



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for the Development of an Enhanced and Comprehensive Reentry System

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: **Awaken Pittsburgh**

Authorized Representative Name & Title: **Dr. Stephanie Romero, Executive Director**

Address: **5738 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh 15217**

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: **www.awakenpittsburgh.org**

Legal Status: ☐ For-Profit ☒ Nonprofit ☐ Sole Proprietor/Individual ☐ Partnership

Women Owned: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Minority Owned: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, select the ethnicity:

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Hispanic or Latino/a

☐ Western Asian/Middle Eastern

☐ South Asian/Indian (Subcontinent)

☐ Other Asian

☐ Black or of African decent

☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

☐ East Asian/Far Eastern

☐ Southeast Asian

☐ Multi-racial

Self-Describe: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Faith Based: ☐ Yes ☒ No

Partners included in this Proposal: **Visible Hands Collective, Village Center for Holistic Therapy**

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

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Which service are you proposing to provide? *(please check all that apply):*

RFP for the Development of an Enhanced Comprehensive Reentry System

- ☐ CT-R Course Facilitation
☒ Curriculum-based Programming
☐ Activities-based Programming and Resource Coordination

If your organization is proposing to provide Curriculum-based Programming, please select the service area(s) for which you're proposing to provide programming.

- ☒ Mental and Physical Health
☐ Substance Use Treatment-related Supports
☐ Job Training and Development
☒ Relationship Building and Maintenance

Total dollar amount requested: \$230,894.70 per year, \$461,789.40 for two years

Proposal summary (*please use only one sentence*):

Awaken Pittsburgh proposes to offer comprehensive mindfulness-based programming designed to support mental and physical health, recovery, and relationship building for individuals in and leaving the Allegheny County Jail, contributing to the enhanced Reentry System envisioned by the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative.

REQUIRED CONTACTS

| | Name | Phone | Email |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Chief Executive Officer | Dr. Stephanie Romero | | |
| Contract Processing Contact | Dr. Stephanie Romero | | |
| Chief Information Officer | Dr. Stephanie Romero | | |
| Chief Financial Officer | Paul Block | | |
| MPER Contact* | Dawn Lehman | | |

* [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

* For the Board Chairperson, you must list an address, phone and email address different than the organization.

Board Chairperson Name & Title: **Dr. Richard Stachel, Chair**

Board Chairperson Address:



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Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: Partners included in this Proposal:

[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.*

1. Bethany Hemingway, Program Officer, Staunton Farm Foundation,
[REDACTED]
2. Walter Lewis, CEO, Homewood Children's Village, [REDACTED]
3. Dr. James Huguley, School of Social Work/Parenting While Black, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
4. Angela Reynolds, CEO YWCA Pittsburgh, [REDACTED]
5. Neil Ashbaugh, President/CEO, New Century Careers, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CERTIFICATION

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

X 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.

X 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

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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. Attachments do not count towards the page limit for your Proposal.

- Sample Staffing Plan *(please provide a staffing plan for each service proposed)*
- Sample Curriculum *(only for Proposers of Curriculum-Based Programming)*
- Sample Activities Schedule *(only for Proposers of Activities-based Programming and Resource Coordination)*
- Letter(s) of support from a community-based organization/individual
 - b. Walter @HCV
 - c. Neil @NCC
- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
 - a. Village Center for Holistic Therapy
 - b. Visible Hands Collaborative
- MWDBE and VOSB documents *(see Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the RFP for more details)*

Although we are a women-led and founded org, we are not permitted to receive this designation b/c we are a 501c3

- W-9

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. **All Proposers must complete the Organizational Experience, Organizational Capacity and Budget Sections. Please complete these sections only once, regardless of the service(s) proposed.** The score from these sections will be added to the score for each service proposed. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive in each category of service is:

- Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy (CT-R) Courses Facilitation = 95 points possible
- Curriculum-based Programming = 105 points possible
- Activities-based Programming and Resource Coordination = 80 points possible

Complete only the sections for the service(s) you wish to propose. Services not included in your Proposal may be left blank. Please stay within the page limit listed at the top of each section.

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All Proposers must complete these sections. Your response to this section must not exceed 5 pages.

Organization Experience (30 points)

1. Describe your organizational experience and success working in difficult settings with high-need individuals and/or communities with diverse identities, especially current or former justice-involved individuals. (10 points)

Dr. Stephanie Romero founded Awaken Pittsburgh (AP), which was incorporated in December 2015, in order to integrate mindfulness and meditation into all levels of systems and organizations and make mindfulness and meditation practices available to those who would not otherwise have access to these transformative mental health supports. AP received 501(c)(3) status in July 2016 when AP began offering programming to at-risk youth and those that help, support, and serve youth. Subsequently, AP has expanded its offerings to others in need of mindfulness skills that reduce stress and burnout and enhance compassion, self-regulation, and emotional intelligence. AP offers 8 years of expertise and various intellectual property in mindfulness programming to support individual and organizational health and wellbeing in addition to building deep community connections and collaborations.

Since its designation as a 501(c)(3) in July 2016, AP has offered 160 presentations & workshops to over 7,200 attendees, delivered 2,170+ hours of programs to over 90 organizations, including children, youth and adults and has curated 134 more immersive experiences for 1,525+ participants. The main vehicle for our programming is **Mindful Connections™**, AP's proprietary, evidence-based curricula series which trains in self-regulation for anyone who experiences high levels of toxic stress and/or needs social and emotional regulation support. Targeted introductory programs are available for: Public Safety, Educators, Helping Professionals, Workplace Wellness, Parents & Kids. Awaken also offers more advanced programs for: Bias Awareness, Classrooms, Trauma Sensitive Practices, Supporting Families. We have created an Awaken Practice Community online in order to provide ongoing support to our participants. We offer live and recorded practices, new content related to our courses, etc.

As an organization, Awaken Pittsburgh has taken seriously our mission to reach populations who might not otherwise have access to mindfulness training and resources. We have partnered with family centers, schools and community partners in low-income neighborhoods who experience high levels of trauma. In this work, we seek to build relationships with partners and participants so that we can be agile and responsive to their needs. We recognize that delivering content occurs best in a context of care and connection, and that our delivery will vary pending the needs of each group.

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Some of AP's collaborations include:

- AP's Mindful Connections is being offered for 16 CE hours for therapists, social workers and licensed counselors through co-sponsorship of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work.
- Thanks to the support of Highmark, Staunton Farm, Remake Learning, and Grable Foundations, we have been partnering for 3 years with The Chill Project by AHN to deliver programming to the whole staff at both Clairton City School District and Carnegie Elementary.
- We engaged with the Health and Human Performance Lab at Carnegie Mellon University as researchers of the work at Clairton City School District.
- AP and Village Center for Holistic Therapy have a strategic partnership, offering programming to therapy clients and those on the waitlist to support their development of a mindfulness practice in order to support their mental health and wellbeing and providing therapy sessions alongside our MC for Public Safety program.
- AP has partnered with the 10.27 Healing Partnership and the Jewish Community Center delivering programs to support their staff and the communities they serve. We currently are also space sharing with the JCC.
- YWCA of Pittsburgh -Course for administrators and supervisors
- Institute of Clinical Research Education and Training Health Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine
- AP has partnered with AIU3 and UPMC Children's to work with leaders, staff and low-income families in the local Family Centers for the past five years.
- AP has embarked on a multi-year journey with Homewood Children's Village and Pitt's Parenting While Black to bring our mindfulness-based programming, and therapeutic supports to leadership, staff, educators and families of Homewood.

Within our pool of program deliverers we have experience working with a broad range of populations: low income families, people with trauma-related difficulties, e.g. PTSD, children with autism or other disabilities, unhoused individuals, youth in the CJS, crisis hotlines, and many others. Both our Executive Director and Program Coordinator have delivered mindfulness training at ACJ in the past via the Path of Freedom Curriculum. Our Program Coordinator has previously worked in partnership with Allegheny County Juvenile Court and on staff with the ACJ Discharge and Release Center.

2. Describe your organizational experience and success in building trust in the communities within which you work, including at least one letter of support from a community-based organization/individual. (10 points)

Awaken Pittsburgh has a strong track record of building trust within the communities we serve, particularly through supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our participants, which builds psychological safety and support when we deliver mindfulness-based interventions and trauma-informed care. Our organization has successfully collaborated with various community-based organizations, schools, and companies, fostering trust and delivering impactful programming tailored to the unique needs of these populations. A testament to the

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level of trust and relationship we have is the length of time we have collaborated with some organizations.

One notable example of our success is our partnership with the Clairton City School District, where we implemented mindfulness programs to support teachers, and staff for over three years. Through consistent and transparent communication, active involvement of participants, and a demonstrated commitment to cultural sensitivity, we have built a foundation of trust and mutual respect. Another example is with the Allegheny County Family Centers. We have been able to work with vulnerable populations through the various family centers across the region for the past five years, and continue that programming today.

Additionally, our collaboration with Homewood Children's Village exemplifies our capability to earn the trust of individuals facing a high level of trauma, poverty and other systemic barriers. By providing a safe, non-judgmental space and employing facilitators trained in trauma-informed care, we have helped participants develop coping skills, build resilience, and foster a sense of community and belonging. In addition, we have interrupted patterns of violence. In the words of one parent participant, the program "helped me slow down and not just instantly react. Like, think about what I'm going to say before I say it instead of just reacting helped a lot. Like, just take 2 seconds instead of karate chopping the throat. Think about it." We are proud to include a letter of support from Walter Lewis, CEO of Homewood Children's Village, who can attest to our effectiveness in building trust and positively impacting the lives of those we serve.

Awaken Pittsburgh's proven ability to build trust and deliver effective, culturally sensitive programming uniquely positions us to support the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's reentry initiatives and positively impact the lives of individuals in and leaving the Allegheny County Jail.

