



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Teen Programming

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Alliance for Refugee Youth Support and Education, Inc.

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Jenna Baron

Address: 6101 Penn Avenue, Suite 201, Pittsburgh PA 15206

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: Jenna@arysepgh.org

Website: https://www.arysepgh.org/

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

Date Incorporated: February 21, 2013

Partners included in this Proposal: [Click here to enter text.](#)

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Pittsburgh Public Schools OST Office

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	Jenna Baron	[REDACTED]	jenna@arysepgh.org
Contract Processing Contact	Jenna Baron	[REDACTED]	jenna@arysepgh.org
Chief Information Officer	Jenna Baron	[REDACTED]	jenna@arysepgh.org
Chief Financial Officer	Morgan Puterbaugh	[REDACTED]	morgan@arysepgh.org
MPER Contact*	Morgan Puterbaugh	[REDACTED]	morgan@arysepgh.org

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

RFP for Teen Programming

BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

Kheir Mugwaneza, Chair
Jane Voros, Vice Chair
Phoenix Le Nguyen, Treasurer
Jonathan Muscatello, Secretary
Holly Hickling
Faduma Saleh
Barbara Johnson
Mark Nahkla
Erica Kelly Curren
Maya Ragavan

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Kheir Mugwaneza

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: [REDACTED]

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.*

Dr. Jennie Schulze,
Associate Professor of in the Department of Political Science at Duquesne University,
[REDACTED]

Dr. Maya Ragavan,
Pediatrician, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Ivonne Smith-Tapia,
Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services, JFCS, [REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$50,000

RFP for Teen Programming

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.

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>.

- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
- W-9

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 100 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 12 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

RFP for Teen Programming

Organizational Experience (20 points possible)

1. Describe your organizational experience serving the target population, specifically teens from diverse communities and populations. Please including examples of ways in which your organization connects with teens.

The Alliance for Refugee Youth Support and Education (ARYSE) is entering its tenth year of service to youth in the refugee and immigrant community of Allegheny County. ARYSE began in 2013 as a grassroots effort led by local refugee youth and college students who realized that the students they were tutoring, low-income refugee youth, were experiencing unique challenges and barriers to success in an educational system that was not designed or adapted to meet their needs. In response, they organized the only summer program in the region specifically tailored to the needs and interests of immigrant and refugee youth, which centered programming on literacy development, community building, and storytelling through the arts. Since then, the organization has grown from serving 25 teens through one summer program to reaching 150 teens through a variety of programs throughout the school year. The organization is now recognized throughout the region as the premiere out-of-school-time resource for immigrant and refugee youth, as key regional partners, including all local refugee resettlement agencies and Pittsburgh Public Schools, regularly refer students to the ARYSE summer, after school, and weekend enrichment programs.

ARYSE has seen strong interest and enrollment as well as retention due to the student-centered nature and development of the programs as well as the near-peer mentorship model employed in all programs. Through ongoing and extensive evaluation and feedback from program participants and the creation of a youth steering committee, the programs and operations of ARYSE are developed and guided by the voices of teen participants. By providing meaningful leadership and program design opportunities coupled with engaging and unique activities for teens, ARYSE has developed OST programming that has experienced full enrollment and a waiting list of teens who are voluntarily choosing to participate. ARYSE is applying to DHS to support the ongoing implementation of the After School Club which will strengthen its model for future replication to meet increased demand from the community.

2. Describe your organizational experience working in high-need communities.

The immigrant and refugee youth population in Allegheny County is growing, and while these young people are ambitious, dynamic, and talented, they largely come from low-income families with a myriad of barriers to accessing their full potential. ARYSE has centered its work over the past decade in supporting this historically marginalized community while focusing on its strengths, opportunities and interests to have the greatest impact.

Immigrant and refugee youth often feel isolated and separate from the many economic, professional and recreational opportunities that Pittsburgh offers its community. Without direct access to mentors, exposure to local cultural institutions and opportunities, and with the lack of modeling from people of similar demographics, they have difficulty imagining themselves immersed, celebrated and fully thriving in the greater Pittsburgh community. ARYSE has developed, over the past decade, an articulated leadership pathway where students enter as youth participants and advance to become counselors in training, counselors, steering committee members, volunteers, and/or staff. They see themselves reflected in their mentors and set goals for themselves to become leaders within the programs and beyond.

