



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# RFP Response Form

## RFP for Teen Programming

### PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Locally Grown (D/B/A Community Forge)

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Dr. Michael Skirpan, Executive Director

Address: [Redacted]

Telephone: [Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]

Website: [www.forge.community](http://www.forge.community)

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

Date Incorporated: March 2019

Partners included in this Proposal: YWCA, Propel Schools, Pittsburgh Learning Commons, Bricolage Production Company, Carnegie Mellon University (ECE Dept)

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Email from AIU3

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	Dr. Michael Skirpan	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Contract Processing Contact	Bethany Hallam	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Chief Information Officer	Dr. Michael Skirpan	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
Chief Financial Officer	Olga Pogoda	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
MPER Contact*	Bethany Hallam	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

## RFP for Teen Programming

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

## BOARD INFORMATION

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

- Dr. Travis Alvarez, Chair
- Olga Pogoda, Treasurer
- Kenny Chen, Secretary
- Dr. Marcel Minutolo, Vice-Chair
- Dr. Patrick Cooper, Board Member
- Jacqueline Cameron, Board Member
- Dr. Jeffrey Bigham, Board Member
- AJ Drexler, Board Member
- Nadyli Nunez, Board Member
- Tammy Thompson, Board Member
- Jada Shirriel, Board Member
- Nick Ryan, Board Member
- Deborah Walrath JD, Board Member
- Donald Robinson, Board Member

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Dr. Travis Alvarez, Board Chair

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.*

- Kathi Elliot (Gwen's Girls) [REDACTED]
- Josiah Russell (Youth Council Member) Harold Russell (Father of Josiah), [REDACTED]
- Brian Noyama (Google) [REDACTED]

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

### **PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$160,000

### **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**

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

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).

### ***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.*

Locally Grown is a nonprofit based out of Wilkinsburg focused on making multi-generational investments towards building a more equitable economy and breaking down the silos of our region. Having transformed the former Johnston Elementary School in Wilkinsburg into Community Forge, a thriving community space that is home to 40 nonprofits and local entrepreneurs, a minority entrepreneur incubator, professional development courses, youth programs, and community events. Since 2017, Community Forge has grown to be a staple for the neighborhood and greater Pittsburgh Region.

Our organization has had vast experience and success in engaging local teenagers. Our playground is used as a public park for play and community events, especially during the warm months. Approximately 150 youth will use our playground as a safe play space each summer. Our team regularly engages with youth on the playground through sports, music, and other activities. We have further been running a youth leadership council for 4 years where teens who frequent Community Forge can operate as decision-makers: setting policies for the playground, planning events, and giving youth voice on changes to our facility or programs. The youth council have held Halloween parties, drive-in movie nights, and even operate their own budget of about \$1000 each year. In 2020, the Youth Council at Community Forge was invited to the National League of Cities conference to keynote the youth delegation.

The youth arm of Locally Grown has been Pittsburgh Learning Commons (PLC) over the past years. PLC has been a Learn and Earn site for 3 summers now and has run a variety of after-school and summer learning experiences that engage teens. PLC continues to provide support in college and job applications for youth seeking to advance their lives and careers.

Our program director for BootUp (the program we are seeking funding for) is Amil Cook. Amil has extensive experience in working with teenagers. He has a background in working with adjudicated youth through residential treatment facilities. He was a teacher at Propel Schools for six years where he taught their computer-related courses and acted as an afterschool site coordinator. He has experience teaching soft skills for career readiness, graphic design, hip hop studies, african american history, media literacy, and computer science to teenagers. He is one of the educators affiliated with Hip Hop Ed in New York and regularly engages with around 50 teenagers as part of his BootUp PGH platform at Community Forge.

Our organization also works with a slate of mentors who have experience working with teenagers and engaging teenagers in critical life decisions. Our current lead mentor working alongside Amil is Anthony Rose. Anthony was born and raised in Wilkinsburg and now runs a mentoring program, Struggle Through Grace. Anthony was a professional athlete and was also formerly incarcerated. He brings lived experience and his own personal growth story to his mentorship work with teenagers.

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

## RFP for Teen Programming

Since the first day of opening Community Forge, we have been dedicated to serving the immediate neighborhood around our facility. With youth, this has meant that we've taken a relationship and mentorship approach to getting to know youth and families slowly over time.

We try to have as few barriers as possible to getting started with programs at Community Forge. Many of our youth first got to know us by playing sports, listening to music, or helping out around the Forge. Those who want to take a part in our programming or do more at Community Forge are given that option, but there are also many youth who we get to know and maintain a relationship without them needing to see Community Forge as a place where they go to "programs" only. We have encouraged the community to see our space as functional to their needs to avoid the interventionist view that is often seen of nonprofits entering in the community. This means throughout the year, we host birthday parties, baby showers, hip hop shows, and other functions that are more directly related to the culture and lives of our communities. This builds trust and buy-in to our programming.

