



Allegany County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for the Design, Launch and Coordination of a Countywide Juvenile Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Gwen’s Girls, Inc

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Kathi R Elliott, CEO

Address: 711 West Common-3rd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Telephone: 412.904.4239

Email: kelliott@gwensgirls.org

Website: www.gwensgirls.org

Legal Status: For-Profit Corp. Nonprofit Corp. Sole Proprietor Partnership

Date Incorporated: 05/06/2003

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Proposal: None.

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Received email announcing solicitation

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing? Yes No

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Kathi R. Elliott	412.904.4239	kelliott@gwensgirls.org
Contract Processing Contact	Kathi R. Elliott	412.904.4239	kelliott@gwensgirls.org
Chief Information Officer	Kathi R. Elliott	412.904.4239	kelliott@gwensgirls.org
Chief Financial Officer	Alice L. Logan	412.904.4239	alogan@gwensgirls.org
MPER Contact*	Kathi R. Elliott	412.904.4239	kelliott@gwensgirls.org
EPSDT Coordinator	Denise McGill-Delaney	412.904.4239	dmcgill@gwensgirls.org

* [MPER](#) is DHS’s provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

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BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.
See Attachment 1: Board of Directors List

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Angela M Weidman, Board Chair

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: angela.weidman@ey.com

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation, and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

Judge Kim B. Clark, President Judge of the Family Division of the 5th Judicial District of Pennsylvania; Kim.Clark@alleghencourts.us; Phone: [REDACTED]

Jeffrey Williams, Sr. Director of Diversion Initiatives, Foundation of Hope; jwilliams@foundationofhope.org; Phone: [REDACTED]

Dr. Nancy Hines, Superintendent, Penn Hills School District, nhines@phsd.k12.pa.us; Phone: 412-793-7000, ext 1282

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 1/4/2022

Amount Requested: \$1,758,111 over 2 years

CERTIFICATION

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA, and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

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By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred, or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- 3 years of audited financial reports
- W-9

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REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 130 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 15 pages.

Organizational Capacity and Experience (70 points possible)

1. Describe why your organization is interested in designing, launching, and implementing this Initiative, including how it fits well within your mission.

Gwen's Girls, in partnership with the Black Girls Equity Alliance (BGEA) and the Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute (GJEI), have been at the forefront of advancing systemic change around issues that affect Black youth – particularly Black girls- for the past 20 years. Gwen's Girls has the expertise, mechanisms for convening stakeholders, and networks in place to reduce local racial and ethnic disparities (R/ED) in Allegheny County's juvenile justice system. In Pittsburgh, where Black girls are 10 times more likely than their white peers to be referred to the juvenile justice system, Gwen's Girls has created programming and community outreach that supports the unique needs of Black girls while providing the expertise to affect policy and create systems-wide change. With its mission "to empower girls and young women to have productive lives through holistic, gender-specific programs, education, and experiences," Gwen's Girls has been combating racial disparities in juvenile justice, education, health and wellness, and child welfare sectors since its founding in 2002.

For this county-wide pre-diversion initiative to be successful, the ideal lead organization would be a Black-led, community-based entity that has a history of working and building trust with youth, families and system stakeholders in the communities that have a high rate of Black youth being referred to the juvenile justice system. Although the mission of Gwen's Girls and the BGEA is unapologetically focused on the Black girls, any advocacy, research, and system-change work that we engage in, inherently impacts all youth. As detailed by numerous reports, a community response to the system-wide issue of over-referral of Black youth to juvenile justice is needed. Gwen's Girls is the lead convener of the Black Girls Equity Alliance and has 75+ stakeholders as a part of its Juvenile Justice workgroup focused on reducing disparities in the Juvenile Justice system, it is the community anchor that is needed to oversee an effort to reduce racial and ethnic disparities from prevention, intervention and to diversion in Allegheny County.

Under the leadership of Kathi Elliott (CEO, Gwen's Girls), and in partnership with the BGEA, Gwen's Girls has led the vision to realize a countywide juvenile pre-arrest diversion initiative in Allegheny County. Over the last six years, Dr. Elliott and other stakeholders have built relationships, convened educators, parents, law enforcement, and youth-serving agencies, provided trainings, and conducted and published research that supports the urgent need to resolve the issue of criminalizing our Black youth, manifested by disproportionately high arrest rates and referrals to juvenile justice. Based on this history and experience, Gwen's Girls is the ideal organization to take the lead in planning, designing, launching, and implementing a county-wide pre-arrest juvenile diversion program. Gwen's Girls' proposed initiative will reduce the number of racial disparities seen in juvenile justice referrals, advance a culture of restorative justice within schools and communities, and reduce citations and arrests of Black youth by diverting youth towards needed services.

2. What experience do you have serving youth (ages 10-21) from diverse communities and populations? Include: 1) examples of how your organization connects with youth and 2) examples of how your organization ensures that your clients feel welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

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For nearly 20 years, Gwen’s Girls has filled a critical gap in providing holistic gender-responsive programming for girls living in high poverty communities—with an emphasis on Black girls. We serve girls ages 8-18 through afterschool, school-based, and workforce development programming. We serve approximately 100 girls daily throughout Allegheny County mostly at our program sites located on the North Side, Penn Hills, Wilkinsburg, and Clairton.

