



*Request for
Proposals*

YOUTH EXCEL CITY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COHORT

Cities Advancing Equitable Youth Economic Recovery and Empowerment

KEY INFORMATION

Purpose: To support cities in creating more equitable economic success for young people who are marginalized from economic success. This includes youth and young adults who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC).

Proposals Due: November 19, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. ET

Selection Announcement: By early December 2021

Funding Available: \$150,000 grant from NLC

Project Dates: December 2021 – June 2023

Information Call: October 6th at 3:00 p.m. Eastern.
[Please register here.](#)

Eligibility: All U.S. cities

Submission Information: Submit your application [online](#). Questions? Contact Mike Bartlett, Program Manager, Bartlett@nlc.org, 202-626-3131

Youth Excel is made possible with the generous support of the Siemens Foundation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I. YOUTH EXCEL INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

- Context
- Response
- Youth Excel Framework

PART II. RFP OVERVIEW

- NLC Objectives
- Benefits for Participating Cities and Support from NLC
- Requirements for City Participation in Cohort
- Preparing Your City's Proposal
- Required Proposal Materials
- City Selection Process
- Initiative Timeline
- City Grant Terms

PART III. PROPOSAL

- A. Cover Sheet
- B. City Context
- C. City-Led Cross-Sector Partnership Information
- D. City Goals & Desired Outcomes (template provided)
- E. City Action Plan (template provided)
- F. Grant Budget and Budget Narrative (template provided)
- G. Required Supplemental Materials
 - 1. Mayor Letter of Commitment
 - 2. Letters of Support from Partner Entities
 - 3. Supporting Information

PART IV. RESOURCES FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

PART I. YOUTH EXCEL INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

CONTEXT

Economic mobility is out of reach for too many young Americans. Since the Great Recession, nearly 95 percent of all new jobs have gone to workers with at least some college education, and the economic disruptions of the current Covid-19 pandemic seem likely to follow a similar pattern. Yet many young people who are marginalized from economic opportunity, particularly youth and young adults who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), are too often disconnected from school and/or the workforce. Those marginalized from quality educational and career opportunities face structural barriers to accessing career pathways and quality jobs, particularly in high-demand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) industries.

The pandemic has exacerbated these obstacles, adding to the reality that too few paths existed even prior to the health crisis for marginalized young people to achieve long-term economic vitality, or play a role in determining how they can do so. Youth and young adults graduating from high school in 2020 and 2021 face unique long-term risks, with measured lower rates of postsecondary engagement and anticipated long-term labor market impacts. Marginalized youth are disproportionately represented among those industries hardest hit by the pandemic, such as healthcare, hospitality, service, childcare, and agriculture. These industries often represent low-quality jobs with poor wages, scheduling volatility, a lack of flexibility, and few, if any benefits.

RESPONSE

City leaders – including mayors, city councils, and city managers – have the opportunity and are well-positioned to respond to these challenges and to improve the trajectory of youth by building strong pathways to quality jobs in STEM industries and promoting long-term family and community economic security. Addressing the multi-faceted structural issues will require cities to act with urgency to develop partnerships and implement strategies that improve access to quality postsecondary education and career pathway opportunities, focus on job quality improvement strategies, and integrate the critical perspectives of youth and young adults. These bold actions will lead to greater economic success for young people and the communities in which they live.

To address these pressing issues, the National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) has launched the Youth Excel: Cities Advancing Equitable Youth Economic Recovery and Empowerment initiative. The goal of Youth Excel is to support cities in creating equitable career outcomes for marginalized youth. The initiative is made possible with the generous support of the Siemens Foundation.

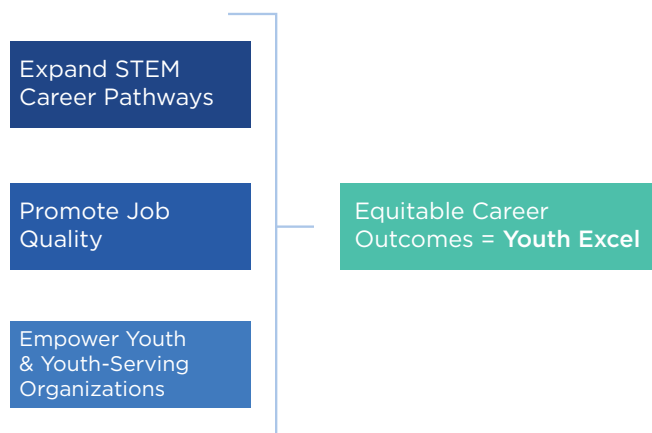
NLC is forming a Youth Excel City Cohort (City Cohort) to support cities' efforts to implement short- and long-term changes to policies, programs, and practices that will support equitable economic recovery and growth for marginalized young people ages 16 to 24. NLC will identify six cities through a competitive selection process to join the City Cohort. Each city will be awarded a \$150,000 grant to achieve the goals they have set for their communities over the course of the two-year initiative.

The expert assistance and funding from NLC will help cities move quickly to action that reconnects marginalized youth and youth from marginalized populations to quality educational, training, and career opportunities. NLC will provide selected cities in the City Cohort with tools and guidance to help their communities gain knowledge and develop strategies for building more equitable futures for marginalized youth and young adults including how to engage young people in the design and implementation of the work. Selected city teams will be spearheaded by city leaders – including mayors, city councils, and city managers – and will have the opportunity to connect with their peers to share and refine specific approaches that hold promise in overcoming barriers to accessing quality jobs and NLC staff will help the cities to address these critical issues through an equity lens centered on the needs, goals, and voice of young people.