Another aspect of working in a high-need community is we try to make sure our staff are trained to know resources around things such as housing, county programs, and mental health assistance. We are aware we cannot solve every problem; however, we like to know all the resources people may need to solve their problems. We've been able to meet some of these needs by ensuring that we have a diverse body of resources in-house. We have mentors, child care, program partners, and a litany of black-owned businesses that operate out of Community Forge and allow us to have resources at our disposal as families needs are understood.

Lastly, we try to make our programming responsive and not overly structured. Meaning, we try to develop programs that engage people in ways they are able. For instance, we have learned that many teenagers have babysitting responsibilities right after school so we try to make teen programming later or on flexible schedules. We also try to have aligned programming for younger kids that allows them to bring their younger siblings, if necessary. We do not overburden youth with strict curriculum, meaning that if we see something we are doing is harming engagement, we are quick to pivot. We also try to align incentives such that programs are often pathways to getting paid or have a component or reward such as a stipend, a field trip, or some other return on investment for those who participate fully. This allows our programs to be competitive with other household needs that sometimes restrain youth participation in other enrichment activities.

*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.*

Our organization is built with the purpose to connect people from all places, invest in the under-served, and break down silos. This mission can only be achieved by us having a community building energy and inclusive approach to all programs, events, and work that we do. Throughout our organization you'll find diverse people and thinking that creates an all around inclusive culture. Thus, you'll find inclusivity and diversity as a major part of our hiring practices, leadership, and how we operate our programs. Some of those are as follows:

- Diverse staff and board

## RFP for Teen Programming

- Our board is extremely diverse in all meanings of the word. It includes people with a variety of experience, all the way from accomplished lawyers to entrepreneurs who have participated in our programs. We are diverse across race and gender with 4 Black, 1 Latina, and 1 Asian board members and a board that is 50% women & 50% men.
- Our staff is also extremely diverse and hired locally. We have hired staff that come straight from the communities we serve. We have a 7 person team with 3 Black, 2 white, 1 Latino, and 1 Asian.
- Diversity of organizations in the building
  - Our building contains a variety of resources that create an inclusivity across cultures and communities. Within our building we have youth programs such as Gwen's Girls and Wilksburg Athletics Association. We have extreme sports athletes, therapists, County anti-violence programs, home health companies, personal trainers, and many other individual business owners from the community. We have artists and event planners who host events that bring in diverse audiences and help us build connections across people from different neighborhoods.
- BootUp Program
  - From the beginning, the BootUp program was designed with student input. When we first started a planning process for a technology empowerment program, we brought in youth to direct us in what elements and activities would make them most engaged. This thread of students feeling heard and in control of the program is one of the key features
  - The aesthetics of our space and stories we tell in our programs represent a broad cultural understanding. Even as a technology space, we pay regard to parts of history that are culturally relevant to more than the typical techie space may be – we talk about Egyptians, the Arabic world, women and people of color who have contributed to science and technology. We fill our spaces with imagery and materials that represent a wide range of culture such as hip-hop artists and other musicians and poets.
  - BootUp does not require people to work on just one thing. Students define their own projects based on their capacities and interests. This is meant to make the program flexible to people of different skill sets and allow them to work at different paces.
  - BootUp programming is set up to take place through multiple channels, online and offline. We have in-person hours where students can come to our space to engage in the program directly, but we also support a livestream of certain program activities, host educational videos online, and manage a chat channel so students can get asynchronous support on their projects.
  - BootUp takes personal connection and mentorship seriously as that is how all people feel they belong in the program. Thus, we have mentors who come from a variety of places. We have mentors from within the community who are there to help keep youth present and make sure they have space to talk about personal things such as homelife issues. We also have mentors coming from tech spaces such as grad students at CMU and local technology companies. Students will find

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

people from all different backgrounds and life experiences in mentorship and support roles across the program.

### ***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.*

BootUp PGH is a culturally inclusive, community based technology empowerment program providing in-person and digital programming for Allegheny County youth. We serve youth ranging from grades 3-12, providing them access and exposure to critical tech literacies often overlooked and neglected by traditional educational institutions. We have a mix of in-person and digital programs that offer skill-based education, mentorship, community building, and opportunities for college and career exploration and advancement. Our use of hybrid digital and physical programming with interest-driven and socially-driven elements follows the well researched best practices of connected learning ([Ito et al., 2020](#)). We anticipate the BootUp program engaging 30-40 teenagers in direct programming (ie., enrolled in the regular week-to-week program) and an additional 20-30 teens through secondary programming such as special events or online mediums.

