

**The Family League of Baltimore City, Inc.**  
**Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) – Ready By 21**  
**Community Forum of October 7, 2011**  
**Questions & Answers**

**Application process**

Q: When will applicants be notified?

A: For the BCDSS Foster Care youth, by mid-November, 2011. For the DJS CORPS youth, early November.

Q: When is the start date for the awards?

A: For the BCDSS Foster Care youth, by December 1, 2011. For the DJS CORPS youth, mid-November.

Q. Are there restrictions against current CORPS vendors applying for this funding?

A. No. However, any current CORPS vendor would be expected to demonstrate strong performance, backed up with data/evidence as detailed in the proposal.

Q. Can we upload attachments to the online application tool?

A. Yes

Q. Please clarify character limits. Do spaces count as characters?

A. The character limits are inclusive of spaces.

Q. Can you provide guidance on the allowable costs for youth stipends, wages and taxes? What can be included in the 52% of the budget? For example, would we be able to provide bus passes and count that towards the 52%?

A. The following expenditures are appropriate:

- Youth stipends while participating in training
- Youth wages while in subsidized employment
- Taxes associated with subsidized employment
- Tuition for technical skills training provided by an accredited for-profit institute, community college, or other third-party entity. Justify why you have selected that particular training provider and present its track record of job placement success. Participants must receive a stipend during the training program.

Bus passes may not be considered an appropriate expenditure within with the 52%.

Q. Can youth be paid for attending training?

A. Yes, that would be budgeted as a stipend.

Q. Is there a minimum wage?

A. No, propose what you deem reasonable.

Q. Should YouthWorks salaries be included in the budget?

A. No, those salaries will be funded through the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. However, you will be responsible for ensuring that participants are registered for YouthWorks.

Q. Is there a thirty-week minimum for training?

A. No, but youth should be engaged through training, employment, or other activities for the length of the program.

Q. Do we need letters of support? What community partners should we include in the proposal? If we have multiple partners, how do we determine who would be our lead letter?

A. Discuss in your proposal and provide letters of support only from community partners that will directly support the program. You make the decision about the lead partner.

Q. Must a youth being served through BCDSS or DJS provide the youth letter of support?

A. No.

Q. Will a match be acceptable? For example, if my program costs \$5,000 per youth, but I bring \$500.00 to the table in match funds, would I meet the \$4,500 per youth range?

A. A match is not required but would be seen as favorable by reviewers. We encourage applicants to bring additional resources to the table to enhance their programs. Please document those resources in your proposal and through Letters of Support, where appropriate.

Q. What's the invoicing & payment process?

A. Awardees will be advanced 10% of the total award to assist in program start-up. Afterward, the awardee will invoice FLBC monthly for expenses. Payment of invoices occurs within 30 days of the submission, provided that awardee has submitted all required reports and contractual deliverables. FLBC does offer payments through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). This is a more timely payment method.

Q. What is the purpose of the fact sheet?

A. The one-page description of your program will be a marketing tool to help case managers and youth advocates make appropriate referrals, and to help participants choose programs of interest to them.

Q. Can we have the list of organizations in the room?

A. Yes, all attendees have agreed to share such information - the list is posted on the FLBC website.

### **Questions for Youth in Foster Care and CORPS Youth Programs**

Q. What is the age range? Education level?

A. 14.5 - 21 years. Education levels could include youth currently enrolled in high school or GED, youth who have dropped out of school, high school graduates, or youth who have achieved a GED.

- Q: Please define “unduplicated.”
- A. Each participant is counted only once. Therefore, if you enroll 20 youth in pre-employment training, then enroll those same 20 youth in skills training, total enrollments may be 40 but unduplicated headcount is 20.
- Q. Can a participant in last year’s Ready by 21 program be re-enrolled?
- A. Yes, if they continue to meet eligibility criteria, and if you can offer a meaningful learning experience, not just a repeat of last year’s program.
- Q. Will there be flexibility to select industries that aren’t listed in the RFP/RFQ?
- A. Yes, as long as your proposal supports, with data, demand for skilled entry-level workers in that industry.
- Q. May we offer multiple training areas?
- A. Yes, as long as your proposal supports, with data, demand for skilled entry-level workers in that industry.
- Q. Does training in entrepreneurship qualify?
- A. Yes, as long as your proposal documents how and when that training will result in a job for the youth.
- Q. Can employment in the mental health/human services field be proposed?
- A. Yes, as long as your proposal documents with data the fact that the skills will be marketable after program completion.
- Q. Can you provide examples of the industry-recognized certificates?
- A. Examples may be found at the U.S. Department of Labor website ([www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)) and, for approved apprenticeships, the Maryland Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation (<http://dllr.maryland.gov/labor/approcc>). However, you are not limited to these examples, as long as you can back up demand in your proposal.
- Q. What are transferable credentials?
- A. A certificate, apprenticeship, or degree that is recognized throughout an industry. Examples would include A-1 certification (computers), GNA certification (healthcare), or ServSafe® (food handler).
- Q. What is unsubsidized employment?
- A. Employment in which the employer pays the full wages and salary of the program participant.
- Q. What happens if there is a placement change (BCDSS) or a young person is incarcerated (DJS)? Will that be counted against us in our retention rate?

A. No. Re-incarceration (DJS) will not be counted against your program. However, a placement change (BCDSS) will not necessarily mean a program transfer or removal from RB21.