In addition to tailored academic support through a strengths-based lens, and leadership and workforce development programming, immigrant and refugee youth need spaces for social healing and soft skills development as the migration and integration process is often harsh, re-traumatizing, and confusing. Once immigrant and refugee youth reach the U.S., they are frequently misunderstood and socially alienated due to structural inequities like language barriers, discrimination, and lack of background knowledge on their new context. These young residents of Allegheny County experience significant obstacles that impede their pathways to economic mobility. By centering social and emotional

RFP for Teen Programming

development activities with individualized academic support, ARYSE provides students with creative outlets for joy and storytelling that transcend language and help them more deeply connect with their peers and mentors as they become more equipped and prepared to pursue their passions and realize success.

3. Describe your organization's commitment to serving all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences. Provide specific approaches used and examples of how they are reflected in your work.

Working toward equity and systemic change are central to ARYSE. In practice, there is an explicit commitment among ARYSE staff, board of directors, and Youth Steering Committee members to include the voices and perspectives of immigrant and refugee youth at all levels of decision making. The goal is that this practice, as well as the presence of immigrant youth leaders in our region, creates a transformation among institutions and systems in the broader community. The vision is that the voices and experiences of immigrant and refugee youth are heard, seen, and prioritized in all spaces where decisions are being made about the future of our communities.

One specific approach used at ARYSE is the implementation of a leadership pathway that ensures that mentors, leaders and staff at the organization reflect the demographics and lived experiences of the program participants; this is a key pillar in reaching the goal of supporting all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences. Additionally, interpretation and translation support is provided in all programs to ensure that all participants, regardless of English language proficiency, are able to fully participate in programming. All of the ARYSE programming is also intentionally differentiated to ensure that students with diverse intellectual and physical abilities can engage in all aspects of programming in a meaningful way. ARYSE also prioritizes a high staff-to-student ratio for all programs to ensure that each student receives the attention that they deserve.

While the organization has seen a lot of success in implementing these strategies, among others, it is also constantly eliciting feedback and evolving its programming to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all students. One example of this is the recent creation of the LGBTQ+ Initiative and Queer Youth Space which is in direct response and support of a growing number of youth attending ARYSE programs who identify as queer, trans and/or nonbinary.

Program Design (55 points possible)

4. Provide an overall description of your proposed Programming and how it will provide teens with the opportunity to engage in enriching and interesting activities. If applicable, include how input from teens and/or best practice research was/will be taken into consideration in the design of the Programming.

With support from the DHS teen programming grant, ARYSE will strengthen its flagship site of After School Club (ASC), located on Duquesne University's campus, to help meet the growing demand from the immigrant and refugee community in Allegheny County. This program, along with all ARYSE programming, has developed with direct input and leadership from teens and their parents, partners from Jewish Family and Community Services and Duquesne University, and volunteer mentors. Most notably, the ARYSE Youth Steering Committee is the formalized leadership team that was created to ensure that teens have an active and consequential voice in designing and shaping the future of ARYSE in partnership with the staff and board.

The ASC is the focus of this request and aims to help immigrant and refugee high school students overcome educational and social barriers that hinder successful integration while providing meaningful community and engaging opportunities that encourage full and voluntary participation. Activities are

RFP for Teen Programming

geared toward raising students' awareness about educational and labor market opportunities through field trips to city/county government offices, universities, and cultural institutions, and workshops led by representatives from partner agencies. The program also encourages social and cultural integration through near-peer mentoring by university students.

ARYSE programs, especially After School Club, are designed to address the unique challenges refugee youth face greater in educational attainment compared to their native-born peers, especially due to the disruption of formal education as a result of displacement (Augusta & Hakuta, 1997). The majority of youth who participate in the ASC have had interrupted formal education; many have limited time to graduate before aging out of school upon turning 21. Additionally, refugees are often resettled in areas with higher rates of poverty and in school districts with correspondingly lower resources (Orfield & Yun, 1999). These factors, coupled with the challenge of navigating competing value systems at school and home, place refugee students at a disadvantage. In addition to having a shorter time to catch-up to their native-born peers, refugee young adults served by ASC also balance the demands of providing critical support to their families and communities.

In addition to academics, the ASC supports students' social and emotional wellness and empowers participants by providing a safe space to learn about American culture, while still encouraging students to celebrate their own cultural identities. Selective acculturation theory provides evidence that immigrant youth are more likely to experience upward social mobility when they retain aspects of culture from their parents' country of origin (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014). The ASC seeks to create a positive and inclusive multilingual space where students feel safe practicing English, but also have opportunities to share their native language and culture. Interpreters are almost always present at ASC and they facilitate the development of active bilingualism where students use their first and second languages interchangeably. Additionally, regular assessments, designed by Dr. Jennie Schulze, lead Duquesne University partner, indicate that ASC students have difficulty understanding the complexities of race relations in the United States, and that they have experienced discrimination on the basis of their race or ethnicity, both in school and in their neighborhoods. The ASC is committed to developing and implementing practices that assertively address these issues and empower both refugee high school students and mentors to navigate racial barriers.

