

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## Scan of Community-based Diversion Initiatives

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

### INTRODUCTION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (the Foundation or Casey) is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children and youth by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. The Foundation is committed to ensuring that all young people — regardless of race, ethnicity or where they live — have equitable opportunities to achieve well-being and success.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE

There is perhaps no group of young people at greater risk of falling short of the aspiration of a brighter future than those caught up in our juvenile justice system. As a nation, we rely too heavily on the juvenile justice system to respond to adolescent misbehavior that can be best addressed by families, schools and community organizations. We put too many young people on probation, a segment of the system focused on surveillance and compliance instead of promoting personal growth, positive behavioral change and long-term success. More than any other country in the world, we use detention centers, youth prisons and other residential settings to respond to delinquency despite decades of evidence that this approach undermines the life trajectories of young people, makes communities less safe, wastes scarce public resources, disconnects youth from opportunities and disrupts families. It's typically an overresponse since most youth grow out of delinquency as they mature into their mid-20s without any intervention from the justice system.

### COMMUNITY-CENTERED JUVENILE DIVERSION

Fewer than half of the young people who come in contact with the juvenile justice system in the United States have their cases handled outside the formal court system, also known as diversion. Many of those who are diverted receive informal probation supervision rather than truly being supported outside of the system. Juvenile justice systems should divert at least 60% of cases, including all youth with low-level offenses and who are deemed at low risk for future arrest. Moreover, diversion should be centered in community organizations.

To inform the Foundation's emerging work on community-centered diversion and provide guidance to the field, Casey is seeking to fund a grantee to conduct a national scan identifying different approaches used by neighborhood-based nongovernmental organizations that enable young people to be diverted from formal justice system involvement.

## ELIGIBILITY

The grantee must be a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or university or a public agency. The grantee should have the demonstrated organizational capacity and the relevant expertise and knowledge to carry out this project. The selected grantee should be able to identify best practices that reflect the current trends in community-led diversion.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Foundation seeks to learn from neighborhood-based organizations that facilitate the diversion from legal system involvement of young people who have engaged in behavior that could bring or has brought them to the attention of law enforcement. The Foundation seeks to identify different approaches to working with young people who might otherwise be involved in the justice system.

The Foundation ultimately seeks to identify and profile approximately 10 to 15 initiatives operating in different regions of the country — specifically including the south and southwest — from which to distill a set of promising practices used by the selected organizations. The Foundation is most interested in initiatives that have many of the following elements:

- diverts youth to a community setting rather than a formal court process for misbehavior that could have been referred to the legal system. An arrest is not required, nor would the youth be subject to formal court processing for non-compliance or failure to complete the program;
- is led by a neighborhood-based organization, which may or may not be acting in partnership with schools and/or law enforcement;
- work with youth who may have engaged in more serious or violent behavior currently or in the past;
- incorporate restorative practices, healing- and trauma-informed care and positive youth development;
- serve youth of color, are based in communities of color and, ideally, are led by people of color;
- offer culturally responsive programming;
- engage or have engaged youth in program design;
- engage young people's families and support networks;
- employ individuals who have experience with the justice system;
- have shown effectiveness in reducing court referrals and promoting youth and young adult well-being; and
- have been operating long enough to have generated data that help illustrate outcomes related to both recidivism and youth and young adult well-being.

Project deliverables will include the following:

- a survey instrument that is appropriate to neighborhood-based nongovernmental organizations that support diversion and addresses the goals of collecting data on program features, the groups of young people served, programmatic elements, referral sources, connections to the justice system and law enforcement, program length, intensity, costs, funding sources and youth outcomes;
- national distribution and promotion of the survey to a wide range of practitioners and networks based on the grantee's experience reaching, engaging and working with organizations and programs that serve youth and young adults;
- outreach that includes grassroots and small neighborhood-based programs that may not be mentioned in the available literature or known by national stakeholders;
- follow-up with programs that may not have responded to the initial outreach efforts;
- the engagement of young people, especially young people who have experience with the legal system, in meaningful roles, including providing input on study questions, the survey instrument, outreach and the selection of the 10 to 15 programs to profile;
- a plan for including the perspectives of other key stakeholders on the survey questions and criteria for winnowing of list of programs to 10 to 15. This may include community leaders, education and other public-system partners, law enforcement, family members of justice-involved youth, victims and victims' advocates and representatives of neighborhood-based community organizations.
- study questions and a study description addressing methods, plans for engaging young people and other key stakeholders, planned analyses, anticipated risks and plans to mitigate them, planned reporting and timeline;
- draft data collection protocols, revised based on Casey feedback;
- a written memo answering study questions;
- short written descriptions of 10 to 15 programs, selected in consultation with Casey based on the grantee's identification of available outcomes data and significant and effective practices and program elements, including key elements that emerge from more than one of the selected programs;
- a presentation of findings to Casey staff; and
- monthly written project updates.

## AWARD

- The grant range for project is \$75,000–\$100,000 for up to one year.
- One grant will be awarded.

## TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE WORK

The Foundation expects to receive the first draft of the final deliverables within 10 months of the grant's start date to allow time for feedback before the end of the 12-month grant period.

## PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

- Proposals should not exceed 10 pages in 10-point Arial font, single spaced, not including attachments.
- Contents of proposal:
  - Abstract
  - Organizational commitment to advancing racial and ethnic equity
  - Organizational capacity and relevant work demonstrating capacity to carry out this project, including experience with conducting scans and engaging stakeholders. Proposals should include links to completed and relevant reports where feasible.
  - Qualifications of the team responsible for the project, demonstrating subject matter and methodological expertise related to the project
  - Plan that describes in detail proposed project activities, including methods, plans for engaging youth and key stakeholders, study timeline and milestones
  - Three past-performance recommendations, each including a short description and contact (name, role, email address, phone number)
  - Partners or subgrantees, if any, and their roles and capacities
  - Budget with total costs by key activity

■ Key dates

- Pre-proposal conference: June 24, 2021
- Notification of intent to apply: June 28, 2021
- Due date for proposals: July 12, 2021
- Notification date: August 6, 2021
- Start date for work: September 1, 2021
- Projected end date: August 31, 2022

Please submit questions and intent to apply, along with proposals, to: Senior Associate Jaquita Monroe, [jmonroe@aecf.org](mailto:jmonroe@aecf.org).

## SELECTION CRITERIA

SECTION	POINTS
Organizational capacity	15
Content and research expertise	30
Approach and plan for project completion	30
Effective collaboration with young people and other key community stakeholders	15
Budget	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>