



Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc.
Request for Quotes for
Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative
Planning Consulting Services

I. General

The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as ACAM), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional consulting services. **The deadline for receiving responses to this request is 12:00 PM on Friday, July 8, 2020.** Late proposals will not be accepted. Respondents must submit proposals by e-mail to Sharon Zachary at szachary@acamweb.org and copy Joshua Kulak at jkulak@acamweb.org.

Proposals must be composed and submitted as outlined in Sections IV and VI, respectively titled *Proposal Contents* and *Submission*. There will be no bidder's conference for this Request. ACAM staff is available to answer questions related to this RFP by email as outlined in Section VI *Submission*. ACAM has a maximum of \$20,000 available for the planning and consulting services including at least 3 opportunity youth council meetings targeting 7 participants at each whom the consultant will compensate \$100.00 to each youth advisor for each meeting attended (or a maximum of \$2,100.00)

II. Background Information

General - ACAM is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit management support organization (MSO) that assists a network of community assistance ministry nonprofits (the ACAM Network) with improving their organizational and program effectiveness. ACAM has a challenging role with responsibilities to two sets of clients: the nonprofits to which ACAM provides organization development assistance and the funding community, which expects measurable results from their investment in these programs. As one of its program activities, ACAM offers Management Support to organizations and networks outside of its Network, as described below.

Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative's ("GHOYC")- Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth Planning Project - In partnership with the Harris County Department of Education, ACAM will serve as fiscal management partner and organizational facilitator for the Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative's Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth planning grant provided through the Aspen Institute. The GHOYC is an expansion of the Bridge to College and Career Success (BCCS) Advisory Board which includes representatives from local youth-serving CBOs, community colleges, the regional workforce board, economic development organizations and multiple industry groups and employers, in addition to previously unengaged young leaders, municipal leaders, additional CBOs, and employers. The overarching goal of the GHOYC is to build a powerful ecosystem of pathways for and with Opportunity Youth ("OY") that enable them to accelerate to in-demand careers and lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Additional goals include:

- Increasing knowledge in serving the OY population
- Building strong, lasting cross-organizational partnerships that share and grow assets and resources
- Supporting participating youth to achieve either a higher education credential or job placement with career growth options

The groundwork has been put in place to move the needle. New resources, technical assistance and funding will accelerate the progress and achieve faster and better results. The goals of the Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth Project are in direct alignment with the needs of the Houston community and its goals to reconnect youth to education and employment pathways. Additional information may be found in Attachment A.

III. Scope of Work

Scope of Consulting Services - The purpose of the Request for Quote is to obtain consulting services for the current fiscal year beginning upon execution of a contract and ending January 31, 2021.

The scope of consulting services will consist of the following (most activities to be completed remotely):

- Schedule periodic meetings for the group and manage the logistics
- Work with group leadership and the Aspen Institute technical assistance providers to develop agendas and preparation materials
- Use the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions (“FCS”) OY ecosystem inventory tool to guide meeting agendas
- Facilitate meetings and ensure they meet stated goals
- Lead group through process of developing the deliverables described below
- Inform group’s process through identification of other successful models or approaches.
- Recruit opportunity youth (target 7 participants) to serve as advisors in the planning process and conduct 3 Opportunity Youth Advisory Council sessions.

Aspen Opportunity Youth Planning Grant Deliverables - The awarded consultant agrees to be responsible for the following deliverables, as established in the RFP:

- Create an OY Pathways Scaling Plan for the community that includes:
 - Description of the Houston area’s OY needs and opportunities
 - An inventory of current assets/resources in the community that are or could be focused on OY
 - Bringing together the necessary community stakeholders for scaling OY success in local education and/or workforce systems, including the engagement of OY themselves in planning
 - Development of specific targets for improving outcomes for OY in 3-5 years

- Development of specific goals and scaling strategies (an implementation plan) for accomplishing those targets, with roles and responsibilities assigned
- A budget describing needed investments, including identification of public resources that can be used to support this work
- The deadline for plan delivery is November 30, 2020.
- Establish any needed MOUs between parties to execute the plan, should it be funded.
- Establish any needed data sharing agreements to execute the plan
- Support FCS in documenting effort by bringing forward best practices and lessons learned.

Additionally, the Recipient agrees to be responsible for the following deliverables:

- Recipient agrees to participate in all required the Aspen Institute’s Opportunity Youth Forum (“OYF”) national learning community activities, including OYF in-person or virtual convenings (dates and locations TBD), as well as additional virtual learning community activities that may include asset mapping/ecosystem mapping tools, webinars, conference calls, affinity group meetings, and in-person site visits.

All records will be maintained by the proposer in accordance with ACAM’s record retention policy and any relevant regulatory requirements but will remain the property of ACAM. Any and all records will be surrendered to ACAM upon request.

The proposer will not release records or information related to ACAM without permission or the project to parties outside the GHOYC leadership.

ACAM will provide the selected consultant with necessary documentation and information to ensure the consultant has all that they need to successfully perform the duties outlined in this RFQ.

ACAM will provide all payable requests and other signed documents in scanned PDF format (ACAM retains original requests) and submit to the consultant via email. ACAM uses Microsoft Outlook 365 as its primary email provider.

Qualifications

The proposer must demonstrate the capability to perform the above stated consulting services.

The ideal candidate will have:

- Subject matter expertise in OY or policy, preferably in Texas
- Demonstrated experience in managing coalitions that accomplished stated goals
- Knowledge of the public policy process on state and municipal levels in Texas
- Skills in meeting facilitation, strategic planning and network building
- The ability to build consensus while acting with urgency

Term of Consulting Services

The contract for consulting services will be effective upon execution of a contract for services and ending January 31, 2021. At the end of the contract term, both ACAM and the Contractor will have the option to extend this contract.

IV. Proposal Content

Administrative Component

To describe clearly the proposer's understanding of the work to be done, the proposer will:

- Explain the proposer's approaches to performing consulting services
- List any service costs that will be absorbed by the Contractor (postage, copy charges, etc.), if applicable. ACAM is a nonprofit organization with limited resources. As such, innovative and creative fee arrangements proposed by the Contractor that minimize risk and cost to ACAM will be considered favorably. Contractors shall provide complete information on any pro bono and/or in-kind services which may be provided in the course of providing services on a case rate basis and hourly basis.
- Describe the process by which you would ensure that unexpected contract amendments are minimized. Please note that any changes to the original contract would require a contract amendment and review by GHOYC leadership.
- Indicate proposed billing rate for expanded services if the need for such services should arise

Technical Component

The proposer will furnish satisfactory evidence of capability to provide in a professional and timely manner the services stated in the Request for Quote. To meet this requirement:

- Provide evidence that the proposer has experience in performing consulting services for nonprofit or governmental entities. List current and past clients along with the names and telephone numbers of contact persons and the number of years that services were provided.
- Include the educational background and professional licenses held by proposer.
- Describe the level of assistance that will be expected from ACAM staff.

Task/Activity Plan

- The proposer will specify budgeted hours and timetable for consulting services for each monthly cycle. Please state how consultant will carry out contract requirements in the event of an illness.

Estimated Fees

Please quote the contract fee for providing consulting services as described above. The Contractor will only be allowed reimbursement to the maximum contracted amount agreed upon by both parties. Any additional expenses above the set maximum agreed-upon fee, unless agreed upon by ACAM in writing, will be the sole responsibility of the Contractor. The Contractor shall provide:

- 1) A cost per hour (hourly rate) that is to completion and not to exceed the cost per hour quoted;
- 2) Estimated hours per month;
- 3) A total monthly estimate
- 4) Any monthly estimated in-kind or pro bono services; and
- 5) Total project cost per period.

The fees negotiated with the selected Contractor shall be inclusive of all fees. The Contractor’s fee will be considered in addition to other technical factors in determining the offer most advantageous to ACAM.

V. Quote Evaluation Criteria

Selection of a successful Contractor(s) will be at the sole discretion of ACAM. If a contract is awarded, it will be awarded to the responsible consultant(s) whose qualifications, price, and other factors are deemed most advantageous to ACAM. Additionally, ACAM shall have the right to reject any and all quotes at its discretion.

An evaluation team will be established to review Contractor responses to this RFQ. Quotes will be evaluated by, but not limited to, the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Points Given
1. Contractor’s compliance with all specifications and/or other requirements contained in this RFQ	15	
2. Relevant experience and qualifications	35	
3. Proposed plan for accomplishing the scope	35	
4. Reasonableness of contract price	15	
a. Total Project Cost Not to Exceed		
b. Monthly Cost		
c. Hourly Rate		
d. Donated Services		
Total Points	100	

During the application evaluation, ACAM reserves the right to call for supplementary information from Contractors and to meet with Contractor’s representatives listed in the

application to clarify points of uncertainty or ambiguity. Contractors agree to cooperate fully and promptly in providing supplementary information or meeting requests. Quotes will be evaluated and ranked according to the points received. The highest ranked Contractors may be invited for an interview. Contractors should be prepared to discuss the proposed scope of work, including availability of equipment and staffing, consulting and payment procedures, schedules, qualification of subcontractors proposed for portions of the work, and such other items as are directly related to the application.

