



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Assemble INC

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Kiera Cullen Development Associate

Address: 4824 Penn Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Telephone: (412)-661-6111 ext 2007

Email: Kiera@assemblepgh.org

Website: assemblepgh.org

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

Date Incorporated: April 24, 2012

Partners included in this Proposal: NA

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* We heard about this from an email from Tylor Hart.

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	Nina Barbuto	(412) 661-6111	nina@assemblepgh.org
Contract Processing Contact	Nina Barbuto	(412) 661-6111	nina@assemblepgh.org
Chief Information Officer	Nina Barbuto	(412) 661-6111	nina@assemblepgh.org
Chief Financial Officer	Nina Barbuto	(412) 661-6111	nina@assemblepgh.org
MPER Contact*	Nina Barbuto	(412) 661-6111	nina@assemblepgh.org

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

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BOARD INFORMATION

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

Officers

Samantha Levinson

President

Kara Rubio

Vice President

Shannon Phy

Secretary

Kayla Hunter

Treasurer

Members

Christy Cianelli

Jacquie Foradori

Katelynd Gibbons

Stephen Hajduk

Elizabeth Henry

Kelly Hiser

Christina Howell

Phyllis Kim

Maddy Lafferty

Phil Light

Mary Jayne McCullough

Samuel Rotellini

Janet O'Rourke

Abigail Sanders

Kristen Wishon

Ellen Yates

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Samantha Levinson, Board President

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: samantha@assemblepgh.org

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.

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Erin Perry, Executive Director
Legacy Arts Project,
Partner with Assemble for the Ramp Up Fellowship
eperry@legacyartsproject.org
[REDACTED]

Rick Swartz, Executive Director
Bloomfield Garfield-Corporation
ricks@bloomfield-garfield.org
[REDACTED]

Tyler Samstag, Director of Remake Learning
tyler@remakelearning.org
[REDACTED]

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$121,200

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 things 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

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X 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
- Completed budget template

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 125 points. Your response to the following section should not exceed **6** pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

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Organizational Experience (15 points possible)

1. Describe your organizational experience providing OST Programming or programming that works with youth and families.

Founded in 2011, Assemble is a community space for arts and technology located in Garfield, in the East End of Pittsburgh. We envision diverse neighborhoods of empowered people who create, connect, learn and transform together. Our mission is to build confidence through making by uniting communities of artists, technologists, makers, and learners. By bringing people together, we provide a platform for experiential learning, open creative processes, and building agency within the youth and neighbors we serve.

We offer out-of-school time programming in our physical community space in the neighborhood of Garfield and across Pittsburgh. We continuously present a welcoming and inviting environment, which allows us to bring together a diverse array of individuals to learn from and grow with. For youth, the connections that they are exposed to through our interdisciplinary programming and collaborations with guest makers, artists, and technologists during our after-school programs have lasting impacts. Assemble offers dedicated daily programs, both within our space and in sites across the city, with a core focus on youth in grades K-12. We offer programs geared toward adults to create opportunities for community members to engage with us.

2. Describe your organizational experience working in high-need communities, especially the community(ies) you are proposing to serve.

For the past 10 years, Assemble has been working in the neighborhood of Garfield, A high-need community in Pittsburgh. Garfield is home to nearly 10,675 Pittsburgh residents, with 27.1% living under the poverty line. With a median income of \$31,441, the neighborhood lags far behind other Pittsburgh neighborhoods and national averages. Assemble provides a space for learning, community, and public art to improve the quality of life for Garfield residents. Outside of Assemble's programmatic offerings, there is limited access to STEAM opportunities for the Garfield community. We offer free programming to anyone in the neighborhood, to ensure our programming is benefiting our community first and foremost. We partner with other makers, technologists, and educators in the neighborhood to provide programming at Assemble.

Program Design (40 points possible)

3. Provide an overall description of your proposed OST Programming:

Our space provides a welcoming, fun, and relaxed environment where youth are able to engage in STEAM-based activities and explore their passions. Our programs make the space for creativity to thrive, take risks, fail, and open up new imaginative possibilities as new information is learned and wrestled with. A key component of our work is introducing youth to guest experts to provide career connections across disciplines. We work to recruit experts who provide examples of gender and racial diversity and with whom the youth can directly identify. Our school year programs combine a commitment to high-quality youth education, accessibility, reliability, and uninterrupted outreach to our Garfield Neighbors. All programs are 100% free for youth who reside in Garfield. On-site, school year programs include:

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Assemble Afterschool (grades 1-9), offers specialized and tailored lessons in digital/physical making three days a week. A free-to-all program predominantly attended by local Garfield youth, Afterschool exposes youth to STEAM disciplines through age-appropriate projects, guest experts, field trips, and more.