3. Describe your organizational understanding of trauma-informed approaches and explanation of how trauma-informed approaches will manifest in the Proposer's program(s) and/or when working with program participants. (10 points)

Awaken Pittsburgh understands that trauma-informed approaches are essential for creating a supportive and safe environment for individuals who have experienced trauma, particularly within the criminal justice system. A trauma-informed approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery, acknowledges the signs and symptoms of trauma, and actively seeks to avoid re-traumatization.

Recognizing the prevalence of Trauma, Awaken Pittsburgh designs all of our curricula with the intention to maximize safety, choice, and connection. We build-in practices to invite anchoring

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and resourcing, we acknowledge and normalize a range of responses, and we provide multiple opportunities for participants to have a voice and experience positive human connections. AP recognizes that mindfulness practices can contribute significantly to self-awareness, healing, and sustainable well-being. At the same time, we know that it also comes with risks, particularly when being still and noticing our thoughts, physical sensations and emotions can give rise to memories of traumatic events. It is extremely important that we notice when a mindfulness practice is prompting intrusive thoughts or traumatic memories and guide practice in ways that don't cause emotional or physical dysregulation or harm.

With this in mind, all of our program deliverers are asked to attend a 13 hour training on how to deliver trauma-sensitive practices. This training emphasizes the importance of providing options and support for participants who are not able to engage with a given offering.

In our mindfulness-based programming, trauma-informed approaches will manifest in the following ways:

1. **Safety:** We will create a safe physical and emotional environment for participants by ensuring consistent and respectful interactions, clear communication, and predictable program structures. Our facilitators are trained to recognize and respond to signs of distress and to establish trust and security within the group setting.
2. **Trustworthiness and Transparency:** We will foster trust through transparency in our program goals, processes, and activities. Participants will be informed about the structure and purpose of each session, ensuring they understand and feel comfortable with the progression of the program. There will be choices available to participants for when they may not feel comfortable with a given activity.
3. **Peer Support:** Our programs will incorporate peer support elements, encouraging participants to share their experiences and build connections with other participants. This promotes healing and empowerment through shared understanding and mutual support.
4. **Collaboration and Mutuality:** We will emphasize collaboration between facilitators and participants, valuing their input and actively involving them in the decision-making processes related to their learning and recovery. This approach respects their autonomy and promotes a sense of agency and ownership over their personal growth.
5. **Empowerment, Voice, and Choice:** Our programming will focus on empowering participants by providing them with tools and techniques to manage their stress, build resilience, and make positive choices -- instead of feeling victimized by their emotions and trauma responses. We will encourage participants to express their needs and preferences, tailoring the program to accommodate their individual paths to recovery.

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6. **Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues:** We acknowledge and address the cultural, historical, and gender contexts of trauma, ensuring our programming is sensitive and responsive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our participants. This includes using culturally relevant materials and examples, as well as being mindful of gender-specific issues.

By integrating these trauma-informed principles into its mindfulness-based programming, AP aims to create a healing environment that supports the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of individuals in and leaving the Allegheny County Jail, ultimately contributing to their successful reentry and long-term recovery.

Organization Capacity (15 points)

4. Describe your organizational capacity to recruit, retain and supervise high-quality, diverse staff, including individuals with lived experience with justice system involvement. (5 points)

Awaken Pittsburgh core principles include the following:

- Diversity, inclusion, and working to build healthy and just communities within an anti-racism framework
- Fostering collaboration that responds compassionately to challenges and invites diverse voices to participate in awakened change
- Promoting social justice, non-aggression, environmental awareness, individual self-care, and collective healing

With these principles in mind, we consistently work to invite diverse perspectives onto our team, and to build our collective capacity to dismantle inherited patterns of exclusion. Since our inception, we have sought out, and incorporated, program deliverers who have lived experience similar to the populations that we serve. This has included educators, parents, helping professionals, first responders, LGBTQ+ identified individuals, and black parents, to name a few. We have a clear process for screening, training and mentoring new providers.

Within our current team we have many connections to community justice work, including strong ties with the Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit, the Elsinore Bennu Restorative Justice Think Tank, the Stillworkers and Let's Get Free. We also have connections to numerous mindfulness practice groups in the Pittsburgh community. We are therefore confident that through these networks we will be able to extend our team to include those with relevant experience to those served at ACJ.

We have also recruited meditation practitioners with lived experience, namely Josh Inklovich, and Rikkia Abdullah, who are interested in co-facilitation with our more experienced facilitators.

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Having people with lived experience of incarceration assist in delivering mindfulness programs is crucial because they can build trust and rapport more effectively with participants, offering relatable insights and fostering a sense of understanding and empathy. Their firsthand experience will allow them to address the unique challenges and needs of incarcerated individuals, enhancing the program's relevance and impact. Additionally, their presence can inspire and motivate participants by demonstrating the potential for personal growth and positive change through the content of our programming, despite past adversities.

5. Provide a sample staffing plan for providing sufficient coverage at all times with an appropriate number of staff who have appropriate responsibilities and levels of experience. (5 points)

Awaken Pittsburgh currently has 12 trained professionals who are prepared to deliver programming to adults. Note that due to the high quality of training and facilitation skills already present in our organization, we do not expect to need to hire any additional staff. However, per award of this contract, we will proceed to assess availability for working at ACJ and to supplement the team as needed. It is our intention to provide two trainers for all programs. This will allow us to ensure both content expertise and credibility of relevant experience. Our intention is to mentor those with lived experience to co-lead with our staff, as appropriate.

We feel confident in our ability to staff ongoing training, as this has been our practice for several years. Others, not listed here, are currently in training with AP and therefore will be ready soon to deliver programming. Therefore the only internal training that we'll need to conduct is to bring our deliverers up to speed on any new/modified curriculum tailored to meet the needs of ACJ/DHS. Please also see attachment for more info on our staffing plan.

Our Current Curriculum Design and Facilitation Team Includes-

Deborah Brooks is a licensed dietitian-nutritionist, a longtime meditator, and has been teaching mindfulness meditation for 20-plus years. She focuses in particular on mindfulness of the body as a source and subject of awareness and healing. Her professional background is in healthcare, working with older adults. Deborah has led and organized many retreats, workshops, presentations, and days of mindfulness.

Britt Dorazio has a social emotional arts certification from UCLA's Arts & Healing School. Britt has dedicated many hours of training in nervous system regulation, non-judgmental facilitation, and anti-violence education. She has been delivering programming, writing curricula and guiding ICT rounds with AP for over 2 years.

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Josh Inklovich, a leader in prison reentry and workforce development, has nearly two decades of executive experience and a deep understanding of reentry challenges from his own eight years of incarceration. Since 2012, he has embraced mindful living and sustainable food practices, which have enriched his life and guided his support for others in their reentry journeys. Over 13 years in the skilled trades, Josh trained and employed hundreds of formerly incarcerated individuals, earning recognition for his successful job training programs. In 2015, he founded FIT Farms to promote mindful reentry and community empowerment through plant-based programs and hydroponic systems, benefiting diverse populations. His expertise in project management, team building, and training development, along with his hands-on skills in horticulture and industrial trades, underscores his commitment to helping others rebuild their lives after incarceration.

Jackson Kerchis is an author, trainer and executive coach who also is a happiness researcher and believes that science and contemplative practice have the power to transform the world of businesses and organizations. Jackson has been delivering programming with AP for over 2 years and will be supporting curriculum development and program delivery. After finishing his economics major at University of Alabama in two years, he decided to create the world's first Bachelor of Science in Happiness Studies.

Shannon Jenkins is an educator, meditation instructor and specialist in working with neurodivergent clients. Shannon has been delivering programming with AP for over 2 years and will support the facilitation of programming and ICT rounds.

Ursula Lesic is a curriculum designer and facilitator. Ursula Lesic has over 25 years of experience as an organizational development consultant, coach, facilitator, and educator. She has spent her professional career helping individuals and teams live into their leadership by helping them connect to their purpose and their values along the way. Ursula has been working with AP for over 2 years and will also facilitate ICT rounds.

Yvette Shipman is a trained mediator and facilitator who moves through the world with integrity and ease; honoring folks where they are. She works to build generative spaces with individuals and organizations to bring about individual, collective, and societal transformation. Yvette has been working with AP for over 5 years as a program deliverer, curriculum designer and consultant. Yvette has a B.A. in Communications and an M.A. in Social and Public Policy with a focus on Conflict Mediation and Peace Studies.

Danielle Williams Thum blends her knowledge of physical health with her experience in family-centered care and community building. She holds a B.S. in Athletic Training from the University of Michigan and a M.S. in Exercise Physiology from the University of Pittsburgh. Following burnout from the concurrent demands of graduate school and work, Danielle completed a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course and now shares the simplicity, accessibility, and transformative potential of mindfulness with others.

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Mark Williams is a certified teacher with a masters in foundations of education and mindfulness for educators from Antioch University. He works to build bridges between the branches of our human family tree that have forgotten we share the same roots. Mark currently works in curriculum development and supporting educators through professional development. It's Mark's hope that by remembering our shared identity we can be free to celebrate our uniqueness and work together to create a kinder world.

6. Referencing *Section 2.1 Collaboration with Beck Institute*, describe your organization's plan to work with Beck Institute and strategies for agency-specific staff training, supervision and quality assurance. (5 points)

We look forward to the shared benefits of collaborating with the Beck Institute and providing a continuity of professional and caring services to program participants. Awaken Pittsburgh's curriculum is compatible with the philosophy of the Beck Institute and we are confident that we can easily build on this alignment to strengthen the impact of our shared messaging. We have done similar partnering in the past with the CHILL program, another CBT program and found this to be of mutual benefit.

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) such as ours align with and incorporate cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) principles by integrating mindfulness practices with the cognitive and behavioral strategies of CBT. Both approaches emphasize the importance of awareness and self-regulation in managing thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Our work teaches individuals to observe their thoughts and feelings non-judgmentally, creating a space between stimulus and response that allows for more thoughtful and less reactive decision-making. This mindful awareness helps individuals identify and challenge negative thought patterns, a core principle of CBT. Additionally, MBIs encourage acceptance and present-moment focus, which can reduce the impact of distressing thoughts and enhance emotional regulation. By fostering a mindful attitude, individuals can better implement CBT techniques, such as cognitive restructuring and behavioral activation, leading to more effective and sustained therapeutic outcomes.

