

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development

Mayor's Youth Leadership Council (MYLC) Concept Paper

Following release of this concept paper, the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) will issue a request-for-proposal (RFP) for a qualified vendor to manage the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council (MYLC) program in close coordination with DYCD, the New York City Young Men's Initiative (YMI), the Mayor's Office, and other New York City (NYC) agencies. Begun in 2012 as a pilot program, the MYLC offered a small group of 20 high school students the opportunity to formulate a change agenda for NYC in a policy area of their choice and to present their recommendations to the Mayor. Participants interviewed high level public officials, learned how policy is made in NYC, and developed the leadership skills to advance their change agenda. The current RFP will share the goals of the original pilot, but will expand the range of youth who participate in the program and introduce a community benefit project component involving other youth councils across NYC. This addition will enable the MYLC participants to not only identify a change agenda in a given policy area for the Mayor's Office, but also to experience how policy can impact change at the neighborhood level through their involvement in the related community benefit projects.

Program Approach

MYLC Program Goals

The goals of the MYLC program are:

- Develop leadership skills in order to affect change in City policy, and
- Initiate ten community benefit projects designed and implemented by ten youth councils associated with DYCD Cornerstone or Beacon programs.

Program Structure

The program will engage 20 high-school youth (14-21 years of age) to serve on the MYLC and at least 100 youth in 10 borough-based Beacon and Cornerstone program youth councils (hubs) to carry out the community benefit projects.¹ The adult staff members overseeing the youth councils at each hub will integrate the activities of the MYLC into their annual agenda.

The contractor would work with the 20 MYLC participants and the hubs to identify a policy issue of city-wide importance, create an action plan to address this issue, and deliver a formal presentation of the plan to the Mayor as a capstone event. The contractor would also arrange at least one trip outside NYC for participants each year to learn how other cities or levels of government (state, federal) are addressing the policy issue.

Within NYC, the hubs will serve as the vehicles through which MYLC participants examine how the city-wide policy issue manifests itself in diverse local communities. Working in partnership with the adult staff of the hub's

¹ DYCD will select the ten Beacon and Cornerstone youth councils that will serve as hubs for the MYLC and list them in the RFP.

Beacon or Cornerstone program, the contractor would assist its youth council in gathering information on the policy issue, identifying and executing a related community benefit project, and sponsoring community events to raise awareness of the issue. There will be a Policy Summit involving the MYLC, the hubs, and all youth who participated in the community benefit projects.

Program Year Activities, Responsibilities, and Outcomes

Recruitment

The contractor will first work with DYCD, YMI, and hub staff members to select 20 youth to serve on the MYLC. Ten youth will be selected from the hub youth councils (one from each hub). The remaining ten youth for the MYLC will be identified through YMI's network of programs located throughout NYC and involving over 20 NYC agencies, including DYCD, Department of Probation, and the Administration for Children's Services.

A selection committee comprising contractor staff, representatives from YMI, DYCD, and the Mayor's Office will review the application of each youth recommended to the program by a hub or YMI program. In order to be considered for the MYLC, a youth must have a proven record of leadership and accomplishment, the demonstration of which will be left to the sponsors of each applicant. It may, for example, concern community service, civic engagement, commitment to family, or an extraordinary response to a life challenge, and may or may not include academic performance.

The contractor will design and manage the selection process from application to enrollment. Upon completion of recruitment, the 20 youth selected for participation will be invited to a celebratory orientation.

The MYLC

The 20 MYLC participants will begin their program by taking part in a two-day "leadership retreat." Participants will learn how to initiate the process of managing work with hub youth councils, leading a community input process, developing a policy agenda, engaging and coordinating with City agencies, gathering information through research and stakeholder interviews, and presenting to the public. These skillsets will be solidified with additional training throughout the program year. The leadership retreat will also review the calendar of activities and potential youth driven outcomes for the program year.

Following the retreat, the contractor will convene the MYLC once per week after school throughout the school year, and one Saturday per month. The first order of business will be to identify the policy issue that will organize the work of the MYLC throughout the year. Saturday sessions can be used to advance the project, explore challenges in depth, build peer networks, and schedule trips and stakeholder interviews. Through these weekly meetings, participants will track their progress towards task completion, share challenges and successes, and receive coaching from the MYLC contractor.

The contractor will also provide leadership training on special topics such as "the role of City government in creating youth policies" and "how to mobilize a social campaign around a particular issue, for example, domestic violence." For research on the selected policy issue, the contractor would assist with setting up interviews with city officials, experts, and practitioners.