ACAM also reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a Contractor's quote or to obtain additional information necessary to properly evaluate a particular quote. Failure of a Contractor to respond to a request for additional information or clarification could result in rejection of the Contractor's quote.

VI. Submission

One original completed quote must be submitted by email to Sharon Zachary, CEO, at szachary@acamweb.org (CC: Joshua Kulak at jkulak@acamweb.org). Please label the document as follows: ACAM Consulting Services, RFQ.

Assistance – ACAM will not provide assistance to any Contractor in the preparation of a quote, but will, however, entertain **questions** through **Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.** solely for the purpose of clarification of any instruction contained in this request. Please direct questions to Dr. Joshua Kulak, Resource and Program Development Manager, at jkulak@acamweb.org. Questions will not be accepted thereafter.

All proposals in response to this request must meet the following conditions to be considered:

- *Proposal must include a cover letter clearly stating the name, address, and telephone number of the consultant*
- *Proposal must address each of the deliverables as stated in this Request for Quote.*
- *Proposal must include a résumé or biography.*
- *Proposal must contain a quote that is “to completion not to exceed.” ACAM does not reimburse for incidental costs such as mileage and copies, so proposers are strongly encouraged to include all costs in the submitted quote.*
- The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and to negotiate portions thereof. Proposals that address only part of the requirements contained in this Request for Quote will not be considered.
- The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. reserves the right to select any proposal, considering the quoted estimated fee and other factors.
- The proposer shall furnish such additional information that the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. may reasonably require to provide a comprehensive proposal review.
- The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. will not be liable for any cost incurred in the preparation of proposals.

- The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. may ask for an oral interview prior to approval of a proposal. The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. will not be liable for any costs incurred by the proposer in connection with such interview.

VII. Conditions

- A. **Modification** - Proposers may modify proposals that have already been accepted by providing a written modification to ACAM. However, no proposal may be modified after the deadline for submission.
- B. **Assistance** - Please direct questions to Dr. Joshua Kulak as outlined above.
- C. **Sole Discretion of ACAM** - ACAM may accept or reject any or all responses under this request in its sole discretion.
- D. **Proposal is not a Contract** - This Request is not a contract and does not obligate ACAM to pay for costs incurred by any proposer in connection with its proposal. Furthermore, ACAM is not obligated to contract with any proposer. ACAM reserves the right to engage none, all, or any portion of any proposed services. ACAM may negotiate a contract with a proposer as a result of this request and that contract may or may not conform to the requirements of this request at the ACAM's sole discretion.
- E. **Modification by ACAM** - ACAM may change any part of this request at any time prior to the submission deadline. Such modification will be provided to all potential proposers who have obtained this RFP.
- F. **Public Information** - Materials submitted to ACAM as a part of this proposal are considered public information unless noted in the proposal as trade secret or proprietary information. Materials submitted to ACAM as a part of this proposal become the property of ACAM upon submission. ACAM is not responsible for the return of creative examples of work submitted.
- G. **No Undue Influence**
 - a. No employee, member of a Board of Directors, or other governing body, or representative of a proposer who submits a proposal under this Request may have any contact outside of the formal review process with any employee of or any member of the ACAM's Board of Directors for purposes of discussing or lobbying on behalf of proposer's proposal. This contact includes written correspondence, telephone calls, personal meetings, email messages, or other kinds of personal contact. ACAM will reject proposals of those proposers who violate this condition.
 - b. No employee, member of a Board of Directors, or other governing body, or representative of a proposer who submits a proposal under this Request may offer any favor, gratuity, inducement, or anything of monetary value to any employee of the ACAM, or any member of the ACAM's Board of Directors for purposes of influencing the evaluation of a proposal submitted under this Request. ACAM will reject proposals of those proposers who violate this condition.



Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth Planning Grants Request For Proposals (RFP)

Notification of Intent to Apply due by Friday, March 2, 2020

Completed Proposals due by Friday, April 10, 2020

Summary

Scaling Pathways for Opportunity Youth (SPOY) is a new project of the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions' (FCS) Opportunity Youth Forum (OYF). Funded with support from JP Morgan Chase, POY planning grants will assist invited OYF members and other communities to formalize local collaborations that will improve outcomes for opportunity youth, focusing on racially equitable outcomes for opportunity youth who already have a high school credential. The goal of this project is to strengthen each city's capacity to engage all young people in quality education and employment opportunities, thereby significantly decreasing the number of opportunity youth. We are committed to the idea that there is a pathway for every young person who is not connected to school and work.

Eight to ten communities will be selected for planning grants; each site will receive \$20,000 to participate in a 6-month process that will result in an inventory of the local opportunity youth serving ecosystem, and an OY Pathways Scaling Plan. These Pathways Scaling Plans are to include collaboration between (at minimum) the OY backbone/intermediary, the appropriate local systems partners (such as K12, Postsecondary and/or Workforce), and CBOs focused on supports for OY success. These planning grants are precursors to a possible set of larger future investments; FCS hopes to make substantial, multi-year implementation grants to 3 or more communities starting in late 2020 or early 2021.

Background

Since 2012, many communities have begun focusing more intentionally on the success of [opportunity youth](#) (young adults aged 16-24 who are neither currently in school nor working). The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions' (FCS) [Opportunity Youth Forum](#) (OYF) is a national network focused on supporting OY collaboratives. [An independent evaluation](#) of the work of OYF collaboratives by Equal Measure has shown strong growth by members in establishing collaborative structures which lead to positive systems changes that are creating

better community infrastructure – through more, coordinated, aligned and accountable programs, and better policies – that directly support opportunity youth. Likewise, the OY movement has been successful at changing national and local narratives around opportunity youth – repositioning these young adults as assets to a community, rather than a ‘problem’ to be solved.

Many OYF and other OY community collaborations have existing partnerships with K12 and postsecondary institutions and the workforce system in their communities. The SPOY planning grants seek to further formalize these relationships where needed, particularly with education and workforce systems in the creation of multi-year “pathways plans” that have specific strategies and targets for reductions in the numbers of OY who are disconnected from K12, postsecondary, and/or work.

FCS is a strong believer that neither the education nor workforce systems alone can meet the needs of OY, and that this work requires the partnership of CBO’s, and better alignment and leveraging of public resources. For example, in partnership with JFF (and funding from the federal Social Innovation Fund), we supported the Opportunity Works project in 7 OYF sites from 2015-2018, which focused on OY male postsecondary students of color. An [evaluation of this work](#) showed the power of collaboration with CBOs that provided navigation and barrier removal supports for OY, that increased college entrance and persistence. This kind of work requires close partnership between systems and CBO’s. SPOY seeks to support the creation of more such close partnerships that can scale to reach more OY.

SPOY Purpose and Goals

Building on this past work, SPOY seeks to enhance local OY collaboratives’ ability to support OY to complete secondary and/or postsecondary education, and/or obtain good careers through better understanding of regional labor markets, training and career pathways connected to growing sectors, and engaging employers.

Ultimately, should FCS make substantial multi-year future investments, our goal is to increase secondary and postsecondary completion rates and/or employment outcomes for OY, and thereby significantly reduce the overall number of disconnected young adults in communities.

For the SPOY planning grants, the goals are to:

- Support OY collaboratives to map their local opportunity youth-serving ecosystem, and to create plans that identify new and stronger pathway strategies with potential for scale and impact.
- Increase engagement between OY collaboratives (and youth serving CBO partners of the collaborative) with the education and workforce systems.
- Move from pilots to system-wide changes across education and/or workforce systems that are specifically focused on OY.
- Create regional plans on how to accomplish such goals and establish equity-focused targets for improved OY educational credential rates and employment rates. Plans should also include scaling effective CBO-based OY supports.
- Focus on equitable outcomes within the OY population by disaggregating data and looking to support OY subgroups that may have disproportionate needs or be underserved within the OY population.

- Engage OY youth leaders in creating plans and designing improved scalable pathways.
- Identify funding needs and opportunities, including review of new and current public funding sources and new philanthropic dollars that could sustain and scale such work, including opportunities to better align and leverage public funding streams.

Technical Assistance and Other Supports

As part of this project, recipients of SPOY planning grants will benefit from a peer learning community of practice that will convene in person for the first time at the May 18-20 OYF convening in the Bay Area, followed by regular virtual meetings. Additionally, recipients will benefit from continued engagement with the OYF national learning community and national partners (including Jobs for the Future, National League of Cities Reengagement Network, and other experts in pathway design). Recipients from communities/organizations new to the OYF network will receive additional benefits from targeted TA that will be designed by Aspen Forum and partners based on the content of proposals and identified assets, gaps, challenges, and short- and long-term goals across this new community of practice.