A typical afternoon at the ASC involves a shared meal, team building activity, one-on-one homework support, and/or a presentation or field trip related to college and career exploration. ASC takes place on Duquesne University's campus in the student union. ARYSE youth are provided with bus passes to travel from their schools (mostly Brashear or Taylor Allderdice HS) to Duquesne University by 3:30 pm. From 3:30 pm-4:00 pm, students settle in and are provided a hot meal. From 4:00 pm-4:30 pm, the ARYSE Program Coordinator facilitates a team building activity to provide students and mentors with opportunities to share personal stories, deepen relationships, and have fun. On Tuesdays, 4:30 pm-5:30 pm is dedicated to homework support and English conversation practice; on Thursdays, this timeframe is dedicated to ARYSE-facilitated enrichment activities or college and career exploration workshops led by visiting staff from JFCS 412 Futures program. The program transitions to closing with an affirming call and response chant (see lyrics below) led by a student and dismissal at 6:00 pm.

"I Am" Chant Lyrics

I am (I am)

Somebody (Somebody)

Who won't be stopped by anybody (Who won't be stopped by anybody)

I've got my hands in the air (I've got my hands in the air)

I've got movement in my feet (I've got movement in my feet)

I've got love for my people (I've got love for my people)

And it starts with me! (And it starts with me!)

Past and current program participants have reported on surveys and focus groups designed by Dr. Jennie Schulze and approved by Duquesne University's Institutional Review Board, that help with homework, engaging with mentors, and learning about educational and career opportunities are among the most

RFP for Teen Programming

valuable aspects of ASC. Students also report improved educational performance, increased awareness of educational and job opportunities, and support with social and cultural integration they are unable to access anywhere else.

Perhaps the most persuasive evidence of the effectiveness of the ASC is in the growth and retention of the student and mentor base. The program saw a 300% increase in enrollment between fall 2018 and fall 2019, and currently has a waitlist. Committed to inclusivity, the program serves refugee youth from a variety of countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea. Several local newspapers have featured the After School Club and it's been recognized as the flagship refugee youth program by PA Department of Health and Human Services and Office of Refugee Resettlement.

5. Describe how your Programming will provide a physically and emotionally safe space for teens.

The physical and emotional safety and well-being of program participants at the After School Club are of utmost importance and a central focus of the physical site selection, the development of programming, and the recruitment and training of staff and volunteers. The physical spaces, located at Duquesne University, are all ADA compliant. Additionally, the building and classrooms at Duquesne University provide ample space for differentiated instruction which include independent, group and outdoor work spaces. Program participants regularly report that meeting on a college campus is a highlight of the program and one of the reasons that they continue to return and recommend the program to their peers.

ARYSE was originally established with a central focus on designing spaces for youth with refugee and immigrant backgrounds to feel a strong sense of support and belonging. ARYSE staff, volunteers, and any individuals responsible for providing direct services to youth are expected and supported in doing so through a trauma-informed, healing-centered, and anti-racist lens. Resources are allocated to each program, including the After School Club, to ensure interpretation and translation services are always available so all students are able to freely express feedback, ask for help, and fully participate in activities. Students are encouraged to speak their native languages and regularly teach ARYSE staff, their peers, and mentors words and phrases. Students also benefit from one-on-one and small group support, which ARYSE sees as essential to ensuring participants are fully heard and able to thrive.

6. Describe how your Programming will provide teens with opportunities to make positive connections to peers, adults and their community.

Teen participants build lifelong friendships with peers and meaningful connections with mentors and educators throughout the program. ARYSE believes that creating space for authentic relationship building is pivotal in realizing its mission to support immigrant and refugee youth in becoming engaged, confident, and celebrated members of our community.

Through surveys conducted by Dr. Jennie Schulze, After School Club participants have consistently shared facing difficulties making friends, including "American" friends, as well as bullying and discrimination, within their schools and neighborhoods, leaving them feeling isolated and insecure. In response, the After School Club balances educational and career preparedness with cultural and social preparedness. Discussions about socio-political and cultural issues, mock elections, guest presentations, and field trips like kayaking, theatre and ice skating have facilitated authentic relationships between the high school and university students, as well as ARYSE staff and Duquesne faculty.