At the core of our offerings is a desire to help individuals take ownership of their own well-being by developing the capacity to discern their own needs in any given situation. We are committed to introducing and supporting a variety of mindfulness-based social and emotional practices for participants to experience and apply. The psycho-educational content that will be integrated with these practices is adaptable per input, both with Beck Institute collaborative stakeholders and with participants.

CT-R Course Facilitation (40 points)

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Complete this section only if you are proposing to provide this service. If you are not proposing this service, please leave this section blank. Your response to this section must not exceed 7 pages.

1. Provide a clear statement about why your organization is interested in facilitating the CT-R Course and how it aligns with the Proposer's mission or current work. (5 points)
[Click here to enter text.](#)
2. Describe your organizational experience and success in implementing an evidence-informed program, intervention and/or service to model fidelity. (5 points)
[Click here to enter text.](#)
3. Describe your organization's proposed facilitation approach in the ACJ and the community, including suggested locations, schedule and frequency, and engagement strategies for community-based groups (25 points)
[Click here to enter text.](#)
4. Describe your organization's plan to incorporate peers or other credible messengers in your facilitation. (5 points)
[Click here to enter text.](#)

Curriculum-based Programming (50 points)

Complete this section only if you are proposing to provide this service. If you are proposing to provide programming for multiple service areas, your responses must address each program proposed. If you are not proposing this service, please leave this section blank. Your response to this section must not exceed 7 pages per service area proposed.

1. Provide a clear statement about why your organization is interested in developing and facilitating Curriculum-based Programming in the chosen service area(s) and how it aligns with the Proposer's mission or current work. (5 points)

"In 2016, I realized that my struggle with depression had returned. This time the normal doses of medication and cognitive behavioral therapy were not providing their usual relief. Through the recommendations of my PCP, psychiatrist, and intensive outpatient therapy, I began a mindfulness practice. I was unfamiliar and untrained. At the same time, my school offered to pay for any teacher willing to enroll in a "mindfulness for educators" course with AP. ...I enrolled. 6 weeks later I had a mindfulness practice that was growing in daily length and I was seeing my own afflictive emotions in a new and less judgmental light." As illustrated by Peter's story, AP's main outcome is wellbeing.

The goal of Awaken Pittsburgh is putting these powerful tools into the hands and minds of those most in need. We recognize that mindfulness programming is on the rise, and is readily accessible to those with disposable income and/or an abundance of time. Those who are most in need, due to high levels of stress and trauma, often do not have access to mindfulness

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instruction and support. Awaken Pittsburgh's mission is to provide those with least access and most need the transformative power of mindfulness-based interventions. Working within the ACJ would help us fulfill our mission.

Individuals who experience incarceration are typically dealing with multiple layers of vulnerability and marginalization. They are caught in a system that often lacks the capacity to engage with them as full human beings with unique needs and abilities. Navigating this system, and the transition back into the community, requires high levels of personal awareness, discipline, and stamina, as well as the ability to engage effectively with external supports. One of our guiding principles is "offering services that uncover the basic goodness, innate kindness, resilience, and dignity in individuals." We believe that we can engage this population in a way that honors their dignity and provides tools to support their thriving.

AP's mission is to foster well-being, empathy, and compassion for all by teaching and encouraging mindfulness and meditation practices. Our vision is an equitable and just society where diverse peoples live in harmony with each other and their environments. We believe that working with individuals incarcerated in ACJ to reduce their stress, manage their emotions, and build the skills of compassion and empathy can transform not only their lives, but those of their families and our communities as they re-enter.

2. Describe your organizational experience and success in implementing an evidence-informed program, intervention and/or service to model fidelity. (5 points)

For every program that AP develops and delivers we first start with the research base that supports our content and desired outcomes. This approach started from the first program -- which was born out of the dissertation research of our founder, Dr. Stephanie Romero. Dr. Romero's work at the University of Pittsburgh as a researcher and program evaluator also paved the way for AP's high standards of program evaluation, outcome measurement, and integration of formative and summative feedback. All of the data we collect supports the continuous improvement of our content and delivery.

In this way, AP has a strong foundation in implementing evidence-informed programs, interventions, and services with a commitment to modeling fidelity to best practices. Our organization's approach is grounded in research and supported by the latest findings in the fields of mindfulness, trauma recovery, and behavioral health. We also integrate the core principles and practices outlined in the well-researched MBSR curriculum, including mindfulness meditation, body scan exercises, and gentle yoga, while also integrating evidence-based adaptations to meet the specific needs of our participants.

First, our facilitators must have their own multi-year history of practicing mindfulness/meditation. Then, our facilitators undergo rigorous training in our Mindful

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Connections introductory program and our Trauma Sensitive Practices program, ensuring fidelity to the original program model.

Through pre- and post-program assessments, we gather data on participant outcomes such as stress levels, mood, and coping skills to measure the effectiveness of our interventions. This commitment to data-driven evaluation allows us to continually refine and improve our programs while maintaining fidelity to the evidence base. For example, for every program we use pre-post surveys to measure program outcomes for our participants. For intro programs with adult participants, we use 8 scales to assess our program success: 4 facets of mindfulness, perceived stress and 3 indicators of quality of life. We also use “tickets out the door” at the end of each and every class we deliver in order to gather formative feedback that we can use during the delivery period to monitor and adjust, ensuring we are meeting the needs of our participants.

Furthermore, our organization actively engages in ongoing professional development and collaboration with experts in the field to stay abreast of the latest research and best practices. This ensures that our programs remain evidence-informed and aligned with current standards of care. By prioritizing fidelity to evidence-informed practices, AP has successfully implemented programs that deliver measurable outcomes and positive impacts on the well-being of our participants. We are confident that our expertise in this area will contribute to the success of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's reentry initiatives, supporting individuals in and leaving the Allegheny County Jail with the tools they need to thrive.

3. Describe your organization’s proposed approach to the design of the curriculum, including a sample curriculum, for the proposed service area(s) and any pathways to complementary community-based programming. (20 points)

Our approach to developing inclusive curricula for a diverse workforce is multifaceted and deeply rooted in principles of equity and representation. First and foremost, we recognize that diversity includes but goes beyond visible differences; it encompasses a spectrum of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds. With this understanding, our curriculum development process begins by understanding our target audience and conducting a needs assessment to identify the unique perspectives and challenges of the diverse individuals who we will be serving. This collaborative approach ensures that the needs and experiences of marginalized groups are not only heard but also integrated into the fabric of our curricula.

With the identified needs in mind, our next step in our curricular development process is always to determine what outcomes we hope to achieve and then, using our experience, already developed curricular content that has been shown to achieve those outcomes, known best practices, and (if there are outcomes we have not worked on in the past) conduct research into the best practices to get our audience’s needs met. In this way, we ensure that all of our curricular content is evidence-based.

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Moreover, our approach to inclusive curriculum development extends beyond content to encompass delivery methods and accessibility. We strive to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to engage with and benefit from our training programs.

Additionally, we are committed to ongoing learning and evolution. We use pre and post surveys to gauge if our outcomes have been achieved, but we also use formative feedback at the end of each and every class interaction to gather information to make sure we are meeting people where they are at. We take both the formative and summative feedback and continuously review and update our curricula to meet the needs of those we serve. This includes staying abreast of emerging research, best practices, and other sources of information in the field at large.

One example of how AP worked to include the voice of the people we are working with and for can be found in how we designed our Bias Awareness curriculum. We first researched which identities had the worst outcomes socially, educationally, medically and in terms of justice interactions as a result of bias. After deciding (based on the research) which identities were most negatively impacted by bias, we consulted various experts in the region who first and foremost shared the marginalized identities of the groups we were going to include and second worked in their professional lives to ameliorate bias towards these groups. The result was that these individuals co-authored the curriculum with us. AP conducted a deep search of the literature on mindfulness and bias to identify which practices had been shown to reduce bias and support awareness of biases. All of these elements were combined to form a rich and multifaceted curriculum.

Ultimately, our goal is to create an environment where every individual feels heard, valued, and respected so that there is trust. By building trust and incorporating participants' voices, they will be more engaged and thus empowered to thrive so that they can grow and change to be their best self and reach their full potential.

4. Describe how your organization intends to facilitate the curriculum for the proposed programming for each proposed service area(s). (5 points)

Awaken Pittsburgh is committed to facilitating the curriculum for our proposed mindfulness-based programming with a structured, comprehensive, yet adaptive approach tailored to the needs of individuals in and leaving the Allegheny County Jail. Our mindfulness-based curriculum will be designed to support mental and physical health and relationship building, addressing the diverse needs of participants. We adhere to best practices in adult learning, ensuring our program is engaging, relevant, and practical.

Starting at the speed of trust:

We will begin each program cycle with an assessment phase to understand the specific needs and goals of participants, allowing us to tailor the curriculum accordingly. This will be done through a facilitated round of Integrative Community Therapy and presurvey that will take place

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in session 1. This will take one two-hour session. This will facilitate participants feeling heard and able to share their feelings and needs (an important part of emotional intelligence). This work will be supported by Visible Hands Collaborative.

Integrative Community Therapy is a Brazilian strengths-based mental health model which recognizes that people have powerful internal resources and wisdom to share with one another, when given the opportunity to do so. ICT uses guided conversation to draw out this support as an effective and accessible alternative to traditional systems which often have barriers. This structure establishes a welcoming environment and normalizes the emotional challenges brought forth by the group as a way to build a shared sense of humanity.

Adult Learning Best Practices:

Our approach will incorporate experiential learning, allowing participants to practice mindfulness techniques in real-time. Sessions will be interactive, encouraging active participation and reflection. We will also provide opportunities for self-directed learning, giving participants resources to explore mindfulness practices at their own pace in between classes.