Q. Do we need to follow the youth longitudinally (one year post program completion)?

A. No, training and employment are the goals, not job retention.

Q. Can we propose to identify the pursuit of post-secondary education or college credits as an alternative to employment as an outcome?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you clarify the requirement to enroll youth in YouthWorks? Must an organization be registered as a YouthWorks site? If we ensure that all youth are registered, do we have to serve as a YouthWorks site?

A. IF your organization offers direct transition to full-time employment with a public or private sector employer, the YouthWorks requirement is not applicable.

All other service providers must be registered as YouthWorks sites, and all your program participants must be registered for YouthWorks. If your organization does not offer direct employment opportunities on site, you will be expected to secure job placements with local employers for the youth you are serving. Continued skills training will also qualify as “summer employment.” You will not be asked to provide employment for any additional YouthWorks enrollees, just those with whom you have been working.

Q. If participants complete their work/training in July, are we required to keep them busy through August?

A. No. YouthWorks jobs typically last 5 weeks so engagement through the end of August is not expected.

Q. What is the RB21 model? Can you provide additional information on the initiative/model?

A. That information is posted on the FLBC website.

Q. What is SCORE? Do we need to pay participants to attend?

A. A description of SCORE is found on the FLBC website. You may choose to pay participants but it is not required.

### **Youth in Foster Care Questions**

Q. Can we set limits on which DSS youth we will take instead of accepting all 14.5-21 year olds referred? For example, can we limit our program to 18-20 year olds?

A. You may propose age limitations based upon your program criteria but must be willing to accept all referrals within the established age ranges.

Q. Can we specify eligibility criteria for admission to our programs?

Q. Can we design a program only for those out of school?

Q. Do we have to accept youth if they do not have a high school diploma or GED?

A. (Applies to the 3 preceding questions):

You may propose eligibility criteria or entry-level readiness based upon your program design; however, we do not want to establish additional barriers to success for these youth. If such eligibility is deemed as restrictive, it is unlikely that the proposal would be funded.

Q. Can we offer the GED as part of our proposed program?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the enrollment process for foster care youth?

A. All referrals must be made through the BCDSS case workers. However, applicants should take initiative to identify other youth eligible for the program. For example, if you have a young person enrolled in a literacy class and you think this program would benefit him/her, work with the case manager to get him/her enrolled in RB21.

Q. What's the screening process? How are youth selected?

A. Beyond age limitations, there are no specific screening criteria. BCDSS case workers will make referrals based upon the needs and interests of the youth in their case load. If you identify a young person in foster care who could benefit from your program, you will forward the name to the FLBC Program Coordinator via email, who will verify their active status with the BCDSS Program Manager.

Q. Can youth be recruited from existing programs?

A. All youth must be referred by a BCDSS case worker. If the case worker decides your program is the best option for someone already enrolled, and if they make a formal referral, then you can serve someone already in your program.

Q. Will there be case manager access, updated web information, or regular meetings that we could have to support youth engagement and participation?

A. Case managers and awardees will be invited to a meeting during which they can share program information and establish/strengthen lines of communication. Ongoing communication with case managers will then be your responsibility. Monthly meetings with the FLBC Program Coordinator will provide opportunities to discuss progress and concerns.

Q. What is included in the BCDSS case management? Should we build it into our budgets?

A. All youth are assigned a case worker who is responsible for coordination of services. You may include additional case management services in your budget if you can justify the expenditure.

Q. If a participant completes training in year 1, will we be required to re-enroll him/her in year 2?

A. Yes, if the program is structured to provide continual learning and skill-building experiences, not just a repeat of last year's program.

Q. Is the 20 participant minimum firm?

A. Yes.

### **DJS CORPS Youth Questions**

Q. Do referrals come from Youth Advocates?

A. Yes, CORPS youth will be referred through the Youth Advocates.

Q. Must we accept all referrals?

A. Yes. You may propose age limitations based upon your program criteria but must be willing to accept all referrals.

Q. We would like to provide a three-month pre-employment training component, followed by skills training. Is that acceptable?

A. Yes, as long as it would accommodate the required rolling admissions. If the program requires a cohort of students, it would not be acceptable to put youth on a waiting list.

Q. Please clarify rolling admissions.

A. Rolling admissions means accepting new participants as they are referred, rather than placing enrollees on a waiting list until a new course begins or until a minimum class size is achieved.

Q. How strongly must we accommodate the rolling admissions?

A. Rolling admissions are required.

Q. Can we achieve the rolling admission by setting a minimum number of youth to participate? We can't hold a class for just one youth.

A. You can request a minimum.

Q. Are youth advocates assigned to an agency? Is there a way for us to communicate with them on a regular basis? Should we add case management/liaison support in our budget?

A. Youth advocates are assigned to individual participants, so your organization may be working with all four Youth Advocate vendors. You will be encouraged to work with those advocates to ensure appropriate services. You may include case management in your proposal if you can justify the need and expenditure.

Q. Will DJS funding be extended past (1) year?

A. The DOL grant funding this RFQ runs through September 2012. We always hope to find additional funding to extend successful programs but applicants must assume it ends 9/30/12.

Q. Must we apply for the full \$440,000? Must we serve all 50 youth? How many vendors will be funded?

A. No, propose to serve as many youth at a maximum of \$9,000 per youth as are appropriate for your organization. The number of vendors chosen will be determined by the quality of the proposals we receive.

Q. Must youth participate in YouthWorks if they find permanent employment before summer.

A. No, the goal is full-time employment, so that is a priority.

Q. A 75% success rate seems unreasonable. Can you cite programs with that success? Why was this performance measure set for the program?

A. The 75% track record is consistent with the expectations of DOL, which is funding the program, and DJS. Consult the DOL website for effective models.