Finally, the development and implementation of its leadership pathway and near-peer mentorship program is one way that ARYSE facilitates positive connections between teens and their peers, adults, and community. The leadership pathway allows students to enter the After School Club as youth participants and advance to become counselors, mentors, and/or steering committee members. As youth

RFP for Teen Programming

participants work with these professional mentors and leaders who represent their own demographics and have previously participated in the program, there is an immediate opportunity to make a positive connection that only grows throughout the program year after year. In the After School Club, teens are also paired directly with university students who can help them with their academics but also share stories of life on campus and help to support students approaching the transition from high school to post-secondary education and work.

7. Why do you think teens will want to participate in your Programming?

ARYSE has been pleased to see overwhelming levels of interest and engagement from immigrant and refugee teens in all of its programs. The After School Club program currently enrolls 27 teens yearly with 100% of participants completing the full year of programming. With the projected increase in refugee resettlement to the Pittsburgh region, coupled with the strong reputation among participants and local immigrant service agencies, ARYSE anticipates that this program will need to grow to accommodate the interest from teen participants.

Each year, After School Club participants have reported that without the program, they would not be able to complete their homework and fully take advantage of their education. Students also report valuing the program's near peer mentoring, leadership opportunities, being provided with a hot meal after a long school day, individualized support from ARYSE staff, and exposure to cultural and educational institutions throughout Pittsburgh. Additionally, all ASC students are invited to participate in the ARYSE summer program, PRYSE Academy.

Finally, the After School Club is held at Duquesne University, which not only introduces the students to a premier institution of higher education but provides an important foundation and message that shows each student that they are valued and deserving of access to the best the Pittsburgh has to offer. Program participants regularly speak of their experience spending time on campus as a highlight of their participation.

As previously mentioned, ARYSE is deliberate about creating a culture of feedback from students and cultivating a leadership pathway where students enter as participants and have opportunities to become counselors, mentors and/or steering committee members. As youth participants work with and build strong relationships with mentors and leaders who represent their own demographics they see a model for further engagement and opportunity within ARYSE programming and in the greater Pittsburgh community. This, in turn, translates into a deeper engagement and interest in participating in ARYSE programming by all teens.

8. Describe how you will market your Programming and open referral pathways.

ARYSE will rely on existing networks and community connections to market the program and ensure full enrollment. Current referral partners include the Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS), Pittsburgh Public Schools, Acculturation for Justice and Peace Outreach (AJAPO), Hello Neighbor, Bethany Christian Services, and other organizations, school districts, libraries, and individuals who provide services to immigrant communities. In addition to formal referrals, ARYSE has built strong relationships with program participants and their families who share the program opportunities with their peers and greater network. ARYSE will host information sessions for both programs and send flyers advertising these sessions and the program to all current contacts. Finally, ARYSE's flagship summer program, PRYSE Academy, enrolls 100 teens each summer and serves as a direct feeder program to the After School Club.

9. Describe how you will staff your Programming and the strategies you will use to recruit, hire and retain racially diverse staff, staff with relevant lived experience and staff that reflect the population served.

RFP for Teen Programming

ARYSE staff are talented and dedicated people who believe deeply in the mission and represent the diversity of the students and the greater region. The ongoing success of the program and future expansion hinges upon successful staff recruitment, meaningful professional development and strong staff retention.

The After School Club is led by a Program Director, Mike Sirera, who has been in the position since September, 2019. Mike has maintained and cultivated transformational relationships with dozens of students and their family members throughout his tenure at ARYSE and utilizes his skills in mentorship, program design, higher education management, and strategic planning. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, for which this grant is requested, ARYSE will also hire a part-time staff person to provide necessary assistance to Mike and increased individualized support to youth participants.

In addition to Mike and the part-time staff, ARYSE also has a Youth Leadership Coordinator who is responsible for supporting Youth Steering Committee members and students who transition to work as Counselors-in-Training or Junior Counselors at the summer program, PRYSE Academy. Abdi and his family are originally from Somalia and moved to Pittsburgh through the refugee resettlement process in the early 2000's (among the earliest Somali Bantu families in the region). Abdi is fluent in Chizigula and Maay Maay.