Group Cohesion and Accountability:

The dynamics of being in a group will provide opportunities for the participants to hear each other's experiences with the practices and support one another through their shared journey. The group will also serve as accountability partners -- knowing that each week you will be asked how your "homework" practices went is a motivator to try them out and actually do the practices.

The two topic areas our programs will address are:

1. Mental and Physical Health:

6-week Program Structure:

After the initial ICT session, we will deliver a 5-week version of our Mindful Connections for Wellness program (selecting the topics most appropriate for each group), consisting of weekly 2-hour sessions. Each session will include guided mindfulness practices, videos, role plays, group discussions, and practical exercises.

Content Delivery:

The topics covered will be selected based on the outcomes of the ICT rounds that we do with each group, in this way the program will be sure to address the unique needs and concerns of the participants. The curriculum will most likely focus on teaching participants mindfulness techniques to reduce stress, manage anxiety and depression, and improve overall well-being. We will incorporate educational components on the impact of stress/trauma on the body and mind, promoting a holistic understanding of health. See attachments for a comprehensive listing of potential topics.

Healing Trauma & Difficult Emotions - Getting to The Root:

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In addition to the 6-week program, we offer an intervention for folks who have more severe PTSD symptoms which are negatively impacting their life. In collaboration with Village Center for Holistic Therapy and Tactical Resilience USA, our program will provide each person who has a significant PTSD score on the PCL-5 and desires it up to three Tactical Resiliency Process (TRP) and Emotions Management Process (EMP) sessions. The TRP and EMP are two of the most state of the art techniques which promote integration of traumatic experiences so that clients are no longer negatively impacted by PTSD and its effects. TRP was developed modeling the Neurological Linguistic Processing technique for phobia cures called the Visual/Kinesthetic Dissociation (VK/D) developed in the early 1980s, however, may have existed as early as the 1960s. Though different in appearances, they are both based on activating triggers, dissociating the individual from the events, and disconnecting the neural pathways from the amygdala and the hippocampus, along with the visual, auditory, and olfactory senses of the memory. When the neural pathways disconnect, it starts a process known as memory reconsolidation. Each time a memory is activated you can change the formatting and structure of the memory by introducing new data and removing the traumatic feelings. We use no details about the traumatic incidents or the extreme negative emotions and avoid talking about the events. This process will give the individuals we work with the resiliency skills to bounce back from trauma or extreme negative emotions, teaching their brain a new skill. These sessions can be offered in the jail or upon release into the community. They can be done in person or via zoom.

2. Relationship Building and Maintenance:

Program Structure:

After the initial ICT session, we will facilitate a 5-week mindfulness-based program based on our Mindful Connections for Wellness and/or Mindful Connections for Families with weekly two-hour sessions designed to improve interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, and social skills.

Content Delivery:

The topics covered will be selected based on the outcomes of the ICT rounds that we do with each group, in this way the program will be sure to address the unique needs and concerns of the participants. The curriculum will most likely focus on teaching active listening, empathy, forgiveness, radical responsibility, boundary setting with compassion, and conflict resolution through mindfulness practices. Participants will engage in pair and group exercises to practice these skills, fostering a supportive community environment. See attachments for a comprehensive listing of potential topics.

By leveraging our expertise in mindfulness, trauma-informed care, and best practices in adult learning, Awaken Pittsburgh is well-equipped to facilitate comprehensive, evidence-based programming that meets the diverse needs of individuals re-entering the community from the Allegheny County Jail.

Commitment to Care Outside:

Finally, because we are committed to supporting individuals as they re-enter, we will offer 4 rounds of our general introduction to mindfulness course, Mindful Connections for Wellness,

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for anyone who has been in our courses inside the jail. This will provide reinforcement and support for their continuation of social and emotional regulation skill building, but will also provide a group with shared experiences to help navigate the new challenges of re-entry.

5. Describe your organization's intended outcomes for proposed programming and associated measures of success (5 points)

Unaddressed trauma becomes buried in the nervous system and can cause people to deny, dissociate, blame, attack others, self-sabotage or reenact the trauma. These impacts of trauma can unravel families, groups, and communities. The continual activation of the "emotional brain" or limbic system (caused by relentless stresses and traumas) blocks the functioning of the thinking part of the brain (prefrontal cortex) and thereby prevents creative strategies to address problems and difficulties in our lives. Current mental health and social service systems cannot address today's traumas and don't have the ability to have scale or scope to heal or prevent the impact of trauma and acute stress.

This proposal will support people in developing their capacity for self-regulation and healing their trauma in order to buffer themselves and push back against traumas and stressors. This will help our participants find new sources of meaning, purpose, hope and courage in life. In this way, we not only provide mindfulness based techniques for dealing with stress and trauma, but also prevent the long-term impacts of these challenges. Our work builds and sustains participants' healthy thinking and protective factors that can promote long-term mental health, wellbeing, and transformational resilience. We help people to integrate specific practices that enhance mental wellness such as: finding simple joys in their lives, practicing forgiveness, being grateful, integrating self-care into daily life, etc.

The following Short-term Outcomes will be measured by AP through pre-post program surveys:

1. Reduced stress and anxiety: Participants experience a decrease in stress levels and anxiety symptoms. Measured by Cohen's 1983 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).
2. Improved emotional well-being: Mindfulness practice promotes emotional balance, reduces negative emotions, and enhances positive emotions. Measured by the WHO-5 Well-being index.
3. Increased mindfulness & self-awareness: Participants increase their mindful awareness, developing a greater understanding of their mental and emotional states, leading to improved self-care. Measured by the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ-SF).
4. Enhanced overall emotional intelligence. Measured by the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10).
5. Reduction of PTSD symptoms: Participants will take the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) to determine their overall symptom severity. If they score high we can refer them to the TRP/EMP sessions to help alleviate their symptoms. We expect symptom reduction if they engage in the TRP/EMP sessions.

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Sample questions of the surveys we use are (all require response on a Likert scale (some 4 and some 5-point)):

The PSS:

- In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?
- In the last month, how often have you felt angered because of things that were out of your control?

The FFMQ-SF:

- When I have distressing thoughts or images, I “step back’ and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.
- In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.

The BEIS-10:

- I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.
- I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

The WHO-5:

- In the last two weeks, I have felt calm and relaxed.
- In the last two weeks, I woke up feeling fresh and rested.

The PCL-5:

- In the past month, how much were you bothered by:
 - Repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?
 - Irritable behavior, angry outbursts, or acting aggressively?

The analyzed sample will be limited to respondents who complete both pre- and post-surveys. Some of the instruments are multi-dimensional, and responses to a number of questions are summed to create distinct subscale scores. Descriptive statistics for each of the instrument sub-scales are created to understand if pre-post differences are statistically significantly different from zero. Moreover, to aid in interpreting the results, effect sizes will also be computed to determine the magnitude of any observed changes.

An overall course evaluation is included in the final post-survey. This includes open-ended items and, as part of the course evaluation, participants rate each individual module with the following three items:

- This class helped me increase my knowledge about the stated subject.
- This class helped me develop new mindfulness tools to use in my daily life.
- I liked this class/topic.

Research has shown the following Intermediate Outcomes (which are out of the scope of this proposal, but form part of our intended outcomes):

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1. Improved performance: Participants experience enhanced focus, concentration, and productivity in academic and professional settings (Hülshager et al., 2013; Mrazek et al., 2013).
2. Better self-management: Individuals develop the ability to regulate their emotions, reducing impulsive reactions and improving decision-making (Chiesa et al., 2013; Goldin and Gross, 2010; Khoury et al., 2015).
3. Enhanced coping mechanisms: Mindfulness practice equips individuals with healthy coping strategies to deal with life stressors and challenges (Garland et al., 2011; Gu et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2019)
4. Increased life satisfaction: Participants report a higher level of life satisfaction, contentment, and overall well-being (Brown et al., 2003; Rosenzweig et al., 2010; Veehof et al., 2011).

And beyond these are potential Long-term Outcomes:

1. Sustained mental health and well-being: Continued engagement in mindfulness programming leads to long-term mental health benefits and improved overall well-being.
2. Reduced mental health disorders: Regular mindfulness practice contributes to the prevention and reduction of mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. In addition, if participants experience the TRP/EMP, they will have additional relief from PTSD symptoms.
3. Healthy communities: We expect that the positive changes in these people's lives will ripple out into their families and the larger communities.
4. Enhanced quality of life: Participants experience an improved quality of life through better mental health, relationships, job retention, and overall satisfaction.
6. Describe the evidence base supporting your organization's proposed programming and explain how the programming will achieve the intended outcomes. (10 points)

AP bases its work on the research in the field. Due to the great body of support for integrating programs such as ours into incarcerated populations, we are motivated to bring our own work into the ACJ. Some results that encourage us are: A Two-Year study was conducted on Prison Mindfulness Institute's Path of Freedom® curriculum, which was presented at the 11th Annual Center for Mindfulness Scientific Conference on April 20, 2013 in Norwood Massachusetts by Dr. Jill Harrison (Rhode Island College), Dr. Jennifer Clarke (Brown University) and Fleet Maull (Prison Mindfulness Institute). The research methodology included pre and post-tests with the following inventories:

- 1) Schutte et al's (1998) Emotional Intelligence Scale
- 2) Levenson's (2005) Self-Transcendence Inventory

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3) Spielberger's (1983) State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, youth version

The study showed a correlation between the number of classes attended and a reduction in non-violent infractions with prison staff and prison policy. It also revealed an improvement in emotional intelligence scale ratings in women after completing the Path of Freedom® curriculum. Anxiety levels decreased for both men and women participants. According to Dr. Harrison, "As inmates learn to check in with their own feelings of stress & anxiety, impulse control will increase. This will potentially reduce recidivism rates."

