CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

District Attorney of
New York County

December 18, 2019

The CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) appreciates your interest in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Process Evaluation of the *Community Navigators Program*.

This addendum includes answers to questions submitted via CJII Application Portal to ISLG by December 9, 2019.

ANSWERS TO APPLICANT QUESTIONS
Process Evaluation of the
Community Navigators Program

PROGRAM MODEL

ISLG received several questions regarding the Navigator program model. These questions are answered below, including: Is the Community Navigator program based on a particular navigation model? If so, what is the name of the model? Is there a current version of a theory of change for the program and if so, can it be shared?

> **ANSWER:** The Community Navigator Program incorporates elements of peer navigation and community health worker ("CHW") models. It intends to fill the gap between service need and service use by providing intentional, tailored support to connect individuals to appropriate and relevant services. This service gap may result from service referrals that go unused, or from needs that have not been formally identified and therefore, not linked to appropriate services. The program recognizes that individuals may fail to connect to services for many reasons, whether due to lack of knowledge about how to engage in services, insufficient time or resources to do so, because the services to which they are referred are not appropriate for their problems, or because they are not culturally responsive, among other reasons. Accordingly, the program provides trauma-informed and holistic peer support in order to encourage individuals to engage in relevant and appropriate services.

QUESTION: What are the primary target outcomes of the Community Navigator Program?

> **ANSWER:** First and foremost, the program seeks to link clients to the appropriate services and supports for their needs. In so doing, the program aims to improve client outcomes with regard to mental and physical well-being, employment, education, housing, and other domains.

QUESTION: Can you define success for the client? How do you differentiate completion and inactivity (loss of client) when you deactivate them?

> **ANSWER:** The program aims to engage clients for as long as they need support, ideally until all identified needs have been met. Clients' cases may be deactivated because all of their needs have been met (e.g., client is fully engaged in referral services to address need, client need was met by the services to which they were connected), or because they disengage prior to that point. When a case is deactivated, the Navigator records the reason for deactivation, including: client successfully linked to providers for all identified needs; client successfully linked to providers for some identified needs but refused further linkages; client requested case closure after receiving three or fewer Navigator contacts without a successful linkage; client requested case closure after receiving four or more Navigator contracts without a successful linkage; and Navigator is unable to locate the client. Cases that have been deactivated can be reactivated at any time if the client

wishes to resume engagement with the program.

QUESTION: What are the eligibility criteria for enrollment in the program?

ANSWER: The minimum age for an individual to engage with the Community Navigator Program is 14 years old. The current focus of the program is youth, young adults and their families and support networks, particularly those with ties to the East Harlem community. However, these criteria are flexible, and the program also serves people who do not meet these criteria. Among this population, there is a particular interest in justice-involved individuals, persons returning to communities from incarceration, and persons who have experienced violence such as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, or community violence of any kind.

ISLG received several questions regarding client population languages spoken. These questions are answered below, including: What are the primary languages spoken by the population intended to receive the services? Will the evaluator have access to language translation services in order to fully engage non-English speakers?

ANSWER: Most clients are served in English or Spanish. The program serves non-English speakers primarily through Navigators who speak languages other than English. The selected evaluator will be responsible for securing translation services as needed for purposes of the evaluation.

ISLG received several questions regarding participating organizations in the Navigator referral network. These questions are answered below, including: How many CBOs and city agencies are Navigators able to refer their clients to across each of the service categories included on page 8? Is there a list that can be shared of the community-based organizations that the Navigators have partnered with in the past? Can ISLG provide information on how many service agencies/organizations are in the Navigators program's referral network?

ANSWER: The Community Navigators Program has developed numerous partnerships with community-based organizations and city agencies across East Harlem and NYC more broadly, many of whom offer a variety of services relevant to the categories listed on page 8 of the RFP. The Community Navigators maintain a referral list, which includes more than 200 providers that may be a resource to the program. In Q2 2019, the Community Navigators referred clients to 82 different service providers. Information on referral partners and the referral system will be available to the evaluator of the initiative. Note that these partners are not funded through the Navigators initiative.