YOUTH EXCEL FRAMEWORK

NLC has developed the Youth Excel Framework, grounded in evidence-based research, which outlines the power cities have to create more equitable outcomes for young people. Throughout the initiative, the Framework will evolve to incorporate perspectives from city leaders, youth, national thought leaders, and other key stakeholders to ensure its strategies will meaningfully contribute to success in cities.

Youth Excel Framework



For each of the Youth Excel Framework’s core areas, NLC has identified an initial list of different ways cities can effect change for marginalized youth in their communities. These examples are just a starting point. Through the City Cohort, cities will generate many more examples which can be shared to increase equitable career outcomes for young people around the country.

Expand STEM Career Pathways: Career pathways are a workforce development strategy to support transitions from education into and through employment. Through career pathways, cities can rapidly connect marginalized youth and young adults to postsecondary education and career experiences in STEM industries to develop both the technical and transferable skills, such as collaboration, innovation, problem-solving, and critical thinking, that are highly sought by employers. STEM industries include information technology, manufacturing, healthcare, finance, city planning, research, and many others that require science, technology, engineering, and mathematics knowledge and skills.

For example, cities can:

- Leverage real-time labor market information to prioritize in-demand occupations, particularly in STEM industries, and map skills adjacency between declining industries and growing industries to help youth and the business sector understand how existing skills may be transferable to new jobs.
- Identify and address the structural labor market barriers impacting marginalized communities, such as educational attainment, equitable wages, and hiring practices, as well as social capital, digital access, childcare, transportation, healthcare, housing, food, and other basic needs.

- Collaborate with employer partners at the industry level to define, measure, and promote high-quality job features across different priority STEM industry sectors.
- Convene education and training partners to align existing and create new short-term training offerings targeted toward marginalized young people that center on job quality and long-term growth, including internships, apprenticeships, city-sponsored summer youth employment programs, and related activities.
- Establish or expand reengagement programs that provide marginalized young people access to career pathways, and support marginalized youth in transferring existing skills into jobs in STEM fields.
- Listen to youth and engage them directly in the development of local policies and investments to break down barriers to career pathways in STEM fields.

Promote Job Quality: Job quality encompasses a variety of factors such as fair compensation, job security, positive workplace environments, and scheduling and location flexibility. Quality jobs for young people are ones in which they are respected, their work is valued, they are interested in their work, and they have access to learning and career development opportunities. Cities can improve family economic stability and workforce participation by partnering with employers to identify and promote quality job features among employment opportunities for young people ages 16 to 24, including wages, benefits, and scheduling. For example, cities can:

- Establish or appoint an existing workgroup with representation from business, labor, training providers, young people and community organizations (such as a subcommittee of a workforce development board) to specify characteristics of quality jobs and work standards for STEM industry sectors and to incorporate job quality goals into local workforce and economic development strategies.
- Develop pilot or demonstration programs focused on building collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and other skills essential to high-quality jobs and career mobility.

- Identify and adopt metrics for job quality in collaboration with employers to determine living wage requirements aligned to the local economy and create an accountability dashboard to measure job quality disparities among local communities.
- Work with the business community to source talent from marginalized populations and revise hiring practices to be more inclusive and equitable.
- Collaborate with young people to leverage policy and identify practice barriers to promote job quality and advance equity in education and training opportunities.
- Improve coordination among programs that address the non-skill barriers to employment that many marginalized youth and young adults face, including social capital, digital access, childcare, transportation, healthcare, housing, food, and other basic needs foundational requirements for success as defined by youth in marginalized communities.

Empower Youth & Youth-Serving Organizations:

Cities can create better long-term career outcomes for marginalized youth and young adults by intentionally focusing on equity and building partnerships with community-based organizations that have the knowledge and relationships to engage with and support young people in specifying their career needs to effect policy and practice change. For example, cities can:

- Create authentic opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making processes such as through a youth advisory board to the mayor or city council.
- Directly support and provide guidance to youth-serving organizations to leverage existing relationships with marginalized youth and build more effective and targeted outreach to increase access to city and community workforce development services and STEM career opportunities.
- Convene and engage youth-serving organizations to identify existing successful strategies for and challenges to connecting marginalized youth to STEM careers.
- Map industry supports available to build the capacity of youth-serving organizations to increase training opportunities and STEM career exposure for youth and young adults in their communities.
- Empower an entity or individual in city government to inventory, convene, and coordinate programs that address the non-skill barriers that many marginalized youth and young adults face, including digital access, childcare, transportation, healthcare, housing, food, and other basic needs.
- Align new and existing policies, investments, and initiatives focused on digital access, digital literacy, and digital learning by education and training partners so youth-serving organizations have access to these resources for the young people in their communities.

PART II. RFP OVERVIEW

BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPATING CITIES

Participating in the Youth Excel City Cohort will benefit cities in a number of ways. Cities will have the unique opportunity to engage with NLC, national thought leaders, and other cities to:

- Build knowledge about educational options and career pathways that create access to quality jobs in STEM industries;
- Be better positioned to learn from marginalized young people and understand what they value as equitable and meaningful postsecondary and workforce opportunities;
- Learn how to effectively allocate funds and other resources to support their goals for promoting equitable career outcomes;
- Strengthen policy and practice by intentionally engaging with youth and equity-focused youth-serving community organizations; and
- Gain understanding of key strategies to build systems to promote economic equity for marginalized young people and their communities.

NLC OBJECTIVES AND COMMITMENTS

Through the Youth Excel initiative, NLC seeks to support cities that are keenly focused on effecting change in policy and practice that leads to greater economic equity in their communities. NLC anticipates that its engagement with the City Cohort will create a more broadly shared understanding among city leaders of what it takes to achieve equity. To help cities in the City Cohort achieve their goals, NLC commits to take the following actions. As the work progresses, these activities may shift, and other activities may be added.