There are other numerous studies conducted on other meditation-based programs with correctional populations. The more recent study was conducted by researchers at Maharishi University of Management. Their randomized controlled study with female prisoners utilized the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Checklist-Civilian version (PCL-C) as the pre and post test to measure intrusive thoughts, avoidance, and hyperarousal subscales. They found all three measures were significantly reduced for those practicing meditation (Effect sizes ranged from 0.65 to 0.99 for all outcome measures) (Nidich, Seng, Compton, O'Connor, Salerno, & Nidich, 2017). In addition to the above studies there is a substantial amount of research that shows high levels of trauma and stress contribute to an increased risk of recidivism (Donley, Habib, & Jovanovic, 2012; Elder, 2017; Sadeh & McNiel, 2014).

Our own experience as deliverers in the ACJ and work with the Foundation of HOPE also motivates us. Awaken Pittsburgh piloted its mindfulness-based programs with Foundation of HOPE's participants in Pittsburgh's North Side. Providing these programs to HOPE Aftercare participants served as a continuation of programming that was received by many of the participants while involved in the HOPE Pre-Release Program through the Path of Freedom. It also served participants involved in the HOPE Diversion program, which strives to decrease the likelihood of young people reoffending and avoiding a criminal record. After the conclusion of the 21-week program, both partner organizations agreed that there is a need for Mindfulness programming for this client base and that it is beneficial to those who participate. Here is a case study from that experience:

Rhonda (name changed for confidentiality purposes) was referred to the HOPE Diversion Program on 11/27/17 for being in possession of a few illegally controlled substances. Rhonda was accepted into the program and worked with the Diversion and Aftercare Programs to develop a Positive Initiative to Reinforce Change (PIRC) life plan with specific goals. One of her goals was to participate and complete the Mindfulness class that was being facilitated by AWAKEN PITTSBURGH and attend the PIRC weekly support meetings.

Rhonda attended all the Mindfulness sessions except one and was disappointed that she missed the one class. She was so involved and engaged in the program, she invited two additional people in her life that she felt would benefit from the program. While attending the Mindfulness class and PIRC meetings weekly, Rhonda identified some of

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her strengths, weaknesses and challenges. She completed the Mindfulness class and received her certificate of completion. She said that the Mindfulness class helped her channel her negative thoughts into positive thoughts and that led to her making better choices and decisions in her life. She was so happy to start and finish something, even though she had challenges along the way.

After her sincere and heartfelt, emotional testimony in court, along with providing her Mindfulness class “CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION” to the Judge, her case was dismissed, and the charges were removed from her record. Rhonda always reminds the HOPE staff how appreciative she is that she was able to participate in the Mindfulness class and the Diversion and Aftercare programs.

This experience affirmed for us that our program content is needed in the re-entry population.

In terms of the TRP & EMP, the nonprofit 22Zero tracked 100 clients and were successful at eliminating their symptoms of PTSD as measured by the PCL-5. They completed a second study with 100 more clients in order to validate the original findings. All of these 100 participants were relieved of their PTSD symptoms as well. Pre-intervention PCL-5 scores averaged 50.9, with the highest possible score being 80 and a cut point being approximately 28-31 for diagnosis. At the post-intervention the average score had dropped to 5.5 -- well below the threshold of 20 for a diagnosis of PTSD. They are currently working with a research team to conduct a randomized controlled trial as final proof. (Find more here:

<https://22zero.org/media/research/>)

Activities-based Programming and Resource Coordination (25 points possible)

Complete this section only if you are proposing to provide this service. If you are not proposing this service, please leave this section blank. Your response to this section must not exceed 7 pages.

1. Provide a clear statement about why your organization is interested in coordinating activities and resources for individuals incarcerated in the ACJ and how it aligns with the Proposer’s mission or current work. (10 points)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2. Describe your organization’s proposed approach for Activity-Based Programming and Resource Coordination, including a sample schedule of all proposed activities. (10 points)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3. Describe any potential challenges your organization anticipates and how you would address them. (5 points)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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Financial Management and Budget (10 points, not included in page count)

All Proposers must complete this section. Budgets and budget narratives must reflect costs for all services proposed.

1. Attach a detailed line-item budget of the costs associated with all proposed strategies, including staff salaries, matching funds, and total expenses and revenues. (5 points)

See Attachment

2. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget. (5 points)

See Attachment



Mindfulness for Returning Citizens

Offering II. Relationship Building and Maintenance Course: Mindful Connections for Thriving in Community

Offering III. Mental & Physical Health Part II: Option for returning citizens to receive the Trauma Resiliency Protocol to heal trauma

Offering IV. Option for returning citizens to attend our open enrollment course after exiting: Mindful Connections for Wellness

The first two offerings will happen in the Jail before people exit. Offering III can happen either in the jail or upon reintegration. Offering IV is meant as a continuation of skill building and community support upon exit from the jail.

Offerings I & II will each begin with a Reintegrative Community Round, based on Integrative Community Therapy, in collaboration with Visible Hands Collaborative. Integrative Community Therapy (ICT, based on the Brazilian method of *Terapia Comunitária Integrativa*) is a unique large group dialogic therapeutic modality that requires only short-term training, can accommodate groups from 15-200 people, and can be performed successfully either in person or via an online format. *Terapia Comunitária Integrativa* was created by psychiatrist & anthropologist Dr. Adalberto Barreto in response to an increased need for meaningful community-based mental health services in the extremely low-income neighborhoods (also known as favelas) of Fortaleza, Brazil. This modality is based on a five-step participatory structure that elicits therapeutic community conversation and knowledge-sharing in groups. The primary benefits are community building, promoting a sense of “shared suffering,” providing a space of inclusion and diversity, sharing experiences to promote healthy coping strategies, and creating and reinforcing social/support networks. By emphasizing community-building in a shared environment, ICT creates a forum for solidarity, collective healing and proliferation of resiliency. ICT has been documented as a practice to identify, quite quickly, the needs of a group which will allow Awaken Pittsburgh to then address these needs strategically through the following curricular content.



Therapy (ICT) rounds.

ICT Round - guiding questions will be used in session 1 to identify (alongside the pre-survey) the needs and wants of the participants. Here is a sample question:

When you think about re-entry back into the community, of these topics, which might be supportive of what you need?

Once AP hears from participants, we will align the next 5 sessions to meet their needs. Here are a sample set of brief descriptions of the mindfulness-based modules related to mental and physical health that we might choose from for each iteration of the programming:

1. How the Stress Response Affects Our Minds and Bodies + Techniques to Reduce Stress and Anxiety. This module explores the physiological and psychological impacts of the stress response and introduces mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation to reduce stress and anxiety.

2. Working with Difficulty, Such as Pain, Anger and Fear. Participants learn to recognize and understand difficult emotions, using mindfulness practices to observe these feelings without judgment and respond skillfully rather than react impulsively. These same techniques will then be explored for how to navigate physical pain as well.

3. How Trauma Impacts the Body and Mind. This module provides an overview of the effects of trauma on the brain and body, highlighting the importance of regular mindfulness practice in promoting healing and resilience.

4. Tools for Regulating the Nervous System. Participants are introduced to mindfulness exercises like body scans and grounding techniques to help regulate the nervous system and manage stress and trauma responses effectively.

5. Do Your Emotions Have You or Do You Have Them? Creating Space for Response and Pause. This module focuses on cultivating mindfulness to create a pause between stimulus and response, enabling participants to choose how they react to emotional triggers.

6. Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Life: Working with Self-Limiting Thoughts and Cognitive Distortions. Participants learn to identify and challenge negative thought patterns and cognitive distortions through mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral techniques, fostering more positive and constructive thinking.

7. The Role of Self-Care in Mental and Physical Health: What Are Your Strengths and Areas for Growth. This module emphasizes the importance of self-care practices in maintaining mental



healthier relationship with food and improve overall well-being.

9. *Practices to Build Resilience in the Face of Adversity.* This module introduces mindfulness techniques designed to build resilience, such as gratitude practices, self-compassion, distress tolerance, urge surfing, and maintaining a positive outlook during challenging times.

10. *Connecting with and Embodying Your Values and Intention.* Participants reflect on their core values and intentions, using mindfulness to align their actions with these guiding principles, fostering a sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

11. *Amplifying the Good in Our Lives; Connecting with Inspiration and Joy.* This module focuses on mindfulness practices that help participants notice and savor positive experiences, enhancing feelings of joy, gratitude, and inspiration in their daily lives.

Offering II. Relationship Building and Maintenance Course: Mindful Connections for Thriving in Community

This same approach will be used with the modules that relate to Relationship Building and Maintenance. A pre-survey and ICT rounds will be implemented in session one. Here is an example of the type of question that might be used to engage the conversation:

When you think about re-entry back into the community, of these topics, which might be supportive of what you need?

Once the needs and wants of the participants are identified, AP will select the topics that most closely align with what they shared. Here are brief descriptions of a sampling of the mindfulness-based modules related to relationship building and maintenance for the proposed programming:

1. *Healthy Relationship with Myself as the Foundation of Healthy Relationships with Others.*

This module explores the importance of self-awareness, honesty, and self-acceptance as the basis for forming and maintaining healthy relationships with others.

2. *Inner Strength: Building Self-Compassion.* Participants learn techniques for developing self-compassion, which fosters a kinder, more forgiving relationship with oneself and improves interactions with others. This is especially important when dealing with guilt and shame about our behaviors and harm we have caused.



examine their recurring patterns in relationships, using mindfulness to become aware of these habits and make conscious choices to foster healthier interactions.

5. *The Path of Empathy: Navigating Challenging Relationships*. This module focuses on developing empathy and understanding toward individuals we find difficult, using mindfulness practices to navigate and improve these relationships and how we respond.

6. *Learning How to Speak and Listen with Honesty, Empathy, and Compassion*. Participants practice mindful communication techniques to enhance their ability to listen and speak authentically and empathetically, fostering deeper and more meaningful connections. (This module can be divided into two classes.)

7. *Healthy Boundaries: Compassionate and Respectful Interactions*. This module teaches participants how to set and maintain healthy boundaries with clarity and compassion, as well as how to respect the boundaries of others, promoting mutual respect and understanding.

