



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Teen Programming

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: The Center that CARES

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Rev. Glenn G. Grayson

Address: 2701 Centre Ave.

Telephone: 412.621.9612

Email: ggrayson@centerthatcares.org

Website: www.centerthatcares.org

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

Date Incorporated: December 1, 1999

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

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

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	Rev. Glenn G. Grayson	412.621.9612	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Shinora Johnson	412.621.9612	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Dina Martin	412.621.9612	info@centerthatcares.org
Chief Financial Officer	Germeen Green	412.621.9612	info@centerthatcares.org
MPER Contact*	Shinora Johnson	412.621.9612	[REDACTED]

* [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.

Steven M. Barth, Esq. Chair

Attorney

Rev. William King, Esq. Treasurer

Attorney

Michelle Porter, Secretary

Community Economic Development Consultant

Debra Valentine-Gray

Indiana University- Regional Advancement

Andrew McCray

Department of City Planning, Housing Specialist

Sharjeel Farouq

Oracle, Sales Director

Karl Pietrzak

Visit Pittsburgh, Vice President

Makalah Smalls McCray (student rep)

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Steven M. Barth, Esq.

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.

Cassandra Brentley, MA Ed., Ready to Learn Program Manager, University of Pittsburgh, P.

[REDACTED]

Dr. Eric Graf, Principal UPrep,

[REDACTED]

Brandon Blanche-Cohen Amizade. Phone:

[REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 3/1/2022

RFP for Teen Programming

Amount Requested: \$150,000

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).

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.

For the past twenty-two years, the Center that CARES has effectively implemented and sustained quality programs, exceeding performance indicators and creating opportunities for success. Through our afterschool and summer programs, the Center that CARES promotes student academic achievement, personal development, and future success through innovative, culturally centered programs and dynamic partnerships. With the acquisition of the Jeron X Grayson Center in 2014, CARES was able to significantly increase its programming for teens. The Center that CARES embraces the hope and potential of youth to build a foundation from which they can enhance the quality of their lives and achieve success. The teens that attend our program reside in underserved neighborhoods, are economically challenged, attend low performing schools, and confront multiple barriers, and we have designed programs that have successfully engage our teens in quality learning and enrichment experiences and created opportunities for growth and development. Our commitment is to excite and motivate teens through unique and vibrant program options that nurture their strengths, explore interests, and expose to new opportunities.

For 15 years, the CARES has offered a viable, quality experiences for underserved teens. Our achievements and youth centered outcomes this past year include:

- 92% increase in attendance in school, exceeding benchmarks for improving grades.
- 90% success rate in a pilot program for seniors to transition to college or jobs
- 90% completion rate for summer employment participants.

Examples which highlight our innovation and work with teens include:

- The Center that CARES spearheaded a Virtual Town Hall Meeting facilitated by renowned actor Sterling K. Brown in order to allow teens to connect and share after the George Floyd murder and outrage at the systematic injustice which was reflected. The Virtual Town Hall enabled teens from the Center that CARES to participate in a candid discussion with youth from 6 other youth serving organizations which was moderated by Sterling K. Brown. In this manner, through connecting with other youth, the experience mobilizing young people to develop a collective vision for their role as change agents for social justice.
- Through Amizade, our students have been able to participate in exchange programs for community service to other countries which we will be able to expand youth participation through this project. Global Links has also assisted our youth implementing community service projects both in their community and abroad.
- GEN-Tech was a strategy to develop the technological capacity of our Hill District youth and families through providing comprehensive computer training to youth, while

RFP for Teen Programming

simultaneously providing a vehicle for building the digital literacy of adults and caregivers. Our teens participated in a training on digital literacy and Microsoft suites and then subsequently conducted training sessions on digital literacy to parents and caregivers.

CARES is uniquely positioned to implement the Teen Programming model as outlined by ACDHS as we have both a history of quality programming and innovative model offer a dynamic opportunity for youth who are chronically underserved. With a firm participant base of teens regularly attending its programs, CARES is seeking to leverage additional resources to increase the potential of our young people for success.

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

Anchored in Pittsburgh's Hill District, the Center that CARES has evolved from an unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of underserved, high-need youth and families. Moreover, our programs have been tailored to respond to the needs of our youth and community. The Center that CARES has offered afterschool programs, Teen Programs, and Summer Employment Programs that have effectively engaged underserved teens. Four years ago, the Center that CARES partnered with the City of Pittsburgh to launch a grassroots initiative to offer violence prevention and intervention. With a community focused approach, the Center that CARES spearheaded a comprehensive effort to not only respond to escalating violence, but also to work with vulnerable youth experiencing issues and barriers that expose them to potential violence including homelessness, runaway, domestic violence abuse, joblessness, and lack of support systems. Through community engagement and relationship building, our staff identifies and works with high-risk youth to provide a bridge to a positive lifestyle and viable paths to self-sufficiency. With outreach workers and support services staff in high risk neighborhoods throughout the City, the Center that CARES emerged as portal for struggling youth.