The ARYSE staff recruitment process is done through an equity-lens; all position descriptions list the salary range, outreach efforts are targeted to diverse communities, and people of color and those with immigrant backgrounds are explicitly encouraged to apply. ARYSE has thoughtfully designed an evaluation rubric for candidates which prioritizes evidence of shared lived experience, demonstrated relevant work experience, and a commitment to anti-racism.

Overall, ARYSE works to create a culture where all staff are valued and given the support they need to experience success and fully thrive in their work. Through regular check-ins, a collaborative work culture, the prioritization of personal wellness over productivity, and the freedom to follow individual passions and expertise, new and future staff members feel a part of a supportive, passionate team. This recognition and valuing of staff is the main approach to recruiting, hiring and retaining a diverse staff.

10. Describe how your Programing set teens on a positive trajectory toward adulthood and any skills you expect teens to gain (e.g., socioemotional, leadership, workforce-related, conflict resolution skills).

The ARYSE mission and focus of its teen programming is to support immigrant and refugee youth in becoming engaged, confident, and celebrated members of our community. Through out-of-school-time programming that prioritizes the arts, mentorship, workforce readiness, and healing centered engagement, ARYSE youth gain the tools they need to take their place as leaders within their communities and our world. Specifically, the teen programming and leadership pathway support the development of literacy skills and self-confidence while creating a sense of belonging among students. This support in building self-efficacy and literacy skills, coupled with the social and emotional benefits of the program and the network of peers and adult mentors sets the teens on a positive trajectory toward adulthood.

Implementation Challenges (15 points possible)

11. If your Program experiences low attendance, how will you engage more teens?

Low attendance has never been a challenge in the prior ten years of programming with teens in Allegheny County, though ARYSE is prepared to implement a targeted recruitment strategy to address an enrollment gap, if necessary. This would include working directly with referral partners and key school

RFP for Teen Programming

leadership members including the ESL director at PPS to host information sessions or accept new participants after the initial enrollment period.

12. If one of the teens in your Program experiences behavioral or mental health issues, what will you do?

ARYSE takes a proactive and preventative approach to support the well-being of all students. By outlining and reinforcing the behavioral expectations from the first day of the program and relying on returning students to model and set the tone for positive program engagement, a culture of respect and care is created and behavioral challenges are reduced. Additionally, through one-on-one check-ins, a high staff-to-student ratio, and pre-program and ongoing communication with participant families, ARYSE staff become aware of any challenges or crises that the teens are facing and can offer support according to the specific needs and wishes of the family and individual teens. Finally, ARYSE maintains strong relationships with partner social service organizations and the students' schools, and works to collaborate with these agencies to ensure that each student receives the support that they need.

13. If a parent of a teen in your Program expressed the family's need for support outside of what your Program can provide, what will you do?

Due to the positive experiences of teens who participate in ARYSE programming, coupled with consistent and deliberate parental engagement, ARYSE often becomes the most trusted agency for not only the teens but their families. Therefore, ARYSE regularly fields requests from families for services which may include English language classes, housing assistance, and job placement, among others. Most often when this occurs, ARYSE refers parents to programs like Immigrant Services and Connections (ISAC) where they can receive high-quality service navigation.

Budget (10 points possible)

14. In the space below, provide a detailed one-year, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Programming.

See below

15. In the space below, provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in your proposed line-item budget.

See below for the line-item budget and the corresponding narrative for each expense. The total projected budget for the ARYSE After School Club in the 2022-2023 school year is \$129,187. In addition to the DHS Teen Programming grant, ARYSE is applying to the Pittsburgh Foundation for its March, 2022 deadline and hopes to be renewed for a Youth Mentoring Grant from the PA Department of Health and Human Services as a subgrantee through Jewish Family and Community Services. These three funding sources, plus individual and in-kind donations, will be essential for implementing the program.

Program Director	\$37,800.00	90% of the After School Club Program Director's \$42,000 full-time salary is expensed to the program.
Program Assistant	\$17,680.00	Funds for a part-time Program Assistant to work at the program
2 Program Alumni Mentors	\$4,500.00	Funds for two ARYSE program alumni to get paid on a part-time basis for mentoring weekly at the program