8. *Heart and Mind: Developing Emotional Intelligence*. Participants develop emotional intelligence skills, such as recognizing, understanding, and managing their own emotions, as well as identifying and empathizing with the emotions of others.

9. *Seeing Disagreement and Conflict as an Opportunity*. This module reframes conflict as an opportunity for growth and connection, teaching participants mindfulness techniques to maintain their composure in the face of conflict and handle disagreements constructively.

10. *Forgiveness of Self and Others*. Participants explore the process of forgiveness, both of themselves and others, using mindfulness to release resentment and promote healing in relationships.

11. *Grief - Releasing What You've Lost to Start Something New*. This module addresses the role of grief in relationships, helping participants mindfully process loss and find ways to move forward and build new connections.

12. *Who Do You Want to Be in Relationship With: How to Connect and Deepen Relationships*. Participants reflect on the qualities they value in relationships and learn mindfulness practices to attract, connect with, and deepen relationships with like-minded individuals.

13. *The Role of Trauma in Relationships*. This module explores how trauma impacts relationships, teaching participants mindfulness techniques to understand and address these effects, fostering healthier and more supportive interactions.



is designed to help people heal from acute stress and post-traumatic stress (PTSD). The TR-P is part of an intervention that also includes the Emotions Management Process (EMP), which is used to address extreme negative triggers like anger, shame, and sadness. The TR-P and EMP processes don't use any information about the person's specific events.

The TR-P is based on visual Kinesthetic Dissociation (VK/D), a phobia cure technique from NLP that was likely first used in the 1950s and 1960s. One aspect of the TR-P involves imagining a black and white movie of the traumatic event, watching it from a safe distance until it can be viewed without discomfort. The participant is then asked to step into the movie and experience it in color, in reverse, and at high speed. The intervention is considered successful when the participant can talk about the trauma without discomfort. This is usually achieved in one to three sessions. This can be either before or after exiting the jail and can be done either in person or via online video conferencing.

Dan Jarvis, of Tactical Resiliency USA, has offered to run this protocol for free for any participants who are veterans. Village Center for Holistic Therapy and Awaken Pittsburgh have been collaborating to support mental health and wellbeing for four years. Their trained and licensed therapists have been trained in Awaken Pittsburgh's mindfulness curricula and TR-P. They will offer TR-P to participants alongside Awaken Pittsburgh and will act to support our work in case a participant needs extra therapeutic support.

Offering IV. Option for returning citizens to attend our open courses after exiting Mindful Connections for Wellness

This course will help participants discover a more mindful and connected life. This unique course offers an invaluable opportunity to integrate mindfulness and meditation into everyday life. Through expert guidance, participants will acquire practical skills to remain focused and grounded, enhancing personal well-being and enriching interactions with others.

Some of the skills we will work to build include:

- Mastering strategies to manage everyday stress
- Building resilience to face life's challenges
- Cultivating deeper compassion and empathy
- Establishing and maintain a consistent mindfulness practice



- The research that supports mindfulness
- Dealing with difficult emotions and events
- Understanding and improving relationships
- Mindful communication - speaking with honesty, listening with empathy
- Conflict resolution
- Amplifying the good in our lives: connecting with inspiration and joy

Staffing Plan for Awaken Pittsburgh's Partnership with the Allegheny County Jail/Department of Human Services.

This staffing plan is designed to balance the expertise of internal staff with the specialized skills of subcontractors, ensuring the successful development and implementation of the mindfulness and meditation programs. Please also see the main RFP response sheet for bios of our subcontractors.

1. Executive Leadership - Dr. Stephanie Romero is the founder and Executive Director of Awaken Pittsburgh who is at the helm of the organization. Stephanie is an educator with 20+ years of experience teaching elementary, middle school, high school, college students and many others in communities and organizations across Western PA. She has been a meditator and mindfulness practitioner since the early 2000s. In 2013, seeking to bring others the same benefits she was experiencing, Stephanie was trained in the Path of Freedom Mindfulness Curriculum, which she delivered through the HOPE pre-release program in the Allegheny County Jail. Stephanie completed her doctorate in Education Leadership where her dissertation was the culmination of three years of research into the transformational power of mindfulness in education.

- **Role:** Oversee program implementation and organizational effectiveness.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Manage program budget
 - Assist with financial and logistical tasks
 - Support overall program administration
 - Performance Monitoring: Regularly review the performance of both internal staff and subcontractors to ensure they meet the program requirements and deadlines.

2. Program Coordinator- Dawn Lehman will be the main point of contact for DHS for the duration of this project. Dawn manages day-to-day operations, including program delivery, staff coordination, and partnership management. Dawn is also a skilled facilitator, mediator, and leadership coach. She will also be responsible for some of the program delivery and ICT Rounds as well. Dawn has been working with AP for over 4 years and will also contribute to curriculum development. Dawn holds a B.A. in Social Work and an M.A. in Conflict Transformation.

- **Role:** Oversee program development, manage timelines, coordinate between teams, and ensure program goals are met.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Develop and maintain the program plan
 - Conduct regular team meetings
 - Liaise with stakeholders and participants
 - Monitor progress and handle issues

- Act as participant liaison

3. Evaluation and Reporting - Melanie Readal is a dedicated advocate for community well-being. She has a Master of Science degree in Healthcare Administration from Grand Canyon University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Services from the University of Pittsburgh. Her primary focus is on promoting health equity and inclusion, and she works to create community-focused connections that help residents thrive in their communities of choice. Melanie's experience in bringing together community stakeholders has resulted in improved access to services and increased stakeholder engagement using a holistic whole-community approach by creating opportunities for stakeholder linkages, quantitative and qualitative analysis, research, and information sharing.

- **Role:** Conduct research on mindfulness practices, evaluate program effectiveness, and contribute to program development.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Design and implement research studies
 - Collect and analyze data
 - Prepare reports and presentations
 - Stay updated on the latest mindfulness research
 - Collaborate with the program deliverers to integrate research findings into the curriculum

4. Graphic Design, Video Editing and Marketing Manager - Eddy Paul Thomas supports AP's print and digital landscapes by making our presentations and marketing materials more beautiful and accessible. With his master's in organizational management, Eddy's business expertise aids his nonprofit experience. He brings a diverse perspective to the executive table and challenges leaders to move beyond their comfort zones. Eddy's work intersects organizational growth, leadership development, digital marketing, and entrepreneurial expansion. Eddy has been with AP for over 2 years.

Role: Manage marketing strategies, communication, and visual content creation.

Responsibilities:

- Manage social media and website content
- Design program materials (powerpoints, brochures, graphics)
- Create and edit video content for online courses and promotional materials
- Ensure brand consistency

5. Mindfulness Program Deliverers - Please see other RFP document for bios of all of our subcontractors.

- **Role:** Conduct mindfulness and meditation sessions, develop curriculum, and ensure the quality of mindfulness content.
- **Responsibilities:**

- Design and implement program curriculum
- Facilitate mindfulness sessions
- Create and update course materials
- Provide participant support
- Mentor co-facilitators with lived experience

7. Optional Program Advisory Committee: Composed of Dawn Lehman, as a representative from Awaken Pittsburgh, and selected leadership & staff from the Department of Human Services, Allegheny County Jail, and possibly participants and other stakeholders to provide guidance and feedback on program implementation, outreach strategies, and evaluation efforts. This committee should meet virtually quarterly to check in on progress and any delays or obstacles.

[illegible]

Awaken Pittsburgh Budget Narrative

The attached budget shows totals per programming line as well as all the components necessary to run each program. This narrative explains a little bit more about the budget rationale both by programming and by Chart of Accounts. This budget outlines the costs for one-year of programming aimed at supporting returning citizens through therapeutic support, mindfulness, and relationship-building courses, with additional options for trauma resiliency interventions.

Program Elements:

1. Mental & Physical Health Course:

- We estimated serving up to 250 participants or 25 per cohort for 10 cohorts each year inside the jail.
- Length: Each cohort runs for 6 weeks, with three hours of content per week (delivery schedule TBD).

The first week will be based on rounds of ICT and include pre-survey administration that will be used to help us determine the content for the subsequent 5 weeks.

- Subtotal: \$72,660.00

2. Relationship Building & Maintenance Course:

- We estimate serving up to 250 participants or 25 per cohort for 10 cohorts each year inside the jail.
- Length: Each cohort runs for 6 weeks, with three hours of content per week (delivery schedule TBD).

The first week will be based on rounds of ICT and pre-survey administration that will be used to help us determine the content for the other 5 weeks.

- Subtotal: \$72,660.00

3. Mindful Connections for Wellness: Open Courses for Returning Citizens - outside of the jail for support after re-entry:

- Participants: up to 100 (max 25 per cohort); 4 cohorts per year
- Length: 9-week courses, 17.5 hours total, offered 4 times a year.
- Subtotal: \$23,858.00

4. Trauma Resiliency Protocol (TRP):

- Participants: up to 50 returning citizens through this budget, free for veterans via Tactical Resiliency USA. These sessions can be delivered either inside the jail pre-release or outside the jail post-release, or a combination of in and outside the jail.

- Description: 3 TRP sessions each
- Subtotal: \$31,600.00

Detailed Expenses by Category:

5030 Therapeutic Support - TRP: \$22,500.00

This line item covers the cost of providing the Trauma Resiliency Protocol (TRP) sessions to returning citizens. The TRP is a highly effective intervention designed to alleviate PTSD symptoms in 1-3 sessions. The funds will be used to compensate trained facilitators and cover any associated costs of delivering these sessions.

5050 Travel Expenses: \$5,520.00

Travel expenses are allocated to cover the costs associated with transportation and parking expenses for program staff and facilitators.

5100 Training on New Elements of Curriculum: \$6,600.00

These funds are designated for the ongoing training of staff on new elements of the curriculum, especially as we tailor programming to the desires and needs of each cohort, and also the incorporation of information and materials shared by the Beck Institute.

5101 Program Delivery: \$103,680.00

Program delivery expenses encompass all costs related to the direct implementation of the courses. This is mainly facilitator salaries.

5104 Research & Evaluation: \$6,580.00

Allocated funds for research and evaluation are intended to assess the program's impact and effectiveness. This includes pre and post survey set up, data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure that the program is meeting its goals and making necessary adjustments based on results and feedback.

5110 Program Coordination & Oversight: \$13,250.00

This budget item covers the salaries and administrative costs associated with program coordination and oversight. It ensures that the program is managed efficiently, including scheduling, participant management, and overall program supervision. It might also include meetings with jail or county administrators.

5201 Curriculum Development: \$9,600.00

Funds allocated for curriculum development are used to create and update the program content based on each round of ICT and also information and materials shared by the Beck Institute. This ensures that the curriculum remains relevant, engaging, and aligned with the other interventions at the jail.

5250 Materials & Supplies: \$15,000.00

This line item includes costs for all necessary materials and supplies required for the program. This can include printed materials, books, journals, technology aids, and other supplies needed to facilitate the programs.

5520/5527 Benefits and FICA: \$1,418.00

Benefits and FICA cover the employer's portion of Social Security and Medicare taxes for the program staff. This ensures that all employees receive their rightful benefits and contributes to their financial well-being. Many of our program deliverers are subcontractors and therefore are not included in this category.

5510 Graphic Design & Communications Support: \$7,030.00

Graphic design and communications support are critical for creating promotional materials, participant handouts, PowerPoints, and other visual aids necessary for the program. This ensures that all materials are professionally designed, engaging, ADA compliant, and effectively communicate the program's message.

5590 Consulting Services from VHC: \$8,400.00

Consulting services from the Visible Hands Collaborative provide additional expertise and support for the ICT rounds in each of the in-jail programs.

This comprehensive budget ensures that all aspects of the program are adequately funded, from direct individual support through TRP/EMP to the logistical and administrative functions necessary for group programming and successful implementation.

Total Costs:

- Subtotal: \$200,778

- Awaken Overhead @ 15%: \$30,116.70

- Grand Total for One Year: \$230,894.70
- Total for Two Years: \$461,789.40

This budget reflects the comprehensive nature of the proposed program, integrating trauma healing, relationship building, and mindfulness-based social and emotional regulation interventions to holistically support returning citizens. The support of Visible Hands Collaborative and Village Center for Holistic Therapy bring more breadth of experience and expertise to our work. Tactical Resiliency USA's involvement, particularly in offering free TRP sessions to veterans, significantly enhances the program's capacity to address trauma effectively, thereby improving reentry outcomes.



May 29, 2024

Dear Proposal Review Panel,

I am writing on behalf of Visible Hands Collaborative to express our full support for Awaken Pittsburgh's application to undertake the work outlined in the recent Request for Proposal (RFP) Comprehensive Re-Entry Program. We are enthusiastic about the potential of this project to make a significant impact on the mental health and relationships of individuals re-entering the community from prison.

Visible Hands Collaborative is committed to providing our expertise and resources to support the rounds of Integrative Community Therapy (ICT) as a diagnostic tool for the groups facilitated by Awaken Pittsburgh. Our team of experienced practitioners is prepared to engage both in person and as consultants to ensure the successful implementation and outcomes of these therapy sessions.

Integrative Community Therapy has been proven to be an effective method for fostering resilience, enhancing mental well-being, and rebuilding social connections. Our involvement will include:

1. **In-Person Support:** Our trained facilitators will be available to conduct ICT sessions, providing direct support and guidance to participants. Our presence will ensure that each session is conducted with the highest standards of care and effectiveness.
2. **Consultative Services:** In addition to our in-person contributions, we will offer ongoing consultation to Awaken Pittsburgh's team. This will include regular check-ins, strategy meetings, and the provision of additional resources as needed to support the therapeutic process.
3. **Diagnostic Tools:** Our team will provide and support use of diagnostic tools to assess the needs, progress, and outcomes of participants. This will ensure that the programming provided is tailored to the unique circumstances of each individual and group.

We believe that the collaborative efforts between Visible Hands Collaborative and Awaken Pittsburgh will yield transformative results for the individuals served. Our shared commitment to mindfulness, mental health, and community reintegration aligns perfectly with the goals of

this project. We are confident that our combined expertise will significantly enhance the effectiveness of the proposed initiative.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. We are eager to contribute to the success of this important work and look forward to the opportunity to collaborate closely with Awaken Pittsburgh.

Sincerely,

Dr Ken Thompson, Co-CEO

Brigit Hassig, MPA, Co-CEO

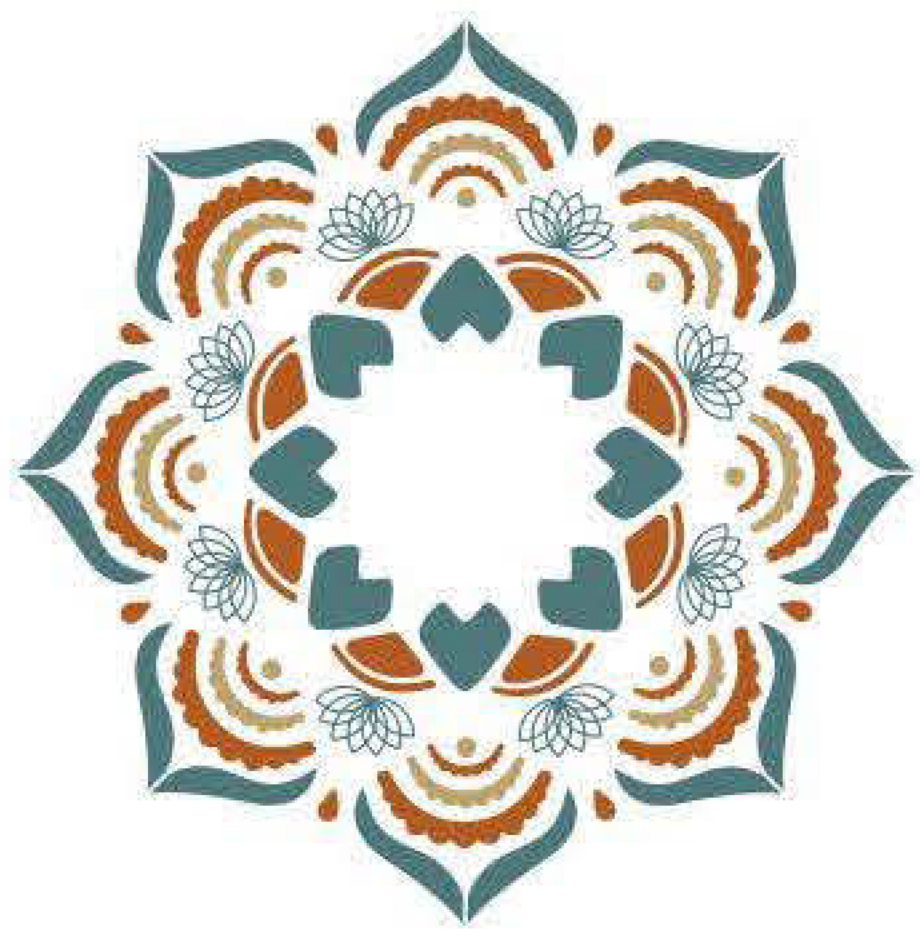
Visible Hands Collaborative

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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VILLAGE CENTER
for holistic therapy, P.C.

Dear Department of Human Services Proposal Review Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Awaken Pittsburgh's application in response to the recent Request for Proposal (RFP) Development of an Enhanced Comprehensive Reentry System. I have had the pleasure of working with Awaken Pittsburgh for the past four years as part of the Village Center for Holistic Therapy. During this time, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact their programs have on participants' lives, particularly in fostering mental health, resilience, and positive relationships.

Awaken Pittsburgh's dedication to ensuring that all people have access to holistic well-being makes them an excellent fit for the proposed programming and the population it aims to serve. We are fully onboard to support their innovative approach, combining mindfulness and therapeutic practices/interventions, addressing the unique challenges faced by returning citizens.

The Village Center for Holistic Therapy is committed to offering our expertise and services, specifically through the Trauma Resilience Protocol (TRP) and Emotional Management Protocol (EMP). These interventions are designed to help returning citizens manage and overcome trauma and the symptoms associated with PTSD, significantly improving their chances of successful reintegration.

Our collaboration with Awaken Pittsburgh will ensure that participants receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs, ultimately contributing to healthier, more resilient communities. We believe in the transformative potential of this program and are dedicated to its success.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Awaken Pittsburgh and contributing to the positive outcomes of this essential work.

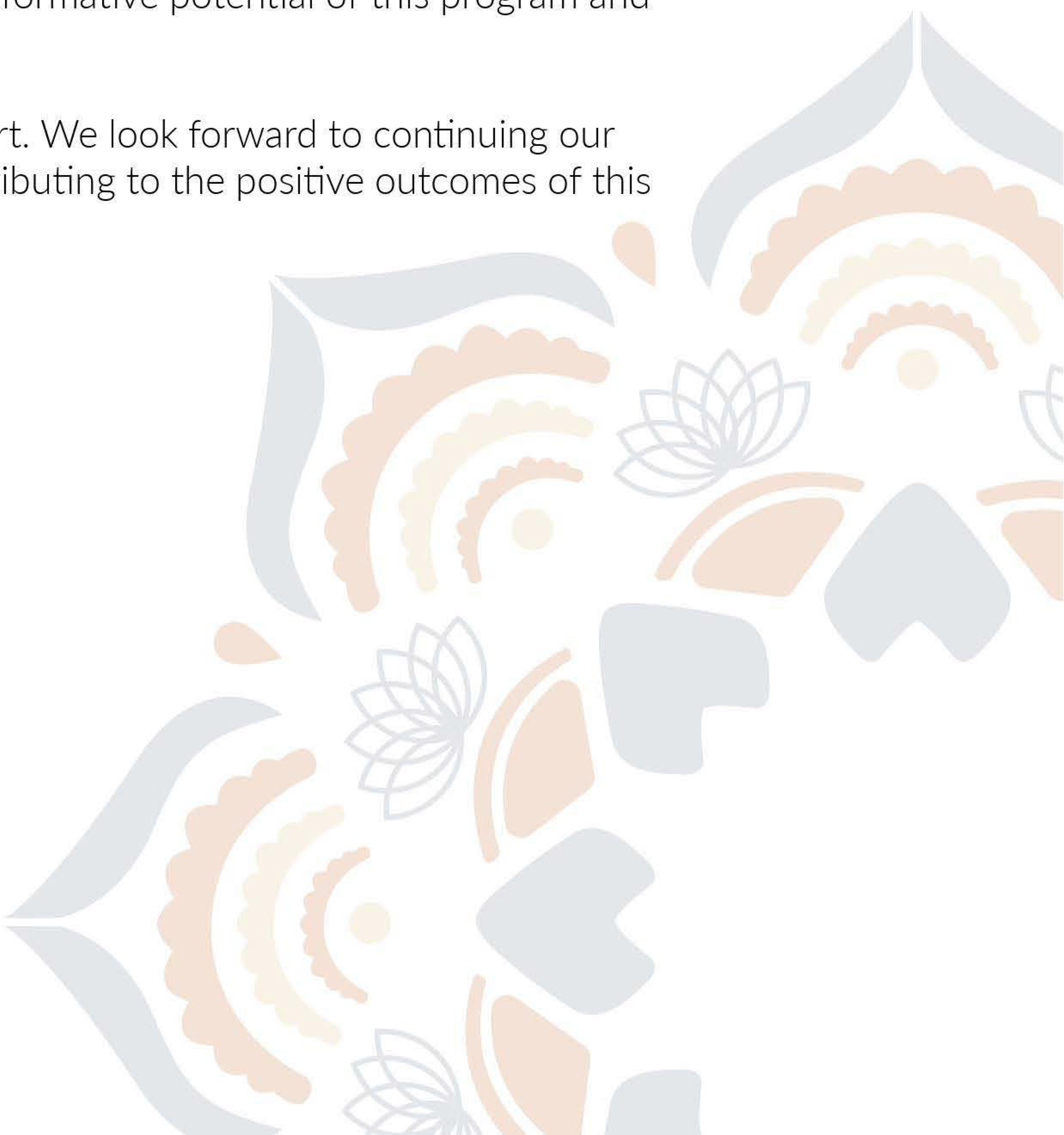
Sincerely,

Kristy Weidner
Co-Owner, LCSW
Village Center for Holistic Therapy
[Redacted Signature]

VILLAGE: WEST
[Redacted]

VILLAGE: NORTH
[Redacted]

P: [Redacted]
F: [Redacted]
W: VillageTherapy.org



Dear Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Allegheny County Jail Collaborative-

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Awaken Pittsburgh's application to undertake the critical work of supporting mental health of reentering citizens, as outlined in the recent Request for Proposal (RFP) Development of an Enhanced Comprehensive Reentry System. I have had the privilege of training Awaken Pittsburgh and the Village Center for Holistic Therapy in the Trauma Resiliency Protocol (TRP), a powerful intervention capable of relieving symptoms of PTSD in just 1-3 one-hour sessions.

Tactical Resiliency USA is committed to guiding this intervention and offering our services to any reentering veteran referred by Awaken Pittsburgh at no cost by directing them to Healing the Hero USA, Inc. our nonprofit. We believe that addressing trauma effectively before re-entry can profoundly change the trajectory of an individual's reintegration into the community, fostering better mental health and stronger relationships. We have worked with many veterans involved in the criminal justice system by helping to restore their dignity and removing traumatic emotions allowing for better decision-making skills.

Tactical Resiliency USA is a training company specializing in training law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics and nonprofit peer support teams to intervene with critical incident stress and traumatic stress preventing problematic emotional states from associating into and becoming unhealthy emotional states. The founder of Tactical Resiliency USA is also the founder of 22Zero Follow Me, Inc and Healing the Hero USA, inc., two successful nonprofits providing these nonclinical interventions to gold star families, veterans, first responders, active military, and the their family members at no cost.

Our organization, Tactical Resiliency USA, specializes in providing advanced, evidence-based protocols to support trauma recovery. Arizona State University is preparing to publish a retrospective data analysis on our law enforcement and veteran data collected by 22Zero Follow Me, Inc. relating to the Trauma Resiliency Protocol. Our collaboration with Awaken Pittsburgh includes the following key components:

1. Training and Support: We have trained Awaken Pittsburgh and the Village Center for Holistic Therapy to effectively utilize the Trauma Resiliency Protocol. This protocol is designed to rapidly alleviate PTSD symptoms and triggers, providing relief and enhancing resilience.
2. Veteran-Focused Intervention: For any veteran referred by Awaken Pittsburgh, our team at Tactical Resiliency USA will provide free TRP sessions through Healing the Hero USA, Inc. Our goal is to ensure that these veterans receive the necessary support to heal from their trauma and successfully reintegrate into the community.


3. Holistic Healing: We understand that healing trauma is a vital step in the re-entry process. By addressing these deep-seated issues, we can help returning citizens build a solid foundation for their mental health, which in turn supports their overall success in reintegration.

Our partnership with Awaken Pittsburgh is founded on a shared commitment to improving the lives of returning citizens through innovative and effective trauma interventions. We are confident that our combined efforts will lead to significant positive outcomes for the individuals we serve.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. Tactical Resiliency USA is dedicated to providing the highest level of support and expertise to this initiative, and we look forward to contributing to its success.

Sincerely,

Dan Jarvis
Founder and CEO
Tactical Resiliency USA
332 Ave B SW, Suite 200-36
Winter Haven, FL 33880





May 21, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter of support for Awaken Pittsburgh in their proposal to provide mindfulness-based programming as part of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's reentry system. New Century Careers has had the honor of partnering with Awaken Pittsburgh, who delivered their transformative programming to our students and staff. I, myself, participated in their programming and found it to be deeply meaningful and transformative.

For almost 25 years, New Century Careers has been successfully providing advanced manufacturing training and job placement assistance to individuals with a variety of backgrounds, barriers, and challenges. With the emphasis on inclusive training and meeting the needs of our manufacturers for job ready entry-level employees, the addition of mindfulness and mental health training has been a wonderful addition to our trainees, staff, and instructors.

Awaken Pittsburgh's mindfulness programs had a profound impact on the participants. The techniques and practices they teach have proven to be incredibly effective in helping to manage stress, develop emotional resilience, and overall mental health. These skills are especially crucial for individuals transitioning from incarceration, as they face unique challenges and stressors during their reentry journey.

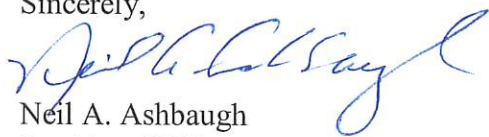
The professionalism and dedication of Awaken Pittsburgh's facilitators are evident in their approach. They create a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment that fosters trust and encourages personal growth and change. Their commitment to trauma-informed care ensures that the specific needs and experiences of our students are respected and addressed, promoting healing and empowerment.

One of the key strengths of Awaken Pittsburgh is their adherence to evidence-based practices. Their programs are grounded in rigorous research and continuously refined based on participant feedback and outcome data. We experienced this first hand as the program they delivered to us was a pilot. They first led focus groups to hear about our needs, then incorporated those into the course design. This commitment to fidelity and effectiveness has resulted in consistently positive outcomes for our participants, including improved emotional regulation, reduced anxiety, and enhanced interpersonal skills.

We have witnessed firsthand the positive changes in our staff and students who have participated in Awaken Pittsburgh's programs. Their ability to cope with stress, engage in meaningful employment, and build healthier relationships has significantly improved, contributing to their successful reintegration into society.

I strongly support Awaken Pittsburgh's proposal and am confident in their ability to contribute valuable programming to the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative. Their expertise, dedication, and proven track record make them an ideal partner for this initiative.

Sincerely,



Neil A. Ashbaugh
President/CEO
New Century Careers



staunton farm
foundation
working for mental wellness

To Whom It May Concern,

I am delighted to write this letter supporting Awaken Pittsburgh's proposal to provide mindfulness-based programming as part of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's reentry system. The Staunton Farm Foundation has had the privilege of funding Awaken Pittsburgh's work in the mental health space since 2018, including their impactful work with youth at Brashear High School who were returning from Shuman Detention Center.

Awaken Pittsburgh has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication to improving mental health and well-being through their innovative mindfulness-based interventions. Their programs have been instrumental in helping individuals manage stress, develop emotional regulation skills, and foster resilience. I, myself attended one of their programs and found the content to be transformative.

The feedback from participants in Awaken Pittsburgh's programs has been overwhelmingly positive. This has been particularly evident in their work with participants who face significant challenges and stressors as they navigate their reentry into society. Participants regularly report significant improvements in their ability to cope with stress, maintain focus, and build healthier relationships. The skills and techniques imparted by Awaken Pittsburgh have empowered individuals to make positive changes in their lives and futures.

Awaken Pittsburgh's facilitators are highly skilled and trained in mindfulness practices and bring a deep sense of empathy and understanding to their work. Their trauma-informed approach ensures that participants' specific needs and experiences are respected and addressed, creating a safe and supportive environment for healing and growth.

I am confident that Awaken Pittsburgh's expertise and proven track record will make a valuable contribution to the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's reentry initiatives. Their commitment to evidence-based practices and continuous improvement ensures that their programming will effectively support the mental and physical health of individuals reentering the community from the Allegheny County Jail.

I wholeheartedly support Awaken Pittsburgh's proposal and believe that their mindfulness-based programming will make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of those they serve.

Sincerely,

Bethany Hemingway