1. Work with a senior city leader to support the city's efforts, with a plan to ensure their longevity and engagement throughout the life of the initiative.
2. Provide \$150,000 grants to each city to enable them to make strategic, flexible investments to advance their priorities.
3. Provide a framework to help cities identify baseline measures of community well-being informed by marginalized youth and young adults.

4. Facilitate discussions and help cities build trusted relationships with and between stakeholders to create a foundation for strong collaborative partnerships.
5. Share examples of successful or emerging strategies used in other cities not within the Youth Excel City Cohort which have addressed the structural barriers faced by marginalized youth and young adults ages 16 to 24.
6. Work with each city to develop and implement a strategy to directly incorporate youth voice, being intentional about the inclusion of youth who have not had equitable access to economic opportunity, with the goal of creating a sustainable means for youth to influence city policies and programs that impact them.
7. Convene regularly scheduled calls to help each city develop their cross-sector partnerships, vision, goals, and action plans to implement their strategies, as well as cross-city calls to enable peer information-sharing.
8. Hold cross-city in-person meetings to allow city teams focused and in-depth time to think strategically about their work, meet with their peers, and learn from national experts.
9. Hold national briefings to highlight the work of the selected cities to a broad policy, funder, and national thought leader audience.
10. Conduct site visits to each city giving city leaders an additional platform through which to galvanize the community and its stakeholders, shine a spotlight on the city's progress, bring in national experts to share information, attract media attention for local efforts, and/or utilize the presence of NLC staff to help city leaders and partners see how their efforts are part of a national movement.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CITY TA COHORT PARTICIPATION

NLC welcomes proposals from all cities that believe in the importance of building equitable career outcomes in their communities. NLC is seeking cities that are willing to work closely with youth and cross-sector partners to take bold and innovative actions to

dismantle barriers that impede access to quality STEM jobs and career pathways for young people who have been marginalized for too long.

To join the Youth Excel City Cohort, your city must commit to engaging in the following activities over the course of the two-year Youth Excel initiative:

1. Participate at the outset of the project in a community assessment to identify assets, opportunities, and challenge areas, as well as establish key indicators of long-term project success.
2. Begin to implement a city action plan based on the three core areas of the *Youth Excel* Framework and strategically utilizing NLC's \$150,000 project grant to launch and implement this work.
3. Develop a clear strategy including a City Youth Summit to actively engage youth with city leaders and partners to inform the design and implementation of the city action plan and to connect them with postsecondary opportunities and STEM employers. This must include a City Youth Summit which will position marginalized young people to share insights into their experiences with education and careers, and provide input into city decision-making around policies and programs.
4. Collaborate on the development of a city highlight video or other media product to complement the city action plan, showcase efforts, and otherwise contribute to overall articulated communications plans. NLC expects such products can be leveraged to share success stories with a wider audience, such as ways youth have influenced policy and practices to reduce barriers to career pathways in the STEM industries. (Production costs up to a maximum amount will be covered by NLC.).
5. City team participation in regular coaching calls with the designated NLC staff lead.
6. City team participation in regular Youth Excel City TA Cohort technical assistance calls.
7. Up to four city team members attend three in-person cross-city meetings to share best practices and receive input on challenges from peers, NLC, and national experts, with costs covered by NLC. Additional team members may attend at the city's expense.
8. Commitment from the mayor to participate in two in-person site visits with NLC staff to accelerate

progress on city action plans and address specific technical assistance needs identified by the city. One site visit may be in conjunction with the City Youth Summit.

9. Participate (potentially) in national briefings which will highlight successful city leadership strategies to create a system that empowers and prepares marginalized youth and young adults to take advantage of career opportunities that lead to individual and community economic recovery.

PREPARING YOUR CITY'S PROPOSAL

Forming and sustaining a strong local team lays the foundation for achieving the outcomes cities seek to achieve through membership in the Youth Excel City Cohort. To ensure your project proposal is comprehensive, your city should convene leaders from the key entities you anticipate will be part of your cross-sector partnership. If your city is currently working with youth to learn from their input and guidance, consider including a young person on your team. Together, your city team should plan and prepare the entire proposal so the views, assets, and interests of all key stakeholders are reflected throughout. Cross-sector partnerships must be led by the mayor's office and include representatives from:

- Postsecondary education institution(s);
- K-12 schools and/or district(s);
- Workforce and economic development intermediaries, such as a workforce development board;
- The business community, particularly those representing STEM industries;
- Youth-serving organizations, particularly those with a focus on equity;
- Local philanthropy, if appropriate; and
- Any other key local stakeholders.

As your city team works together to prepare its proposal, please refer to the resources in Part IV of this RFP. NLC has curated a range of information from its own work with cities as well as reports, tools, and other materials from the field that will aid you in thinking through what your city's goals and approach to achieving them will be.

REQUIRED PROPOSAL MATERIALS

- A. Cover Sheet
- B. City Context
- C. City-Led Cross-Sector Partnership Information
- D. City Goals & Desired Outcomes (template provided)
- E. City Action Plan (template provided)
- F. Grant Budget and Budget Narrative (template provided)
- G. Required Supplemental Materials
 - 1. Mayor Letter of Commitment
 - 2. Letters of Support from Partner Entities
 - 3. Lead Partner Staff Bios
 - 4. Supporting Information

INITIATIVE TIMELINE

Announcement of City Cohort Cities:

Early December 2021

City Coaching Calls:

December 2021 through April 2023

Cohort-wide Calls:

December 2021 through April 2023

City Site Visits:

Spring 2022 and Winter 2022

Cohort Meetings:

Spring 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023

National Briefings & NLC Meetings:

Winter 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023

City Cohort Ends:

May 2023

CITY SELECTION PROCESS

NLC will engage a panel of external subject matter experts and NLC staff to review proposals. Cities will be notified of their selection status by early December 2021.

September 24, 2021:

City Cohort RFP release

October 6, 2021:

RFP Information Session

November 19, 2021:

City proposals due to NLC

December 6, 2021:

Announcement of selected cities

Proposals must be received no later than November 19, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Only one proposal per city will be accepted.

Please submit your application [online](#). Questions? Contact Mike Bartlett via email at MBartlett@nlc.org, 202-626-3131.

PART III. PROPOSAL

A. COVER SHEET

Please provide the following information about your city and any additional information NLC should know related to the point of contact if selected for the Youth Excel City Cohort:

City: _____

Mayor: _____

City Staff Lead for City TA Cohort (name/title): _____

Team Lead Phone: _____

Team Lead Email: _____

Team Lead Address: _____

Other Contact (e.g., assistant to staff lead; name/title): _____

Contact Phone: _____

Contact Email: _____

Contact Address: _____

B. CITY CONTEXT

NLC intends to select cities to join the Youth Excel City Cohort that are ready to take on the challenge of stepping into this complex but crucial work, regardless of where they currently are in their progress. Please respond to the following four questions with information that tells your city's story. Your responses will help NLC understand your city's current environment, its history, and its readiness to take bold and ambitious action to increase equity. Be sure to work with your proposal team to frame your responses carefully and candidly.

Provide any supporting information (such as documents, reports, press releases, youth testimonials, etc.) that clearly provides evidence related to your response. In your responses, please clearly indicate specifically where the supporting information is relevant.

1. Why is your city a strong candidate for the Youth Excel City Cohort? (Your response should be no more than 400 words.) Consider the following as you respond to this question:

- What is your city's vision for what it will achieve by participating in the Youth Excel initiative?

- How will your city create or expand infrastructure, including leveraging existing relationships that community organizations have with marginalized young people, for career pathways that are more equitable and accessible?
- How will your city's leadership ensure the success of your project?

2. What opportunities currently exist for marginalized youth and young adults in your city to access quality jobs? (Your response should be no more than 250 words.) Consider the following as you respond to this question:

- What equity-based strategies, programs, or policies might your city leaders and partners need to create for young people to be able to access quality jobs?
- How are youth and young adults currently accessing existing or creating new opportunities to gain the skills and credentials required to be prepared for quality jobs?
- How are supports for social capital development as well as basic needs like digital access, childcare, transportation, healthcare, housing, and food provided to make quality jobs accessible?

3. What is the current STEM career landscape in your city? (Your response should be no more than 250 words.) Consider the following as you respond to this question:

- What do you need to learn about equity and the accessibility of STEM jobs for marginalized young people in your city?
- How are employers in STEM industries bringing marginalized youth and young adults into jobs and helping them build careers?
- What qualifications and qualities are STEM employers looking for when they review job applications?

4. What information will your city need to assess its progress toward the outcomes you seek to ensure equitable STEM career opportunities are accessible to marginalized youth and young adults? (Your response should be no more than 250 words.) Consider the following as you respond to this question:

- What metrics will you set to inform whether you are on track or need to iterate your work to improve equity in career opportunities for marginalized young people?
- What data assets does your city already have related to career pathways, STEM job availability, youth and young adult employment, and other key factors in fostering economic equity?
- What capacity does your city have to analyze data and use tools that enable your city leaders to understand how they can achieve equitable career outcomes for marginalized youth and young adults in their communities?

C. CITY-LED CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION

To effectively engage in the Youth Excel City Cohort, your city must establish a city-led cross-sector partnership team to direct its proposed activities to meet its goals. Your partnership team may have as many members as your city believes will be necessary to effectively achieve its desired results. If your city is currently working with youth to learn from their input and guidance, consider including a young person on your team.

Cross-sector partnerships must be led by the mayor’s office and include representatives from entities with perspectives and expertise relevant to the Youth Excel initiative, such as:

- Postsecondary education institutions;
- K-12 schools and/or districts;
- Workforce and economic development intermediaries, such as a workforce development board;
- The business community, particularly those representing STEM industries;
- Youth-serving organizations, particularly those with a focus on equity;
- Local philanthropy, if appropriate; and
- Any other key local stakeholders.

In this application, please provide the information below:

1. List each senior leader or high-level staff with expertise related to the objectives of the *Youth Excel* initiative who will serve on your city team. For each, provide a brief description of their expected role as well as a brief bio. (Each description and bio should be no more than 100 words.)

Individual (name/title/entity)	Role in Cross-Sector Partnership	Bio

2. Specify how your city’s cross-sector team will ensure the capacity and sustainability of the partnership throughout its participation in the two-year Youth Excel City Cohort. (Your response should be no more than 200 words.)

D. CITY GOALS & DESIRED OUTCOMES

In your application, briefly lay out specific goals and outcomes your city seeks to achieve over the course of the two-year Youth Excel City Cohort. To help you get started, refer to your responses in the City Context section about why your city wants to build equitable career outcomes for marginalized youth and young adults in your community and how it will engage young people in achieving its goals.

Consider what your city needs to do to build systems (for example, expand infrastructure and capacity for career pathways) that lead to the outcomes it seeks to achieve (for example, a greater number of marginalized young people employed in quality STEM jobs). Because your city’s desired long-term outcomes will be beyond the lifespan of the Youth Excel initiative, you should specify short-term and interim outcomes that are likely to lead to those in the longer term.

