

Request for Proposals: Legal Service Providers for Youth Represent Reentry Fellowship

Introduction

Youth Represent seeks host organizations to pilot a Youth Represent Reentry Fellowship, an exciting new initiative to support the success of justice-involved youth by providing advice and legal assistance. The Fellows will work under the supervision of the host organization to provide direct representation, and Youth Represent will provide support to jointly collect data and monitor results. Youth Represent will provide the host organization with a fellowship award of up to \$50,000 over the period of two years. The host organization will provide the Fellow with salary, fringe benefits, malpractice insurance, and appropriate workspace and supplies.

About Youth Represent

Youth Represent is dedicated to improving the lives and futures of young people affected by the criminal justice system. A conviction, an arrest, or even a simple interaction with police can have lasting consequences for young people, threatening the stability they need to thrive. When our justice system creates barriers to success for youth, we use the law to help them leave the stigma of a criminal record behind.

Youth Represent's community-lawyering model ensures that youth age 24 and under have access to reentry legal representation and advice in the neighborhoods where they live. Our goal is for youth from under-served and over-policed communities to be able to pursue the cornerstones of stability we all need—housing, employment, education, and family support—both during and after involvement with the justice system. Youth Represent attorneys travel to different community-based organizations across New York City where young people feel safe and comfortable, and we work on-site with youth, staff, and families to provide reentry legal services to secure the best possible solutions for each young person.

At the core of our model are our rich relationships with our community partners. We collaborate closely with partner staff and suggest career paths, vocational training, and educational opportunities that are possible given the particular criminal history of each participant. By breaking down legal barriers to reentry, this holistic partnership increases a young person's chance for success while also improving our partners' overall outcomes.

We are excited to bring this community-lawyering model to Strive's affiliate sites in Hartford, CT; Baltimore, MD; and New Orleans, LA.

About Strive

STRIVE was founded in East Harlem in 1984 to provide job training and placement services to individuals who faced substantial barriers to employment. STRIVE's mission is to help people acquire the life-changing skills and attitudes needed to overcome challenging circumstances, find sustained employment, and become valuable contributors to their families, their employers, and their communities.

From the outset, STRIVE adopted a rigorous approach to job readiness that focused on the behaviors and life situation of individuals with significant challenges. Three decades later, STRIVE's training and employment model has proven to be a highly flexible approach that works in diverse locations and cultures. The STRIVE model has been replicated in over 20 cities nationwide, administered by a robust network of community-based organizations. From its headquarters in East Harlem, STRIVE today is an international leader in helping individuals from underserved communities receive the training and support they need to obtain meaningful employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

STRIVE Future Leaders is a cohort model based program, grounded in positive youth development that encourages individualized program and career planning through strength-based assessments. STRIVE Future Leaders provides the opportunity for young adults to engage in life skills and job readiness training, workforce placements and credential attainment, and strong supportive services for up to one year.

STRIVE Future Leaders in Hartford, operated by the Career Resources Inc. (CRI), provides wrap around services for justice-involved young adults, ages 18 to 24, who reside in Hartford's socially and economically challenged neighborhoods. STRIVE Future Leader's goal is to enhance youth re-entry strategies and reduce youth recidivism rates through informed interventions and by placing young people in employment opportunities aligned with Hartford's current growth industries. CRI currently provides youth skill training opportunities in Hartford's growth industries of food services, retail sales, healthcare, office administrative support, and computer and mathematical operations. The program is funded through the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

Youth Represent Reentry Fellowships

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and in partnership with Strive, Youth Reentry Fellowships are designed to provide on-site civil legal assistance post-disposition to help youth understand their criminal history. Required legal services include obtaining a copy of each participant's RAP sheet, summarizing the contents, and explaining it to youth in a way they can understand. Optional legal services include advice or representation for youth who are being denied jobs or vocational licenses because of a criminal history, sealing or expunging cases where applicable, securing a driver's license, educational or housing advocacy, and other services that help youth successfully reenter the community. Fellows will be expected to work on-site at the Strive Affiliate one day each month to conduct intakes and be available for consultation. The Fellow will also be expected to conduct two Know Your Rights workshops each year for youth participants; Youth Represent will provide a curriculum.

Youth Represent Funding & Support

Youth Represent will provide host organizations with funds for the equivalent of 0.25 FTE of an attorney at a range of \$40,000 - \$50,000. The host organization can use the funds as it chooses, but will be responsible for covering the Fellow's payroll taxes and benefits. Youth Represent will also provide training in positive youth development lawyering, including concepts of motivational interviewing and assets-based framework. These trainings will be in webinar format, so the host organization may permit staff other than the Fellow to participate. We will also provide technical support for the process of obtaining and summarizing RAP sheets, as well as curricula on the rights of justice-involved youth as they pertain to one's criminal record, interactions with police, and employment rights. Youth Represent will provide ongoing technical assistance to Fellows. Funding for the Fellow will be for two years, with the potential for renewal, depending on the priorities of U.S. DOL.

Host Organization Contribution

Host organizations must have ready office infrastructure to host a Fellow. First, host organizations must fund the Fellow's health insurance and malpractice insurance (and where required, worker's compensation benefits). Second, host organizations must provide workspace, computer, email, office supplies, and other on-the-ground material support. Third, host organizations must commit to the success of this program and provide attorney supervision to support the Fellow providing direct legal services. Fourth, host organizations must be willing to collect data, participate in evaluation activities, and prepare and submit reports to Youth Represent. Lastly, the host organization must be willing to collaborate with Youth Represent on this national initiative.

Youth Represent and the selected host sites will complete and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prior to the Fellow's placement.

Host Organization Eligibility:

Applicants are limited to state, county, and local public defender offices; nonprofit organizations that provide direct legal services; faith-based and community organizations that provide direct civil legal services; and clinical programs within law schools that provide juvenile defense or civil legal services. Youth Represent welcomes a range of applicants from rural, urban, and suburban offices, and will seek geographic diversity in site locations. Priority will be given to applicants with experience serving youth or justice-involved populations.

Fellow Eligibility:

This initiative funds the placement of either new or current organizational staff (union concurrence required where applicable). The Fellow must be admitted to the local bar of the jurisdiction of the Strive affiliate site and must be able to begin delivering legal services upon execution of the MOU. Youth Represent is an equal opportunity organization. Host organizations are prohibited from discriminating in the Fellowship selection process.

Submission Details:

Proposal Deadline: All completed applications must be submitted to Fellowship@YouthRepresent.org by 11:59pm on June 9, 2017, with the subject line: "Proposal: Youth Represent Reentry Fellow Project – HARTFORD". All materials must be submitted as a single PDF file attachment. (Note that this deadline has been extended from the original June 1 deadline.)

Project Start Date: Youth Represent's objective is to select host organizations quickly and start Fellows in July, 2017.

Duration of Project: Funding for the pilot project is anticipated to run through March, 2019, though is subject to change based on availability.

Anticipated Number of Awards Under This RFP: One (1)

Application

Applicants must submit an Application Narrative that addresses each of the following questions. Please answer the questions in the order here and use the headers as written. Please limit your answers to no more than five pages, single-spaced.

- I. Organization Description:**
Provide a brief overview of your organization's history, mission and current programs.
- II. Organization Capacity:**
Describe your organization's capacity to administer this Fellowship. Include details on supervisory and logistical support, any material and personnel supports that will be available, your ability to manage grants, and evidence of strong connection to the community served.
- III. Programmatic Alignment:**
Explain why your organization is an appropriate choice as a host organization. What sets you apart from other organizations? What sort of training in culturally competent representation do your attorneys receive?
- IV. Applicant Capabilities & Competencies:**
Because the success of this project requires the Fellow to immediately begin providing services, local bar admission is required. Applicants who have specific Fellow candidates in mind are encouraged to submit, as part of this proposal, their resume and cover letter, written by the applicant, describing why they would be a good fit for the Fellowship. While identifying Fellows is not essential for the applicant's consideration, no MOU can be initiated and no project started without the identification and training of a specific attorney who is eligible to practice within the jurisdiction.
- V. Plan for Collecting Data:**
Because continued funding for the Fellow beyond the defined term will be predicated on demonstrating that dedicated attorney representation in this area is leading to better results for youth, a system of monitoring, data collection, and evaluation must be in place to capture measurable results within the first 3 months of the project. Describe the process for measuring the project performance and identify who will collect the data, who is responsible for performance measurements, and how the information will be used to guide and assess the program.
- VI. Host Organization Support**
Provide a proposed budget that delineates the costs to your organization of hosting a Fellow, including health insurance, malpractice insurance, and any in-kind materials and services that your office will be able to provide—including but not limited to, office space, computer/technical support, on-site supervision, access to support staff, Lexis or Westlaw or other legal research support, etc. Host organizations will be required to submit financial and progress reports to Youth Represent. Note that this budget and any accompanying notes will be included in the five-page narrative limit.

Application & Attachments

1. Application Cover Sheet (below)
2. Application Narrative (no more than 5 pages, single-spaced, 12pt. Times New Roman font)
3. Resume and Cover Letter of Proposed Fellow (where available)
4. Organization Operating Budget (identifying organizational expenses & sources of revenue)
5. Statement of Nondiscrimination
6. Statement of Union Concurrence (where necessary)
7. Any other relevant attachments, such as program evaluation, that you would like Youth Represent to consider (OPTIONAL)

Review Process

Youth Represent is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding grants. Youth Represent will review the application to make sure that the information presented is consistent with the solicitation. Youth Represent will assess applications meeting basic minimum requirements on technical merit. The application process will include a phone/Skype interview of the host organization by Youth Represent's site selection committee. Absent explicit statutory authorization or written delegation of authority to the contrary, all final decisions will be made by the Executive Director of Youth Represent.

Host Organization Inquiries

For more information, please email your questions to fellowship@youthrepresent.org with the subject line "Fellowship Inquiry." Please include your name, organization, and contact numbers if you request a phone consultation.

Note: Youth Represent is funding this initiative through a cooperative agreement with the federal government and Strive, and as such, program details are subject to change.

Youth Represent Reentry Fellow Application – HARTFORD

HOST ORGANIZATION:

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION (PUBLIC DEFENDER, LAW SCHOOL CLINIC, ETC.):

ADDRESS:

CITY, STATE, ZIP:

PHONE:

WEBSITE:

CONTACT PERSON (NAME & TITLE):

PHONE:

EMAIL:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OR EQUIVALENT:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

OPERATING BUDGET:

DATES COVERED BY THIS BUDGET:

DATE OF SUBMISSION: