May 25, 2018

The CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) appreciates your interest in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Evaluation of the *Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood* initiative.

This addendum includes answers to questions submitted via CJII Application Portal to ISLG by May 9, 2018.
ANSWERS TO APPLICANT QUESTIONS
Evaluation of the
Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood Initiative

PROGRAM DESIGN

QUESTION: Do the two programs base or model their services upon a specific health behavior theory or intervention model that should be considered when creating the respective logic models for evaluation?

ANSWER: The models for Graham Windham’s Graham SLAM and The Door’s Manhattan Academy Plus incorporate several evidence-based treatments and interventions. Components of their programs are listed below. More details on each program can be found in Section IV.B and Appendix 3 of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to Evaluate Programs for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood.

- **The Door: Manhattan Academy Plus (MAP)**
  - Positive youth development framework (PYD)
  - Wraparound supports and services
  - SPARCS (Structured Therapy for Adolescents Responding to Stress)
  - TF-CBT (Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy)
  - STAIR/NST (Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation/Narrative Story-Telling)

- **Graham Windham: Graham SLAM (Support, Lead, Achieve, Model)**
  - MI (Motivational Interviewing)
  - SBC (Solutions-based Casework)
  - PPC (Positive Peer Culture)
  - Network Therapeutic Community
  - *Career Club* (a component of YA WORC or Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers)

QUESTION: Could the two programs provide a proportional break-out of their clients by age and gender?

ANSWER: The Door estimates that approximately half of its clients will identify as cisgender female and the other half will identify as cisgender male. In addition, a small number of clients will identify as transgender or gender nonconforming. It estimates that approximately one third of its clients will be ages 16-18, and two thirds will be ages 19-24.

Similarly, Graham Windham estimates that approximately one half of its clients will be female and one half will be male. It will also update its databases to include options for other genders. In addition, it anticipates that one third of its clients will be ages 16-18, and two thirds will be ages 19-24.
QUESTION: What proportion of youth served through each program also participate in other programs, such as "Supervision 21"? This could confound measurement of outcomes directly linked to program participation.

ANSWER: Any young person between ages 18-21 who signs herself out of care is automatically on the Supervision 21 caseload. Staff in the Supervision 21 unit seek to reach out to such youth and connect them to relevant programs, which would include Graham SLAM and the MAP.

The Door notes that it tracks all of the different (internal) Door programs and services in which a young person is engaged. It does not currently track youth participation in specific external programs, such as “Supervision 21”. Graham Windham does not have this information readily available.

QUESTION: Do you know whether there is any overlap in individuals served by the two programs? Might some clients participate in both of the programs to be evaluated?

ANSWER: This specific information is unknown. Nonetheless, The Door notes that it does not have a substantial number of Graham Windham participants in its existing programs. Therefore, it does not anticipate significant overlap between the programs going forward. Graham Windham notes that it has previously referred participants to The Door for GED/TASC services but is unable to provide more specific information.

EVALUATION DESIGN

We received several questions regarding the construction of comparison groups. This explanation serves to address those questions.

ANSWER: As detailed in Section VI.B.2 of the RFP, applicants should propose outcome evaluation designs that allow for comparison of intervention participants to those who do not engage in the intervention, as well as intervention completers to non-completers. Treatment-as-usual groups could consist of individuals receiving non-intervention treatment and/or individuals receiving no treatment at all. Applicants should justify the proposed outcome evaluation design, including comparison groups, in light of the research in Section VI.B.1, including how the proposed outcome evaluation will add to understanding and knowledge in/of the field.

Providers will likely exercise some authority in the selection of program participants/employees, which could introduce selection bias (e.g., from an application process). Applicants should anticipate this possibility and propose a strategy for addressing it. In addition, given the potential difficulty of identifying appropriate comparison groups, applicants should also discuss any necessary approaches for accounting for differences between intervention and comparison groups.
Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene representatives from ACS, the providers (grantees), and the evaluator to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach.

**QUESTION:** In their funding proposals, did the two programs identify the specific outcomes they believe they will achieve? If so, can you please share this information? Should the outcome evaluations be standardized generally across both programs to allow for comparison, or more closely tied to the outcomes each program seeks to achieve?