The chart is organized around the three core areas of the Youth Excel Framework. Your city may have more than one goal for each of the core areas. If your city has another way to frame your goals and desired outcomes, please adapt the chart to fit your needs. To inform your thinking, refer to information already in your city, content you have prepared for this proposal package, the resources provided in Part IV of this RFP, or other sources.

Framework Core Area	City Goal	Short-Term Outcomes (What can we achieve in 1 year?)	Interim Outcomes (What can we achieve in 2 years?)	Long-Term Outcomes (What might we be able to achieve in 5+ years?)
Expand STEM Career Pathways				
Promote Job Quality				
Empower Youth & Youth-Serving Organizations				

E. CITY ACTION PLAN

Your city’s action plan is intended as a starting point for your city-led cross-sector partnership to lay out what will be needed to achieve your city’s goals and outcomes. As such, the action plan should be tied to the responses you provided regarding your city context and the goals and outcomes you presented in Section D.

In your application, lay out the strategies and activities your city expects to implement through its participation in the Youth Excel City Cohort. Each action must be specific, linked to your city’s goals and desired outcomes, and attainable within the two-year project period.

The application is based on the three core areas of the Youth Excel Framework. To inform your thinking, refer to information already in your city, content in this proposal package, the additional resources provided, or other sources.

For each component of your city’s action plan, provide the following information with as much specificity as possible in the template.

- **Action:** What do we need to do? Why do we need to do it?
- **Partners:** Who will be part of this action? (Include the city team lead and all individuals from partner entities or other stakeholders in your city including marginalized youth and young adults.)
- **Assessment:** What information will we use to evaluate the success of this action? Where will we get this information? How will we know how well we have done?
- **Timeframe:** What steps do we need to take? How long will they each take? When will we complete the action?

Expand STEM Career Pathways

Cities can rapidly connect marginalized youth and young adults to postsecondary education and career experiences in STEM fields to develop both the technical and transferable skills sought by employers.

Actions	Partners	Resources	Assessment	Timeframe
Example: Convene STEM employers to learn what abilities are required for jobs in their industries	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Youth Excel city team members ■ STEM Business Coalition chair ■ Chamber of Commerce executive ■ Workforce Development Board lead 	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Budget for meeting space ■ List of specific goals ■ List of invitees ■ Invitation from mayor 	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation (invitees:attendees) ■ Review of goals to confirm achievement ■ Follow-up survey to participants 	Example: April-May 2022

Promote Job Quality

Cities can improve family economic stability and workforce participation by partnering with employers to identify and promote quality features among employment opportunities for young people ages 16 to 24, including wages, benefits, and scheduling.

Actions	Partners	Resources	Assessment	Timeframe

F. GRANT BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Below is a template for the budget for your city's participation in the Youth Excel City Cohort.

Your grant budget must provide an overview of how your city proposes allocating the \$150,000 grant funds over the entire two-year period of the City Cohort. You must also present a narrative to explain how the funds will help your city implement its action plan.

Cost Category (No indirect costs can be charged to this grant.)	Year 1	Year 2	Total Line Item Amount
Staffing (Specify the individual(s) or the position(s) that the grant funds will subsidize, the amount of time allocated for this grant, any matching funds or other dollars that will be used to support the position(s), and a plan for sustaining staff after the City TA Cohort ends)			
Data Tools (e.g., data collection, sharing, analysis, and presentation platforms such as dashboards)			
Youth Stipends (For participation in city events and related activities to compensate for time and support transportation, childcare, etc.)			
Communications Materials (e.g., outreach materials, publications, videos, etc.)			
Meeting Expenses (e.g., space rental, audio/visual, food and beverage)			
Travel Expenses (e.g., air and ground transportation, lodging, etc.)			
Consultants (including honoraria costs for speakers)			
Other (please describe)			
TOTAL (Must not exceed \$150,000)			

Budget Narrative: (Your narrative should be no more than 300 words) How will the elements of your proposed budget for participation in the Youth Excel City Cohort help you implement your city's action plan? How will your budget help your city-led cross-sector partnership achieve your city's goals? What other resources (in-kind or otherwise) do you anticipate leveraging to support your City Cohort work?

G. REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Please provide links or attachments for the following required materials to supplement your proposal:

- 1. Mayor Letter of Commitment:** Please provide a brief letter of commitment from your mayor articulating how they will ensure the success of your city's engagement in the Youth Excel City Cohort including the inclusion of young people in information gathering and decision-making. The letter must specify the senior-level staff member designated to be the city's lead for the project.
- 2. Letters of Support from Partner Entities:** Please provide a brief letter of support from at least four of the key entities which will comprise your city-led cross-sector partnership. The letter should specify how the entity will engage in and contribute to the cross-sector partnership.
- 3. Supporting Information:** Please provide any supporting information (such as documents, reports, youth testimonials, press releases, etc.) that clearly provides evidence related to your response. In your narrative responses, please clearly indicate where the supporting information is relevant.

PART IV. RESOURCES FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

To help you develop your proposal, NLC has gathered resources that may aid you in establishing your city's goals and strategies to achieving them. You may find that some will be more useful to you than others, but NLC encourages you to look them over so that your proposal is informed by current research and practice related to the key elements of the Youth Excel initiative: equity for marginalized young people, career pathways, job quality, meaningful work in STEM fields, and youth empowerment.

LOCAL PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Many places around the country are working either on their own or with outside organizations like the National League of Cities to create postsecondary education options and workforce pathways to promote equitable career outcomes for marginalized youth. These efforts provide examples of strategies and practices that are useful for cities as they work to create opportunities for young people to pursue meaningful careers and achieve economic vitality.

Corpus Christi, Texas: In Corpus Christi, the city set goals to improve the lives of its residents and create economic prosperity by building a diverse educational pipeline for youth entering careers in STEM fields. As a port city, there are many quality job and career opportunities in STEM fields. To focus on connecting marginalized youth with these opportunities, the mayor's office engaged with the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, South Texas Economic Development Center, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Del Mar College, and Citizens for Educational Excellence. Together, the partnerships resulted in key outcomes, including:

- The mayor's Education/Workforce Stakeholder Committee, which comprises city leaders, school district superintendents, postsecondary institution presidents, workforce officials, and community leaders, formalized the City's Education Strategic Plan.
- The city produced the Corpus Christi Education Data Report and used the data to assess its current state, set outcomes goals, and plan a strategy to achieve those outcomes.

- The City developed and published the results of an Employer Needs Assessment, which was disseminated to youth advocacy groups, education institutions, and the business community.
- The mayor's office and school district collaborated to develop education pathways for 10 high-demand career areas. The pathways are intended to provide guidance for students from marginalized communities to earn a certificate, then an associate's degree, then a bachelor's degree, with minimum loss of credit hours.
- The mayor's office is working to establish and support a business-led collaborative to work in partnership with education leaders to close the skills gap for industry-specific, middle-skill positions.

Charleston, South Carolina: In Charleston, the mayor's office established a cross-sector partnership with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Trident Technical College, Charleston County School District, College of Charleston, and youth-serving community-based organizations. Through the partnership, the city achieved key objectives, including:

- Charleston has career academies in three school districts that focus on such in-demand STEM fields as health services, manufacturing, and information technology, which work in conjunction with more than 100 local employers.
- The mayor's office worked with Charleston County School District career specialists to provide more workplace learning opportunities in high-demand STEM fields via job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships.
- Trident Technical College and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce build out a robust youth apprenticeship program based on an alignment of educational content with career skills. The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce used its Accelerate Greater Charleston scholarship fund to support the youth apprenticeship program.

Austin, Texas: In Austin, the mayor's office partnered with the Austin Chamber of Commerce, Austin Community College District, Workforce Solutions of the Capital Area, Workforce Investment Board, and other key stakeholders to develop the Austin Metro

Area Master Community Workforce Plan. The Master Plan laid out a common agenda and established a framework for collaboration to coordinate efforts. Key actions that resulted from the city-driven initiative include:

- The Austin City Council initiated an effort to reform its Economic Incentives Policies to co-invest in companies that create quality jobs and provide training and up-skilling opportunities for local talent in alignment with the Master Community Workforce Plan.
- Austin Community College and community-based organizations established data sharing agreements on providing workforce development training to measure workforce readiness among marginalized youth and young adults in STEM and a range of other career fields.
- The Austin Chamber of Commerce supported the development of a regional portal to track real-time college readiness data and help higher education institutions establish college readiness supports for youth to prepare for in-demand STEM and related careers.

Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP)/Big Step Youth Programs - Creating Viable Starting Points for Career Pathways: This report takes stock of current employment opportunities for young Milwaukee residents, highlights the limitations of existing youth career development resources, and lays out the unique youth career development model advanced by WRTP/BIG STEP. The report provides a set of case studies, illustrating the diversity of initiatives that the organization has undertaken to support Milwaukee’s youth. The conclusion offers some general points for consideration in developing an industry-led youth career development program. https://wrtp.org/report_search/creating-viable-starting-points-for-career-pathways/

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Major initiatives have been underway in Philadelphia to align and scale workforce development activities, with an emphasis on advancing career pathways—a sector-based workforce model that relies on employer input to articulate routes to well-paying jobs and provide support and guidance to individuals moving along the path. This has included a new online tool (<https://www.philaworks.org/career-pathways/>) for youth to explore different pathways they can take in their career. Each

career pathway shows key jobs within the industry, common transition opportunities between them, and detailed information about salaries, credentials, and skillsets associated with each role. See also this assessment conducted using data from stakeholder input and program self-evaluation.

<https://economyleague.org/uploads/files/647833388649500484-philadelphia-career-pathways-assessment-final.pdf>

The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions and Jobs for the Future - The Pathways to Careers

Fund: The Pathways to Careers initiative encourages a new level of partnership between youth-serving CBOs, workforce development intermediaries, and employers that will lead to more effective onboarding, retention, and advancement of opportunity youth in these workplaces. These local models provide evidence of youth workforce development models focusing on longer term career pathways that include the supports, training, work experience, and credentials that put young people on a path to economic mobility. Embedded within a larger ecosystem approach, these pilots will point the way to systemic changes that enable this work to happen at scale.

<https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OYF-Pathways-to-Careers-Fund-2020-Report.pdf>

CAREER PATHWAYS

National League of Cities, Reconnecting Youth Through Dropout Reengagement Centers: This Municipal Action Guide and related publications of the NLC Reengagement Network can help cities develop “on ramps” to career pathways for Opportunity Youth ages 16-24 who are out of school and out of work. <https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Reconnecting-Youth-through-Dropout-Reengagement-Centers.pdf>

MDRC - Inequity in Work-Based Learning During COVID-19: Eighteen months of a pandemic laid bare widening inequities embedded in our education system, our economy, and many other aspects of our society. Among the many gaps exposed by the crisis are significant disparities in students’ access to career and technical education (CTE), and success in those programs. A recent discussion among teachers and program coordinators prompted stark observations of problems in work-based learning, which has a mission

to provide real-world professional experience and networking opportunities to students through internships, apprenticeships, and other forms of hands-on job training. In a remote environment, the differences between students who succeeded and those who struggled were especially apparent. To improve access to and success in programs with diverse, often disadvantaged students, CTE practitioners are rethinking how they use remote learning, how they view employer partnerships, and how they measure student competency.