MYLC participants will be assigned in teams of two to work with one particular hub throughout the year. Participants sponsored by a hub will continue to work with that hub as part of the MYLC. Teams will meet with hub youth council members at least once per month or as needed to discuss how the policy issue manifests itself in the surrounding local community and to plan and track the implementation of hub activities such as the community benefit project.

The contractor would also arrange at least one trip outside NYC for participants. The destinations and timing of the trip will be chosen based on the interests of the participants and the relevance to the participant-led policy project.

The Hubs

Each hub's youth council will plan, organize, and execute a three-month community benefit project related to the selected policy issue in their surrounding community. Along with the benefit project, hubs will be expected to sponsor related events to raise awareness of the issue in the community. Each hub will be provided with a modest budget of \$3,400 to support its efforts. The contractor will provide training for adult volunteers from the Beacon and Cornerstone youth councils to prepare them for their responsibilities in the MYLC. Throughout the program year, the contractor will provide technical assistance to the hubs and involve MYLC participants in the meetings related to the community benefit project and event planning, implementation, and follow-up. The hub youth councils and their adult staff members would meet at least once per week. The contractor would provide hands-on support and resources at hub meetings at least once per month to support the Cornerstone and Beacon staff and to ensure that the project is advancing on schedule.

The hubs will also be a resource for the MYLC policy project and provide information and insight on how the chosen policy issue manifests itself within the local communities surrounding the hubs throughout the City.

Policy Summit (Year One)

The Policy Summit will be a one-day conference led by the MYLC and involve all youth and adults who participated in the community benefit projects at the hubs. The MYLC and each of the hubs will prepare poster board displays describing their projects. Keynote speakers will address both the policy issues on display as well as the importance of leadership and civic engagement. The public officials, experts, and practitioners interviewed for the policy project as well as the general public will be invited to attend the event.

Policy Summit (Year Two)

The Policy Summit event in year two and in subsequent years will be similar to year one event. However, there will be an opportunity to engage the stakeholders involved with the previous year's policy issue and the recommendations presented to the Mayor. In these years, the conference will include a panel of the previous year's stakeholders comprising MYLC alumni and city officials, who will report on and discuss the Mayor's response to the recommendations.

MYLC Alumni

Youth who successfully complete their year on the MYLC will be invited to serve as mentors to the incoming cohort of participants. They will also be invited to participate in the Policy Summit.

Timetable

July-September

- Participant selection process and leadership retreat.

October-November

- MYLC and hubs identify and begin to research city-wide policy issue.
- MYLC and hubs share information on how the policy issue affects citizens and public programming at the city-wide and neighborhood levels.

December

- Hub youth councils identify and plan a community benefit project related to the city-wide policy issue.

January-April

- Hub youth councils carry out the community benefit project.
- MYLC and hubs continue to share information on how the policy issue affects citizens and public programming at the city-wide and neighborhood levels.
- MYLC prepares recommendations and action plan for the city.
- MYLC works with hub youth councils to understand how the city-wide policy issue manifests itself at the community level and plan the Policy Summit.

May

- Culminating Policy Summit with MYLC and hub youth councils.

June

- MYLC presentation to the Mayor.

Anticipated Funding and Payment Structure

The anticipated annual funding for the program is \$200,000.

Contracts will comprise line-item reimbursement in accordance with the budget approved by DYCD.

Subcontracting

No subcontracting will be allowed under this RFP.

Eligibility and Basis for Award

Eligible organizations will be incorporated as not-for-profit organizations at the time of contract award.

Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience, demonstrated level of organizational capability, and proposed approach and design of the program or

services. Organizations selected for award will be those which demonstrate successful experience providing similar services to similar populations of youth. Successful relevant experience will take into account past performance on DYCD contracts, where applicable.

Procurement Timeline /Contract Term

It is anticipated that DYCD will release the RFP for this procurement in January 2015. The proposal submission deadline will be approximately six weeks from the release of the RFP. DYCD anticipates entering into a three-year contract beginning July 1, 2015 with an option to renew for three additional years.

Use of HHS Accelerator

To respond to the forthcoming RFP and all other client and community services (CCS) Requests for Proposals (RFPs), vendors must first complete and submit an electronic prequalification application using NYC's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System. The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services agencies to manage procurement. Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Service Applications for one or more of the following will be eligible to propose:

- Community Engagement
- Academic Supports

To submit a Business and Service application to become eligible to apply for this and other CCS RFPs, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>.

Comments

Please email comments on the concept paper to DYCD at CP@dycd.nyc.gov no later than December 8, 2014. Please enter "MYLC Concept Paper" in the subject line.

Written comments also may be submitted to:

Robert Frenzel-Berra, Director of Research and Program Development
Department of Youth and Community Development
156 William Street, 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10038