QUESTION: How many Navigator offices are there, including co-located sites?

ANSWER: The Community Navigator Program has one central office located in East Harlem; it is moving into a larger space in the same neighborhood in January 2020 and will close its existing office. The program had co-location sites in the earlier stages of implementation, but currently does not maintain these sites formally. Rather, Navigators now partner with select organizations and agencies (e.g., hospitals, schools) serving the focus populations. Although some partnerships are simply referral partners, others host Navigators for regularly scheduled "office hours." There are currently 10 CBOs hosting Navigators through office hours at their sites. Each site has a different schedule; for example, one site may have two Navigators assigned—one on Wednesdays from 10am-1pm and another on Thursdays from 4-6pm.

ISLG received several questions regarding the number of Navigators and teams. These questions are answered below, including: How many Navigators are there in total? How many Navigator teams are there? Are the student interns assigned to teams? If so, do they primarily work as Peer Navigators?

ANSWER: As of November 2019, there were a total of 12 Navigators and eight interns (7 BSW, 1 MSW). Navigator outreach teams consist of two Navigators and an intern. The interns are part of the daily program operations; their primary function is as Peer Navigators, and they work up to 14 hours per week in the program.

ISLG received several questions regarding Navigator neighborhood zones. These questions are answered below, including: How many zones are there? What is the composition of the zones? Is there a map of the zones? How are the zones covered by the Navigators? How does a Navigator/team select a zone to cover? How do they work in the zone? What happens when the client bleeds between zones?

ANSWER: There are ten designated "zones" throughout the East Harlem community for community outreach. Each zone consists of several city blocks and includes individuals who may be disconnected to services and/or unfamiliar to the program. Navigators are assigned a zoned area, but do not work exclusively within them, e.g., if accompanying a client outside of the zone. During outreach, Navigators use several engagement strategies: direct outreach (stopping people in the street and connecting with them regarding the program), tabling (setting up a kiosk of information at a designated location), and/or knocking on doors (selecting specific buildings and businesses to flyer or connect with tenants). It is likely that community members encounter Navigators at various locations as part of this strategy.

ISLG received several questions regarding how Navigators serve families. These questions are answered below, including: The RFP (page 10) indicates that the target caseload per Peer Navigator is "20 individuals." Given that the program serves individuals and their families, is each family member considered a client or is the family unit considered the "individual" client? Can you elaborate on your definition of family? What constitutes a family and what types of support do you offer to the family? Can you provide more information about how families will be engaged?

ANSWER: Navigators aim to serve the whole family unit, as needs of individual family members necessarily affect overall family dynamics and functioning. Therefore, when possible, Navigators engage more than one member of a family, including children, parents, and other caretakers. These family members may have varying or related service needs and as such, be connected to services that serve them collectively or independently. For the purposes of determining caseload, anyone actively receiving services counts toward the number of individuals on a caseload. If more than one member of the family is actively engaged with the Navigator, they would count independently toward that average caseload of 20 individuals.

QUESTION: Can you provide additional details on the training the Navigators receive? Is the training curriculum and materials available to the prospective applicants?

ANSWER: All Community Navigator staff participate in a week-long, mandatory initial orientation training. Training modules include, but are not limited to: using the case management system; client engagement and assessment; understanding mental health/trauma issues, domestic violence and substance abuse; working with LGBTQ people; and understanding the housing, immigration and child welfare systems. These are further enhanced through weekly trainings provided by Navigator staff, Navigator Steering Committee/Advisory Group members, Hunter faculty, and/or outside experts. Additionally, Navigators receive ongoing administrative and clinical supervision to address any outstanding training needs and reinforce skills that were emphasized in previous trainings. Social Work Navigators receive additional supervisory training through external trainers and/or certificate programs. Training materials will be available to the applicant selected to conduct the evaluation.

QUESTION: Page 9 of the RFP explains that Peer Navigators are "often, but not exclusively" "peers" of the individuals with whom they work (i.e., are from the same neighborhood or share similar backgrounds or life experiences). How many Peer Navigators are not considered peers as defined in the RFP? How are those individuals selected for the program and what is their background?

ANSWER: The program aims to employ Navigators whose experiences reflect the communities they serve, such as people with criminal justice histories, foster care involvement, prior victimization, connections to the community, particular racial/ethnic backgrounds, specific language abilities, and others. Because these identities and experiences intersect, some Navigator experiences may be more or less relevant to a particular client or community. Peer Navigators are selected through a formal application process, including submission of resume the RF CUNY employment website, and subsequent participation in a group interview with the Navigator team.

AVAILABILITY AND PROVISION OF DATA

ISLG received several questions regarding the types of data collected for the program. These questions are answered below, including: Does the Navigators program currently use a data management system, and if so, what types of program/administrative data are currently collected in the program (e.g. client demographics, client referrals, etc.)? Can the evaluator add fields deemed necessary for the evaluation? How are the various types of data currently collected (e.g., self-reporting by clients through client feedback forms,

reporting by Navigators based on conversations with clients, or submissions from organizations that receive referrals) and in what format do they exist (e.g., hard copies, or data entered in Excel spreadsheets)? Page 13 of the RFP explains that program-related data will be made available to the vendor. What data, besides data on "enrollment, attendance, services received," are currently being tracked by the program and will be made available to the vendor?

> **ANSWER:** Hunter uses Unite Us and Google Forms for case management. All Navigators enter case info into the system, including client characteristics, dates of outreach and enrollment, intake/assessment information, ongoing communication with Navigators, referral to and use of social services, and case deactivation and reactivation. Therefore, the information is collected through a combination of means, including client self-report, specific assessments administered by Navigators, and Navigator observations. This process is already quite lengthy and occurs over multiple sessions, but evaluators may propose additional metrics for inclusion, to be determined in conversation with the program and ISLG. ISLG anticipates that existing and future administrative data will be provided to the evaluator in identifiable, case-level form, pursuant to a data use agreement (DUA) to be negotiated between Hunter College and the evaluator. Following the selection of the evaluator, ISLG will convene Hunter College and the evaluator to discuss and finalize the evaluation approach.
>
> In addition, Hunter College is 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. ISLG encourages applicants to propose additional sources of data and data collection activities to supplement the 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 and how they plan to address them.

PROPOSAL DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS

ISLG received several questions regarding the scope of the process evaluation. These questions are answered below, including: To what degree do you want this evaluation to be formative? Is the process evaluation intended to assess current program implementation? Should the evaluation also include a description of the evolution of the program?

> **ANSWER:** The primary goals of the process evaluation are to understand how the Navigator program is implemented, including the process of establishing the program itself (e.g., training/curriculum for Navigators) as well as key components of the program (e.g., interactions between Navigators and clients); how/why specific program design decisions are made; specific factors that affect program implementation, such as referring social service organizations' size, experience, and culture; an assessment of the different approaches by which clients are connected to Navigators; whether the Navigators

successfully connect clients to services (e.g., mental health treatment, workforce development) and whether this practice varies by Navigator approach; and lessons learned and recommendations for future implementation of the program model.

To the extent possible, the evaluator should document both current implementation as well as program evolution and the rationale for ongoing program decisions. Given that the program is still evolving, applicants should propose a process evaluation approach that is flexible and can adapt to changes to the Navigator program model. It is expected that the evaluator will work closely with the program, providing regular information and iterative feedback on challenges and successes. Therefore, applicants should propose a design that permits an ongoing understanding of the program.

QUESTION: To what extent is DANY interested in incorporating participatory evaluation methods, i.e., participatory action research in the process evaluation?