Mondays at Assemble is Girls Maker Night (grades 5-9) (GMN). A free-to-all program, GMN makes space for and supports middle school-aged girls and those who identify as a girl, trans, or non-binary. Participants are provided opportunities to 'geek out' on STEAM content, work on collaborative projects, and connect with like-minded peers and mentors. GMN pushes against the status quo, by providing a specialized space for exploration, and opening up possible futures for female-identified youth that might not have otherwise been. GMN students have worked on an array of projects from robotics, design, code, stop animation, screen printing, circuit bending, terrariums, and more!

Happening 3 times throughout the school year, Learning Parties are a cross between a community party and a mini science fair. Families and students participate in activities centered on a specific theme from biology to interactive art presented by local experts from organizations, academic departments, companies, and individuals who geek out on the topic. Learning Parties has been a great means for disconnected youth to build community in our space at their pace or speed.

Youth Maker Night (Grades 5-9) offers tweens opportunities to interact and learn with featured local makers. Youth Maker Night topics in the past have included comic bookmaking, electronic music-making, and sewable zine-making.

Saturday Crafternoons (grades 1-5) is a drop-in workshop focused on project-based learning and community engagement. All workshops are co-facilitated by a local artist, maker, or technologist. Themes have included community projects, voyages to outer space, music visualization, and more! Being a drop-in program with new guest experts each week, kids are meeting new faces all the time while building their social and making skills.

During the days Pittsburgh Public Schools don't have classes, Assemble offers Day Camps (grades 1-8) to alleviate the stress of childcare/taking time off work for parents. These programs are themed to touch on multiple STEAM disciplines and media-making and structured to keep campers engaged in creative thought throughout the day. Day camps are a way for our Garfield community youth to deepen their relationships with each other and explore STEAM topics.

Summer Camps run for 8 weeks throughout the summer, with each week having a different theme ranging from Coding and Couture to Afrofuturism. Summer camp serves as a time for campers to really dive into specific STEAM topics. We host guest experts from a variety of fields to join in on the learning process.

Youth and Parent Experience (10 points)

4. Why do you think youth will want to participate in your OST Programming? Provide specific methods you will use to ensure that they remain engaged and interested in your Programming.

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"I've been going to Assemble ever since I was 8 years old. Assemble has always been an open and accepting place where I could freely express myself. Every afterschool program, summer camp, and family event has brought me joy. I encourage people to go out and visit Assemble to experience the things I did." - Viveka, 17 At Assemble, it is one of our core values to be welcoming. All staff are encouraged to always "say hello, introduce yourself, offer a snack!" as a kid walks by our space. Youth love our programs because they get to be themselves while being creative in a safe and welcoming environment. We utilize personalized learning methods and all youth as seen as their own full-person, with expertise to share. Our practice is rooted in Paulo Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed as the abolitionist teachings of Dr. Bettina Love.

The creative activities make lasting impacts on youth, as noted by student Hannah: "I still remember things from the project I did three years ago because it was on a topic that I picked". Students make deep connections with other students at Assemble, and they help each other learn. "I taught Carson how to successfully solder- look!" - Aaron. Assemble is truly an environment where students can create, learn, fail, and explore with full support from our team. We know our students love Assemble because they tell us, "Thank you so much for Assemble, I love it here" - Max. Without Assemble many of these youth wouldn't have a space to explore STEAM subjects outside of school, and here they are able to explore these topics, meet new people, and build a love of STEAM.

5. Describe your approach to communicating with parents/caregivers. Provide specific methods you will use to ensure that parents/caregivers feel comfortable with your OST Programming and confident that their child is safe and well cared for.

Our approach to communicating with parents/caregivers is one of care, understanding, and support. We reach out to them when youth are missing from programs. We check in to see if they need connections to other resources, from food, tech, and housing aid. We connect them to other programs that are in line with their child's interests. Based on their preferred method of communication, we primarily communicate through phone calls, text messages, and emails. Staff welcome parents/caregivers as they enter the space.

Operations (20 points)

6. Describe how you will market your Programming and open referral pathways. Provide a description of how you will build and sustain relationships with schools.

Assemble is a PPS approved partner. Assemble actively reaches out to our partners at Pittsburgh Public Schools, different Pittsburgh charter schools, and other educational organizations. We directly connect with in-school educators, principals, and FACE coordinators when possible. Our Off-Site in-school programs and participation in community events and fairs serve as a recruitment engagement. Through the Remake Learning Network and the Arts Education Collaborative, Assemble has strong connections with peer organizations. We were an active APOST member as well. Ultimately, the best referral pathways have been from our own students and families. We strive for our staff to continuously build relationships with our youth and families, connecting them to other resources beyond Assemble as well. We utilize the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation's Bulletin for ads and stories about our programs. We will do mailers to families in our neighborhood. We create posters and flyers and post through social media, our eblast, and Events Calendar sites such as Kidsburgh.

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7. 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.

Assemble prioritizes having a diverse team of teachers and staff reflective of our community and the youth we serve. Part of our hiring considerations are the connections applications have with the neighborhood. For hiring teaching staff, we post job descriptions through Remake Learning, Arts Education Collaborative, NextDoor, the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation Bulletin, and APOST (when available.) Our hiring process is two-tiered with a phone interview and a second interactive interview. Managers are responsible for hiring their staff, knowing first hand the youth to be served. Second interviews include a hands-on learning lesson of the applicant's choice and typically include two Assemble staff members. To retain staff, we have been in the process of creating more full-time teacher-coordinator positions that provide healthcare benefits and job security. Most of our teaching staff are part-time, as with many OST educator roles. We are looking to actively shift this, with equity in mind, we are in the process of creating more roles and have been looking into healthcare options for part-time staff working an average of 30 hours per week. (Full-time roles are at 40hrs a week.) Our teachers start off at \$15/hr and are paid for their lesson planning, training, research, program delivery, and all work they do for Assemble. Though we value learning, we do not emphasize academic careers across our staff. We have a range of staff with masters to incomplete undergrad degrees. We do not correlate academic achievement with pay to offer equity for those affected by system oppression in our education system.

Through a year-long professional development engagement with Debralyn Woodberry-Shaw, a team of staff members are developing a plan to diversify our board and staff as we create new positions. We acknowledge that diversity is the outcome of having a space that practices equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice. We are committed to creating a safe space for our BIPOC youth and staff to be their full-authentic selves at Assemble. Our Board of Directors are committed to this work.

As to invest and support the next generation of teaching artists and educators, Assemble has partnered with the Legacy Arts Project on the Ramp Up Fellowship. This pilot workforce development program offers full-time salaried support and benefits to 18-24-year-olds, with a focus on BIPOC and LGBTQIA young adults, interested in becoming OST educators. We are actively looking for funding to continue this program.

8. Provide the hours and days you expect your OST program to operate during the school year and summer.

We offer programming most weekdays, and Saturdays during the school year, we offer summer programming every weekday. Our Girls Maker Night runs every Monday from 4 PM - 6 PM during the school year. Afterschool runs Tuesday through Thursday from 4 PM - 6 PM. Saturday craftnoons run every Saturday from 1 PM - 3 PM. Our day Camps happen whenever Pittsburgh Public Schools don't have school, from 9 AM - 4 PM. Our summer camp programs run every weekday from 9 am - 4 pm. For Day and Summer camps, we offer pre-camp from 8am and post-camp till 5PM.

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9. Describe your plan for storing and providing healthy snacks and meals during the school year and summer.

We partner with local organizations to provide meals to our students throughout the year and summer. We always have plenty of healthy snacks on hand in our kitchen area. Whenever a student enters our building we offer them a snack and drink. Students are always told they can ask for a snack again if they get hungry after snack time. We make sure kids have space to eat without being right on top of each other for Covid-19 safety precautions. Assemble is a peanut-free space. We are attentive to youth's food allergies and religious preferences.

Implementation Challenges (20 points possible)

10. If your Program experiences low attendance, how will you engage more youth?

If we are ever facing low attendance, our first priority is to check in with any youth already registered to figure out why they aren't attending. We try to make sure everything is ok for them to return later on and make sure the student is having their needs met, putting the family in contact with any resources they may need. If students are no longer able to participate in our programs we turn to our typical recruitment strategies, posting flyers around the neighborhood, posting on social media, talking to parents or guardians to see if any of their friends would be interested.

11. If a youth in your Program experiences behavioral or mental health issues, what will you do?

Assemble's staff is trained in Mental Health First aid which is offered annually. For any issues beyond staff capabilities, we refer students to mental health resources in the community. If we have an emergency situation we connect the youth to the Resolve Crisis Center. We try to be as open and communicative as possible with students so they know we can be a resource for them. As an organization, we exercise restorative justice practices. We work together to find solutions and take into consideration everyone's affected needs. We are always learning and growing from moments of discomfort. We have had mediated conversations between students, trying to give students a path for open communication but in a safe way. We are constantly reflecting on how we are balancing the space for everyone. We know conflicts are part of social-emotional growth for youth. We need to give them a safe space to work through these challenges with others and teach them how to get through conflict.

12. If the results of the bi-annual parent survey indicate that parents are not satisfied with the experience of their children in your Program, what will you do?

We heavily value parental feedback. We have been consistently getting feedback from parents, through surveys. If we ever receive negative feedback we will reach out for more information, try to develop a fuller understanding of the situation. Depending on the situation we will make accommodations for the student and parents. We will use any feedback to make changes to our program, once we have resources to fund these changes. It's vital for Assemble's mission to keep our space safe and helpful to everyone.

13. If a parent of a child in your Program expresses a transportation issue, what will you do?

Although we don't have transportation in the form of buses or drivers, we will help families in a few different ways. For instance, we help fund bus passes for students. In emergency situations

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with parents consent and when age appropriate we will buy a student a lyft home. We will not drive students home without written permission from parents or guardians. We will walk them home when it is within walking distance from Assemble.

Financial Management and Budget (20 points)

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

Our request of \$121,200 will be divided into 2 major categories; Personnel, and Operations for both School Year (Fall-Spring) and Summer Programs. For School Year programs, we are requesting a total of \$97,200. For Summer, we are requesting, a total of \$24,000.

Personnel: \$97,490 of the requested funds will go toward program staff salaries to compensate for lesson plan creation, training time, prep time, teaching time, clean up and other necessary working time needed to run all of our programming. Quality staff is a necessary part of strong OST programming. Program staff members include our teachers, coordinators, and program manager.

Operations: \$24,000 of the funds are to fund food and beverage, professional development, and supplies and materials. Food and beverage count for healthy snacks and the additional lunches we might provide during our programs. We do participate in local summer food programs when possible to cut down these costs. We request healthy snack donations. The Professional Development costs are costs for trainers for staff. Professional development includes and isn't limited to First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Social-emotional learning skills, content, youth development, youth voice, and other skills-building trainings. Materials and supplies include all the materials needed for the hands-on STEAM activities the youth will use. This includes and is not limited to electronics, art supplies, science materials, building materials, and other consumables. This does not include equipment such as computers.

All costs not included in our budget will be covered by other grants obtained by Assemble. Those costs include guest expert honorariums, rent, clearing costs, healthcare costs, marketing and outreach costs.

16. Describe the funding model of your proposed OST Program (i.e., do you have a mixed model of private pay, subsidy and free spots, only free spots?).

Assemble utilizes a mixed funding model of grants, corporate sponsorships, individual donations, and program fees to fund our programming. All of our programs are completely FREE to all youth except our Day and Summer Camps. With our Day and Summer Camps, we offer a mixed fee of a Full Price, a half-priced scholarship, and free tickets for Garfield youth. Day Camps typically cost \$50 for the full 9 am - 4 pm daily, with \$25 being the scholarship price. Week-long summer camps typically cost \$250 for the Monday through Friday camp, each day running from 9 am - 4 pm. The summer camp scholarship tickets are priced at \$125. If the scholarship price is a barrier for parents in need, we work with them on a "pay-what-you-can" model and offer payment strategies. Ultimately, if youth outside our neighborhood are in need of a free camp, we will make it work. Garfield youth attend free to both Day and Summer camps.

	total # of children requesting funding for**	rate	days	total
Afterschool	20	\$27	180	97200
Summer	15	\$40	40	24000
				121200

Afterschool	Expense
<i>Personnel</i>	79200
Teachers	25000
Coordinator	36000
Manager	18200
<i>Operations (supplies, rent)</i>	18000
Food & Beverage	5000
Professional Development	5000
Supplies & Materials	8000
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Indirects</i>	
*Total:	97200

Total funding request based on seats 97200

*Total should = total funding request based on seats

Summer	Expense
<i>Personnel</i>	18290
Teachers	7290
Coordinator	9000
Manager	2000
<i>Operations (supplies, rent)</i>	6000
Food & Beverage	2000
Professional Development	1000
Supplies & Materials	3000
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Indirects</i>	
*Total:	24290

Total funding request based on seats 24000

*Total should = total funding request basd on seats