



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 5, 2016

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL LAUNCHES NEXT PHASE OF COMPREHENSIVE MENTORING INITIATIVE THROUGH AN RFP TO REACH 1,000 ADDITIONAL YOUTH**

*Organizations and community-based partners encouraged to apply to deliver mentoring, support Mayor's plan to reach youth in highest need communities*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) today announced the next steps to carry out a bold three year initiative to provide mentoring programs to 7,200 boys and young men in high crime neighborhoods. A Request for Proposal (RFP) that launched today is seeking organizations with a strong presence in targeted communities to supplement the City's comprehensive mentoring plan with out-of-school mentoring for male youth.

"Earlier this year, we made a promise to our communities that we would support our next generation with more opportunities for all of our youth to succeed," said Mayor Emanuel. "We have delivered on that promise, and the RFP is the next step to grow the kind of mentoring services that will make a difference in young men's lives and help them to get back on track for a better future."

An integral component of the administration's public safety strategy announced earlier this year, the growth of the mentoring initiative through the RFP will complement a significant expansion in Chicago Public Schools through the Becoming A Man (BAM) program. An investment by the administration in September allowed the program to grow by an additional 1,300 youth to serve more than 4,000 students today.

As part of the Mayor's public safety strategy over the next three years, DFSS is seeking grassroots, community-based partners to link boys and young men in 8th, 9th and 10th grades to caring adults who can serve as positive role models, coaches and guides as youth navigate their teenage years. The RFP will help to identify organizations with a strong track record of providing youth programming who have the appropriate plans, experience and capacity to mentor youth through the Mayor's initiative.

Specifically, this RFP is seeking providers to support boys and young men during out of school time, focusing on both active students and through supports to re-engage those boys and young men at risk of falling out of school system. To reach both, the RFP will look to community providers to address chronic absenteeism and truancy, as well as the socio-emotional and cognitive therapy.

The high-quality mentoring partnerships that will be formed as a result of the RFP process will provide sustained contact between youth and caring adults at least five hours per month, as well as a focus on developing skills or training through program activities such as employment skills, postsecondary opportunities, or anti-bullying. Youth will be provided with a setting that incorporates positive values, principles and practices while addressing students' socio-emotional needs.

Mentorship has been proven to be an effective strategy for increasing high school graduation rates and reducing violence. Research by the University of Chicago Crime Lab suggests the promise of this approach for improving the life outcomes of vulnerable young men. The Crime Lab found that BAM reduces violent crime arrests among participants by 45-50 percent, and increases on-time high school graduation rates by 19 percent.

"In order to drive our work forward, we are seeking strong organizations that have roots in these communities of need, and those who can provide support and guidance to our young boys and men," said DFSS Commissioner Lisa Morrison Butler. "Our RFP presents a unique opportunity for leaders in the community to play and make a difference in thousands of lives."

Today's launch commences Part One of the RFP process and includes a Pre-Proposal Screening to first identify specific criteria for community-based partners before they may submit a full proposal and demonstrated work plan. The initial criteria sought by the RFP include: demonstrated success operated a mentoring program in past years; physical presence in one of the 22 identified community areas; background in mentoring young males; and 501c3 status.

In recognition of the strong body of research which shows young men who have dropped out of school and are unemployed to be far more likely to be the victims and perpetrators of violent crime, the Mayor's mentoring plan will seek to provide the most at-risk youth from 22 of our city's highest poverty and highest violence neighborhoods with the support they need to remain on-track to graduate from high school and to avoid involvement in the criminal justice system.

Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications will be asked to submit a full proposal starting January 25th, 2017. Part Two of the RFP process will ask more in-depth questions regarding program plans, experience and capacity, with winners announced in March 2017. Executives from the winning organizations will participate in a professional

leadership program to help build organizational capacity, learn from best practices and establish standards of implementation while meeting the goals of the initiative.

DFSS will also host a webinar with University of Chicago Urban Labs, on December 13th for those who are interested in mentoring to answer any outstanding questions or further explain the criteria.

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