ANSWER: Applicants are encouraged to propose an approach and methods that accomplish the goals of the evaluation. Applicants should justify the proposed approach and methods, whatever they may be.

QUESTION: Page 18, *Exhibit 2*, Row 2 of the RFP describes the desired literature scan as a comprehensive review of Navigator models and related, peer-driven social service models. Meanwhile, page 13, paragraph B.1 references a 2009 systematic review of healthcare-focused CHW models. Could we confirm that DANY is not necessarily seeking a systematic review of Navigator and related social service models in this process evaluation, and would be open to proposals from applicants for a literature scan that achieves DANY's goals in light of the timeline and budget provided for? On page 13 in *Section VI. B1* (*Research and Practice Review*), the RFP notes that applicants "should outline the primary areas of inquiry that it expects to be a focus of the literature scan." Would it also be helpful for applicants to briefly outline their proposed methodology for structuring the literature scan deliverable around those areas of inquiry?

ANSWER: Within the proposal, applicants should outline the proposed areas of inquiry for the literature review, and are encouraged to specify their methods for conducting the review. <u>The evaluator will be expected to conduct a systematic review of related service models for the purpose of understanding how the Navigator program is related to, or different from, prior initiatives, and how those initiatives may inform the program moving forward</u>. The review should include relevant research and practice, key program elements, populations, notable gaps with regard to intervention elements, methodological research approaches, and key findings. The review referenced on p. 13, paragraph B.1 is related to a specific type of navigation; the review required for this evaluation should incorporate this and other types of navigation models for the purpose of understanding and informing the Community Navigators Program.

QUESTION: What are the expectations for securing IRB Human Subjects approval? Would the contracted Evaluator have access to Hunter College's IRB?

ANSWER: The evaluator is responsible for securing any necessary approval from its own Institutional Review Board (IRB) and any other review boards necessary to conduct the evaluation. CUNY's IRB, which includes representatives from Hunter College when appropriate, likely would not be the primary project IRB unless the project includes CUNY personnel in a central role.

QUESTION: Page 12 of the RFP states that the selected applicant should work closely with ISLG, Hunter College, and the Navigators themselves to conduct the evaluation. In addition to providing feedback on key measures for the evaluation (page 14) and receiving quarterly status updates (page 18), how else would ISLG like to be involved in the evaluation process (e.g., to what extent, if at all, would ISLG like to participate in engagement or interviews with Navigators or with clients)? What specific roles does ISLG have in mind for Hunter College and other partners?

ANSWER: ISLG will manage the evaluation on behalf of DANY. As part of that responsibility, ISLG will review all evaluator deliverables. In addition, the evaluator may propose to include ISLG staff as participants in the evaluation itself, given ISLG's role in managing Hunter College's implementation of the program. In order to achieve the goals of the evaluation, e.g., understanding the implementation of the program, the evaluator would need to include relevant stakeholders in data collection, e.g., interviews with Navigators, administrators, and other stakeholders. The evaluator will be responsible for proposing the evaluation design and conducting the evaluation itself. Aside from including key parties as participants in data collection, the evaluator will also regularly update stakeholders of findings, e.g., key issues in outreach, problems with service use, and so on.

QUESTION: Are letters of support only required when subcontractors or consultants are proposed as part of the project team? Also, is there a letter of support form that should be used? Is there a preferred number of letters of support that should be submitted?

ANSWER: As described in *Section VI.C*, applicants may, but are not required, to submit letters of support/commitment 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 a process evaluation in particular. 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: Page 15 states that the preferred indirect rate is 17%. Does coming in lower or higher than this preferred indirect rate (assuming justification is provided for exceeding it) affect the scoring of the budget section and if so, how would scoring be affected?