Gwen’s Girls has been a leading community agency addressing the structural inequities and subsequent disparities experienced by Black girls, and ultimately all youth, in our region. We fill a critical gap in providing holistic gender-responsive programming for girls living in high poverty Allegheny County, PA communities—with an emphasis on girls of color. Each year, Gwen’s Girls serves more than 300 Allegheny County girls ages 8-18 through afterschool, school-based and workforce development programming. While our programs are open to and attractive to all girls, we have historically served a high proportion of girls living in high poverty, high crime communities. Through our programming and outreach, we address stressors and risk factors that girls face, such as maintaining a sense of self, race and class factors, academic insecurity, social and cultural expectations, sexuality, puberty, adolescence, and body image in way that is highly personalized, motivational, and effective for young women. For its participants, Gwen’s Girls works to create a world in which Black girls can pursue any dream or career path and believes in nurturing girls’ passions from a young age. In addition to research and collaborative partnerships, Gwen’s Girls engages with stakeholders in a wide variety of career readiness, education, STEM (Science, Technology, Education, Mathematics), and creative industries.

Welcoming to All Youth

Gwen’s Girls welcomes any youth who is in need of supportive services. No youth is turned away for services, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identify and expression, intellectual or physical ability, or life experiences. Although an intentional focus has been to support Black girls, Gwen’s Girls provides supports and services to all who identify as a girl/female, and frequently engage with male youth. Gwen’s Girls’ approach is to provide support to the whole family, including male siblings or relatives of the girls in our programs. Although we do not provide direct intervention and prevention services to boys, we partner with organizations that do and utilize them as a referral source. Additionally, our advocacy and policy change work have an intentional focus on Black girls. However, we take an intersectional approach that highlights gender, race, and disability. Our reports and recommendations not only focus on the disparities and policy changes that would impact Black girls, but all youth – including boys. Gwen’s Girls continues to explore opportunities to engage with male youth through partnerships that build up all youth. For example, for the past two years, Gwen’s Girls has been providing academic support to all youth in Allegheny County. This has included male youth, as well as ESL (English as Second Language) students including Latinx/Hispanic and African youth and families.

Although our programs focus on girls ages 8-18, we maintain contact and support for youth over 18, especially youth that were in our residential group home until we closed the facility in 2018. Our motto “Once a Gwen’s Girl, Always a Gwen’s Girl” is indicative of this. We have continued to support Gwen’s Girls participants through post-secondary education, workforce entry, and transitions into independent living. Our partnerships with other organizations who provide services to those over 18 has also been vital to our ability to meet the needs of youth who have completed our traditional programming.

3. What experience does your organization have with the juvenile justice landscape and system, including, direct experience diverting youth from the juvenile justice system?

Gwen’s Girls (GGs) has been able exist for almost 20 years now due to on-going collaboration with stakeholders that share a commitment to ensure the well-being of our youth. In the spring of 2017, the Black Girls Equity Alliance (BGEA) was formed. BGEA is overseen by the GGs and GJEL members and

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is comprised of individuals, community-based organizations, universities, and government entities that work with Black girls and acknowledge that their lives and experiences are unique within existing societal constructs. BGEA is comprised of four working groups, with more than 75 active members that meet monthly, in the areas of Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Education, and Health & Wellness. The BGEA is the meeting place of stakeholders that work with Black girls including individuals, community-based organizations, universities, and government entities. These stakeholders collaborate with a common goal to inform providers, communities, and systems about best practices for supporting Black girls and to advocate for policy change. Gwen's Girls' direct experience in providing diversion services as well as brief overviews of the BGEA workgroups, which are led by partners for youth-serving systems, universities, and community-based organization are as follows:

- **Residential Services, including Alternative to Detention (Now Closed)** - Prior to our residential facility closing in 2018, Gwen's Girls contracted with Allegheny County Juvenile Probation to provide an Alternative to Detention option for girls ages 10-18. Our residential service was a diversion from admission to Shuman Detention Center, which was a locked facility. Troubled and struggling girls were referred to our least restrictive, community-based residential group home. Although this was typically short-term (1-3 days), our staff were able to access and provide supports to hopefully address their needs and prevent recidivism.
- **The Juvenile Justice Working Group (JJWG)** is co-led by Kimberly Booth, Assistant Chief of the Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Office and Dr. Sara Goodkind, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh. Additionally, Gwen's Girls' CEO Dr. Kathi Elliott has been an integral lead in this workgroup as well the overall function of BGEA.
 - Since its founding in 2017, the group has convened once per month. Like its peer working groups, the JJWG includes a wide array of community partners such as the Youth Advocacy Clinic of Duquesne University, ACLU Pennsylvania, the District Attorney of Allegheny County, The Pittsburgh Foundation, the Department of Human Services, The University of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, FISA Foundation, Juvenile Probation of Allegheny County, regional youth, and family provider agencies, among others. School District members include Pittsburgh, Clairton, Penn Hills, and Woodland Hills. The group's purpose is to collaborate with local law enforcement officials and school officials to identify communities with the highest referral rates for Black girls and the associated behaviors. Through this process, the JJWG serves as the lead convener for community organizations, parents, and families as well as policymakers to reduce rates of referral.
 - Most recently, the JJWG has collaborated with Judge Kim Clark, President Judge of the 5th Judicial District to explore diversion options for youth before they enter the juvenile system. This effort has resulted in meetings with 50+ stakeholders from police departments to magisterial district judges to outline a regional process for diverting youth in Allegheny County.
 - To simultaneously disrupt patterns of student arrest and to disseminate knowledge that highlights the inequities that Black youth experience, the JJWG created the "Juvenile Offense Trends" dashboard. Funded by the FISA Foundation as a collaboration between the JJWG, law enforcement, and the judicial system, this public data set collates juvenile-justice related information such as neighborhoods, school districts, and offense trends. This data allowed the JJWG to discover that the majority Black girls enter the juvenile justice system through referrals for "school-related offenses" that were submitted by school police. As a result, school districts across Allegheny County are invited to the work group meetings to discuss strategies that serve as alternatives to suspension.
 - In addition to data collection, the Juvenile Justice Workgroup has authored and contributed to a number of reports on the state of youth [arrest] rates in Allegheny County. The most recent report "Disrupting Pathways to Juvenile Justice for Black Youth in Allegheny County" was released in

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2020. Building on previous reports released as well as data from the “Juvenile Offense Trends” dashboard, “Disrupting Pathways” highlights that juvenile justice referrals are the result of distorted expectations on the part of school officials, rather than the behavior of Black students.

- **The Health & Wellness Group** is led by Dr. Britney G. Brinkman, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Clinical Psychology program at Point Park University.
 - The group’s focus is on promoting wellness across both the physical and mental health domains as they relate to age-appropriate health issues including comprehensive sex education and intersectional trauma-informed care training. The working group authored the report “Black Girls and Sexuality Education: Access. Equity. Justice.”
- **The Child Welfare Group**- co-led Chaired by Twanda Clark-Edgal, Chief Program Officer at Gwen’s Girls and Betsy Caroff, Regional Office Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
 - The group’s goal is to directly engage with county officials to understand why Black girls have disproportionately high child welfare referral rates. This group has provided anti-racism and anti-bias trainings for all employees in Allegheny County’s Children, Youth, and Families Dept.
- **The Education Workgroup** Chaired by Amanda Cross, PhD, Evaluation & Research Manager in the University of Pittsburgh’s Office of Child Development
 - The group’s goal is to foster collaboration between school districts and community organizations to address issues that disproportionately impact Black girls in school, including sexual harassment and suspension.
- **STARS (Striving to Achieve Resilience and Success) Program** – a strengths-based, community-based, youth-driven advocacy program for youth identifying as girls who are involved in, or at risk for involvement in, the juvenile justice system. STARS uses a trauma-informed model of care that provides advocacy support and mentorship to meet a girl’s individual needs and goals and connects them to community resources. This is one of Gwen’s Girls’ newest programs that was implemented in January 2021 through a federal grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention.

Since 2016, the GJEI has hosted its yearly Equity Summit and Awards Ceremony, which engages practitioners, community stakeholders, and youth to discuss promising practices that support Black girls. The high-profile Summit enables Allegheny County to acknowledge successful practices for supporting Black girls, while bringing racial disparities in the juvenile justice system to a broader, national audience. Over the past 6 years, GJEI and BGEA have published four data-driven reports that not only highlight inequitable policies and practices, but recommendations and solutions to address the issues identified.

4. Describe the specific strategies your organization uses to recruit, hire, and retain racially diverse staff, staff with relevant lived experience and staff that reflect the population served by your programs.

The diversity of Gwen’s Girls’ workforce is represented in both our board of directors and in our staff. The board consists of 10 Black females, 6 white females, one Black male and one White male. Our staff consists of 25 Black females, 4 White females, 2 Black males, 1 White male, and 1 Asian female. Gwen’s Girls also has historically been intentional about hiring applicants from the communities that we serve. We also give preference to those who have lived experience (e.g., system-involved, lived in poverty)

Staff Recruitment & Training

Gwen’s Girls prides itself in maintaining a qualified and engaged workforce. Recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce (race, age, gender, and professional backgrounds) follows the organization’s recruitment strategies geared to attract qualified staff:

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- Recruit current high performing staff members with relevant experience and career goals who are ready for advancement.
- Actively recruiting staff who have knowledge and experience in trauma-informed care as well as credentials that meet the State of PA licensure requirement for social work (MSW, LCSW) and/or clinical counseling (LPC, PhD).
- Targeted recruitment through local college and university campus visits, career fairs, information sessions, on-and off-campus interviewing, and information to department heads, professors, and advisors.
- Job postings are placed internally on the Gwen’s Girls intranet as well as externally on the Gwen’s Girls website, Indeed.com, LinkedIn, and college and university job boards.
- Jobs at Gwen’s Girls also are posted to several external organizations and community boards to announce job openings and source candidates.
- Gwen’s Girls utilizes social media strategies to target potential candidates based on their demographics on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram
- Promotion of our employee benefits such as opportunity for free medical insurance for employees, retirement program with company match, and up to \$1500 for education reimbursement to use for conferences, training, or tuition payments.

Using these recruitment strategies, Gwen’s Girls has built a successful process of filling staff needs as well as retaining top employees to sustain effective programming. To retain staff, Gwen’s Girls continues to support staff development with monthly supervisory meetings, consistent communication, training opportunities offered through the RELIAS Learning Management System, annual reviews with opportunity for salary raises, and ability to grow within the organization via internal promotions (when operationally possible). The success of using these strategies has strengthened Gwen’s Girls priority of retention and engaging the workforce.

Staff Training Plan

Gwen’s Girls has established standardized training requirements for each job description. Training modules for employee roles are defined for all positions and tracked in the Essential Job Function Training and the Training Record. Training standards are linked to licensing, and state, county, and organizational-wide requirements. Gwen’s Girls leadership team works to ensure that the parallel processes of employee training and employee development are intertwined. Currently, all Gwen’s Girls staff receive the following trainings:

Training	Hours
Orientation Binder and Policies & Procedures	8
CSEC	8
Sanctuary 1 & 2	3
First Aide & CPR	6
Classroom Management, Girls Circle & Documentation	6
Youth Mental Health First Aid	8
Antecedents, Behaviors & Consequences	6
SOGIE	6
Clinical Services	2
Salesforce	1
Mandated Reporter	3
HIPPA Privacy	.5
Cultural Diversity	1.25
Drugs in the Workplace	1
Best Practices: Behavior Support and Intervention	1

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Strengths Based Approach in Working with At-Risk Youth	1.25
Sexual Harassment for Employees	.5
Workplace Harassment	1.25
Intro to Trauma Informed Care	1.5
Positive Behavior Support for Children	1.75
De-escalating Hostile Clients	1.5
Overview of Depressive Disorders	1.25

Racial Equity & Cultural Competency

As a regional leader in the youth-serving agency field, Gwen’s Girls strives to create equity within our organization, partner with external systems to improve practices, and be a model for other youth-serving organizations. The issue of racial disproportionality in the juvenile justice system, particularly as it impacts African American youth and families, has been a concern of Gwen’s Girls and other similar youth-serving agencies for decades with research raising concerns about racial bias, disparate treatment, and racial inequities that have a direct negative effect on their safety and well-being. We believe that our organization must lead transformational change internally by doing our part to confront and eradicate systemic racism across systems for our children and families.