These goals are achieved through our dynamic tech programming offering which include our Elementary Tech Program (grades 3-5), Middle School Tech Program (grades 6-8) & High School Tech Program (grades 9-12). Each of these programs provide youth the opportunity to learn and enhance their tech skills while having fun, building community and getting creative. Each of these programs offers a chance to be exposed to new technologies, connect with mentors and educators who will help develop your skills, and create projects based on your own area of interest. The program is set up such that it is flexible and youth can define and work on their projects on adaptable schedules using both in-person and online means. Our programs also provide exposure to a variety of paid opportunities to deepen skills and interests (more on some of these below).

To additionally support teenagers in our area who may not be passionate or currently interested in technology, we have designed our Tuesday night Teen Mentoring program that supports youth in self exploration, life skills, relational development and career exploration. The goals of the Teen Mentoring on Tuesday is to spark the youth's desire to achieve and their self-efficacy. The mentoring curriculum includes opportunities for youth to set personal goals, obtain the state documents required for employment and formal financial access. Youth will also begin developing their own personal empowerment plans that encompass various domains of life including: friendships, romance, health, family, community and career.

To create weekend opportunities for teens in the community, our Saturday's will include special programs and drop-in hours for youth to access the BootUp tech lab to enhance their technical skills, work ongoing projects and connect with their friends and mentors. Through our partnership with Propel Schools on 2 Saturdays a month we will use the BootUp tech lab to serve as an Entrepreneurial Hub for youth to develop their business skills, ideas and launch their own businesses. Through our partnership with YWCA, we will run the Saturday Academy where

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

teens will have the opportunity to visit 6 different college campuses on a completely free field trip with transportation and food included.

All facets of our Teen Programming are designed to funnel youth to our advanced pathway opportunities that provide teens opportunities to get paid and while engaging with career and educational advancement beyond the traditional classroom. Through our partnerships with Bricolage Production Company, youth will have the opportunity to participate in a robust playwriting and podcasting curriculum called Midnight Radio, where a select group of teens will write, design, and ultimately produce their own dynamic radio plays. Those who take on this project will be paid for their time.

Through our partnership with the Andy Warhol Museum and our own multimedia audio and video studio, youth will have the opportunity to learn the essentials of professional audio engineering, professional video editing and lighting. These skills will form the foundation for an innovative curriculum on multimedia project management, where youth will further learn the business skills behind the modern digital arts industry including contract writing, invoicing, scheduling, budgeting and more.

Through our mentorship network, we will also be starting an e-sports gaming team that will meet weekly to practice and then will be able to enter tournaments regionally and globally. These students will get direct training from local gamers coming from the University ecosystem and will learn the discipline of what it takes to train to be a professional gamer. They'll also learn how to collaborate and play on a team as we will be requiring they play a variety of team games that mean communication and coordination with others.

We further partner with Propel Schools to bring the BootUp streaming platform into their after-school time program. We will livestream 2-4 hours of programming each week to Propel to support engaging students in getting exposed and gain new skills with technology. These teens will also be invited to leverage our online programming through Discord chat, Twitch streams, and YouTube videos.

The design of this program started by taking input from our youth council and then we brought together a working group of local educators and technologists for an eight week planning committee. Throughout that time youth were brought in to discuss our ideas and provide input on the programs. We further launched a pilot of the BootUp program in Fall 2021 to get further input from youth and learn how they wanted to use the space and how best to align with their interests. Our framework for evaluation has been adopted from the research work of Raphael Travis Jr and uses an empowerment and resilience lens around identity formation and related attributes such as confidence, connection, and character (more below).

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

BootUp PGH will provide a physically and emotionally safe space for teens by offering programmatic flexibility, positive relationships with adults and mentors, and access to incredible resources and people. The structure of the program will create a regular space for youth to come together in person while maintaining ongoing and growing complimentary digital resources. Multiple days per week, there will be in-person access to our computer lab, multimedia studio, and other spaces in the Community Forge facility. These spaces will be supervised by our team plus additional mentors who come from the community and industry and will support youth in developing and exploring their interests. These spaces will support a culture of safety, not



## **RFP for Teen Programming**

allowing fighting, harassment or other forms of harm while offering safe spaces for discussion, venting, and access to culturally-relevant mentors.

To promote emotional safety, this program embodies an empowerment-based positive youth development framework (Travis and Leech, 2013) that seeks to promote the “healthy development for African American youth that is strengths-based, developmental, culture-bound, and action-oriented.” We have structured their five Cs of positive development into how we evaluate the growth of our teens: competence (e.g. badging with technology skills), confidence (e.g. youth leadership opportunities to run lessons), connection (e.g. paired projects, mentors), caring (e.g. games that encourage teamwork and empathy), and character (e.g. ethics content). In addition to broad implementation, we recognize that the youth we’re working with often deal with trauma and need further emotional support. One night per week, we are partnering with Anthony Rose of Struggling through Grace, to explicitly offer a night that focuses on real life conversations and general life support for youth to address issues that often are left out of school and home conversations.

Coming out of COVID-19, we found that additionally having a digital platform for program delivery and engagement gave the flexibility for teens to stay engaged with us even when life circumstances (e.g. watching siblings, transportation) made it so they couldn’t make it in-person. So in addition to the physical space, BootUp PGH will host virtual spaces that allow youth to connect to the programming, peers, mentors, and a broader community of people online. We will run live streams on Twitch where teens in person can connect with teens elsewhere, and where we can lead activities with other OST programs. We will also have a Discord for digital community building and sharing between our teens. These spaces will be moderated and checked daily by our program leads to ensure that the interactions reinforce the culture that we’ve established for in-person programming. This gives teens the chance to engage in new formats and build a network with a broader group of youth across communities, and allow the impacts of BootUp to go beyond the days and times of in-person programming.

BootUp PGH is also building off the long-term grounding Community Forge has as a safe and innovative space for youth in Wilkinsburg. As the former Johnston Elementary School, it was important to community members that our building remained a space for youth. For the last 4 years, Community Forge has run multiple youth after school programs and a youth council, been home to partner nonprofits to create additional safe spaces (e.g. CURE, Gwen’s Girls), and has opened our outdoor play space for youth recreation and events (which has funding to be renovated summer 2022).

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

At Locally Grown, our youth and young adult programming has emphasized long-term relationships between youth and their families, and community building with people in and outside of their neighborhood. We know that positive relationships are the foundation before learning can happen, so we start with building those trusting connections. Teens in BootUp PGH have multiple ways to connect with peers, adults, and a broader community of people and build positive relationships.

Teens will get to connect with others sharing interests in technology, coding, graphic design, and music. Many of the activities happening on different nights will focus on creative

## RFP for Teen Programming

collaboration and working with peers. Collaboration will be integrated throughout from project-based learning activities to paired programming when coding to team-building during e-sports. There will also be opportunities for teens to take on leadership roles with each other as they get to lead activities they have specialized in (e.g. lead a new person in building a PC after you've proven that competency).

Each teen will also have the opportunity to connect with adult mentors. BootUp will have several regular staff and has had 10+ adult members who come on a regular basis. Adults provide mentorship in both life skills and professional development in technology. To ensure that the adults will play a positive role, adults are screened beforehand for relevance to our youth and passion, time commitment, and insight about the field, and they are trained about common pitfalls and expectations. Mentors will attend program nights and also work one-on-one when a teen wants additional support. Professional mentors have come from Google, Carnegie Mellon University, and other local tech companies.

We have added a specific mentorship night with our partner organization, Struggling with Grace, to give youth a time to connect on issues unrelated to technology and get support about personal nights. This will open up a space of vulnerability and discussion of real life issues and develop trusting relationships beyond learning.

There are also several other aspects of BootUp's structure that will encourage connections to a broader community. As teens engage with us, we plan to get them incorporated into larger projects that impact the community or another organization. These may be building a PC for a local family to helping produce podcasts for a local theater company to putting interactive art on display. There will also be specific elements to connect with parents and neighbors through share out nights and dinners.

Outside of our programming, it is a part of Locally Grown's mission towards economic justice to bridge social silos in Pittsburgh. Each youth will be connected to a large social network, have opportunities to do projects that connect to other organizations and places in Pittsburgh, and get direct enrichment and career opportunities. Current partners for advanced program connection and jobs include Carnegie Mellon University, Bricolage Production Company, and Warhol Museum.

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

BootUp PGH held 3 months of pilot in October-December 2021 which engaged 42 young adults and kids participating in our in-person OST programming, the majority of whom were teens from Wilkesburg and the broader eastern region of Pittsburgh. We engaged with an additional 16 teens through live streaming pilots with Propel Schools and had another 20 join us in online spaces. Thus, we already have the direct evidence of youth interest and desire to be a part of BootUp PGH. With this funding, we will be able to extend this pilot and open our doors to a broader group of youth.

This program has taken many steps to ensure its relevance to young adults. Young adults help design the program, including the hours we run and the content. The content is culturally relevant for young adults, playing off generational interests like streaming and gaming. It's in a convenient location for many Wilkesburg youth and just off of 376 for other youth. The program also gives them access to cutting edge technologies (e.g. VR, studio for recording) that aren't easily accessible. We have passionate educators with relevant life experience, who work to

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

build long-term mentoring relationships with the teens that extend beyond technology programming.