In response to the need for housing among disenfranchised, underserved youth indicated through our REACH Initiative, the Center that CARES has recently acquired resources to facilitate access to housing as a critical factor in providing the stability and security for young adults that will enable them to make informed decisions and connect with resources that allows them to pursue their dreams. This fall, the Center that CARES acquired the Hamilton House, a former convent with 30 individual rooms located on Hamilton Ave. in Homewood. This facility serves as the hub for youth programming, while offering options for temporary housing for youth, becoming fully operational by December 31, 2020.

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.

RFP for Teen Programming

Equity and Inclusion is central to the mission of the Center that CARES which embraces and serves all youth, including youth who are systematically disenfranchised from traditional organizations. As part of this commitment, CARES staff, facilities, programming, and strategies are reflective of the diversity in all aspects of the communities we serve. Central to achieving this objective, CARES employs a Youth Development framework for delivering programs and services, emphasizing a strength-based paradigm that builds upon skills and talents and nurtures strengthening assets that contribute to healthy development. Additionally, our curriculum is designed to be inclusive of different learning styles, as well as incorporate material and content that is reflective of our commitment to diversity and inclusion. As part of our youth leadership initiative, we strive for it to also reflect the range of youth attending our program and the diversity of our community.

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.

In designing our teen programming, the Center that CARES has prioritized creating vibrant environment incorporates key best practices as the foundation for developing a continuum of dynamic learning experiences for our youth:

1.) Youth leadership- giving youth a voice in programming is a proven, successful strategy and is cited as a key standard for quality youth development with supporting research. Opportunities for youth leadership and autonomy can contribute to positive gains for youth, including engagement, intrinsic motivation, self-determination, academic competence, and reduction of problem behavior (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Deschenes et al., 2010; Russell, Mielke, & Reisner, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 1998; Soenens & Vansteenskiste, 2005; Eccles et al., 1997; Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Briere, 2001).

2.) Culturally Responsive Framework: Another feature we will embrace in our model is a culturally responsive framework that includes the four conditions necessary for culturally responsive teaching- 1.) establish inclusion, 2.) develop positive attitude 3.) enhance meaning and 4.) engender competence (*A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching*, Wldokowski, Raymond J. and Margery B. Ginsverg 1995).

3.) Disparity in Access to STEM: More importantly, through our program design, we intend to counteract the disparity of opportunity which often confronts youth from low-income families and has fostered not only a significant digital divide, but a widening disproportion of opportunities. As noted in this article, "Many of the roadblocks that prevent young, African-American men from pursuing careers in STEM fields sound familiar: a lack of resources, role models and "relatability." The solutions, too, mirror those used to entice more women to work toward STEM careers: Start teaching and engaging students sooner, and work to dispel the curse of self-doubt." (*African-American Men: The Other STEM Minority*, Bidwell,

RFP for Teen Programming

Allie May 7, 2015, US News). Moreover, the prospect for exploring or developing STEAM concepts is a further illustration of how the widening divide of technology access contributes to supporting a STEM career path for African-Americans. “Unlike their more affluent counterparts, students who live in underserved communities typically lack access to what are now considered STEM basics: up-to-date laboratories, laptop or tablet computers and access to the Internet.’ (*Bringing STEM Education to Underserved Communities*, Williams, Joseph, May 29, 2014).

Our proposed Teen Program model would include and expand the following components:

- **Youth Voices** is our core leadership development program focused on developing personal leadership skills while fostering civic engagement and community services. Through the program, youth are learning to express their views on current events and critical issues, as well as deepen their understanding of civics, community service, and leadership thereby preparing youth to be change agents and community builders. Mirroring the Red Table hosted by Jada Pinkett, the Center that CARES has begun implementing Table Talk which is a youth-led discussion of key issues and concerns they are focused on which has been successful opportunity for youth to express their voice, share experiences, and obtain support and encouragement.
- **Kufikia Ukuu** (Swahili for **Achieve Greatness**); Through this project CARES endeavors to provide additional individual support to our youth offering guidance and hands-on assistance which empowers them to fulfill their potential through preparation for post secondary education and training with a focus on addressing the racial achievement gap in Pittsburgh and obtainment of high demand skills for emerging jobs in our region. CARES has also developed a relationship with Community Kitchen Pittsburgh to provide culinary training to prepare our youth for employment in the culinary industry and the Energy Innovation Center Institute for entry careers with UPMC and area banks.
- **Working Wednesdays** connects young people to area professionals who share their careers and career path in an effort expand understanding of potential opportunities. Included in as part of this component are college tours build interest and confidence in youth exploring post-secondary education, and over the past three years, the Center that CARES has facilitated college tours to the majority of local post-secondary institutions within a 200 mile radius. Tours or presentations by technical schools and training programs are also included.
- **Pearls & Chucks** has been designed by our women’s leadership team in conjunction with a pilot girls group as vehicle to strengthen the ability and opportunity for young women of color to be advocates and change agent. Our goal is to cultivate and strengthen young women as leaders and empower them as decision makers and change agents in our community. Our program design prioritizes the following elements: Lead by African American women reflective of our community and offer opportunities that enable young women to use their voice, skills, and leadership to obtain experiences that enrich their development and foster their potential and connect with African American women in leadership positions to reinforce career paths and applications of leadership.

RFP for Teen Programming

- **STEM Education and Academic Enrichment** Building upon our dedication to positively addressing disparity in opportunity for underserved youth, CARES implements quality STEM programming using cutting edge technology and innovative project based learning models to strengthen foundation skills, reinforce teens as learners, foster 21st century learning skills, and increase digital and STEM literacy. Illustrations of our program include using drones for Projects, University of Pittsburgh leading projects for a 3-D printer, utilizing Kinex and Legos for engineering challenges, and conducting training on software suites such as Google and Microsoft.
- **CommuniTEA** is our social entrepreneurship endeavor that offers our youth an opportunity to learn and entrepreneurial skills and work readiness competencies through a combination of entrepreneurial training, hands on projects and problem solving, and work experience. Once completing the training program, youth are eligible to work at CommuniTEA.
- **Global Passport Initiative** implements leadership and cultural enrichment experiences that broaden our youth's perspectives, connect to opportunities, and nurture post-secondary success through the facilitating cultural experiences which includes combining educational activities and field trips and develop leadership skills through community service initiatives locally and abroad in conjunction with our partners, Jewish Community Center, Amizade, and Global Links. Culture and leadership experiences have proven to be vital vehicles for broadening the possibilities of youth while simultaneously serving as a catalytic experience that motivates our youth to fulfill their potential. Our Passport to Success Project is designed to improve opportunities and foster future success of our youth through structured enrichment programming that reinforce and enhance their leadership skills while exposing them to cultural and educational experiences that enhance their understanding of the diverse perspectives, foster culture pride and appreciation for their neighborhood, empower them as decision makers, and inspire them to pursue their dreams. Research supports the direct impact that exposure to new experiences has on a student's perspective and life planning. In viewing our volunteer experiences in culturally diverse countries abroad, the Center that CARES is simulating the positive impact of learning experiences in other countries as a catalyst for motivating and inspiring students. As noted through research, it can be a unique and transformational learning experience. "Students who have studied abroad are better able to work with people from other countries, understand the complexity of global issues, and have greater intercultural learning."NAFSA.org
- **Mindfulness and Yoga** Working with local partners, CARES has combined yoga and mindfulness as a strategy for helping teens build coping and resiliency, as well as nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

RFP for Teen Programming

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

The Center that CARES reflects its community and culture in all aspects of organizational design, from staffing to physical environment to programming content. The location for the Center will be at the Jeron X Grayson Community Center located on Enoch Street in the Hill District. Renovated four years ago, the Jeron X Grayson Community is a state-of-the-art facility equipped with cutting-edge technology center, learning labs, and training space. An accessible, welcoming venue, young adults will participate in the dynamic programming, as well as have an opportunity to meet with program staff and utilize resources at the center. The Jeron X Grayson Center is an accessible, quality facility that allows young people to be involved in a positive environment allowing for formal meetings and informal support. With its rich inclusion of cultural environment creates an atmosphere which can support teen programming allowing them to be inspired and connected to a culture of achievement.

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

The Center that CARES is committed to youth-driven programs that empower youth to inform, guide, and implement programming while also cultivating a powerful youth voice to advocate and lead. To ensure this organizational priority, the Center that CARES has Youth Ambassadors as a core part of its program. Youth Ambassadors serve as decision makers in the organization, advising, guiding, advocating, and implementing programming. Additionally, the initiative, Youth Voices, was established as a vehicle for youth to develop and apply leadership skills, most recently spearheading City-wide conversations in response to the George Floyd murder facilitated by Sterling K. Brown and developing the video, "I Can't Breathe". Through the REACH Initiative, the Center that CARES also engages young adults as peer advocates that support and reinforce lifestyle changes with struggling youth. The Center that CARES also includes youth on its governing Board of Directors.

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

In working with our teens, three key elements have provided favorable feedback: a variety of program options that allow youth to explore interests, youth voice and leadership components that incorporate their ideas, and exposure to new opportunities and experiences, ranging from technology to field trips. In our program design and environment, the Center that CARES seeks to affirm our teen programs are an inclusive, safe place where teens are welcome and made to feel comfortable.

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

The Center that CARES also "markets" new program opportunities and initiatives allowing additional students to engage, expand, or re-engage by a focus program of interest

RFP for Teen Programming

which subsequently leads to additional program involvement. Outreach and marketing is done via fliers distributed at schools and community sites and effective use of social media.

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.

The Center that CARES is firmly committed to hiring individuals who are anchored in neighborhoods and fostering their abilities to effectively serve their community. Through the REACH Initiative, the Center that CARES identified, trained, and retained diverse staff from underserved neighborhoods who are rooted and connected to youth in their community, with many having also been previously marginalized or disconnected. Building upon their strong relationships, understanding of neighborhood dynamics, and experienced with issues facing youth, our program staff have effectively been able to outreach to disenfranchised youth and work with them to achieve their goals. Similarly, throughout the CARES organization, we reflect the children and youth we serve.

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 Center that CARES adheres to a strength-base, culturally relevant individual support framework that prioritizes working with youth to identify their needs, interests, and goals, subsequently developing an action plan that connects them to needed services and support, offers transitional support that offers structured success experiences that strengthen and plan for their success, and provides positive, supportive follow-up from individuals familiar with barriers, issues, and responsive problem solving assistance as needed.

The Center that CARES as designed a career roadmap for youth and parents to assist with decision making regarding career path preparation and reinforce the importance of school performance and program participation. In addition, CARES has developed a strong foundation of programming that can increase student skills, expose youth to education and career opportunities, and connect youth and families to needed resources and services. Building upon this cornerstone of programming and the individual service strategies for our youth, our Career Coaches will work with each youth to develop an individual plan combining the individual service strategy and career road map format to create goals and benchmarks for youth. In addition, CARES has established a productive partnership with Pittsburgh Milliones University Prep. In addition to meeting with leadership and staff at the school regularly, CARES has secured an office on site at the school which we would like to use for individual sessions with students as part of this grant. The key outcomes we anticipate achieving for our youth include:

RFP for Teen Programming

- Youth will successfully enter post-secondary education, training, or employment the first quarter after graduation
- Youth at risk of school failure will increase their attendance at school.
- Youth will obtain industry recognized credential or college credit.
- Youth will regularly participate workforce development activities.
- Youth will obtain industry recognized credential or college credit.

Implementation Challenges (15 points possible)

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

The Center that CARES stresses relationship building with youth and their families to develop consistent participation. Active outreach to youth to encourage attendance will occur through our staff connecting to youth during the school day, consistent communication with families, and direct follow-up with youth who miss programs; furthermore, staff will also monitor school attendance to prevent potential issues. We encourage youth to attend daily, and as an incentive to do so, we establish a welcoming environment, offer exciting learning activities, and form rapport with our youth.

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

The Center that CARES prioritizes including teens who are chronically underserved, and as a result, have provided training to our staff on strategies for program management that are inclusive to different learning styles, approaches to handling challenging behavioral issues, and referral systems for additional needs. In addition, we also recognize the affects of trauma on teens, and as such Trauma Informed Care at our organization adheres to the key pillars of safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment, with our staff trained in Trauma Informed Care and understanding the needs and services of youth must be viewed in context of their experiences and trauma.

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?

Through our REACH initiative, we have developed partnerships and working resource directory To assist families. Information on services and referrals process are included as part of our staff development training with REACH outreach workers and managers providing support to navigate referrals.

RFP for Teen Programming

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.

Budget

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Personnel	\$ 70,000
Contractor Services (STEM)	\$ 20,000
Supplies	\$ 23,000
Facility	\$ 12,000
Transportation	\$ 15,000
COVID supplies/cleaning	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$150,000

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

Through this grant, our goal is secure funding to offer teen programming that excites and motivates teens to succeed. To accomplish this goal, we are seeking support for staffing and instructors that allow for a menu of programs to be delivered and allow for increased expertise to be shared with our teens. In addition, we are requesting funding for supplies to support hands on projects and STEM education; transportation to assist with increasing access and removing barriers; additional cleaning and maintenance precautions implemented in response to the COVID pandemic, and support for facility cost including Wi-Fi and utilities.