

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES – INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH, EDUCATION,  
AND FAMILIES’ CITY COHORT INITIATIVE:**

# Reengaging Opportunity Youth in Education & Employment Request for Proposals

## KEY INFORMATION

The *Reengaging Opportunity Youth* initiative of the National League of Cities Institute for Youth Education and Families (YEF Institute) addresses the urgent need to develop community-wide approaches to reengage opportunity youth in education, employment, and beyond. This initiative provides expert assistance to support cities and partners to create new or expanded infrastructure in the form of reengagement centers or programs.

Thus, with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the YEF Institute seeks to support cities committed to building new or expanded capacity to reduce the number of Opportunity Youth.

**Proposal Due:** Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021,  
by 5:00 PM ET

**Selection  
Announcement:** January 5, 2022

**Project Dates:** January 2022 – July 2023

**Submission  
Information:** Please submit completed applications [online](https://nlc.org/initiative/nlc-reengagement-network) at [nlc.org/initiative/nlc-reengagement-network](https://nlc.org/initiative/nlc-reengagement-network).



Questions? Contact Antonia Rangel-Caril, Sr.  
Program Specialist, at [Rangel-Caril@NLC.org](mailto:Rangel-Caril@NLC.org), 202-  
626-3023

## BACKGROUND

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Responding to the ongoing crisis among [16 to 24-year-old Opportunity Youth](#), the YEF Institute is extending an offer of 18 months of expert assistance to city leaders and their partners to reengage young adults in the Southeast and Southwest U.S. in education and employment.

[Measure of America](#) estimates that nine million young adults in the U.S. were not working or in school at the height of pandemic. In addition, the rapid transition to virtual learning in 2020 and ongoing pandemic conditions and effects may have resulted in more disconnection from school. Rates of disconnection in Southern states such as Mississippi (15%) and Georgia (13%) have trended higher than the 11% national average. These high rates “leave talent on the table” in cities seeking to develop and sustain solid workforces and tax bases, deprive young people of the dignity and stepping stones that stem from work and educational attainment.

For more than a decade, [Reengagement Centers](#) and Programs have served as critical policy responses of city governments and their partners by connecting tens of thousands of out-of-school and out-of-work young adults back onto pathways that lead to academic achievement, professional skill development, credentials, and employment. In some 25 locations [nationwide](#), these programs have provided critical infrastructure with dedicated staff to support young people re-enroll in school and progress in other ways while attending to a range of psychosocial and developmental needs. Best case, centers and programs function as part of broad local Opportunity Youth strategies and alongside ongoing student retention efforts in schools. The YEF Institute supports the spread of high-quality reengagement programs through activities of the NLC Reengagement Network.

## BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING CITIES

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Cities selected to join the technical assistance cohort will gain access to a broad range of benefits, including:

- ◆ Individualized technical assistance and guidance to develop and implement a reengagement program or center for Opportunity Youth;
- ◆ Links to resources, peer learning, and national experts through virtual meetings and convenings;
- ◆ At least one in-person site visit by a YEF Institute staff member and one meeting of all site teams in the cohort (pending pandemic safety measures)
- ◆ Training and support on best practices to engage and support opportunity youth

## ELIGIBILITY

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To be eligible for this technical assistance initiative of the YEF Institute, the Mayor and city team must demonstrate a broad commitment to implementing a reengagement program in their community during an 18-month period beginning in January 2022. The YEF Institute seeks applications from cities in FL, GA, AL, MS, AR, LA, TX, NM, TN, KY, SC, NC, and OK. Groups of two or more neighboring cities may apply. The YEF Institute will prioritize the participation of cities that hold NLC membership in good standing.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

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The technical assistance period will occur January 2022 – July 2023

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED DATES
INFORMATIONAL SESSION	November 4, 2021 November 30, 2021 3:00 PM ET
PROPOSAL DUE	December 8, 2021 5:00 PM ET
NYEC ANNUAL YOUTH FORUM – REENGAGEMENT TRACK	December 1 – 3, 2021
ONGOING COHORT ASSISTANCE AND SITE VISITS	January 2022 – July 2023

### Selection Criteria

The YEF Institute will select participating cities based on the following criteria:

1. Strength of demonstrated commitment by municipal leadership.
2. Capacity to form a diverse, city-led core team to engage consistently throughout the technical assistance and peer learning activities.
3. Capacity to select and host a young adult American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fellow.
4. Capacity to collect and analyze relevant data within city government or with a designated partner(s).
5. Ability to demonstrate need among local Opportunity Youth and to describe a plan for obtaining input from Opportunity Youth regarding support and service needs.

### PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

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To be considered for this initiative, the applicant must submit a fully completed [online](#) application.

#### REQUIRED PROPOSAL MATERIALS

- A. Cover Sheet
- B. Proposal
- C. Supplemental Materials
  - a. Statement of Mayoral support and engagement
  - b. Two letters describing roles and commitments of collaborating organizations
  - c. Supporting Information

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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The YEF Institute will host two informational sessions on **Nov. 4 and Nov. 30, 2021, at 3:00 PM ET** for municipalities interested in learning more about this opportunity. The sessions will take place. Interested cities are strongly encouraged to attend.

**All proposals must be submitted [online](#) by 5:00 PM ET on Friday, December 8, 2021.** The YEF Institute may contact cities following application submission for additional information and inform cities of final selections by close of business on Wednesday, January 5, 2022.

The outline below details the content from the [online](#) application. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Antonia Rangel-Caril, Senior Program Specialist at [Rangel-Caril@NLC.org](mailto:Rangel-Caril@NLC.org) or 202-626-3023.

### Proposal Outline

#### 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 *Reengaging Opportunity Youth* initiative.

CITY:

POPULATION:

Young adult population (age 16-24)

MAYOR:

TERM DATES:

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 Narrative (maximum five pages)**

The YEF Institute will select cities to join the *Reengaging Opportunity Youth* cohort interested and ready to create new or expanded infrastructure in the form of reengagement centers or programs to support Opportunity Youth. Please respond to the following six questions using the online form. Provide information that demonstrates your city's interest and readiness in the form of candid appraisals of assets, as well as areas for growth and development.

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

1. What challenges does the city face regarding reengagement of Opportunity Youth? Please include data and descriptions of the neighborhoods or racial/ethnic groups most affected.
2. What infrastructure, capacity, and policies does your city (inclusive of partners) currently have in place to carry out the key functions of reengagement, namely:
  - ◆ Outreach to the known Opportunity Youth population such as students on “school leaver lists” and Opportunity Youth at large
  - ◆ Assess educational and psychosocial needs of Opportunity Youth
  - ◆ Identify and provide referrals to best-fit education, training, employment, and support options
  - ◆ Provide assistance to re-enroll or gain access to education, training, employment or combination of three
  - ◆ Provide support to stay enrolled and make tangible progress
3. Who will participate on the proposed cross-sector team, beginning with the mayor's designated city staff person to coordinate the effort? Explain the experience of other team members and the proposed roles and contributions of the partner organizations they represent. E.g., school district or intermediate unit/education service district, workforce investment board, alternative school, juvenile justice or child welfare agency, community-based organization.
4. How will your city and team identify and support a Young Adult ARPA Fellow to assist with resource development for the local initiative (preferably someone with lived experience as an Opportunity Youth)?
5. What are your short- and long-term goals for participating in this initiative?
6. What experience or lessons learned regarding Opportunity Youth reengagement can your city share with others selected to participate in the cohort?

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

The following chart provides a snapshot of the current conditions and status of Opportunity Youth. Please fill out to the best of your ability, using any local, state, or national sources and noting the source. [Measure of America](#) publishes yearly disconnection rates. Use the section below the chart to explain in brief, challenges you experienced in populating the chart.

# Of Opportunity Youth in your City								
Opportunity Youth in your City as a % of 16-24 year olds								
Opportunity Youth by Race	Black	White	Hispanic / Latin	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American	Multi-Racial	Other	TOTAL
Number of Opportunity Youth								0
Percentage of Opportunity Youth								
Opportunity Youth by Education Completed	Grade lower than high school	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Some post secondary training /credits	Completed a postsecondary degree (AA/BA/BS) or industry-recognized credential	TOTAL
Number of Opportunity Youth								0

Current Scale of Programs Enrolling Opportunity Youth	Alternative Education	Workforce training	Earn and Learn	Apprenticeships	Other	TOTAL
Number of slots or seats						0

Comments on the Opportunity Youth Data Chart (e.g., data sources, challenges or opportunities in collecting and analyzing the data):

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**C. Supplemental Materials**

- a. Statement from the mayor describing city support and engagement (1-2 pages)
- b. Letters of Support from two collaborating organizations explaining the roles and contributions they plan to make on the cross-sector team
- c. Additional supporting information (maximum ten additional one-page documents)