In this respect, Gwen’s Girls staff participate in cultural diversity and competency webinars hosted by the BGEA and GJEI related to issues that directly impact students/youth who are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. The goal of the webinars is to serve as a source of information to equip local educators, and system stakeholders with understanding the impacts of disproportionality, uncover success stories in the region, and determine a pathway for replication. Additionally, Gwen’s Girls staff are invited to the BGEA’s yearly summit which invites scholars in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to share information about the intersections of these issues. Local program providers, teachers, parents, school board members and administrators, and court representatives are invited to learn about emerging trends and best practices for serving black youth—the most criminalized demographic within the juvenile justice system. Gwen’s Girls is committed to continued awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion not only internally, but externally in our work with at-risk youth. To continue our learning, future trainings being explored include gender identity, sexual orientation, and LGBTQIA issues.

5. What experience do you have building relationships with school staff and community law enforcement, and what experience do you have influencing policy and procedure change?

Under Dr. Kathi Elliott’s leadership, Gwen’s Girls and BGEA have successfully engaged key system leaders and community stakeholders to work collaborative to identify and address inequitable policies and practices. Since 2017, BGEA workgroups have been the primary conduit for relationship-building with school staff and law enforcement as it relates to racial disparities seen in juvenile justice referrals. As discussed above, the Juvenile Justice Working Group (JJWG) and the Education Workgroup have been actively collaborating with local law enforcement officials and school officials to identify communities with the highest referral rates for Black girls; convening community organizations, parents, families, and policy makers; exploring diversion options for youth with police departments and magisterial district judges; collecting data from both schools and law enforcement and publishing reports; and fostering collaboration between schools and community organizations to address issues that disproportionately impact Black girls in school. The workgroups have been intentional and deliberate in their work and have created a space for collaborative interdisciplinary initiatives that have included the development of trauma informed care training, data driven problem solving, participatory action research, and honing community resources to better serve the need of Black girls.

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6. What experience do you have designing, launching, and implementing new, major initiatives? Include at least one concrete example.

Gwen's Girls has significant experience designing, launching, and implementing new, major initiatives specific to the needs of youth, specifically Black youth including:

- *Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute (GJEI)* – In 2015, GGs established the Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute (GJEI), in collaboration with local practitioners and university researchers, to expand its service provision to include advocacy and program delivery for systemic change. In the vein of breaking barriers, GJEI was created to focus on the importance of systems change by harnessing the expertise of individuals to engage in research, provide training, and serve as a clearinghouse for best practices in research and programming to empower young women and girls. For those seeking to better support Black youth, GJEI offers resources and research, and access to thought leaders that have expertise in this area. In 2016, Gwen's Girls/GJEI held its first annual Equity Summit, where over 150 local practitioners, community members, and policymakers gathered to learn about research about Black girls within the community. Data from the report “Inequities Affecting Black Girls in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County” were presented, with discussions about the inequities Black girls were facing throughout numerous systems in the region. Many attendees expressed an interest in continuing the dialogues after the summit and working to take actionable steps to address the disparities.
- *Black Girls Equity Alliance (BGEA)* - Gwen's Girls leads the BGEA, established in 2016 as a coalition of practitioners, researchers, systems administrators, concerned citizens, and young women and includes signature partnerships with the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work's Office of Child Development, Point Park University, who bring together their varied and collective expertise to conduct research into the systemic and structural inequities affecting Black girls in the Allegheny County region. The mission of BGEA is to eradicate inequities affecting Black Girls in Allegheny County. The work of the BGEA has raised tremendous awareness of the inequities Black girls in the region face and has led to multiple publications evaluating data that raise concerns about barriers to healthy development and educational opportunities for Black girls in the Pittsburgh region.
- *Grant: Addressing School Violence in Allegheny County* – Two-year \$300,000 grant funded in March 2021 by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency to support a gender-responsive prevention, intervention, and diversion approach to reduce the number of Black girls referred to the juvenile justice system, reduce school violence, improve public safety, and to increase awareness of systemic racial disparities and affect systems change within Allegheny County, PA schools. Fund will support a three-pronged prevention, intervention, and system change continuum approach to reducing school violence in Allegheny County by:
 - Delivering an evidence-based, gender-responsive curricula that demonstrates effectiveness in addressing trauma and reducing delinquency among teen girls.
 - Providing teen girls with minimal to moderate involvement in the juvenile justice system access and referral to the Girls412 program.
 - Providing teen girls and their families access to quality trauma-informed support services and behavioral health care.
 - Reducing referral and citation rates of Black girls to the juvenile justice system in Allegheny County by increasing awareness of trauma-informed approaches and availability of community resources as diversion options to juvenile justice system.

7. Describe how your organization handles the referral process. Provide examples of your procedures and your typical response times following a request for service.

