November 20, 2017

The CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) appreciates your interest in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Evaluation of the *Youth Opportunity Hubs* initiative.

This addendum includes answers to questions submitted via CJII Application Portal to ISLG by November 3, 2017.
ANSWERS TO APPLICANT QUESTIONS
Evaluation of the Youth Opportunity Hubs initiative

PROGRAM DETAILS

QUESTION: Have the protocols for HUB grantees to determine enrollment/completion eligibility been established, and can CJII make them available?

ANSWER: The eligibility criteria are outlined by Hub in Section IV. B. 3 of the RFP. Generally speaking, each Hub conducts broad outreach, given that the program model is designed to improve adolescent outcomes regardless of risk level. Nonetheless, some Hubs do have a more explicit focus on higher risk/need youth.

Additional enrollment information for each Hub is as follows. These details are subject to change:

- The Central and West Harlem Hub (Lead Entity: Community Connections for Youth, or CCFY) is focusing on young people ages 10-24 who live in, attend school in, or have a significant connection with Central and West Harlem. The Hub approach is built on the strengths of Credible Messengers (men and women from Harlem who were formerly incarcerated), the healing power of Restorative Justice, and the inclusion of Harlem's faith-based congregations in the work of engaging youth and families. The Hub is taking a tiered approach to its services. The Hub will provide intensive intervention in the form of a cohort-based fellowship program facilitated by Credible Messengers for youth who already have significant justice system involvement and known risk factors for gang involvement/gun violence; these youth will be referred by community and law enforcement partners. The Hub will also provide diversion services for youth with some level of justice system contact through youth development programming, including some cohort-based approaches and some low-touch interventions. Finally, the Hub will provide preventive services and general support for youth in the target age range in the community who are not specifically referred through justice system partners, but instead are referred through word of mouth and general community outreach. These youth will be offered a wide range of drop-in, low-touch services, as well as access to more intensive services if needed.

- The East Harlem Hub (Lead Entity: Union Settlement) is focusing on young people ages 10-24 who live in, attend school in, or have a significant connection with East Harlem. Young people who become Hub participants must display one or more risk factors. These risk factors include:
  - Antisocial behavior and alienation
  - Involvement in the criminal justice system
  - Favorable attitudes toward drug use and/or early onset of substance use
  - Aggression, violence, or other problem behaviors
  - School absenteeism
  - Victimization by and/or exposure to violence
  - Unstable housing
  - Cognitive and neurological deficits or mental/behavioral health disorders
Family risk factors (e.g., parent or sibling criminality/antisocial behaviors, poor parent supervision/monitoring, poor family attachment/bonding, etc.)

- The Lower East Side Hub (Lead Entity: Henry Street Settlement, or HSS) is focusing on young people ages 13-24 who live in, attend school in, or have a significant connection with the Lower East Side. Although the Hub does not have specific risk or vulnerability criteria that are required for a young person to become a Hub participant, it plans to focus outreach on both in-school and out-of-school youth, and to include specific outreach to programs focused on youth with previous or current involvement with the foster care and/or juvenile justice systems.

- The Washington Heights Hub (Lead Entity: New York Presbyterian) is focusing on young people ages 14-24 who live in, attend school in, or have a significant connection with Washington Heights. The Hub’s services will be open to all young people who fit the criteria above, and the Hub also plans to offer more intensive case management to youth identified as higher-risk through a clinical assessment.

- The Citywide Hub (Lead Entity: The Door) is focusing on young people ages 12-24 who live in, attend school in, or have a significant connection with Washington Heights, Central and West Harlem, East Harlem, and/or the Lower East Side. Unlike the other Hubs, the citywide Hub is not located in one of the focus neighborhoods and will serve young people from all of them. The Door serves a broad range of youth with varying needs through a network of interdisciplinary community partners. The Door does not have specific risk or vulnerability criteria that are required for a young person to become a Hub participant.

Program completion definitions vary by Hub and within each Hub, given that participant needs vary on a case by case basis. Often, the completion of high school/equivalency, placement into a stable job opportunity, and/or enrollment into higher education may indicate program completion, but both Hubs staff and the participants themselves determine together what completion means for them.

**QUESTION:** To what extent has the initiative identified and/or adopted specific strategies for building agency capacity, or is enhanced agency capacity associated strictly with the additional financial resources the HUBS receive to provide wraparound services? If the former, are there other entities connected to the initiative that have been charged specifically with supporting capacity development? If so, can you please describe the capacity-building strategies in question, and the role of any entity specifically charged with supporting such efforts? Can you provide any additional details on what changes in agency capacity are expected or hoped for?

**ANSWER:** One of the goals of the initiative, and of CJII more broadly, is to build the capacity of service providers in New York City. ISLG asks prospective grantees about their technical assistance needs, and inquires about them further during the contracting, planning, pilot, and implementation phases. Some technical assistance needs that applicants and grantees have already articulated include performance measurement, data systems, scaling up/capacity building, partnership building, trauma-informed practice,
financial practices/record-keeping, and others. ISLG addresses some of these needs using the expertise of its staff. For other needs, however, external resources (e.g., funding, consultants) are required. Currently, no other entity has been engaged specifically to support capacity building for Hubs.