RFP for Teen Programming

Executive Director	\$4,500.00	10% of the Executive Director's \$45,000 full-time salary is expensed to the program for their supervision and general support of the Program Director.
Operations Manager	\$4,200.00	10% of the Operations Manager's \$42,000 full-time salary is expensed to the program for operating support.
FICA	\$5,254.02	This is the total amount of FICA paid by ARYSE for salary costs in this program.
Unemployment Compensation	\$1,607.11	This is the total amount of Unemployment Compensation paid by ARYSE for salary costs in this program.
Medical Insurance	\$9,845.14	This is the total amount of Medical Insurance paid by ARYSE for full-time staff expensed in this program.
HRA	\$300.00	This is the total amount ARYSE will pay towards an HRA for full-time staff expensed in this program.
Dental Insurance	\$313.34	This is the total amount of Dental Insurance paid by ARYSE for full-time staff expensed in this program.
Parking	\$3,000.00	For program staff to park at Duquesne University.
Phone	\$200.00	Used by program staff to communicate with students and families.
Program Supplies	\$750.00	To obtain supplies for games and program activities.
Emergency Fund	\$250.00	Used if needed to support youth when something unexpected occurs.
Food Costs	\$12,500.00	To provide a hot meal for youth at every program meeting or event.
Staff Travel Expenses	\$300.00	To reimburse mileage and other travel costs for part-time staff
Student Transportation	\$6,187.50	To provide bus passes to all youth participants to travel to and from the program
Management Services	\$6,459.36	To pay for contracted management services that are split across all ARYSE programming.
Program Evaluation	\$750.00	Used to compensate youth participants for taking part in program evaluation at the end of the year.
Interpretation and Translation	\$15,000.00	Covers costs for interpreters to be present at program, for interpreted phone calls to families, and translated materials.

RFP for Teen Programming

Employment Clearances	\$250.00	Pays for required clearances for staff and for volunteers when needed.
Special Activities	\$2,000.00	Used for field trips and events outside of regular program meetings.
Subscriptions	\$1,000.00	This expense will partially cover ARYSE Zoom costs for the organization since program staff use the platform to support some students virtually on their homework.
Gifts	\$1,000.00	Used to get gifts for program participants, graduating seniors, and mentors of the program at the end of the year.

March 2, 2022

Dr. Jennie L. Schulze, Associate Professor
Director of the Center for Migration, Displacement and Community Studies
Department of Political Science
Duquesne University
schulzej@duq.edu

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my privilege to write a letter of support for the Alliance of Refugee Youth Support and Education (ARYSE). I have been working with ARYSE since 2018 to coordinate an award-winning after school program for refugee high school students on Duquesne University's campus. As a social scientist, I have conducted annual assessments of the program with students through both surveys and focus group interviews. That research has been approved by the human subjects research board of Duquesne University. I have also had the privilege of serving as a volunteer at PRYSE Academy, the summer program designed for refugee middle school and high school students, and doing participant observation of that program. Many of the students who attend the After School Club also attend PRYSE Academy in the summer, either as campers or as counselors in training. The continuity of year-round programming is crucial for refugee youth. This grant from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services will provide essential support for the After School Club. It will ensure that refugee youth in Pittsburgh have the year-round support that they need to become active, engaged, and successful citizens in our community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added additional challenges for refugee youth, including difficulties navigating virtual schooling and technology, the loss of employment in their families, increased social isolation, and deteriorating mental health. The young people that ARYSE serves are crucial for the success of their families, as they are often responsible for their younger siblings, other household chores, and providing translation for their parents and other family members. They are also critical to the ongoing success and contributions of refugee communities to our city's social, economic, and cultural fabric. Supporting these young people through programs like the After School Club is more necessary and important than ever, considering the double impact of the restrictive national-level policies of the previous presidential administration and the COVID-19 pandemic, both of which have contributed to feelings of alienation and isolation in our refugee communities.

Comparative research on educational and career attainment among immigrant and refugee communities demonstrates that more school contact hours benefit migrant youth, especially when those students do not have adequate support at home. Out-of-school time programs can be vital for filling that gap, especially among high school-aged youth, who have a much shorter window to catch up to their native-born peers

ARYSE programming empowers refugee students and mentors and strengthens our community by preparing future generations for success. It is, therefore, with the strongest confidence, based on my own experiences interacting with students, mentors, and staff, as well as data-driven results, that I recommend ARYSE for this funding opportunity. Program assessments reveal that most students are dependent on ARYSE programming, not only for their academic achievement but also for exploring educational and career opportunities. Students highlight the importance of ARYSE programming for engaging socially with peers who experience the same challenges and with American university students. This is crucial for helping students build community and combat feelings of social isolation that are all too prevalent among youth today, particularly within refugee and immigrant communities. I would be happy to share more results of the data-driven research on ARYSE programming if it would help to facilitate your decision.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennie Lyn Schulze

Jennie L. Schulze, Ph.D.