



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

FY25 Thriving Youth Strategy External Evaluator

DATE OF ISSUE: July 31, 2024

Due: August 26, 2024

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BACKGROUND

Since 1991, Family League of Baltimore (Family League) has been the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore. Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions that align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Family League believes that racial equity plays a pivotal role in realizing its organizational vision and that it can be achieved when race no longer determines the life trajectory of people in Baltimore. As such, Family League applies a racial equity lens to its policies, practices, organizational culture, and grantmaking.

Family League's work is guided by, and its success is defined by its ability to address, the State of Maryland's 8 Child Well-being Results. We work to ensure that babies are born healthy; children are healthy; children enter school ready to learn; children are successful in school; youth will complete school; youth have opportunities for employment or career readiness; communities are safe for children, youth, and families; and families are economically stable.

As a careful steward of the funds awarded by the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and federal and private entities, Family League braids its resources together to maximize the impact of each dollar invested in support of these results areas. We leverage these resources to serve Baltimore's children, youth, and families and hold three key roles in the community: programming and grantmaking, coalitions and collaborations, and policy and advocacy.

Family League's Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

Family League is committed to strengthening Baltimore City-based businesses and incorporating a focus on equity and inclusion in its procurement process. It is the policy of Family League to provide all Baltimore City-based small, minority and/or woman-owned or -led businesses and other historically underrepresented and underutilized business enterprises the maximum practicable opportunity to compete and be awarded contracts to provide goods, services, and activities administered by the Organization.

THRIVING YOUTH STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Reducing juvenile recidivism is and will remain a city-wide effort focused on holistically supporting young people most at-risk of justice system involvement. Family League's Thriving Youth Strategy (hereafter, the Strategy) was implemented in FY21 and has expanded from partnerships with two community-based programs to four. The Strategy is designed to support youth ages 11-17 at-risk for justice system involvement and who have faced systemic barriers. In 2022, Family League began actively collaborating on interagency workgroups to operationalize recommendations associated with Mayor Scott's Prioritizing Our Youth Pillars. This is a "cornerstone of [Mayor Scott's] administration's strategy for a safer, more accountable, and more equitable Baltimore."¹

¹ City of Baltimore. (2021). Mayor Brandon M. Scott Building a Better Baltimore: First Term Action Plan, Released December 8, 2021. ActionPlanSummary.pdf (baltimorecity.gov)

Intense trauma associated with involvement in the juvenile justice system and an increased risk of negative outcomes for young people and their families. Confinement, detainment, and/or incarceration exposes youth to trauma and stigma, creates forced dependency, excludes young people from educational opportunities, offers few prospects for skill development, and often results in diminished psychological health.² These young people are also more likely to disengage from school and/or work. As young people disengage, their future employment prospects may be jeopardized and they are at risk of participating in risky behaviors. These risky behaviors may include squeegeeing (also sometimes referred to as panhandling) at various intersections throughout the city. Young people may engage in squeegeeing for several reasons including the need to support themselves and their families. These young people face systemic barriers such as housing instability, food insecurity, and trauma.

Given the potential negative outcomes, Family League’s Thriving Youth Strategy continues to focus on prevention and early intervention for young people who have been involved with the juvenile justice system with the goal of preventing future involvement. The Strategy evolved to include prevention of initial involvement with the juvenile justice system. The strategy currently has four funded partners: [Baltimore Brothers](#), [the Mayor’s Office of African American Male Engagement](#), [New Vision Youth Services](#), and [The Choice Jobs Program at UMBC](#). Each of these partners have utilized their unique expertise and approach to support young people. At a systems-level, the utilization of Baltimore City’s Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan has positioned program partners to implement and support three pillars:

- (1) Public Health Approach to Violence,
- (2) Community Engagement and Interagency Coordination, and
- (3) Evaluation and Accountability.”

Within the first pillar is an emphasis on youth justice, which is central to the Thriving Youth Strategy. Many of the partners supporting this plan are also critical partners in Family League’s Thriving Youth Strategy and worked to ensure coordination with the larger infrastructure supporting young people at risk of becoming or who have become involved with the juvenile justice system. At a systems-level, the utilization of Baltimore City’s Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan has positioned program partners to implement and support the three pillars.

² De Nike, M., Shelden, R., Macallair, D., & Menart, R. (2019). Collaborating for Successful Reentry: A Practical Guide to Support Justice-Involved Young People Returning to the Community. http://www.cjcj.org/uploads/cjcj/documents/collaborating_for_successful_reentry_juvenile_justice_practical_guide.pdf

Innovative funding structures that remove barriers for participants are critical for program success. With the support of funding from the Baltimore Children and Youth Fund (BCYF), the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), and from the Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund administered by the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS); Family League was able to prioritize the Result *Communities are Safe for Children, Youth and Families* and the Indicator *Juvenile Recidivism Rate in Baltimore City*, approaching this work through the lenses of prevention and early intervention by implementing a justice diversion program partnership strategy to address and respond to systemic inequities impacting Baltimore City youth with programming that helps youth begin to meet their basic needs, access services, receive education assistance, employment opportunities, and other supportive services to help meet their immediate safety needs and provide positive engagement opportunities.

PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTMENT

The goal of this project is to:

- Assess the impact and efficacy of this five-year investment before seeking future funding;
- Enable Family League to share lessons learned with the local community and state level Maryland agencies about the impact that this strategy had on youth. The final products should enable Family League to contribute to the discussion on the need for more diversion and mentoring programs, and the programs’ impact on youth, their families, and their communities at large. An external evaluation of the strategy would provide the evidence base needed to improve and advocate for these programs.

Our program evaluation data suggests positive outcomes from the Thriving Youth Strategy related to:

- Retention of participants in Thriving Youth programs and successful service provision
- Increased referrals to other supportive programs
- Creation and completion of youth community success plans
- Barrier reduction
- Reduction in squeegeeing
- Youth maintaining connections with work and school
- Youth re-connecting with work and school
- Youth alternatively served by restorative justice programs and Reduction of juvenile justice system involvement
- High youth satisfaction with program services and engagement opportunities

DEFINITIONS

- **Juvenile Recidivism:** The return to criminal or delinquent activity after previous criminal or delinquent involvement.

- **Thriving Youth Strategy (TYS):** The collaboration of community-based program partners and coordination of funding to implement services and strategies to support the needs of youth at risk of juvenile justice system involvement. The partners offer needed comprehensive services and solutions to decrease the occurrence of crimes involving juveniles.
- **Thriving Youth Workgroup:** The FY20 partnership between the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and Family League to convene a cross-sector workgroup that focused on reducing juvenile recidivism. The Thriving Youth Workgroup served as a collaborative table with representation from practitioners, funders, City and State agencies, and community that discussed the juvenile justice landscape, identified contributors to the high rate of juvenile recidivism, and lifted potential strategies to respond.
- **Thriving Youth Partnership (TYP):** The FY21 – FY24 coordination of trauma informed, evidence research- and/or community-based programming that addresses the two key components of the Strategy: re-entry planning and navigation and community-based programming.
- **Governor’s Office for Children:** The local governments’ one-stop shop for resources to improve public safety in Maryland that provides access to federal and state grant funds and assistance for towns, cities, counties, and agencies navigating gaining access to these resources.
- **ACEs:** Adverse childhood experiences are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).³ Also included are aspects of the child’s environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding. Other traumatic experiences can also impact health and wellbeing, such as not having enough food to eat, experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, or experiencing discrimination. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood as well as other potential challenges in school and work. ACEs are common; however, ACEs can be prevented.
- **Barrier Removal:** The provision of resources that assists participants in navigating the conditions, policies, and/or personal and social hurdles that many must surmount in day-to-day life that can prevent or impede full participation and success in the initiative. Examples include access to transportation, housing assistance dollars, assistance in securing legitimizing documentation (birth certificate, identification), access to and funding for expungement services.
- **Thematic Code Book:** list of themes found in qualitative data with definitions and examples.

³ Centers for Disease Control (2023). *Fast facts: Preventing adverse childhood experiences |violence prevention|injury Center|CDC*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Family League is seeking an external evaluator to complete an implementation and outcome evaluation of the Thriving Youth Strategy to understand how well the partnerships are working, their individual impact on program participants, and recommendations for future programming. Family League will provide the selected evaluator with evaluation data from July 2019 to present.

This will include:

- Program implementation data
- Quarterly Program Reports
- De-identified data on participants' enrollment, demographics, service utilization, referrals, justice system involvement, and connection to work and school;
- Limited anonymous youth participant feedback survey responses; and
- Limited school attendance and academic records.

We would like the evaluator or team of evaluators to conduct qualitative data collection sessions including 2-4 focus groups or up to 20 interviews with the Thriving Youth Program Strategy's Funded Partners' staff, program participants as allowable, and their families to collect additional qualitative data on the programs' process and outcomes.

The anticipated deliverables for the evaluation project include:

- Research questions and a logic model in consultation with Family League;
- Landscape analysis of the impact of similar programming supporting Opportunity Youth in the region and in similar populations;
- An interview and/or focus group protocol and script(s);
- Interview transcripts, thematic code book, and prevalence data on themes identified
- Documentation on existing data review and analysis;
- A draft of the report on which Family League will provide feedback and assist with meaning-making, if needed;
- A final public report that contains an Executive Summary, Methodology, Findings, Limitations, Data Visualizations, Conclusions, and Recommendations.;
- A presentation to internal Family League staff on the findings of the evaluation; and
- A presentation to TYP partners on the findings of the evaluation.

The External Evaluator shall comply with any contractual or statutorily required privacy standards for maintenance of data as applicable including those required by the Family Educational Records Privacy Act (34 CFR §99), The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) 45 CFR Part 160 and Part 164, Subparts A and E, and the Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.08.

GRANT TERMS & APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

This application is not to be considered an offer or guarantee of funding; should an applicant be selected, a separate contracting process will follow, which will represent the following terms:

Contract Award Amount: Not to exceed \$100,000.00

Contract Performance Period: Contingent upon available funding and completion of contracting, the anticipated period is October 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. Contract performance period, scope of work, and budget will be finalized during the contract execution period. A timeline will be developed with the consultant and Family League to determine when drafts of deliverables should be submitted and reviewed. **Final deliverables must be completed by June 30, 2025.** Project scope is negotiable to fit within this timeframe. All revisions to the contract and corresponding Scope of Work must be negotiated with and approved in writing by Family League.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit proposals through FUNDINGtrack, Family League’s online grants management system accessible through <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Submission must be completed by the date and time specified in this RFQ (REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS) and in the FUNDINGtrack application. The deadlines will be strictly enforced. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application process is completed by the deadline. Hard copies, emailed copies, and late submissions will not be accepted. Furthermore, Family League reserves the right, at its sole and absolute discretion, to amend or modify any provision of this RFQ or to withdraw this RFQ at any time prior to the contract award. Family League shall not be bound by or liable under this RFQ and/or any response thereto until a final written contract has been executed by Family League and the grantee incorporating the terms and conditions of the award.

Applications Due: August 26, 2024, by 4:00pm, EST

Registration

All applicants must be registered in FUNDINGtrack. This is done by selecting the “Register” link on the portal’s home page, found here: <https://flb.fluxx.io>. Applicants will receive login credentials via email within three business days of submission of the registration form. Applicants are highly encouraged to register early.

Organization Information and Documentation

The Organizational Profile enables all registered users of FUNDINGtrack to provide the key business and contact information needed from partners. All registered users should fully complete the requested information and upload the due diligence documentation required in this RFQ.

Help using the Online Application

For questions or problems, contact Family League’s Help Desk at support@familyleague.org, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE & QUESTIONS

Questions can be emailed to fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org. **Questions will be accepted until close of business (4:00 pm) on August 5, 2024.** All questions and responses will be publicly posted on the Family League website <http://familyleague.org/funded-partnerships/funding-opportunities/professional-service-opportunities/> by **August 7, 2024.**

A Pre-proposal Conference will be held on **August 5, 2024, 4:30pm-5:30pm** via Zoom:

Funded Partnerships is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: FY25 Thriving Youth Evaluator RFQ Pre-Proposal Conference

Time: Aug 5, 2024 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/83861257072?pwd=I6iGAgzPAbMTwx4y2O53Q6GilU1KKN.1>

Meeting ID: 838 6125 7072

Passcode: 408658

One tap mobile

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+14703812552,,83861257072# US (Atlanta)

Dial by your location

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• +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

• +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)

• +1 470 250 9358 US (Atlanta)

• 833 548 0276 US Toll-free

• 833 548 0282 US Toll-free

• 877 853 5247 US Toll-free

• 888 788 0099 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 838 6125 7072

Find your local number: <https://familyleague-org.zoom.us/j/9876543210>

RFQ Components

In order to be considered for this opportunity, applicants must complete all application questions/components and provide the following documents :

- Researcher(s) resume and bio;
- Proposed budget for this project;
- Proposed timeline and outline of research process;
- A letter of reference dated within the past 12 calendar months;
- 1-2 samples of final reports for other projects that include mixed methods analysis and data visualization;
- Certificate of Good Standing with the State of Maryland dated within the past 30 days; and
- Audited Financial Statements dated within the past 12 calendar months.

Communication Regarding RFQ

To maintain fairness in the process, inquiries concerning this RFQ, including questions related to technical issues, are to be directed through email to fundedpartnerships@familyleague.org. Communication by telephone or in person will not be accepted.

Inquiries or requests for clarification submitted prior to 4:00 pm on August 5, 2024, 4:00pm (EST) will be addressed in writing and available on Family League’s website at www.familyleague.org no later than **June 20, 2024**. **All proposal responses and supporting documentation must be received by the deadline.**

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Review Panel

Applications will be reviewed and rated by a panel comprised of individuals with experience, knowledge, and expertise in the field. This panel may include service professionals; community members; parents, youth, and/or family members of Baltimore City. Review panelists will serve at the invitation of Family League.

Selection Criteria

Criteria, including compliance with RFQ priorities/requirements, will be used in determining which applicants will be granted the award and become community partners. This includes that the proposal is:

- Designed to incorporate and support community voice;

- Aligned with and designed to report on the priority that communities are safe for children, youth, and families;
- Aligned to meet Family League of Baltimore’s mission and priorities; which are to “work collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions that align resources to dismantle the systemic barriers which limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities,” and that “Children are Successful in School; Families are Economically Stable; and Communities are Safe for Children, Youth, and Families; and
- Meets the needs identified by Baltimore City stakeholders and shows knowledge and experience conducting research ethically with communities.

Announcement

Funding decisions are expected to be announced by the week of October 2, 2024.

Key Dates and Deadlines

DATE	TASK
July 31, 2024	RFQ Released
August 5, 2024	Question & Answer Deadline
August 5, 2024	Pre-Proposal Conference
August 7, 2024	Q&A Posted to Family League website
August 26, 2024	Applications Due
August 27 – September 3, 2024	Technical Review & Cure Period
September 4 – October 1, 2024	Application Review
October 2, 2024	Determination Notices
October 8, 2024	Scope Finalization (in collaboration with Family League)
October 1, 2024	Contract Term Start Date
June 30, 2025	Contract Term End Date