One of the ways ISLG is providing technical assistance to Hubs is through participation in a learning network. This learning network will likely include ongoing meetings for different staff types at Hubs (e.g., all Hub Directors may have a quarterly meeting/training with a specific agenda developed by ISLG), as well as webinars and larger convenings for all Hub staff members. Some, but not all, of the technical assistance needs identified above will be addressed in the context of these convenings.

**EVALUATION DESIGN**

**QUESTION:** Have comparison groups already been identified by the programs (or funder) or is it up to the evaluator(s) to identify those groups and make arrangements to get relevant data for those cases?

**ANSWER:** Comparison groups have not yet been identified. As detailed in Section VI.B.2 of the RFP, applicants should propose approaches that allow for comparison to similar individuals (and/or families, schools, etc.), including a means of addressing selection bias. Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene representatives from the Hubs and the evaluator to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach. Any additional data will also be addressed in the DUAs to be negotiated between the evaluator and the Hubs.

**QUESTION:** Are we correct in assuming that both site level and overall project analyses are expected?

**ANSWER:** Yes, the outcome evaluation should focus on both the project (aggregate) and site (Hub) level, including exploration of individual Hubs. As discussed in Section I.A of the RFP, specific evaluation questions and goals are broad, but include an understanding of how the Hubs are implemented; whether they are effective in reducing risk factors for criminal justice involvement (e.g., school drop-out and delinquent behavior); whether they increase coordination among social service providers in the delivery of supports and opportunities, build the capacity of local organizations to better address the needs and opportunities in their neighborhoods, and increase the appeal and functionality of spaces and services that support young people’s development; and whether they are cost-effective. Thus, evaluation applicants should propose a research design that incorporates a process and outcome evaluation of the initiative, including participant-level outcomes (among clients) and organization- and systems-level outcomes (among providers and social service systems, and for the initiative as a whole), and a cost-benefit analysis (CBA).
QUESTION: To what extent are HUB grantees contractually required to collaborate with the evaluator?

ANSWER: Hubs are required to work with the evaluator, as necessary for evaluation of the initiative. All Hubs were instructed to consider the costs related to data collection and reporting throughout the contract term within their initial proposals. All Hubs funded under the initiative have dedicated staff time and, in some cases, additional resources necessary to provide performance data to ISLG and to work with the evaluator. This funding applies during the three-month planning period, nine-month pilot period, and three-year implementation period, as well as for one additional year following the implementation period.

Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene representatives from the Hubs and the evaluator to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach. In this sense, ISLG anticipates that the Hubs and evaluator will work together to ensure that the evaluation approach is feasible and ethical.

However, the evaluator should not plan on providing funding to or for program staff. It is a priority that the evaluator be able to make independent decisions and be an independent entity. Thus, program staff should participate in the evaluation but should not be part of the evaluation team in any sense.

DATA

ISLG received several questions regarding the types of data Providers are expected to track. This explanation serves to address those questions.

ANSWER: Hubs will submit regular performance data to ISLG, based primarily on administrative data maintained by the Hubs. These metrics are currently being finalized, but pertain to both Lead Entities’ and Partner Providers’ total volume of youth screened, demographic characteristics of youth who are screened, total volume of participants, demographic characteristics of participants, number of participants by type of wraparound support and specific programs within each type, efficiency of service delivery, coordination of services, and program dosage and completion.

Interventions generally fall into seven types of wraparound supports/opportunities: educational support, employment, prosocial and holistic development, health, family strengthening, criminal justice prevention and support, and other. Ultimately, the performance metrics aim to provide information about youth participation and engagement in services within the Hub as a whole, within the Lead Entity, and within the Partner Providers. This structure will help ISLG assess Hub functioning and whether the Lead Entity and Partner Providers are meeting their pre-established enrollment goals. These data are expected to be provided to ISLG in January in aggregate form, though in some cases they may be provided in case-level, non-identifiable form. ISLG anticipates that many of these data will also be of interest to the evaluator, albeit in personally
identifiable form. As such, ISLG anticipates that the performance data could also be provided to the evaluator in identifiable, case-level form, pursuant to data use agreements (DUAs) to be negotiated between the Hubs and the evaluator.

In addition, Hubs are required to work with ISLG and the evaluator for purposes of the evaluation. The evaluator will be responsible for identifying and negotiating any additional sources of data beyond the administrative data described above. Some Hubs already collect follow-up data, and they may agree to make such data available to the evaluator. However, other Hubs do not collect such data. ISLG does not expect that Hubs will provide non-administrative data as part of their responsibility to submit regular performance data to ISLG.

Thus, ISLG encourages applicants to propose additional sources of data and data collection activities, including follow-up data, to supplement the anticipated performance-related administrative data. The evaluator will be responsible for obtaining any such additional data. The cost of any additional data collection and analysis should be incorporated into the budget and explained in the budget narrative. Applicants should anticipate challenges associated with data collection and reporting (e.g., lack of expertise or software) and how they plan to address them. Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene representatives from the Hubs and the evaluator to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach. Any additional data will also be addressed in the DUAs to be negotiated between the evaluator and the Hubs.

ISLG received several questions regarding data use agreements, including whether they are currently in place and, if not, the entity that would be responsible for negotiating them. This explanation serves to address those questions.

**ANSWER:** Hubs will provide data to ISLG as articulated in the contracts between ISLG and Hubs. These provisions allow for the transfer and use of data in aggregate form, or in case/individual-level form provided that such data are de-identified. ISLG may share such data with the evaluator. ISLG does not expect that the Hubs will provide non-administrative data as part of their responsibility to submit regular performance data to ISLG. Hubs’ contracts state that, should personally identifiable information (PII) and/or other data not described above be required for the purposes of the project and/or evaluation, then a data use agreement would need to be negotiated between the relevant parties.

ISLG encourages applicants to propose additional sources of data and data collection activities, including follow-up and outcome data, to supplement the anticipated performance-related administrative data. The evaluator will be responsible for identifying and negotiating any additional sources of data beyond the administrative data provided to ISLG for the purposes of performance measurement. The cost of any additional data collection and analysis should be incorporated into the budget and explained in the budget narrative. Applicants should anticipate challenges associated with data collection and reporting (e.g., lack of expertise or software) and how they plan to address them. Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene the Hubs and the evaluator.
to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach. Any additional data will also be addressed in the DUAs to be negotiated between the evaluator and the Hubs.

As discussed in Section IV. B of the RFP, the evaluation should seek to understand the role of Youth Opportunity Hubs with regard to both youth and organization-level outcomes, as part of both process and outcome evaluations. Applicants should propose a design for a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, and a cost-benefit analysis, as specified in Section IV. B. 4.

QUESTION: Although the RFP states that applicants should anticipate having access to data related to youth participation in activities and services provided by the HUBS, to what extent have decisions been made about the systems that will be used to collect these data and the management and support of these systems at the initiative level? At the Hub level? Are there characteristics related to the collection and extraction of these data that would impact when and how these data would be made available to the evaluation team?

ANSWER: Each Hub maintains its own data system. All five of the Hubs have systems that will allow for the provision of performance data at both a participant level and an organizational level. As noted below, some of these approaches require retroactive data reporting from Partner Providers to Lead Entities. Hubs’ ability to track participants in real time varies more substantially within the Hubs, however. At a minimum, Hubs are required to provide data to ISLG in Excel format. Other systems may be used, depending on any software overlap between the Hubs and the evaluator.

Three of five Hubs use Salesforce to manage their data, but with slightly different data collection models: Partner Providers in the Central and West Harlem Hub are using spreadsheets to track participant data and then sending those data files to the Lead Entity (CCFY) each quarter. In the Citywide Hub, Partner Providers and the Lead Entity (The Door) are co-located at the same site to facilitate data collection. In the East Harlem Hub, Youth Advocates and Navigators accompany youth to access services, inputting data as services are delivered, whether at the Lead Entity (Union Settlement) or Partner Provider sites. The Lower East Side Hub (for which Henry Street Settlement is the Lead Entity) is using the Awards system by Foothold and has positioned social workers (Hub staff) at each Partner Provider site, which facilitates data collection as youth interface with Partner Providers. The Washington Heights Hub (for which New York Presbyterian is the Lead Entity) is currently using SharePoint and will soon be transitioning to NowPow, a data management system that tracks service referrals, to track service delivery.

BUDGET

QUESTION: The preferred indirect cost rate of 17 percent is mentioned on page 20. It also states “this solicitation does not specify a maximum allowable rate or maximum amount for administrative or indirect expenses.” Is the 17 percent or lower preferred rate listed in any formal policy document? If so, could potential applicants be directed to a copy of that
in order to provide it to their sponsored research offices?

**ANSWER:** This solicitation does not specify a maximum allowable rate or maximum amount for administrative or indirect expenses, but the preferred rate is 17% or below. The applicant should provide justification for the budget and any rate(s) requested, and consider that contract awards will be made to the applicants whose proposals are determined to be the most advantageous by the proposal evaluation team, taking into consideration the price and such other factors and criteria as are set forth in the RFP.

**PROPOSAL FORMAT**

**QUESTION:** There is no reference to potential appendices related to the proposed research plan (e.g., possible draft measures, illustrative figures). Does all relevant information have to be contained in the 15 pages designated for that content?

**ANSWER:** Appendices are not allowed for most sections of the proposal. Detailed protocols and instruments are not required for submission with this proposal; the evaluator will develop them with input from ISLG, Hubs, and other relevant parties once the evaluator is selected. Rather, the proposal should focus on the broad evaluation design and the components listed in Section VI.B of the RFP.

All submissions should be double-spaced, using standard 12-point font (Times New Roman preferred) with 1-inch margins. Applications submitted with single spacing will be converted to double spacing, and the length restrictions specified in Section VI. B. I of the RFP will be applied to the documents reformatted for double spacing. Charts, figures, tables, footnotes, endnotes, and references do not need to be double-spaced, but are included in any restrictions on length, as described in Section VI. B. I of the RFP.