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Gwen's Girls receives referral by telephone, website, email, and social media platforms such as Facebook Messenger for girls to enroll in Gwen's Girls services. Girls are referred to Gwen's Girls by school administrators, parents/caregivers, coaches, social service agencies, and the juvenile justice system (e.g., magistrates, judges). Referrals are usually made for girls who are displaying at-risk behaviors such as poor academic performance, truancy, fighting, or their lives are filled with risks characterized by drugs, sexual exploitation, violence living on the streets, and family breakdown. To better receive and track the high volume of referrals made to Gwen's Girls, we added an Intake Coordinator position in July 2021. The Intake Coordinator is responsible for coordinating inquiries regarding all Gwen's Girls programs and services and serves as a community liaison to partnering agencies. This position works closely with community providers in the Diversion community to serve as a resource of the best services to meet the needs of referring families. Other specific job responsibilities include:

- Be knowledgeable about community resources and maintain and update an internal resource guide to identify and facilitate referrals. Refer participants to additional services, as needed. Provide staff and families with resources for discharge planning.
- Log all screening and enrollment activities in our Salesforce database. Analyze data in database on a regular basis to determine trends.
- Be the gatekeeper for our diversion initiatives, Gwen's Girls STARS and See the Best in Me. Be familiar with the different service providers to make the appropriate referral based on need and location. Facilitate and attend diversion provider meetings to ensure cross system coordination and continuity of care.
- Attend and participate in community meetings and assure cross-system coordination of services. Work closely with Program Directors to communicate about program capacities and referral information.
- Incorporate Sanctuary tools and practices into everyday interactions to create a trauma-informed environment.

8. Describe your organizational experience maintaining databases and using software for tracking and reporting service delivery trends and/or client outcomes.

Data collection and evaluation is essential for Gwen's Girls to assess and understand the impact of our services and programs. We continuously explore innovative technology that allows us to do this efficiently. In 2016, we implemented a new database through Salesforce that allows our system to interface directly with the KIDS/DHS's system. As a result, the data only needs to be entered into our system one time (previously data had to be entered separately in both systems) to generate reports and track outcomes for various interventions/datapoints.

Our current database will be a vital asset to the proposed pre-diversion initiative. We will be able to add licenses to our system, which will allow any staff member/provider across the county to access and enter data into our system and then KIDS system. This will also allow Gwen's Girls, as well as contracted partners, to have real-time access to the county-wide efforts that are occurring through this initiative. Our database system will allow us to provide quality monitoring and oversight of referrals, outcomes, and the overall process.

Proposed Approach (30 points possible)

9. How would you approach the design of this Initiative? What would be the key early tasks, and how would you approach them?

Gwen's Girls envisions being the Allegheny County entity that coordinates a broad juvenile pre-arrest diversion initiative that brings together individuals and organizations to implement a countywide,

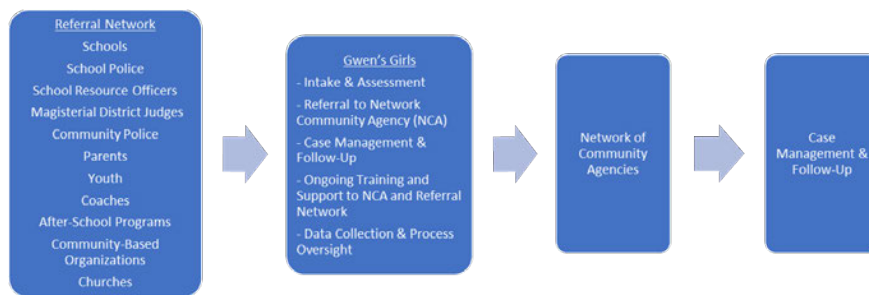
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centralized call center that will provide assessment, intake, and a community-based referral process for youth 10-21 years of age who have engaged in or are at risk of engaging in delinquent activities that often leads to additional delinquent activity and community violence. Gwen’s Girls views the following as key components to be included in the design and implementation of an effective countywide pre-arrest diversion initiative in Allegheny County. These are suggested components and are not necessarily to be implemented in any particular order. Gwen’s Girls will be flexible as to the design of initiatives that are already underway and those that are under development by the city, the county, or other provider, as well as the commitment of time and resources of all parties to be involved in building a larger effort. Gwen’s Girls is fully open to adjusting any of these components in collaboration with DHS. Key components include:

- 1) **Countywide Environmental Scan** – An essential first step in the creation of a new countywide pre-arrest diversion initiative for at-risk youth is to initiate an environmental scan of the county to identify existing resources, services and systems, and programs that serve youth and families across Allegheny County. An environmental scan will help Gwen’s Girls and DHS determine what efforts are already underway and in what communities, where processes and programs are working (best practices), and where gaps may exist. Gwen’s Girls is not aware of any existing study that captures this information and is willing to create a survey tool that can be distributed to foundations/funders, schools, after-school programs, coaches, parents, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and the juvenile justice system (historical juvenile justice referral patterns) to capture this information and compile a county profile of both formal and informal resources who are working directly with youth and their families to divert youth from justice system processing. Gwen’s Girls is aware that this is happening in pockets of the county, and we want to capture those resources and make sure they continue to be a part of the larger effort while also ensuring we are not duplicating efforts. The environmental scan is intended to provide a more formal landscape of current programs, services, and supports in the county.

Based on the outcomes of the Environmental Scan, Gwen’s Girls program design will include three primary components as reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative Components



- 2) **Referral Network** – The launching point of the diversion initiative will be the engagement and commitment of a well-trained Referral Network of individuals and organizations who are on the “front line” of determining whether a situation truly requires a citation or referral to diversion. Gwen’s Girls will reach out to all potential stakeholders including K-12 schools, police/school safety officers, superintendents, school administrators, school board members, teachers, principals, parents, elected officials, judges/magisterial district judges, probation officers, the Allegheny County Office of the District Attorney, the Allegheny County Office of the Public Defender, Child Welfare/Allegheny County Department of Human Services (administrators and

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caseworkers), and community organizations. Outreach and recruitment of these network partners will include information about the diversion initiative, obtaining feedback from these groups about what needs they may have to support their participation in the initiative, and to develop collaborative relationships.

- 3) **Intake Assessment & Referral to Network Partner Agency:** Referral Network Partners will provide a central intake telephone number to the youth/family or call the number directly. Gwen's Girls is aware of the 211 central call center number. If this proposal is awarded, Gwen's Girls will utilize the internal processes and procedures that have been implemented as outlined above to guide the implementation of the referral process for the pre-diversion initiative. A tentative, preliminary plan has been created with the United Way of Southwestern PA 211 call center to receive referrals during non-business hours (8pm-9am). This is essential to offer 24-hour access and an immediate response time to supports. Gwen's Girls will explore the appropriate use or fit to use 211 or any other planned alternate number the City or County may have in play for referral sources to use. The 211 number is used herein for discussion purposes only.

The call center telephone number will be staffed 24/7. Gwen's Girls staff will serve as the Intake Provider and answer referral calls Monday through Friday from 9am-8pm. After hours and on weekends, it is suggested that the intake telephone number be routed to the county's 211 line (or other appropriate call center) where operators there will process intake referrals to the program.

During intake calls, the operators will assess the need, triage the reported situation, provide de-escalation guidance (if the situation is immediate), collect contact information, determine if the youth is a candidate for early diversion programming, and, if so, provide referral to the Network Community Agency closest to the youth/family. The operator will request permission to share the youth's information with the Network Community Agency/Diversion partner. If granted, the data will be shared directly with the partner program. If not, the individual will receive the contact information for the partner program and will be directed to contact the program themselves. When permission is granted, the operator then enters the information into their database and informs the individual that the program will contact them within one (1) business day. Gwen's Girls will contact the Network Community Agency receiving the youth referral within 48 hours of the initial intake referral to document the referral and provide any needed supports. Foundation of Hope, the Boys & Girls Club, and BGEA partners who have experience in diversion have already reached out to Gwen's Girls to be a part of our countywide initiative.

The types of referral sources are represented by three (3) tiers:

- Tier 1 – Parent and/or Child, School, and Community: When there is a criminal or behavioral issue at home, in the community, or at school, the adult at the scene/parent/child turns to 211 instead of contacting the police.
 - Tier 2 – Police involved: When the police are involved, they connect the family to 211.
 - Tier 3 – Probation or Magistrate: Magistrate connects family to 211 before any ruling
- 4) **Case Management & Follow-Up:** Case management will be approached from two (2) directions. First, case management will be the primary responsibility of the Community Network Agencies who have received a referral for a youth/family and are engaging with the youth/family in their agency's programs and services. Case management will also be the responsibility of Gwen's Girls to follow each youth within the diversion initiative to ensure accountability and support, and to monitor Community Network Agencies and their progress with diversion referrals received by the program. Gwen's Girls will respect each agency's autonomy to engage referred youth in their own diversion program or services but will identify specific expectations in the types of data that the larger collective program will require for evaluation and reporting purposes.

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- 5) **On-going Training & Support to Referral Network and Network of Community Agencies:** Proper training of program providers is directly related to the effectiveness of diversion programs. Gwen's Girls will provide thorough and comprehensive training and support to both the Referral Network partners and the community agencies who will be providing case management to the youth and families directly. The purpose of the trainings will be to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the overall process and their individual role, to make sure each entity is equipped to execute on their role, to ensure quality services are delivered to youth, and ultimately that the partners feel supported. Training will incorporate many of the topic areas above that are already required of Gwen's Girl's staff. Training of Network Community Agencies is the most critical stage of action and will provide intensive training to the participating referral sources to learn how to divert to the referral process if the child (11 years +) is about to be cited or arrested for a minor offense (e.g., disorderly conduct, simple assault, small amount of marijuana, terroristic threats, trespassing). Training will focus on how to recognize criminal vs. non-criminal behavior and changing a reactionary narrative of dialing 911 for situations that do not involve criminal activity. Other training will include Strengths Based Approach in Working with At-Risk Youth, SOGIE, Positive Behavior Support for Children, family engagement, parenting skill development, and others. Training of 211 operators will focus on Youth Mental Health First Aid, SOGIE, Mandated Reporter, HIPPA Privacy, and De-escalating Hostile Clients. Gwen's Girls anticipates that these trainings will be ongoing and offered multiple times during a given year and be provided both in-person and virtually to accommodate partner preference. Gwen's Girls will provide these trainings, as well as those that are mandated by DHS.
- 6) **Data Collection & Process Oversight:** Gwen's Girls will work collaboratively with DHS to determine the outcomes to be assessed, the tools and methods with which data will be collected, and the frequency of assessment and reporting. At a minimum, Gwen's Girls will expect Community Network Agencies to report on a quarterly basis the status of the referred youths and will then track and assess the data and report outcomes to DHS. Monitoring of outcomes from GG's system as well as school, juvenile justice (probation, courts, magistrates), child welfare, community-based organization, and parents. Gwen's girls will need to have access to this data to be able to track and monitor outcomes on both a quarterly and annual basis.
- 7) **Program Marketing & Promotion:** Marketing and promotion of the Diversion Initiative will be critical to its success. Youth services across Allegheny County are siloed which does not encourage engagement among entities and working cross-sector, leaving some without knowledge of resources or programs that are under development or actively underway. If the providers do not know about it, then families do not know about it. Youth, families, schools, partners, and community based agencies across the county must be aware of the initiative, its purpose, how it works, and its anticipated value in reducing citations and arrests of Black youth in Allegheny County. Gwen's Girls is open to the option to organize a formal marketing and promotional campaign or have DHS do the marketing and promotion.

Target Populations/Community: Target populations for the proposed initiative will be any 10-21 year-old youth in Allegheny County, specifically Black youth within this age group, as they are disproportionately referred to the juvenile justice system as opposed to their White counterparts. Gwen's Girls anticipates that referred youth and families will come from predominantly Black communities within the county, but we expect, and are prepared to work with, youth and families from racially, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse communities and populations. The initiative should start by targeting following five (5) Allegheny County communities:

Area #1: City of Pittsburgh- East End (Homewood, East Hills, Wilkinsburg)

Area #2: City of Pittsburgh- South and West End

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Area #3: Braddock, East Pittsburgh

Area #4: Mon Valley- McKeesport, Duquesne, Clairton

Area #5: Penn Hills

10. What potential outcomes do you envision for this Initiative? How would you approach prioritizing them?

Gwen's Girls realizes that the design, launch, and implementation of any new initiative such as a countywide Diversion Initiative will be complex. Gwen's Girls agrees with most of the metrics of the broad framework identified by DHS in the RFP related to the design, launch, and coordination of the initiative. The design of Gwen's Girls proposed initiative will be highly dependent upon the Countywide Environmental Scan, outcomes of which are well-aligned to the outcomes proposed by DHS for "Designing the Initiative." Gwen's Girls anticipates working with DHS to realize the proposed metrics and/or re-work or re-frame outcomes informed by the proposed metrics combined with the outcomes of the environmental scan. Additionally, the metrics suggested for the "Launching and Coordinating the Initiative" are well-aligned to Gwen's Girls implementation approach. We anticipate meeting or modifying the metrics as needed to support staffing, the referral process, relationship and partnership development, comprehensive training of partners, working with DHS, and evaluation and reporting.

Priority will be given to completing the Countywide Environmental Scan first, which will inform our next steps to solidifying the design, launch, and implementation of the initiative. Informed by the Countywide Environmental Scan, the second priority will be for Gwen's Girls to become the countywide, centralized intake entity for the Diversion Initiative and be responsible for implementation, coordination, and management of the initiative. At this stage, Gwen's Girls and DHS will evaluate the proposed process components and adjust as needed to the following:

1. Intake and Assessment
2. Referral to Network of Community Agencies (NCA)
3. Case Management/Follow-up
4. On-going Training and Support to NCA and Referral Network
5. Data Collection and Process Oversight

With clear program design, coordination, and implementation, Gwen's Girls anticipates the following outcomes over a two-year period:

Outcome 1 – Creation of a holistic, community-based, county-wide pre-citation/pre-arrest diversion initiative.

Outcome 2 – A reduction in the number of juveniles referred to juvenile court, citations, and arrests

Outcome 3 - A significant reduction in, or complete elimination of, the racial disparities seen in referrals to the juvenile justice system in Allegheny County

11. How would you prefer to partner with DHS, and what would you need from DHS to make this Initiative successful?

Gwen's Girls envisions a partnership with DHS that is open, supportive, and collaborative. Collaboration with DHS will be essential to the implementation and sustainability of the proposed diversion initiative. Necessary to a successful relationship will be access to partnerships that already exist between DHS and other stakeholders/entities in Allegheny County (e.g., school districts, social service organizations, law enforcement), data sharing via Memorandum of Understanding with schools, the Juvenile Probation Office, healthcare institutions, and others, referral resources (community-based organizations that contract with DHS), state and federal funding opportunities, and Student Assistance Programs/behavioral health supports. Gwen's Girls is also interested in partnering with DHS to seek funding from other sources to sustain the program for the long-term.

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Budget (30 points possible)

12. Provide a detailed, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with designing, launching, implementing, and sustaining this Initiative over a two-year term – including all tasks listed in Section 2 of the RFP. Be sure to include position salaries for all proposed staff. (This question **is not** included in the page count. You may use an attachment [e.g., Excel file] for the line-item budget or include your response in the space below.)

See Attachment 4: Program Budget

13. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget (This question **is** included in the page count. Please include your response in the space below.)

Budget Justification

PERSONNEL:

Salary - This cost reflects the salaries for the required staff positions necessary to support the initiative over a 2-year period. Year 1 salaries total \$350,000. Year 2 salaries represent a 2% salary increase at \$357,000. Total = \$707,000.

Benefits – This cost reflects the necessary benefits provided by Gwen’s Girls to all full-time and part-time staff including FICA, medical and life insurance, unemployment compensation, 401K contributions, and Worker’s Compensation. Year 1 cost is \$104,130 and Year 2 cost is \$114,851 (recognizing projected increases in insurance and worker’s compensation. Total = \$218,981.

Total Salary and Benefits Y1 = \$454,130

Total Salary and Benefits Y2 = \$471,851

OPERATIONS

These costs reflect the costs expected to be incurred by Gwen’s Girls to design and implement the initiative over a 2-year period. Costs include:

United Way 24-Hour Call Center – this cost reflects what Gwen’s Girls anticipates will be the cost for the United Way to provide support to referrals made after hours (9pm – 8am) and on weekends.

\$10/call*25calls per day*24hrs*365days = \$182,500 (\$91,250 per year).

PR & Marketing – this cost reflects the costs for designing and printing marketing materials, press releases, and social media posts. Total = \$100,000 (\$50,000 per year).

Professional Development Training – this cost reflects the costs Gwen’s Girls will incur to provide program trainings to Referral Partners and Community Network Agencies over a 2-year period. Total = \$70,000 (\$35,000 per year).

Cell phones – this cost reflects the costs of cellphone usage for Gwen’s Girls staff while providing program services. \$60/line/month x 12months x 7.5staff. Total = \$9,000 (\$5,400 per year)

Technology – this cost reflects the cost of the purchase of 10 Dell Latitude 3420 BTX laptops at \$1,310 per laptop. Total = \$13,100.