<https://www.mdrc.org/publication/inequity-work-based-learning-during-covid-19>

Jobs for the Future - Guided Career Pathways: A New Postsecondary Framework for Today's Learners:

Our country's workforce and education ecosystem is undergoing seismic shifts, and postsecondary institutions must evolve accordingly and adopt new approaches to help students succeed as they navigate lifelong pathways of work and learning. Recognizing that community colleges must sharpen their focus on career outcomes to better serve today's learners as they navigate lifelong journeys of work and learning, JFF has developed a new postsecondary framework called Guided Career Pathways.

<https://www.jff.org/what-we-do/impact-stories/student-success-center-network/guided-career-pathways/>

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) - Principles for a High-Quality Pre-Apprenticeship: A Model to Advance:

This brief contains framing, analysis, and recommendations for the development of high-quality pre-apprenticeship programs as "on ramps" into career pathways. Guided by an equity focus, these strategies can help to bolster the outcomes for individuals and communities that have been traditionally left out of apprenticeships.

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/principles-high-quality-pre-apprenticeship-model-advance-equity>

STEM

National League of Cities, Children and Nature Network, and The Corps Network - City-Corps Partnerships:

The City-Corps Partnerships Strategy is to establish service and conservation corps partnerships that engage young people in outdoor,

hands-on service while also accomplishing projects for cities in areas such as conservation, recreation, and green infrastructure, encompassing many in-demand STEM jobs and skills. The initiative provides an ongoing structure for cities and corps partnerships to work together on projects that provide sustained, intensive connections to nature; a living stipend, wage and/or education awards for corps participants; and development of qualified candidates to diversify the future workforce.

https://corpsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CCCN-City-Corps-Partnerships_July2019.pdf

Advance CTE - Communicating CTE: Strategies and Message Tailoring to Reach Historically Marginalized Learners and Families:

This Learning that Works! blog post presents findings from Advance CTE's national research updated in April 2021 on messages and messengers about the value of Career and Technical Education (CTE) that resonate with middle and high school families both participating in and considering CTE. This update intentionally focused on exploring equity in tested messages, with an oversample of Black and Latinx families and families experiencing low income.

https://blog.careertech.org/?p=17795&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+AdvanceCTE_Blog+%28Advance+CTE+Blog%29

CAST (formerly Center for Applied Special Technology) - Career Exploration and Readiness Environment for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (CEE-STEM): Exploring STEM Careers with Opportunity Youth:

The CEE-STEM project team is embedding a new STEM career exploration and engagement tool (STEMfolio) within the YouthBuild program in order to help build learners' foundational STEM knowledge, skills, and dispositions while also supporting opportunity youth in connecting their interests, readiness, skills, and aptitudes toward relevant STEM career pathways. STEMfolio will provide young people who have often struggled in traditional schools with a personalized, universally designed way to build foundational knowledge, demonstrate their learning, explore and engage in potential STEM career pathways of interest.

<https://www.cast.org/our-work/projects/cee-stem-careers-opportunity-youth>

JOB QUALITY

National League of Cities - How Hard-to-Fill Infrastructure Jobs Impact Building Our Future:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provide funding streams that target expansion, maintenance and remediation of a wide range of infrastructure systems and assets. This will spur an unprecedented number of new infrastructure jobs. Is our workforce aligned, willing and ready to take on these new jobs? Research conducted by NLC examined the open and close date of all infrastructure jobs to determine which take the longest to fill in our current economy. The research found that infrastructure jobs remain harder to fill than those in other industries, despite high competition across employers for talent. Use this tool to dive deeper into your congressional district data. <https://www.nlc.org/resource/how-hard-to-fill-infrastructure-jobs-impact-building-our-future/>

The Aspen Institute, Economic Opportunities Program - Measuring Good Jobs and Good Companies:

Good jobs are good business. Employees who have good wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement stay in their jobs longer and are more productive. Businesses named on Glassdoor's "Best Places to Work" and Fortune's "Best Companies to Work For" lists regularly outperform the market. Until recently, though, there has not been a data-driven way to measure how businesses treat their employees. Companies looking to improve their practices, or investors, banks, and contractors looking to evaluate business practices had no reliable metrics or benchmarks to use. The Good Companies/Good Jobs Initiative at the Aspen Institute's Economic Opportunities Program and Working Metrics partnered to create a new tool to measure just this and to create a reliable benchmark to understand businesses' "people outcomes." The tool collects and analyzes data on frontline workers (those making less than \$60,000/year) and compares them across industries. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Measuring-Good-Jobs-and-Good-Companies.pdf>

Urban Institute - Research on Apprenticeships:

Rigorous apprenticeships that combine structured work-based training, jobs with wages and contributions to production, and related classroom instruction cost-effectively prepare workers for rewarding careers and upgrading jobs. Studies have documented the positive earnings gains for workers, improved productivity for firms, and significant savings in government spending. The Urban Institute conducts research on the effectiveness of apprenticeships for workers and employers, how to build a robust US apprenticeship system, and the development of competency-based occupational frameworks for apprenticeship. <https://www.urban.org/features/apprenticeships>

New America - Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA):

