Data accessed March 27, 2017 at <http://recidivism.cityofnewyork.us/>
- ³ Ryang Hui Kim (2014). 2010 Inmate Releases Three Year Post Release Follow-up. State of New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. http://www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2014/2010_releases_3yr_out.pdf.
- ⁴ See for example, Solomon, A., Osborne, J., LoBuglio, S., Mellow, J., & Mukamal, D. (2008). Life After Lockup: Improving Reentry from Jail to the Community. Urban Institute. Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/220095.pdf>.