Salesforce Licenses – this cost reflects the cost associated with purchasing 10 additional Salesforce licenses to maintain data at \$576 per license. Total = \$11,520 (\$5,760 per year).

Office supplies – this cost reflects the cost of purchasing necessary office supplies (e.g., pens, paper, folders, printer ink/toner, etc.). \$50 per month x 7.5 staff. Total = \$9,000 (\$4,500 per year).

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Travel – this cost reflects the cost of staff mileage to travel throughout Allegheny County to meet with program partners or to attend meetings with key stakeholders. 100mi/month x 6.5 staff x 12 months x .56/mile. Total = \$8,736 (\$4,368 per year)

Rent – this cost reflects a portion of Gwen’s Girls office space on the Northside that will be used for staff and program activities. 7,500 square feet x \$15/sq ft. Total = \$225,000 (\$112,500 per year).

Utilities- this cost reflects a portion of the utility costs (electric, gas, water, sewage) at Gwen’s Girls Northside office space. 7,500 square feet x \$2.39/sq. ft. Total = \$35,850 (\$17,925 per year).

Liability Insurance- this cost reflects the liability insurance required of Gwen’s Girls site and participant coverage on operations only. \$5,796 (\$2,898 per year).

INDIRECT COSTS: This cost reflects the administrative costs for Gwen’s Girls to do business (accounting, payroll, administration, etc.). Y1 cost = \$79,683 and Y2 cost = \$80,145. Total cost = \$159,828.

Year 1 TOTAL BUDGET = \$876,514

Year 2 TOTAL BUDGET = \$881,597

TOAL BUDGET = \$1,758,111

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Attachment 4: Program Budget

Gwen's Girls, Inc.					
DHS Pre-diversion Budget					
FY2022-2023					
	Annual		Budget	Budget	
	Salaries		Year One	Year Two	
PERSONNEL					
<i>Salaries:</i>					
Intake & Resource Manager-FT	52,000	1.0000	52,000	53,040	
Regional Community Based Intake & Resource Coordinators	40,000	5.0000	200,000	204,000	
Parent & Engagement Specialist-FT	48,000	1.0000	48,000	48,960	
Data/Research Coordinator-FT	50,000	1.0000	50,000	51,000	
Total Salaries	Salaries increased 2% Yr2		350,000	357,000	
<i>Benefits:</i>					
FICA (7.65%)	350,000	0.0765	26,775	27,311	
Medical & Life Insurances (15%)	350,000	0.1500	52,500	60,690	
PA U/C (2.48%)	75,000	0.0248	1,860	1,860	
401k (5%)	350,000	0.0500	17,500	17,850	
Worker's Comp (1.57%)	350,000	0.0157	5,495	7,140	
Total Benefits	Projected increases in ins/w's comp		104,130	114,851	
Total Personnel			454,130	471,851	
OPERATIONS					
United Way 24-Hour Call Center	\$10/call*25calls per day*24hrs*365days		91,250	91,250	
PR/Marketing	printed materials, media outlets reports		50,000	50,000	
Professional Development Training	includes trainer/consultant costs, materials and re		35,000	35,000	
Cell phones	\$60/line/mth*12mths*7.5staff		5,400	5,400	
Technology	10 Dell latitude 3420 BTX laptops \$1310/ea		13,100	-	
Salesforce additional licenses	10 licenses*\$576/ea		5,760	5,760	
Office supplies	Paper/pens/folders/toner-\$50pp/mth*7.5staff		4,500	4,500	
Travel (Staff mileage)	100mi/mth*6.5staff*12mths*\$.56/mi		4,368	4,368	
Rent-site	7500sf*\$15/sf		112,500	112,500	
Utilities-site/ Projected/used utility costs-NS site	7500sf*\$2.39/sf (incls elec/gas/water/sec)		17,925	17,925	
Liability Insurance-site & participant coverage	\$289803*1% on operations only		2,898	2,898	
Total Operations			342,701	329,601	
Indirect Costs:					
Administrative Expenses-10%			79,683	80,145	
Totals			876,514	881,597	
2 Year Total Budget:				\$ 1,758,111	

RFP for the Design, Launch and Coordination of a Countywide Juvenile Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

Attachment 1: Board of Directors List



gwen's girls

2021 – 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIST

Name:	Occupation:
Caren L. Caldwell, MBA	UPMC Health Plan Associate Vice President/GM Government Products
Dr. Elizabeth Carter TREASURER	Highmark, Inc. Director, Market Segment Finance-PA
Bridgette Cofield, JD, SPHR	Carlow University Assistant Vice President of HR, Diversity and Inclusion,
Randie Cosby	Labor Relations Consultant
Elizabeth Crow	COMCAST NBCUniversal Director, Community Impact
Renee DeMichiei Farrow VICE-CHAIR	Architectural Innovations, LLC Director of Business Development
Sonia Layne-Gartside	Consultant, Master Trainer, OCM Specialist
Todd Robert Goss	First National Bank of Pennsylvania Branch Manager
Walter Hales	HPS Digital, Inc. CEO
Dr. Kathy Humphrey	Carlow University President
Kenya Matthews	Google Program Manager
Michelle Ritter	Business General Counsel
Nicole Webster	Accenture Workplace Solutions & Corporate Citizenship Associate Manager
Angela M. Weidman CHAIR	Ernst & Young, LLP Partner
Dr. Erroline M. Williams	Professional Coach and Consultant Retired, Duquesne University
Frances Woodward	Gateway Health LLC Senior Vice President, Chief Legal Officer and Secretary
Paula D. Yurkovich SECRETARY	Smith Micro Software Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications