



**NOLA FOR LIFE Services Collaborative
Call for Applications**

***Building a Continuum of Services for At- and High-Risk
Individuals***

Release Date: May 29, 2014

**Information Session: June 5, 2014 at 9:30 A.M.
City Hall, 9th Floor Homeland Security Conference Room**

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY:

5 P.M. ON JUNE 30, 2014

**Proposals along with all required attachments must be
submitted electronically to: krcohen@nola.gov**





NOLA FOR LIFE Continuum of Services Partnership Application Guidelines

I. OVERVIEW

Each component of the NOLA FOR LIFE strategy calls for service providers to ensure that high risk individuals have access to quality services. Historically, the loose network of New Orleans service providers has not adequately facilitated access to or quality of programming for those navigating the complex system. In order to ensure seamless service provision to participants across each area of the continuum, the City of New Orleans created a space specifically dedicated to the construction of a service framework and continuum. The NOLA FOR LIFE Community of Practice (CoP), convened March 2013 – April 2014, identified the following components as central to the development of an effective continuum model:

- Common intake and assessment tools
- Evidence-based best practice models and program standards
- Shared performance measures
- Universal client tracking

This application invites community partners who are serving African American males in the areas of prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation to participate in the identification, review, and implementation of 1) common intake and assessment tools, 2) evidence-based best practices and program standards, and 3) shared performance measures.

NOLA FOR LIFE – A Comprehensive Approach

In 2010, New Orleans had the highest murder rate in the country. In that same year, the homicide rate in New Orleans was more than 7 times the average rate of U.S. cities with a population over 100,000 residents. In 2011, New Orleans experienced a 14 percent increase from the previous year. According to a Bureau of Justice Assistance report from the U.S. Department of Justice, the majority of both offenders and victims are African American males between the ages of 16 and 25 who are unemployed, have criminal records and limited educational attainment.

In May 2012, Mayor Landrieu released NOLA FOR LIFE: A Comprehensive Murder Reduction Strategy, containing initiatives to improve public safety in New Orleans with an immediate and urgent focus on stopping the shootings. Recognizing that law enforcement alone cannot solve the murder problem, the NOLA FOR LIFE plan takes a holistic approach, and divides the plan into five main categories:

- Stop the Shooting;
- Invest in Prevention;
- Promote Jobs and Opportunity;
- Improve the NOPD; and
- Get Involved and Rebuild Neighborhoods.

The NOLA FOR LIFE plan identifies strategies that specifically address the high murder rate in New Orleans. Guided by the Mayor’s Innovation Delivery Team, City officials analyzed homicide data to fully understand murder trends; brought in regional and national crime experts to share solutions specific to New Orleans’ murder problem; and hosted focus groups to hear from citizens most often directly affected by murder – individuals at risk of violence, community service providers, and police officers.

After examining current initiatives, engaging the community to identify issues that contribute to the city’s murder epidemic, and researching and developing effective strategies, the NOLA FOR LIFE plan was created to provide the following outcomes:

- Sustained reductions in youth violence, as evidenced by a decrease in violent crime, including murders and non-fatal shootings;
- More positive opportunities for youth and families, as evidenced by increased numbers of youths involved in school-based and community violence reduction programming;
- Improved quality of life community-wide, as evidenced by increased community engagement to support neighborhood revitalization efforts;
- Stronger families and communities, as evidenced by an increase in positive development opportunities, including employment and mentoring programming;
- Expanded ownership of the issue of violence reduction throughout the community, as evidenced by increased private and public sector investment in prevention and rehabilitation;
- Improved relationships between law enforcement agencies and the community, as evidenced by increased trust and confidence in law enforcement institutions; and
- Increased perceptions of safety in New Orleans, as evidenced by decreased fear of violent crime and victimization.

The NOLA FOR LIFE Fund and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation *Forward Promise Grant*

The NOLA FOR LIFE Fund was established to invest in critical human services to those with the highest risk of killing or being killed. During the first year of implementation, the NOLA FOR LIFE Fund provided grants to 23 organizations to support their ongoing work and commitment to high-risk youth across New Orleans. Additionally, 10 of these grantees were invited to participate in the *Community of Practice (COP)*, a group designed to enhance the ability of grantees and others to network, learn with and from one another, coordinate efforts, and increase efficiencies. Through this effort, a model for a continuum of services was formed and funding to support development and implementation of the model was secured through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Forward Promise grant.

The RWJF grant focuses on improving outcomes for boys and men of color by identifying and addressing factors in and outside of the medical care system that impact an individual’s health. RWJF recognizes that to have a meaningful effect on populations, complex social factors—poverty, education, employment, housing—must be considered, and solutions must be developed within that context.

Together, the City of New Orleans and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will support the next iteration of the NOLA FOR LIFE Community of Practice, which includes development and implementation of the identified building blocks for the continuum of services model:

- Common intake and assessment tools
- Evidence-based best practice models and program standards
- Shared performance measures
- Universal client tracking

The City of New Orleans and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recognize that solutions do not exist in isolation. As such, the work, moving forward, will feature partnerships that employ a collective impact approach to support sustainable interventions and solutions that will improve outcomes for young men.

II. The Continuum of Services Model



The NOLA FOR LIFE Services Collaborative is comprised of 4 convening entities—Partnership for Youth Development (PYD), Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights (LCCR), Total Community Action (TCA), and the City’s Reentry Program—which will serve as the lead agencies for prevention, intervention and rehabilitation services delivered to at-risk to high-risk youth along the continuum of services. These entities will be responsible for establishing and managing convening tables within each of their respective areas/stages (prevention, intervention, rehabilitation) to assist in the development of best practice and program standards for the service needs of the population (i.e. workforce development, housing, behavioral health services, etc.). Ultimately, **the best practices and tools developed at each of the convening tables will be implemented and evaluated for effectiveness through demonstration projects in each of the following areas:**

- Prevention: At-Risk Youth (0-21)
- Prevention: High Risk Youth (14-18)
- Intervention: High Risk Young Adults (18-25)
- Reentry: Returning Citizens (16-30)

III. Partnership Expectations

A. Expertise and Values:

- 1) Organizations must, at the time of application, render direct services that are targeted to individuals who fall within the convening tables’ defined population (definition of risk). The submitted narrative must articulate how many individuals fall within the project’s definition of “risk” they have served in each of the past three years.

- 2) Organizations must clearly explain what constitutes “success” or “failure” in their program model, and how they measure progress towards goals both on the organizational level and for individuals.
- 3) Organizations must be committed to the process of collaboration and learning, which will involve a shared willingness to change and adapt. In their applications, organizations must articulate at least one instance in which they have collaborated with another organization in a way that caused them to change or reconsider how they do business.
- 4) Organizations must be committed to adopting consensus standards defining best practices for the population they serve and the service that they provide.

B. Time Commitments:

- 1) Organizations that are members of the convening tables must commit a staff person to meeting with the other members at least 3 hours per month for the 12 month design period. Organizations should articulate, in the narrative, the chosen representative’s qualifications and capacity to meet the time commitments as outlined.
- 2) While the bulk of the preparation, research, and writing will be performed by the convening entity and the technical assistance provider, organizations should be prepared to spend approximately 3 hours per month, for each of 12 months, of preparatory work outside of the meetings.

C. Deliverables/Outcomes

- 1) **Developing of common, or congruent, tools for intake, client assessment, referral, and evaluation.** These tools will share key elements that will facilitate intake for organizations that work with at-risk and high-risk individuals; promote accurate assessment of developmental needs; and expedite referral processes among organizations. Ultimately, the tools will make access to services and supports simpler and more seamless from the client’s perspective, and more efficient from the perspective of service providers.
- 2) **Developing Evidence-based best practice models and program standards.** Development of standards reflecting best-practices, and measures of quality for organizations working with at-risk and high-risk individuals in New Orleans.
- 3) **Designing and implementing pilot projects.** Pilot projects will bring together organizations using a smaller scale collaborative model for a predetermined number of youth within each continuum area. The projects will allow for real-time piloting and refinement of the intake, assessment, referral and evaluation tools developed by the working group participants.

There are no financial resources associated with an organization’s participation in this phase of the Services Collaborative. Participating organizations will design the core building blocks for an effective continuum of services model—including common intake and assessment tools; evidence-based best practice models and program standards; shared performance measures; and universal client tracking. Future funding opportunities will focus on successful implementation of these building blocks to deliver high-quality, seamless wrap-around services to high risk individuals.

IV. Convening Tables

A. Youth: Partnership for Youth Development

Since 2012, PYD has served as the *backbone organization* for two collective impact initiatives focused on improving youth outcomes in New Orleans: YouthShift, which aims to create and execute a shared vision for K12 success; and the Aspen Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF), which creates pathways to postsecondary and career opportunities for disconnected youth. Together, these initiatives support a citywide conversation about how all youth-serving entities can better coordinate, communicate, define and track impact.

These initiatives fit seamlessly into the NOLA FOR LIFE Continuum of Services model. As PYD and the City of New Orleans move forward with the strategic coordination of NOLA FOR LIFE and YouthShift/OYIF, PYD seeks participants interested in building the universe of providers, the robust resource and referral channels, and the data sharing relationships necessary to create a viable pipeline from K12 to adult success.

To this end, we seek youth-serving entities who provide services to children and youth ages pre-K through age 21; to children and youth still connected to K12 systems; and to youth disconnected from the K12 system but looking to reconnect to educational opportunity. We will engage participating organizations in the following activities:

- 1) Intervention/Strategy mapping – to better understand the existing landscape of solutions to overcoming barriers
- 2) Community and Youth Engagement Strategy – to bring more diverse voices to the table from beyond the sector of professional youth development
- 3) Data agenda – to identify programs that maintain relevant indicators and to mobilize that information to fill data gaps
- 4) Long term sustainability plan– to envision the work as truly collectively owned, collectively housed, and centralized in a way that supports all stakeholders citywide

Population description: Pre-K to 21 years of age at risk for disconnection.

B. High-Risk/Court Involved Youth: Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights

As the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights works directly with some of the city’s most vulnerable children, and works to connect its clients to the community-based supports and opportunities that help them to develop and thrive.

We seek to engage with organizations that have a demonstrated commitment to working with youth who are at the greatest risk of disconnection and court involvement. Together, we will build a strong continuum of services that meets young people where they are and empowers them to succeed and to define their own goals for success. The working group convened by LCCR will be charged with designing and implementing the pilot project that will test and refine the tools developed by the Forward Promise collaborative.

Population description: African American males ages 14-18 who are at risk for involvement in violence (court involved, expelled from school within the past 12 months, chronically truant, unenrolled in a traditional high school and without a diploma or GED)

C. Intervention: Total Community Action

Total Community Action (TCA) is a nonprofit community action agency whose mission is to reduce poverty in the community by providing human services, experiences, and opportunities which move individuals from poverty to self-sufficiency. TCA focuses on direct services, early childhood education, economic empowerment and asset development, policy and advocacy, and collective impact.

Through its role as an anti-poverty organization, TCA has served vulnerable and high risk populations for 50 years. Most recently TCA has partnered with the City of New Orleans through NOLA FOR LIFE: The Mayor's Comprehensive Murder Reduction Strategy, to address the needs of African American males most at risk for involvement in violence.

As the single point of entry for the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS)¹ and a member of the City's Reentry Program and CeaseFire² provider networks, TCA has been able to leverage its case management services and additional resources, including utility assistance, emergency food pantry, employment and workforce development services, financial planning and child care to meet the most basic needs of high risk individuals and their families.

Population description: *African American males 18-25 at high risk for involvement in violence (court involvement, affiliation with a group or gang, low educational attainment, unemployed)*

D. Reentry: City of New Orleans' Reentry Program

The City of New Orleans has developed a strategy to focus on access to employment, social services and education while also dealing with policies and procedures that create barriers to reintegration. The focus of the strategy is to:

- 1) Provide job training, education and jobs
- 2) Foster meaningful relationships between returning citizens, their families and their communities.
- 3) Provide access to services to treat the physical and mental illness issues of returning citizens
- 4) Break the bonds of addiction that lead returning citizens towards recidivating
- 5) Manage the key transition period of reentry through the promotion of employment and access to services, as well as, the reduction of policy barriers.

To this end, the City of New Orleans with assistance from social service providers and workforce partners has created a comprehensive workforce reentry program to provide wraparound social services, training and education opportunities, employment opportunities and community supports to those returning from incarceration. Leveraging the resources of our service partners, we will provide the participants access to job training and job assistance, substance abuse counseling as needed, housing

¹ **Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS):** Designed by criminologist David Kennedy, GVRS is a strategy that assembles law enforcement, service providers, and community members to deliver a strong message to violent offenders: "stop the shooting" while also dramatically improving access to social services and the administration of swift and targeted enforcement for those who continue to commit violence.

² **CeaseFire:** Ceasefire reduces the number of shootings and killings in the Central City target area through street level outreach that interrupts the violence.

assistance, access to healthcare, access to education and access to mentors and trainings that will equip them to be successful outside of the institution.

Population description: *Men and women, 16-30 years of age, who have committed a felony, have spent time either on probation or incarcerated and are most likely to either be victims or perpetrators of murders as well as those most likely to reoffend and reengage the criminal justice system.*

V. Proposal Narrative

Local nonprofits are invited to submit a proposal that describes their current programming, indicates the knowledge and/or expertise that they would bring to their selected convening table(s), and clearly demonstrates a commitment toward constructing a system that serves those at greatest risk for disconnection and violence. Proposals should address the following questions in the outline and order listed below. Limit the narrative to 3-5 pages—using no less than a 12-point font and one-inch borders on all sides.

On the attached application cover sheet, select the convening table(s) that your organization is interested in participating in:

- 1) **Prevention: Youth**
- 2) **Prevention: High-Risk Youth**
- 3) **Intervention: High-Risk Young Adults**
- 4) **Reentry: Returning Citizens**

A. Organization Information

- 1) Organization mission and vision statement
- 2) Description of your organization's relevant programming, *please include the following:*
 - a. Description of program model
 - b. Population(s) and number served
 - c. Program outcomes to date
 - d. Performance measurement tools

B. Programming

- 1) How do you measure success in your program(s)? How do you measure success on individual, programmatic, and systemic levels?
- 2) What processes do you use when you fail to meet targets?

C. Staffing/Representation

- 1) Identify the staff person (name, title, and responsibilities) that will be representing your organization at the convening table.
- 2) Why is this individual the most appropriate representative? Will this individual have the capacity to fulfill the time commitments as outlined in the expectations? Please explain.

D. Working as a Collaborative

- 1) Describe one example of your organization's experience in working with a collaborative? How did working in this collaborative cause your organization to change or adapt its practices?
- 2) What challenges did you encounter while working in the collaborative? How was your organization able to overcome these challenges?
- 3) Ultimately, what did your organization find to be of greatest value in working within a collaborative?

VI. Application Review and Selection Process

The grant review process will begin after the application due date. Each application will be reviewed to ensure that it is eligible for review based on compliance with the grant guidelines, criteria outlined in the application instructions, eligibility requirements and thoroughness of response. Applications that fail to meet requirements may be rejected and will not be further considered.

The City of New Orleans reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time prior to contract award. We also reserve the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, received in response to this RFP and to waive or permit cure of minor irregularities in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the selecting organization. Applicants whose proposals are not accepted will be notified in writing or email.

Organizations that are selected to participate in the NOLA FOR LIFE Services Collaborative may be required to execute a formal partnership agreement with the City of New Orleans.



**NOLA FOR LIFE Services Collaborative
Partnership Application Cover Page**

Please fill this application out completely (typed). Be concise, using only the space provided.

Organization Name:

Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Title:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email Address:

Organization Website:

Annual Operating Budget:

Type of Services (Check all that apply)

- Advocacy
- Behavioral Therapy
- Education
- Employment/Job Training
- Housing
- Legal Aid
- Mental Health
- Nutrition
- Substance Abuse
- Other _____

Select the convening table(s) that your organization is interested in participating in:

- Prevention: Youth
- Prevention: High-Risk Youth
- Intervention: High-Risk Young Adults
- Reentry: Returning Citizens

I agree to the terms of participation stated in Addendum C.

Executive Director (Print Name)

Executive Director (Signature)

Board President (Print Name)

Board President (Signature)

Addendum B – Evidence-Based Strategies to Support High Risk Individuals

The City of New Orleans and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recognize that solutions do not exist in isolation. As such, the working model will feature partnerships that employ a collective impact approach to support sustainable interventions and solutions that will improve outcomes for young men. While no one program model or intervention can meet the scale of the challenge and diverse needs of the target client base, the City of New Orleans will incorporate what the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has documented as key components of successful program interventions to improve outcomes for disconnected youth.¹ In addition to CLASP's recommendations, we add recognized components of successful reentry models.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide details in the Program Narrative section of the application about how your organization delivers one or more of the following services to high risk individuals. Please identify the evidence-based program model or curriculum you are implementing, information regarding the level or intensity of engagement, and estimated cost per client served. Preference will be given to those organizations that demonstrate the greatest potential to contribute to strong client outcomes and the viability of a specific convening table.

- ***Strong and persistent outreach, multiple points of entry***
In order to ensure access and community impact, investment in outreach strategies and staffing, particularly street outreach and the creation of “on ramps” and pipelines connecting youth and adults to life-changing opportunities and critical supports is essential.
- ***Caring advocacy and navigation (Case management)***
A caring advocacy and support system that helps individuals navigate a complex maze of programs, services and educational options. Rooted in the principles of case management, advocacy and navigation is designed to guide and support clients in choosing the set of services that best suits their individual needs. Such a system creates a personal relationship of respect and support between the client and well trained, caring advocates.
- ***Stable housing***
One of the most important factors to ensure successful intervention is stable housing. Without stable housing, high risk individuals can experience homelessness, causing them to become involved in survival activities that could lead to additional criminal justice system involvement.
- ***Cognitive behavioral therapy***
Those most at risk require comprehensive cognitive behavioral programming that incorporates a proven curriculum of critical thinking, anger management and moral reasoning. Additionally, program interventions should incorporate a host of life skills training opportunities including time management, financial management and decision-making skills.
- ***Access to health care and mental health services***
Disconnected and incarcerated youth and adults have higher than average rates of substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies and psychiatric disorders, all of which can impact behavior and the ability to make healthy decisions. Consequently, it is important to ensure that individualized, accessible, integrated and effective substance abuse, mental and physical health services are available.

- ***Multiple pathways integrating academic skills and occupational preparation***
The education/competency levels of disconnected youth and adults span a broad range. Individuals whose basic skills and English literacy are at low levels need substantial amounts of education in order to achieve a secondary school credential; individuals who have sufficient skills to earn a high school diploma or GED quickly may be nearly ready for college. Given these differences, a system that allows for multiple entry and exit points along an education continuum is most useful in meeting the diverse educational needs of the dropout population.
- ***Rich work experiences and workplace connections***
Work skills and protocols cannot be effectively imparted in classroom and workshop settings. This requires exposure to work and to people who work as role models. Especially in communities of high unemployment, a range of work-related experiences is essential to exposing individuals to a variety of work environments and career options and to fostering the development of appropriate workplace skills and a work ethic.

Often, the ability to sustain participation in education and training over a longer term depends directly on earning income. The array of work-related options should include subsidized employment, work experience, internship, paid or stipend community service, on-the-job training, tryout employment, part-time and full-time employment, and college work-study. These offerings should be arranged along a continuum that enables people to progress from the most sheltered experiences to unsubsidized private sector workplaces, depending on their level of work preparedness and comfort.

- ***Personal development, leadership and civic responsibility***
Preparing individuals for success in postsecondary endeavors and for advancement in workplace requires not only developing their critical academic and occupational skills but also honing their personal, communication, social, and life management skills. Activities that expose participants to new environments, engage them in civic projects, allow them to volunteer, and provide them with opportunities to lead and function as part of a team all contribute to the development of their skill sets. Helping youth mature into responsible adults who possess integrity, a strong work ethic, and a sense of personal, civic, and family responsibility should be a key objective of program intervention.
- ***Risk and recidivism reduction interventions***
Disconnected youth and adults often exhibit high risk behaviors, and have involvement in either or both the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Reconnecting disconnected individuals with active or past involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice system requires intentionality in behavioral interventions. In addition to the other services listed above, it is important to reconnect ex-offenders with mentors/personal coaches to support the development of “mental toughness.”

For our purposes, “*mentoring*” is defined as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where a caring volunteer assists ex-offenders in successfully and permanently re-entering or sustaining in their community by providing consistent support as needed, guidance, and encouragement that impacts the participants in developing positive social relationships and achieving personal outcomes such as job retention, family reunification, reduced recidivism.

Addendum C – Service Partner Terms of Participation

The NOLA FOR LIFE Services Collaborative provides an effective platform for members to foster greater program integration, reduce competition among service providers, and link institutions around a common agenda—transforming the lives of high risk individuals. This approach will strengthen the sector by sharing information, partnering to ensure effective service delivery, exchanging and developing practices that work, and achieving collective impact.

Consequently, the City of New Orleans, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and our convening partners require agreement to the following terms of participation. If your organization is willing to commit to these terms, please check the box on the “Cover Page” that reads “**I agree to the terms of participation stated in Addendum C.**”

1. Identify one key staff person able to make organizational decisions to actively participate in the Services Collaborative.
 - a. Meet with partners at a specific convening table at least 3 hours per month for 12 months.
 - b. Be prepared to spend approximately 3 hours per month for 12 months of preparatory work outside of the meetings.
2. Actively participate in monthly working sessions wherein members provide updates regarding provision of services to high risk individuals received through the centralized case management infrastructure.
 - a. Developing of common, or congruent, tools for intake, client assessment, and referral.
 - b. Developing consensus program standards
 - c. Developing a shared professional development agenda and calendar
 - d. Designing a pilot project, to be implemented in 2015.
3. Track and evaluate your organization’s service delivery to at-risk populations. Be willing to share successes and failures within the Services Collaborative to increase the capacity of the group.
4. Engage, as needed, non-Collaborative organizations and members of the continuum population as resources to better understand the needs of the target population.
5. Complete any reading assignments and review materials prepared by the consultant team prior to attending monthly sessions.
6. Participate in an evaluation process of the 12-month engagement that assesses the effectiveness of the Services Collaborative, highlighting at a minimum:
 - a. Lessons learned—including successes and failures—related to serving high risk individuals
 - b. New approaches to your organization’s work, working with others, and in the sector

ⁱ Linda Harris and Kisha Bird. “Comments to U.S. Department of Education Request for Information on Strategies for Improving Outcomes for Disconnected Youth,” Paper submitted by Center for Law and Social Policy, July 2012