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—whether higher or lower than the maximum preferred rate—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.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

ISLG received several questions regarding applicant eligibility. These questions are answered below, including: Are any of the current partners supporting the Community Navigator program (including CUNY and Hunter College) eligible to bid on this evaluation project? Would it be considered a conflict-of-interest for employees or partners of Hunter College's Silberman School of Social Work to have a role as a subcontractor on this project, if they are not directly involved with the Navigator program?

ANSWER: Current partners of the Community Navigator Program, including CUNY institutions, are eligible to apply for this RFP. Applicants should identify any actual and apparent conflicts of interest and describe how they plan to mitigate them.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

QUESTION: Are the components of our submission that are not subject to page limits (i.e., the cover letter (*Section VI.A*), letters of support/commitment (part of *Section VI.C*), and resumes (part of *Section VI.D*) still subject to the other formatting requirements (i.e., double-spacing, twelve-point font, and one-inch margins)?

ANSWER: Most evaluation proposal components should be double-spaced, using standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with 1-inch margins; these include the *Evaluation Proposal*, *Organizational and Staff Capacity*; *Experience*; and the *Budget Narrative* sections. Any of these sections submitted with single spacing will be converted to double spacing, and the length restrictions 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 described in the RFP, unless otherwise noted.

The cover letter, evaluation budget, and components not subject to the page limits (e.g., resumes, letters of support) may be formatted in other ways.

QUESTION: The section numbers at the bottom of page 16 and top of page 17 (in *Section VI.H* of the RFP) do not match those in the preceding sections of the RFP. Can we confirm that the section numbers originally assigned to each section take precedence over the section numbers listed in *Section VI.H* of the RFP, i.e., that the Organizational and Staff

Capacity section is to be *Section VI.C* (rather than *VI.D*) of the proposal; the Experience section is to be *Section VI.D* (rather than *VI.E*); and so on?

> **ANSWER:** The subsection references articulated in *Section VI.H Proposal Formatting and Length Requirements* are incorrect. For clarity, the subsections listed there should read as follows:
>
> - *Section VI.A: Cover Letter*
> - *Section VI.B: Evaluation Proposal*
> - *Section VI.C: Organizational and Staff Capacity* (erroneously listed as *Section VI.D* in this section of the RFP)
> - *Section VI.D: Experience* (erroneously listed as *Section VI.E* in this section of the RFP)
> - *Section VI.E: Evaluation Budget* (erroneously listed as *Section VI.F* in this section of the RFP)
> - *Section VI.F: Evaluation Budget Narrative* (erroneously listed as *Section VI.G* in this section of the RFP)
> - *Section VI.G: Fiscal Sponsorship Documentation (if applicable)* (erroneously listed as *Section VI.H* in this section of the RFP)

QUESTION: Page 15 of the RFP indicates that the *Experience* section should not exceed five pages, but the parenthetical on this page states that the maximum number of pages for this section is three. Please clarify.

> **ANSWER:** Parts 1 through 6 of the *Experience* section (*VI.D*) should not exceed <u>three</u> pages (double-spaced). Only the first <u>three</u> pages will be read and scored by the proposal evaluation team. Resumes of key staff are not restricted by length.

QUESTION: Page 16 of the RFP indicates that the *Evaluation Budget Narrative* should not exceed three pages, but the parenthetical on the prior page states that the maximum number of pages for this section is two. Please clarify. Can you confirm that the "justification for the budget and any rate(s) requested," as described on page 15, *Section VI.E (Evaluation Budget)* of the RFP, should be provided in *Section VI.F (Evaluation Budget Narrative)* of our proposal, rather than in *Section VI.E (Evaluation Budget)* itself?

> **ANSWER:** The Evaluation Budget Narrative should not exceed <u>two</u> pages (double-spaced). Only the first <u>two</u> pages will be read and scored by the proposal evaluation team. Applications should provide justification for the budget and any proposed costs in the *Evaluation Budget Narrative* (*Section VI.F*).

<u>CONTRACT AND DELIVERABLES</u>

QUESTION: Please provide a project start date for the evaluation.

> **ANSWER:** Proposals are due December 20, 2019, with proposal review expected to occur in January and February 2020; any applicant follow-up questions and responses in

March 2020; and notification of the selected evaluator by April 2020. The anticipated contract start date for the process evaluation is late Spring 2020, on the earliest date possible following notification of the award. The start date will be determined by DANY, ISLG and the selected evaluator once the selected evaluator has been notified of the award.

QUESTION: Regarding the contract payment structure, will payment be tied to each deliverable referenced in *Appendix 1* of the RFP? If so, how will payments be managed for deliverables that are due on a quarterly basis (e.g., status updates, stakeholder updates)?

ANSWER: The contract payment structure will be deliverables-based (i.e., payments will be based on the satisfactory completion of deliverables as drafted in *Appendix 1* of the RFP and to be included in the signed contract), whether those deliverables are singular (e.g., the draft evaluation plan) or recurring. The evaluator will submit invoices for each month in which deliverables are due, e.g., if a status update and the final literature scan are due the same month, both would be reflected in the invoice for that month. The deliverables, frequency, and dates are subject to negotiation.

QUESTION: How long will ISLG and DANY require for review and comment of final deliverables? Is that time accounted for in the 18 months?

ANSWER: All deliverables will be submitted within the 18-month contract term. Most, if not all, will also be reviewed within this period. Deliverables due in the final month of the evaluation are expected to include a final status report, the final evaluation report, and the framework for a future, potential outcome evaluation. Because the evaluator will have already submitted a draft evaluation report prior to that point, and because status reports are primarily synopses of past work, it is likely that only the framework for the outcome evaluation may involve review and comments past the final month. That said, specific dates will be determined by DANY, ISLG and the selected evaluator. As reflected in the contract template in *Appendix 3* of the RFP, the contract may be modified by a written instrument executed by both DANY and the evaluator, except a no-cost extension, which may be issued by email from DANY.

QUESTION: Are there preferred templates or formats for the deliverables (e.g., literature scan, final report)?

ANSWER: There are no designated templates or preferred formats for deliverables. Specific deliverable requirements will be discussed by DANY, ISLG, and the selected evaluator.

QUESTION: What are the expectations around in-person vs. virtual attendance at the quarterly summaries of real-time data and stakeholder updates?

ANSWER: Depending on the location of the evaluator, these summaries may be provided in person or by video/phone.

QUESTION: Page 18, *Exhibit 2*, Row 2 lists Month 6 as the month the "final plan" is due for the literature scan. We would like to confirm that it is the literature scan itself that is due in Month 6, recognizing that further updates may be made to the literature scan prior to Month 18 (as provided for in Row 6 of *Exhibit 2*).

> **ANSWER:** The selected evaluator will be expected to submit a draft and final literature scan with the opportunity to apply revisions as the evaluation progresses. Please note that the anticipated list of deliverables outlined in *Exhibit 2* of *Appendix 1* is subject to negotiation. The final literature scan would be due in Month 6 in the deliverables table reflected in *Exhibit 2*.

MISCELLANEOUS

QUESTION: Are there any Minority-/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) requirements for this contract?

> **ANSWER:** No, there are no M/WBE requirements for this contract.

QUESTION: Can you provide additional details on the program's budget? What is being covered by the $2.57M budget? Does that include the training and salary of the Navigators?

> **ANSWER:** The program budget includes personnel (including Navigators), space, materials, and other direct costs.

QUESTION: Will the evaluator chosen for the process evaluation automatically be the recipient of any future outcome evaluations of the program?

> **ANSWER:** The evaluator selected under this RFP will not automatically be selected for an outcome evaluation of the Community Navigator Program should DANY elect to fund such evaluation. DANY will decide—based on the findings of the process evaluation, the status of the program, and other factors—whether and how to identify and fund any additional evaluation components or foci.