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

BootUp PGH has largely been drawing on a group of youth who have been connected to Community Forge and our partners through past programs and events. Many of our youth are based in Wilkinsburg and the eastern boroughs, and come to multiple programs in our building. We draw on the connections of our staff, board, and friends who have personally mentored youth through other roles in the city (e.g. Amil Cook worked as an educator with Propel) and often refer youth to us. We also have several partners where we get to work with their teens for technology enrichment, such as Gwen's Girls and Wilkinsburg School District, and can recruit from them.

We are also connected to the local schools including past partnerships with the Wilkinsburg School District and as a member of the Woodland Hills Providers Council. We plan to distribute flyers at those schools, do some drop-in class activities, and connect with students through other extracurricular activities.

In addition to drawing on our physical networks, we will market this program through our digital and social media platforms for both Community Forge and BootUp including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Email Listservs and Twitch. We will leverage partners in supporting our marketing and connecting us with youth. As a Remake Learning Member and partner of other networks, we will leverage our wider network of partners to help share our information.

### *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.*

Building a diverse staff requires a foundational culture that is respectful and equitable for staffers, and Locally Grown has spent our formative years building that. Locally Grown currently has a racially and culturally diverse staff, many with backgrounds as community members and advocates. Our large staff has been highly connected in Pittsburgh and we have a reputation now for strong community engagement. This often attracts many people to our jobs when we post an opening. In a normal week our team gets multiple inquiries about job availability as working at the Community Forge facility is something many community members want.

BootUp PGH in particular is led by Amil Cook, our Director of Technology Education, who culturally represents many of the youth we work with. He has a large network as a Pittsburgh Educator to recruit guests, mentors, and staff, and has been very intentional about ensuring the adults are from diverse backgrounds.

Our organization is intentional about where we recruit and share our job openings to make sure we are getting a diverse pool of applicants. In our past interviews, we have even included our youth and questions from our youth to screen potential hires to make sure they will work well with our youth. While we look at many factors in our interviews, we do give weight to people who have relevant experience and are relatable to our youth.

### *10. Describe how your Programming 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).*

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

The teen programming offered through BootUp PGH aims to set young adults on a positive trajectory through the various means. BootUp PGH understands, appreciates and supports creating a healthy network of an adult support system by connecting teen participants with mentors in various tech and tech aligned careers. We also recognize that having mentors alone is great but not the end all be all. Youth still need to possess the proper documentation required to be a fully engaged citizen in our society. With this in mind, BootUp has incorporated the acquisition of essential documents into our curriculum to prevent the inevitable bureaucratic hurdles that far too many marginalized teenagers face as they inevitably enter adulthood. Teens will be required to obtain a physical copy and have access to an easily accessible digital copy of their birth certificates, health insurance cards, vaccine cards, an up to date physician's physical, a PA state ID, and if applicable a PA Learner's Permit or Driver's License. Having these bureaucratic hurdles out of the way will clear a path for youth propelling them towards an empowering trajectory in society.

Our teen mentoring curriculum also includes career exploratory skills and research modules that help youth identify their skills, personalities and interests and how those align with current, legacy and emerging occupations. Through our Teen Mentoring program, Saturday Academy and Youth Entrepreneurship Hub youth will have the opportunity to produce a high quality résumé, cover letter and personal statement that they will add to their professional portfolios. Our youth will be encouraged to develop their public speaking skills through creative expression and developing social emotional skills. These skills will allow them to become more self aware and responsive to those around them.

Led by a diverse and culturally adept team of mentors, youth in BootUp will be instilled with a sense of pride in self, acknowledging that despite potentially being from impoverished and challenging environments that does not determine their worth nor relegate them to that condition permanently. Beyond these we anticipate that our program will support progress in the following areas:

- Personal and Professional Growth
  - Job & Career Research
  - Researching Educational Options
  - Job Interviewing,
  - Resume
  - Cover Letter
  - Life Skills
  - Communication Skills
  - Social Emotional Learning
  - Feelings Identification
  - Self-Esteem Development
  - Cultural Pride
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Self-Awareness
  - Emotional Regulation
  - Healthy Eating & Lifestyle Choices
  - Relationships & Dating
- Tech Skills
  - Computer Fluency (Mac and Windows)

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

- Website Development (HTML & CSS basics)
- Basic Uses and Handling of Data
- Logic
- Basic Coding (Python, JavaScript)
- Robotics
- Electronics
- Audio and Video Editing
- Music Production and Beat Making
- Live stream management
- Portfolio/profile

### ***Implementation Challenges (15 points possible)***

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

If our program has low attendance, we will take a two-fold approach to engage more young adults. First, we will increase our recruitment efforts with an emphasis on in-person outreach and going directly to places where youth are, which has been the most successful in the past. We will also engage our youth who are attending our program to help reach out to others.