**ANSWER:** The goal of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood was to identify qualified vendors to plan and pilot OR scale up innovative transition programs/approaches for foster youth who are close to transitioning to adulthood or who have recently transitioned to adulthood from the child welfare system (ages 16 to 24). Programs were encouraged to provide services related to:

- Housing (e.g., rent subsidies, group homes)
- Employment (e.g., workforce development, job placement)
- Education (e.g., tutoring, college application assistance)
- Supportive services (e.g., mental health counseling, mentoring)
- Permanency (e.g., permanency pacts, KinGap agreements)

Applicants should propose an outcome evaluation design that facilitates understanding of the individual programs, including participants’ engagement with the programs and relevant outcomes in education, employment, and justice system involvement. Thus, the evaluation designs should be tailored to each program individually. Nonetheless, the evaluator may seek to incorporate similar strategies or measures in the evaluation of each program, so as to enable some comparison between the programs and to the foster care system more generally.

Graham SLAM’s overarching goal is that every young person in Graham Windham’s child welfare programs who is 16 or older today will enter a living-wage career path by age 25. It noted specific program goals of improving educational attainment and employment outcomes. The Door’s MAP and Bronx Academies includes specific goals of improving employment outcomes, educational attainment, postsecondary enrollment, and housing stability.

ISLG encourages applicants to propose outcomes or questions relevant to the field in addition to those listed above, provided that they align with the broad goals articulated above. These additional measures may help discern additional benefits to the program beyond the constructs discussed in the RFP, but should not replace those listed in the RFP or above. Following the selection of the evaluator(s), ISLG will convene the providers and the evaluator(s) to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach. Any additional data will also be addressed in the DUAs to be negotiated between the evaluator(s) and the provider(s).
QUESTION: The RFP discusses a cost-benefit analysis. Is CJII open to variations on cost-benefit, such as cost avoidance?

ANSWER: Applicants should propose the strongest possible design for each of the elements listed in Section VI.B. Applicants are encouraged but not required to submit a proposal for a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA). Applicants may also propose other analyses that assess financial factors of the programs, such as cost avoidance. If submitting a proposal for a CBA or related analysis, applicants should justify the proposed design in light of the research in Section VI.B.1 in the Request for Proposals (RFP) to Evaluate Programs for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood, including how the proposed analysis will add to understanding and knowledge in/of the field. Whether an applicant proposes a CBA or related analysis is a factor that will be considered when scoring the proposals.

QUESTION: Are you interested in evaluating the effect of the programs on younger participants who are still in their foster homes? or Is the primary focus more narrowly on those who have already aged out?

ANSWER: The goal of the Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood initiative is to pilot OR scale up innovative transition programs/approaches specifically for foster youth who are close to transitioning to adulthood or who have recently transitioned to adulthood from the child welfare system (ages 16 to 24). Thus, the providers (grantees) will be serving youth who are A) still engaged in the child welfare system, but will soon age out, and B) individuals who have recently transitioned to adulthood. Within this focus population, the outcome evaluation should include a stratified analysis of program effects based on participant differences in age, race, dosage, justice system involvement, and other characteristics.

QUESTION: We are assuming that IRB clearance would be appropriate given that this research will involve gathering data from youth. Is the vendor expected to arrange for IRB clearance or will CUNY provide this support?

ANSWER: The evaluator is responsible for securing any necessary approval from its Institutional Review Board (IRB) and any other review boards necessary to conduct the evaluation. With respect to ACS, the evaluation may require approvals from both ACS Research Review Committee and NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Conditioned on ACS/OCFS approvals, if needed, the evaluator will be asked to submit a written request for administrative data and will meet with the ACS data team to discuss feasibility of the request and logistics.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PROVISION OF DATA

We received several questions regarding providers’ (grantees’) participation in the evaluation, including their responsibility and ability to collect and provide data to the evaluator. This explanation serves to address those questions.
**ANSWER:** Both funded providers under the *Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood* initiative are required to work with the evaluator throughout the duration of the planning period (if applicable), implementation period and up to an additional year following the implementation period. This may include the provision of existing administrative data, interpretation or clarification of data, facilitation of additional data collection (e.g., distributing surveys, sending reminder emails, providing contact information to the evaluator on current and former participants), and, if the provider’s budget allows, the collection of additional data.

Providers (grantees) were instructed to consider the costs related to data collection and reporting throughout the contract term within their initial proposals. Both providers 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 planning period (if applicable), three-year implementation period, as well as for one additional year following the implementation period.

Both providers (grantees) will submit regular performance data to ISLG, based primarily on administrative data maintained by the providers. These metrics commonly pertain to total volume of participants, participant characteristics, efficiency of program enrollment, and program dosage and completion. The metrics vary by provider, and providers may also provide other types of performance data to ISLG, e.g., on coordination with external providers. Both providers maintain their own data systems. Graham Windham utilizes an internal database called Enterprise Client Management System (eCMS). eCMS incorporates a database that was built specifically to track the services provided by the program. The Door uses Salesforce to track youth participation in programs and services as well as youth outcomes and progress toward goals. The Door’s program staff and data team work collaboratively to collect, track, and analyze data with supervision and oversight from The Door’s Managing Director of Career and Education Services. Although both providers’ systems allow for the tracking on individual participants, these data are expected to be provided to ISLG in aggregate form.

ISLG anticipates that many of these data will also be of interest to the evaluator, and 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 providers and the evaluator directly. In addition, providers may already collect follow-up data, and they may agree to make such data available to the evaluator. However, ISLG does not expect that providers will provide non-administrative data as part of their responsibility to submit regular performance data to ISLG, and ISLG does not collect identifiable data from providers.

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(s) will be responsible for obtaining any such additional data. **Although both programs are required to work with the**
The evaluator, including facilitating the collection of data, they are not expected to absorb the costs of data collection beyond the purposes of providing performance data to ISLG and working with the evaluator on matters involving these data and others already collected by the programs. Accordingly, evaluation applicants should incorporate the cost of any additional data collection and analysis into their budgets and explain them 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(s), ISLG will convene the providers and the evaluator(s) to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach.

As noted above, both programs 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.

**We received several questions regarding specific data collected by providers (grantees). This explanation serves to address those questions.**

**ANSWER:** Graham Windham collects data on demographic characteristics; employment, school enrollment, and status in other key domains (e.g., housing stability, court involvement); and program attendance, performance, and achievement in its internal database. It does not currently use standardized assessment tools. Graham Windham collects this information at intake and during participation in the program and stores it at the child level. It is also able to collect some data on foster care youth prior to their participation in the program. Graham Windham will only be able to provide de-identified or identified foster care data at the child level if ACS/OCFS approves the evaluator’s request.

Graham Windham does not require any guardian permission to participate in programming. In addition, Graham Windham has access to the most recent contact information of current participants and participants who have dropped out of programming. However, as with the data described above, Graham Windham will only be able to provide contact information for foster care youth with the approval of ACS/OCFS.

The Door collects basic demographic, service utilization, and outcome data. The Door collects data at intake, during enrollment, at program completion (e.g., at placement in employment, education, or housing), and then again up to 12 months following completion/placement. All data are stored in an individual client record and are also available in group level reports from our Salesforce data system. Examples of the data The Door collects of participants include: age, race, address, living situation, foster care status, juvenile justice system, pregnant/parenting status, educational history, employment history, attendance in programs/classes, enrollment in a training or internship, completion of a training or internship, job placement and retention, college enrollment and retention, HSE enrollment, grade gains, and high school diploma or HSE degree attainment. The only standardized assessment tool The Door uses is the TABE to determine young people’s math and reading levels at time of intake. This helps to place
them in the appropriate education class or job. For students in adult education classes, the TABE is administered approximately every 100 hours to measure grade gains and progress.

The Door also collects phone numbers and email addresses for all participants. All young people receiving Career and Education Services sign an education and career information release form. As a confidential youth space, The Door does not require any guardian permission to participate in programming. If a specific program (e.g., MAP) has an evaluation component, The Door typically asks participants to sign this additional document during intake so that they understand the evaluation expectations. The only time The Door discloses any information about young people is when they have provided specific written permission to do so or The Door is subpoenaed by law enforcement.

If a young person “drops out” of its program, The Door continues to try and contact them via phone and/or email, but they cannot guarantee that the information will be accurate, as many young people turn off cell phones, change their numbers, or stop checking their email accounts. In order to provide contact information, The Door would need to alter their consent form for young people to sign at program enrollment and to establish a data sharing agreement with the evaluator.

QUESTION: Does ACS know that this evaluation is taking place?
A. If so, did ACS request that the evaluator submit materials through the ACS Research Review committee?
B. Has ACS indicated that they will support the evaluator’s data needs as long as they comply with the regulations?

ANSWER: DANY, ISLG, and ACS have been in regular communication in preparation for the Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood initiative as well as its evaluation. They expect to continue this collaboration throughout the duration of the initiative and its evaluation.

Approval from ACS and other city agencies will likely be necessary to execute the evaluation and thus the successful contractor, working with DANY/ISLG, will need to be prepared to navigate these processes to gain access to the data. Note that ACS/OCFS may need to review not only administrative data requests but any data collection tools (interview, focus groups, survey tools/protocols) and any consent/assent forms involving ACS clients, ACS staff, and staff at ACS contract agencies.

Applicants should not request letters of support from ACS as part of their proposals, nor are they expected to submit materials to the ACS review board prior to their selection as the evaluator. After the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene ACS, program representatives, the evaluator, and other relevant parties to discuss the research design and necessary processes for approval. Applicants should describe any relevant experience with ACS or the programs in the past, including securing research approval and administrative data.
QUESTION: What information, if any, will DANY be able to provide the contractor on research participants and their involvement in the criminal justice system?

ANSWER: Applicants should describe any additional anticipated sources of data, including from DANY or other agencies. For reference, DANY is not able to provide data on people arrested outside of Manhattan, so additional sources of data (e.g., from DCJS) are encouraged. The evaluator will be responsible for identifying and negotiating any additional sources of data beyond the administrative data described in Section VI.B.3, as well as obtaining any necessary agency approval, including from DANY or others, for the use of those data. Applicants should also describe their experience securing and analyzing these data, as indicated in Section VI.E.4 of the RFP.

BUDGET

QUESTION: Can we provide our budget using fully-loaded hourly rates, inclusive of staff direct labor, indirect costs, and fixed fee?

ANSWER: Applicants’ budgets and budgets narratives should include the information identified in Sections VI.F and Section VI.G of the RFP to Evaluate Programs for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood. Applicants are encouraged to be as clear as possible, including distinguishing between direct and indirect costs. Applicants should specify the types of expenses included as indirect costs, and describe how they determine whether to charge an expense as an indirect versus a direct cost. Applicants should clearly describe any rates or fees and include justification for them. In addition, the Evaluation Budget Narrative should link the proposed costs to the proposed evaluation components and activities and outline any assumptions on which the budget is based.

QUESTION: Will you have flexibility on the overhead rate of 17%?

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: Will you accept responses with co-applicants, rather than one lead organization?

ANSWER: Applicants may apply independently or form partnerships with other organizations to conduct the proposed work; neither model is preferred over the other. All proposals will be assessed based on their responsiveness to the goals and requirements of
the RFP, including the applicant’s and any partner provider’s relevant experience and organizational capacity. See Sections VI.D and VI.E for more information. As described in Section VI.C, applicants are encouraged to provide letters of support/commitment from partners, consultants, subcontractors, and/or other funders, as appropriate.

If an applicant plans to engage partner organizations in the evaluation, only one organization should serve as the official applicant and submit the proposal to DANY on behalf of the partnership/coalition that will conduct the work. In such case, the applicant will hold the primary contract awarded under this RFP and will then subcontract with the partner organizations. All partnerships must be approved by DANY.

**QUESTION: Do you have preferences for types of letters of support?**

**ANSWER:** Applicants may, but are not required, to submit letters of support. These letters may come from government agencies, consultants, subcontractors, and/or other funders, but are not restricted in their form or content. For instance, these letters could detail past collaboration, speak to the strengths of the applicant in general, or describe the applicant’s ability to conduct an outcome evaluation in particular. Note that applicants do not need and should not request letters of support from providers who will be evaluated as part of this initiative.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**QUESTION: Regarding Page 59, Appendix 6: The items on this page have printed out, numbered as 4 through 7. Are there the first three items missing?**

**ANSWER:** This was a copy error as a result of attaching the original program RFP as Appendix 6, and the items should read as 1 through 4, and not 4 through 7. There are no items missing from page 59 of Appendix 6.

Please note that Appendix 6 is the original Request for Proposals (RFP) for Programs and Approaches for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood and is available [here](#) as well. The content therein was directed towards potential service providers. For information on Performance Measurement under the current RFP to Evaluate Programs for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood, please see Section VIII. Appendix 1.