PAYA is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to assist innovative organizations around the country in developing robust youth apprenticeship programs that are scaled and replicated to serve students, employers, and communities alike. PAYA is comprised of eight National Partner organizations: Advance CTE, CareerWise Colorado, Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeship, Education Strategy Group, JFF, the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, and the National Governors Association. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/partnership-advance-youth-apprenticeship/>

Jobs for the Future - Diversifying Apprenticeship: Acknowledging Unconscious Bias to Improve Employee Access:

Promoting frontline workers to more senior positions is a great way to improve workforce diversity, but unconscious bias can prevent employees from getting the training they need to advance. <https://www.jff.org/resources/diversifying-apprenticeship-acknowledging-unconscious-bias-improve-employee-access/>

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

National League of Cities: Authentic Youth Civic Engagement:

This report provides guidance and examples of ways city leaders can provide young people meaningful opportunities to contribute their experiences, knowledge and solutions to city issues. This includes three core values: treating youth as valuable partners in the work of local government; preparing and supporting youth to take on meaningful roles in addressing important issues; and respecting and listening to youth.

https://www.nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/IYEF-Authentic-Youth-Civic-Engagement_web.pdf

The Ford Foundation - Youth-Adult Partnership Resource Kit: Tools and Inspiration for Organizations and Communities:

Youth-adult partnerships can be a powerful tool for youth engagement and organizational improvement. By forming authentic partnerships with youth and sharing decision-making responsibilities and power, Youth-Adult Partnership provides a framework for collaboration across generations. Both youth and adults benefit from skill building while working toward a shared goal.

<https://www.tfff.org/sites/default/files/Youth%20Adult%20Partnership%20Resource%20Kit.pdf>

Opportunity Youth United - Increasing Voter

Engagement Among Low-Income Young Adults: In 2015, the National Council of Young Leaders held focus groups with former opportunity youth from over 20 states and developed this analysis of why young people don't vote, and what steps would be effective in inspiring them to get involved. This paper is a guide for Community Action Teams and for additional research on civic engagement for low-income youth.

https://oyunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/voter_engagement2016.pdf

Annie E. Casey Foundation - Authentic Youth

Engagement: Young people are the experts in their own lives and should be fully engaged in decision making that affects them — from leading their own case planning to partnering with system leaders to improve child welfare policy and practice. Authentic youth engagement builds individual leadership skills, strengthens meaningful relationships, and leads to effective solutions. This website presents resources on authentic youth engagement as a best practice for systems change in child welfare, including “A

Framework for Effectively Partnering with Young People,” “Youth-Adult Partnerships,” and “Realizing the Power of Youth and Young Adult Voice Through Youth Leadership Boards.”

<https://www.aecf.org/work/child-welfare/jim-casey-youth-opportunities-initiative/areas-of-expertise/authentic-youth-engagement>

Urban Institute - Opportunity Works Implementation Report: Lessons from the Back on Track Model for Opportunity Youth:

The Back on Track framework describes a multiphase intervention to help “opportunity youth” — young people ages 16 to 24 who are not in school or meaningfully employed — into pathways to postsecondary and careers. Opportunity youth have been a growing focus of poverty alleviation, workforce development, and social inclusion efforts across the country. This report describes the Opportunity Works intervention across seven cities.

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/95406/opportunity-works-implementation-report_0_0.pdf

The Forum for Youth Investment - Local Children's

Cabinet Network: Children's cabinets are convened in localities across the country as forums for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of government efforts to improve child and youth outcomes. These entities are systematically changing the fragmented ways that state and local governments do business for children and youth. Members of these networks share best practices and learn more about tools that focus on bringing efficiency and effectiveness to their efforts to improve outcomes for young people.

<https://forumfyi.org/ccn/local/>

GradNation-America's Promise Alliance - Barriers to Wellness: Voices and Views from Young People in

Five Cities: This report provides new insights into the obstacles to wellness young people of color face and brings young people's voices and views into the discussion about what affects their health and wellness. To better understand the obstacles to well-being experienced by young people of color, the Center for Promise implemented a youth-led health and wellness assessment in five cities: Boston, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, and St. Paul.

<https://gradnation.americaspromise.org/report/barriers-wellness>

Young Invincibles - Race & Ethnicity as a Barrier to Opportunity: A Blueprint for Higher Education Equity:

In the United States, people of color will become the new majority in education and workforce settings in just three decades. However, systemic barriers and poorly shaped policy have contributed to persistent inequities between racial and ethnic groups from classrooms to boardrooms. Such challenges extend to postsecondary education and are evident in the deep gaps in student success and college attainment that exist. This paper takes an in-depth look at racial inequities across the postsecondary education system. The report provides a series of federal policy recommendations to begin closing these gaps, including how to give students the tools and support they need to access college, complete a degree, and manage student loan debt.

<https://younginvincibles.org/blueprint-higher-education-equity/>

The Forum for Youth Investment - Opportunity Youth Playbook: Strategies to Increase Post Secondary Graduation:

Postsecondary education and training is more critical than ever. The job market is increasingly populated by middle- and high-skilled positions. Conversely, low-skilled jobs, which once allowed those with only a high-school credential or less to secure a decent paycheck, are becoming harder to find. Estimates show that jobs requiring a postsecondary credential will increase to 63 percent of the economy before 2020. A postsecondary credential is essential to the social and economic mobility of young men of color and their families. As the Center on Education and the Workforce found, “postsecondary education has become the gatekeeper to the middle class and upper class.” Young people who are born into the bottom 20 percent and go on to obtain a college degree improve their odds of getting out of the bottom bracket of income distribution by over 50 percent.”

<https://forumfyi.org/knowledge-center/opportunity-youth-playbook-strategies-to-increase-post-secondary-graduation/>