Second, we will critically evaluate and iterate on our programming. We will get feedback from our current teens and teens in other programs who don't attend to see what we could change to reach a broader group. We will shift the program structure as needed, since creating an environment that is engaging for teens is our priority.

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

This will depend on the severity of the situation. All of our staff and most of our mentors have been trained in mental health and crisis management, and are mandated reporters.

Our first action will be to immediately de-escalate the situation and assess if any additional parties are needed to ensure the safety of all youth. After any incident or concern, we work towards restorative mediation of the parties (when acceptable to them) at a later point and a community debrief.

In our follow-up to an incident or if we notice a youth who is struggling with a mental health issue, we aim to have conversations with relevant parties, identify and direct towards further resources outside of our organization, and have continued tracking of the situation. Throughout all mental health and behavioral issues, we make it a priority to communicate the issue with all relevant parties including parents, staff, and government agencies. We are lucky to have the Office of Violence Prevention located in our building, and have connected with other support services in the past to address our teens' needs.

*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?*

It will depend on the needs expressed by the family, but we will generally have two approaches: referrals and meeting small/slow needs.

Our main strategy when there is a family need outside of our program is to refer. We will connect them to other organizations and county programs in Pittsburgh such as the Food Bank,

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

housing authority, and legal support. We will engage our staff and board's connections to determine where we can refer families. We have personal connections to many different support organizations in the area including the Office of Violence Prevention, Wilkinsburg Family Support Services, local counselors, etc.

There are additional ways where Community Forge (outside of BootUp PGH) has been equipped to support a teen including keeping a free food pantry, hygiene supplies, and clothing to give away. We have often held regular events for other needs when expressed by community members such as vision tests and free glasses, mobile health lab for physicals, and food bank drop-offs. Our partner organization, Pittsburgh Learning Commons, has hosted a youth fund that has funded small more immediate needs such as bus passes, food, and technology for teens.

### ***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.*

Program Director (Amil Cook, 50%) - \$40,000

Program Assistant (.5FT) - \$25,000

Employee Fringes - \$13,000

Contracted Mentors - \$7000

Equipment & Software - \$10,000

Youth Stipends - \$5,000

Food - \$5,000

Transportation (6 field trips) - \$5,000

Partnership fees - \$35,000

Overhead (10%) - \$15,000

**TOTAL: \$160,000**

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

Our base salary for our program director is \$80,000 and this program will require half of his time effort, leading to the \$40,000. We will hire a program assistant for this, which will be a half-time role using a \$50,000 base salary. We add an additional \$13,000, which covers the 20% overhead on employees for taxes and benefits. We anticipate spending about \$3500 (100 hours) in each of the fall and spring periods on mentorship fees to pay our dedicated community mentors. Overall mentor costs will likely be double this, but with in-kind support and other funding sources, we believe we can cover the remainder. We already have a lot of equipment, but are still updating software and equipment does break so we are asking for a \$10,000 budget to make sure that additional computers, cameras, and software needed are covered. Our overall equipment budget will be closer to \$50,000 for the year, but other sources will support, and this budget will ensure the teen program has equipment needed for the projects teens take up.

Transportation for field trips cost roughly \$350 for field trips. We are adding another \$5,000 for youth stipends as we like to have different opportunities to pay youth for completing projects or taking lead on certain elements of the program. This will allow us to have \$100-200/youth to dole out throughout the program year. Food is also an important element, and we usually slate a

## **RFP for Teen Programming**

budget of about \$150/week for food resources to ensure we have snacks and can order dinners and have pizza or wings on special nights. This budget would cover about 32 weeks of programming at this rate. Field trips, which we plan to take a few, start with an average transport cost of \$350 plus food, additional staff/chaperones, and ticketing/entry fees for the destination. Our partnership fees we are committing are \$20,000 to the YWCA for the Saturday Academy program and \$15,000 to Bricolage Production Company for the continuance of Midnight Radio audio storytelling and engineering program with our youth. Finally, we place an additional overhead of 10% on the grant to cover our internal accounting costs and other expenses such as the use of our facility which this program will use greatly.

**Carnegie Mellon University**  
College of Engineering

**Office of the Associate  
Dean of Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion**

College of Engineering  
Carnegie Mellon University  
5000 Forbes Avenue  
ANSYS Hall, Room 250  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890

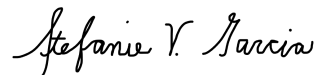
To the Locally Grown team and BootUp PGH,

We at Carnegie Mellon's College of Engineering are excited to support Locally Grown with its teen programming plans through BootUp PGH. The work currently being offered by BootUp PGH exposes teens to flexible and innovative programming that allows underrepresented teenagers to access hardware and software that might not normally be accessible in schools or at home. We have been impressed with the design of the program, and its inclusion of teen ideas and interests as the basis for current programming. Our organization plans to be a partner in current and future program implementation.