SPOY Eligibility Criteria and Expected Commitments

Eligibility:

- Only those who have received an invitation by FCS are eligible to apply.
- Applicant organizations must be a designated OYF backbone (or in other communities, an approved 501c3 nonprofit designated by FCS or JPMorgan Chase).
- Communities must have at least one education or workforce system partner (a lead entity that has authority over the local system) and at least one OY-serving CBO partner. Preferably these partners co-author this RFP with the OY backbone.
- Notify FCS (email Yelena.nemoy@aspeninstitute.org) no later than Friday, March 2, 2020 of your intent to apply.
- Agree to the commitments below.

Commitments: SPOY planning grantees must be willing to make the following commitments -

- Start project by May 2020 with an official kick-off meeting at the spring convening in Oakland; have existing staff ready and able to immediately lead this work and complete your plan by November 30, 2020.
- Use the FCS OY ecosystem inventory tool in your community. (The tool is still under development but will be available by project start.)
- Create an OY Pathways Scaling Plan for the community that includes:
 - Description of your area’s opportunity youth needs and opportunities
 - An inventory of current assets/resources in the community that are or could be focused on this group of OY
 - Bringing together the necessary players needed in your community for scaling OY success in your education and/or workforce systems, including the engagement of OY themselves in your planning
 - Development of specific targets for improving outcomes for OY in 3-5 years

- Development of specific goals and scaling strategies (an implementation plan) for accomplishing those targets, with roles and responsibilities assigned
- A budget describing needed investments, including identification of public resources that can be used to support this work
- Establish any needed MOUs between parties to execute the plan, should it be funded.
- Establish any needed data sharing agreements to execute the plan
- Support FCS in documenting effort by bringing forward best practices and lessons learned.
- For OYF member communities, complete target setting for the 4 Common Measures no later than December 2020.

SPOY Planning Grant RFP Questions:

If you wish to apply for a SPOY Planning Grant, please briefly answer the following questions, in a narrative of less than ten pages total:

1. What is the current state of education and workforce system access and success in your community, specifically for opportunity youth? Please include any specific data on OY you have. What is the need in your community to scale supports for OY? What kind of supports exist? What other kinds of supports are needed?
2. Describe the OY-focused intermediary/backbone that would lead this work and your local OY collaborative (if one exists) along with its key activities to date.
3. Describe, in some detail, *the approach (or process) your collaborative would use to create an OY Pathways Scaling Plan?* For reference, potential elements of such a SPOY plan are noted in the preceding section. Note that we are requesting that you *describe the process you would use* to create a plan, **not** create nor share a draft of such a plan at this time. If you have an existing plan that covers some, or all of what might be in a SPOY plan, please include it as an attachment (or as a link) to this proposal. If you have an existing plan, explain how you would use the planning process to enhance or revise that plan.
4. Planning partners:
 - a. Name and describe, as appropriate to your project, the education and/or workforce system partners in your community that would participate in this effort. Describe very briefly any existing programs run by these systems partners that are focused specifically on OY.
 - b. Describe how you would engage OY or former OY in the planning process.
 - c. Describe any other key partners that you'd see as a part of your SPOY planning group.
5. Describe any potential OY sub-populations your planning process may address, such as young men or women of color, justice-involved, foster youth, those who already have high school credentials, etc.
6. Does your community currently have a specific goal or specific target numbers for OY success? If so, please describe. How is that data collected, reported out, and used for decision making?
7. What sorts of technical assistance, capacity building, or other kind of help that is aligned with this planning grant would you find most useful?

8. What would you anticipate being the main challenge(s) of this planning project for your collaborative and community?
9. Include a brief budget narrative, describing (roughly) how you would use the \$20,000 grant for this project.
10. Name the main point of contact for this application and their contact information.
11. Include letters of support from the education and/or workforce system partners named under question 4a. Optionally, include up to two letters of support from any CBO partners critical to planning process success.

This RFP is **due Friday, April 10, 2020**, and should be emailed to:

Yelena.nemoy@aspeninstitute.org

Additionally, you must notify FCS (email Yelena.nemoy@aspeninstitute.org) no later than **Friday, March 2, 2020** of your intent to apply.

FCS will host a bidders' conference on **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**, from 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm ET to discuss this RFP.

After that online meeting, additional questions about SPOY, or the RFP can be referred to Yelena.nemoy@aspeninstitute.org.