If BootUp receives further funding from Allegheny County, we can commit to sending more CMU undergraduate and graduate student volunteers to the Wilkinsburg location, as well as continuing to engage with teens with using technology to develop personal projects. We are also excited to help the teens grow in their ability to design and learn technical engineering terms, as well helping teens learn more about technology from a societal context.

CMU's College of Engineering is committed to the long-term success of Locally Grown and its impacts in Wilkinsburg and beyond. The growth of BootUp PGH as a platform for teenagers could have a lasting impact on our region by expanding who has access to technology and influence new ideas on what STEM education might look like in different communities and spaces. We believe in this initiative, the leadership behind it, and its capacity to enact positive changes for both the CMU student community, and local teens in Pittsburgh. We look forward to further collaborations with this partner.

Sincerely Yours,



Stefanie V. Garcia | K-12 Outreach Coordinator  
Dean's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion / Electrical and  
Computer Engineering Department  
Carnegie Mellon University, College of Engineering  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers



# BRICOLAGE

PRODUCTION COMPANY

*Adventurous Theater*

Jeffrey Carpenter  
Artistic Director  
[jeff@bricolagepgh.org](mailto:jeff@bricolagepgh.org)

To the Locally Grown team and BootUp PGH,

I am excited to support Locally Grown with its teen programming plans through BootUp PGH. The platform offered by BootUp PGH is an innovative and flexible program that has great promise to engage under-represented teenagers in their future planning and learning skills and pathways into STEM-related careers. We have been impressed with the design of the program and its inclusion of teen's ideas and interest in the creation of the program, and our organization plans to be a partner in implementation.





For 13 years, Bricolage's Midnight Radio series, has treated audiences to 1940's-style radio plays, complete with live Foley sound-effects, comic news updates, musical guests and commercial parodies. The series pairs a nostalgic medium with contemporary themes and emphasizes a sense of community among our audience by incorporating Pittsburgh-centered adaptations and sketches, in celebration of our common experiences in this city.

Since 2013, the inquiry-rich, project-based Midnight Radio Education model has served over 30 school districts throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, and led to the student-led creation and presentation of hundreds of new radio dramas performed in schools for local communities, teachers, fellow students and parents.

Bricolage is now working with the Locally Grown team and BootUp PGH to implement the program at Community Forge. The initiative will immerse teens from the community, to write, rehearse, perform, record and edit their very own radio dramas to be "aired" as podcast episodes on various media platforms.

In alignment with BootUP PGH staff and goals, Bricolage teaching artists will engage with students in-person, and/or on-line, guiding them to research and write their plays, craft foley props and become proficient with the tools necessary to produce, record and edit their creations. Each participant will engage in the project in their own way, through writing, performance, post-production duties and more.





Bricolage is thrilled to help positively impact the lives of young people, giving them hands-on opportunities to develop current, real-world skill sets, learn from and collaborate with professional working artists, as well as their own peers, and to explore unconventional methods of story creation, while fostering creativity and expression in ways traditional arts programs do not necessarily provide.

 [BricolagePGH.org](http://BricolagePGH.org)  
 412.471.0999  
 [info@bricolagepgh.org](mailto:info@bricolagepgh.org)  
 937 Liberty Ave Pittsburgh PA, 15222

# BRICOLAGE

PRODUCTION COMPANY

*Adventurous Theater*

 BricolagePGH.org  
 412.471.0999  
 info@bricolagepgh.org  
 937 Liberty Ave Pittsburgh PA, 15222

We at Bricolage are committed to the long-term success of Locally Grown and its impacts in Wilksburg and beyond. The growth of BootUp PGH as a platform for teenagers could have a lasting impact on our region by expanding who has access to technology and influence new ideas on what STEAM education might look like in different communities and spaces. I believe in this initiative, the leadership behind it, and its capacity to enact positive change.

Sincerely Yours,



Jeffrey Carpenter  
Artistic Director  
Bricolage Production Company  
jeff@bricolagepgh.org

February 28, 2022

Dear Michael Skirpan,

Pittsburgh Learning Commons is excited to support BootUp PGH under the leadership of Locally Grown and their application for the new Department of Human Services teen programming RFP.

Pittsburgh Learning Commons has been the youth wing of Community Forge for the last 4 years. Over this period, we have built many relationships with youth and families in the region, especially in the eastern boroughs. We have supported teens through a wide variety of programs including Learn and Earn summer jobs programs, college application support, a youth emergency fund for supplies, special internships, and our youth council. BootUp PGH is a technology-focused teen program that emerged out of the request by our teens who wanted more access to advanced technology and a space to hang-out.

Going beyond many past programs we've run, BootUp PGH's piloting has already created a welcoming space that celebrates black technology culture and is a hit with neighborhood teens. Within 3 months of opening up pilot computer lab hours in October 2021, BootUp had over 40 youth involved in their programming and over 200 followers for their digital platforms. Amil Cook, Director of Technology Education and lead of BootUp PGH, is an amazing educator and mentor that has brought together innovative technology, hip-hop education, and community-based practices into this program to help teens explore their passions and connect with each other.

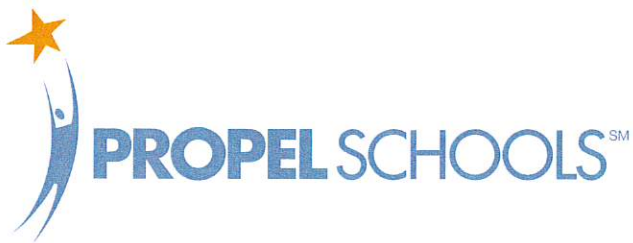
If Locally Grown receives funding from DHS for this program, we are excited to see how this pilot could expand to be a staple in Wilkinsburg and give teens access to innovative spaces and networks. Pittsburgh Learning Commons will be a continued support for BootUp PGH. We have been in the process of integrating our institutional knowledge about running youth programs to Locally Grown and will continue to make connections to many youth and families in the area, share best practices, and co-market. In addition to this, we will provide additional support in-line with our past work such as driver's license preparation, college and job applications, youth scholarships for academic needs, technology curriculum development, and connections for youth to advanced internship and program opportunities.

I am committed to the long-term success of BootUp PGH and its impacts in Wilkinsburg and beyond. This program has the potential to build both a positive space for collaborative creativity for local youth and an expandable model that authentically engages the younger generation, especially youth of color, in technology learning.

Sincerely Yours,



Jacqueline Cameron  
Executive Director, Pittsburgh Learning Commons  
[jackie@pghlearn.org](mailto:jackie@pghlearn.org), 412-897-9324



3447 East Carson Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15203  
Phone: 412-325-7305 • Fax: 412-325-7309  
[www.propelschools.org](http://www.propelschools.org)

March 1, 2022

To the Locally Grown Team and BootUp PGH:

We are excited to support Locally Grown with its teen programming plans through BootUp PGH. The platform offered by BootUp PGH is an innovative and flexible program that has great promise to engage under-represented teenagers in their future planning and learning skills and pathways into STEM-related careers. We have been impressed with the design of the program and its inclusion of teen's ideas and interest in the creation of the program, and our organization plans to be a partner in implementation.

Under this grant funding from Allegheny County, locally Grown will provide Propel middle and high school students with the opportunity to participate in Boot Up programming, the Saturday Academy and Youth Hub initiatives. Propel will assist in recruitment of students for other Locally Grown initiatives.

We are committed to the long-term success of Locally Grown and its impacts in Wilkinsburg and beyond. The growth of BootUp PGH as a platform for teenagers could have a lasting impact on our region by expanding who has access to technology and influence new ideas on what STEM education might look like in different communities and spaces. I believe in this initiative, the leadership behind it, and its capacity to enact positive change.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rosemary Anderson, Ed. D.  
Chair, 21st CCLC State Advisory Board  
Director of Afterschool Programs  
Propel Schools  
3447 East Carson Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

CC: Dr. Tina Chekan, CEO/Superintendent

---

March 1, 2022

Michael Skirpan, Executive Director and Co-Founder  
Locally Grown  
1256 Franklin Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Dear Mr. Skirpan,

YWCA Greater Pittsburgh is pleased to provide this letter of support for Locally Grown's Bootup PGH teen programming. Our organization is committed to helping students overcome barriers to educational opportunities, and we recognize a disparity of opportunity across communities in our region that negatively impacts youth of color. We are particularly interested in Bootup PGH's innovative and flexible programs that engage underrepresented teenagers in their future planning and learning skills and pathways into STEM-related careers. We are impressed with the design of the program and its inclusion of teens' ideas and interest in the creation of the program, and our organization plans to be an implementation partner.

If Locally Grown receives funding from Allegheny County, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh will provide Saturday Academy workshops for participants ages 13 through 19. Through Saturday Academy, students visit local college campuses, engage in STEM careers, network with women who have pursued STEM as a career, and participate in life-skills workshops.

YWCA Greater Pittsburgh supports the long-term success of Locally Grown's educational advancement programs and its impact within and beyond Wilkinsburg. The growth of BootUp PGH as a platform for teenagers could have a lasting effect on our region by expanding who has access to technology, diversifying STEM fields by race and gender, and influencing new ideas on what STEM education might look like in different communities and spaces.

Sincerely,



Angela Reynolds, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer  
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh