



**Department of  
Youth & Community  
Development**

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**CONCEPT PAPER**

**for**

**BEACON COMMUNITY CENTERS**

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## **I. Purpose**

This concept paper is a precursor to a forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) through which the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) will seek appropriately qualified not-for-profit organizations to operate 56 Beacon Community Centers (Beacons) in neighborhoods across New York City (City) including 15 with an Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) foster care prevention services component. DYCD will also seek vendors to provide technical assistance support for the Beacon program contractors. Accordingly, there will be three Service Options: Service Option 1 – Beacons without ACS Services, Service Option 2 – Beacons with ACS Services, and Service Option 3 – Technical Assistance.

## **II. The Beacon Model**

The Beacon programs are school-based community centers designed to serve youth and adults during non-school hours, thereby maximizing effective use of public assets. The first Beacons were established in 1991 with funding from the municipal “Safe Streets, Safe Cities” initiative amid widespread concerns about drug-related crime and public safety in the City. The Beacon programs have always been supported by a mix of funding that includes City Tax Levy dollars and federal sources such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Conceived as collaborative, multi-service, safe havens, they represented a convergence between youth and community development, engaging youth, families and adults through a range of recreational, educational, career and community services.<sup>1</sup> As in the past, today’s Beacons aim to promote the healthy social and emotional development of youth while at the same time responding to the needs of adults. As a result of interagency collaboration between DYCD and ACS, 15 Beacons include foster care prevention services that provide on-site assistance for youth and their families.

Beacons operate in familiar, secure, public school environments, and all their activities and services are provided free. They offer young people “a place to grow” through participation in challenging activities, experience of caring relationships beyond the family, and the chance to contribute to the program and the community.<sup>2</sup> Beacons emphasize youth leadership and set high expectations for participation, behavior and goals.<sup>3</sup> They also provide valuable services for parents and other adults on weekday evenings and on weekends and build on the strengths of community-based organizations to offer both volunteer and staff opportunities.

Beacons have always played a unique role in relation to adolescents by offering a variety of activities in a safe environment. In its 2007 RFP, DYCD launched its Middle School Initiative in response to studies highlighting the developmental challenges that often confront middle school students. For the first time, Beacons were required to provide a minimum of 200 middle school youth annually with structured programming, in six core areas, for at least 216 hours. The initiative was a significant innovation and the lessons learned will be reflected in the upcoming RFP.<sup>4</sup>

## **III. The Beacons Going Forward**

The vision for the Beacons set out in this concept paper is informed by the research literature on youth development and effective youth programming, including evaluations of DYCD programs, the experience of DYCD program managers, and input from a range of key stakeholders. The voices of young Beacon participants were heard through interview and survey data collected by Policy Studies Associates Inc. for

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<sup>1</sup> See, Beacons - A Union of Youth and Community Development. 1997 [http://forumfyi.org/files/3\\_B\\_UYCD.pdf](http://forumfyi.org/files/3_B_UYCD.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *A Place To Grow* - Evaluation of the New York City Beacons Final Report 2002 <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED502385.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Beacons - A Union of Youth and Community Development, Op. Cit.

<sup>4</sup> The Beacon Community Centers Middle School Initiative: Final Report on Implementation and Youth Experience in the Initiative. Jennifer LaFleur, Christina A. Russell, Mark Low, Rebecca Romash Policy Studies Associates, September 2011. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/Beacon\\_Middle\\_School\\_Initiative\\_Final\\_Report2011.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/Beacon_Middle_School_Initiative_Final_Report2011.pdf)

the evaluation of the Middle School Initiative and a more recent youth survey. Discussions were convened with program directors of Beacons including those with ACS services, advocates and experts, and executive directors of community-based organizations (CBOs) with current Beacon contracts. DYCD also met with senior staff of other key City agencies including ACS and the Department of Education (DOE).

### *Building on strengths, enhancing school partnerships, and increasing flexibility*

Going forward, DYCD expects the Beacons to continue to operate as vibrant community centers providing a range of services for school-age youth<sup>5</sup> and adults on a year-round basis, including the summer. To ensure a rich menu of activities for participants in different age groups, programs will be expected to draw on resources from within their own organization and, wherever possible, forge relationships with external partners, as the most successful Beacons have always done. The RFP will emphasize, in particular, the importance of integrating programming that is provided by co-locators into the overall Beacon program design, so it forms part of a coherent whole.

Historically, Beacons sites were predetermined by DYCD. In the forthcoming RFP, CBOs will be permitted to propose to locate a Beacon in any public school where the principal welcomes the program and there is no DYCD City or discretionary, Council-funded Out-of-School Time (OST) program. However, DYCD will encourage proposers to select schools located in one of the high-need Community Districts listed in Section X below. This approach will provide flexibility for proposers while targeting communities with greater needs, including communities where the number of foster-care placements suggests a need for ACS prevention services. In addition, it will ensure that DYCD policy is in line with CDBG guidelines which require grantees to give priority to activities that benefit lower income persons.<sup>6</sup>

### *Middle school youth*

DYCD will continue the Beacon Middle School Initiative, but with reduced requirements in terms of numbers and contact hours. This change will give Beacons greater flexibility to address, in addition, important needs among younger and older school-age youth. For example, it may be a priority in certain neighborhoods to respond to the needs of working parents by offering quality afterschool activities for elementary age children. Elsewhere, the priority may be high school-age youth, with offerings that address the transition from high school to post-secondary education and the world of work, including career and college options, work experience, and internships opportunities.

The case for maintaining efforts to engage middle school students is amply demonstrated in the research literature.<sup>7</sup> It is typically in middle school that youth confront the multiple challenges of adolescence and identity formation. As they gain more freedom to make their own choices, middle school students are increasingly at risk for becoming disengaged from school. However, while they are most likely to benefit from youth programs that foster physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth, middle school youth are often reluctant to participate in such activities.<sup>8</sup> The Beacon Middle School Initiative and similar

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<sup>5</sup> That is, youth from Kindergarten through age 21.

<sup>6</sup> Twelve Beacon programs are currently funded exclusively through the CDBG. [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/entitlement](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/entitlement). As noted above, the Beacon Community Centers were conceived as safe havens in high poverty, high-crime neighborhoods. The target community districts identified on page 14 below include neighborhoods where safety is currently a concern, as well as poverty. See e.g., *Ranking New York City's Communities by Risks to Child Well-Being* (see under "Safety"). Citizens Committee for Children of New York, Inc. [www.ccnyc.org/Web%20Graphics/KT10/rankingriskchart.pdf](http://www.ccnyc.org/Web%20Graphics/KT10/rankingriskchart.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Afterschool Innovations in Brief - Focusing on Middle School Age Youth, January 2011

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/MetLifeCompendium.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Eccles, J., & Gootman, J.A. (Eds.) (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; and Balfanz, R., & Herzog, L. (2006). *Keeping middle grades students on track to graduation*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Philadelphia Education Fund.

initiatives elsewhere show that effective outreach and well-planned, properly implemented, rewarding activities are able to attract these adolescents.<sup>9</sup>

Beacons can recruit and retain middle school students, build their resiliency, help prevent their involvement in risky behaviors (such as skipping school, smoking, and experimentation with drugs and sex) and, thus, lay the foundation for their future success. They will participate in hands-on, structured activities if they have “voice and choice” that allows them to select and shape projects, gain a sense of purpose, and experience the satisfaction of mastery. Many middle school youth want to know about career choices and college options, enjoy participating in sports, and find structured cultural, arts and service projects stimulating and rewarding.<sup>10</sup>

### *Promoting college-readiness*

Beacons are also well-placed to offer youth a variety of engaging, age-appropriate learning opportunities that promote college readiness and highlight the links between high school graduation, postsecondary education and training, and future success in the labor market. The importance of college degrees and other credentials to better employment opportunities and financial self-sufficiency in adulthood has been confirmed.<sup>11</sup> By 2018, it is expected that two-thirds of all jobs in the U.S. will require at least some college education<sup>12</sup> and, over a lifetime, a college graduate can be expected to earn \$1 million more than a high school graduate.<sup>13</sup> College graduates also benefit from higher rates of civic participation and other positive outcomes.

Beacon programming can play a significant role by promoting life-long learning and a college-bound culture. Beacons can ensure that participants of all ages are aware of college requirements and other postsecondary options and even, for example, connect youth to education experts able to assist with the selection of courses that focus on college readiness, provide mentors and arrange trips to college campuses, and help disconnected youth explore alternative routes to college.

### *Adults and families*

DYCD will also expect Beacons to offer services that address identified needs among adults and make deliberate efforts to engage families.<sup>14</sup> For example, there may be a demand for classes that lead to academic or vocational qualifications, English language credentials, or mastery of computer skills; for activities that promote health and fitness; for legal or financial advice or healthcare services; or for workshops on parenting skills, the DOE application process for middle and high school, and requirements for high school graduation and college admission. In addition, through interactions with parents and other caregivers, Beacons can provide families with critical information and resources that have a bearing on

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *Best of Both Worlds – Aligning Afterschool Programs With Youth Development Principles And Academic Standard*, Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center, <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Afterschool Innovations in Brief - Focusing on Middle School Age Youth, Op. Cit.

<sup>11</sup> For example, data from 2004-2005 showed that 83 percent of those with a bachelor's degree were employed compared to only 70% of high school graduates. See, Khatiwada, Ishwar; McLaughlin, Joseph; Sum, Andrew; with Sheila Palma (2007), National Commission on Adult Literacy, *The Fiscal Consequences of Adult Educational Attainment*. Center for Labor Market Studies Northeastern University. <http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/content/fiscalimpact.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Carnevale, Anthony; Smith, Nicole; and Strohl, Jeff (2010). *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018*. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Retrieved February 27, 2012, from <http://cew.georgetown.edu/jobs2018/>

<sup>13</sup> Root Cause (2010). *Social Impact Research College Access and Success Report*. Retrieved February 27, 2012, from <http://rootcause.org/documents/CAAS-Issue.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> *Issue Topic: Building the Future of Family Involvement*, Special Issue of *The Evaluation Exchange*, Harvard Family Research Project. Spring 2008. <http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/building-the-future-of-family-involvement>; Beyond the Bell®: A Toolkit for Creating Effective. Afterschool Programs. Literature Review. January 2008. Jaime Stephanidis and Judith Murphy. <http://www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/homework/pdf/BTBLLitReview.pdf>

their children's futures such as the college admission process, SAT preparation, and financial aid for college.

Beacons will be expected to intentionally develop relationships with parents and other caregivers of youth attending the program. Parents are the primary adults in the lives of young children. They shape their behavioral norms and values and are largely responsible for whether they attend school and participate in out-of-school activities on a regular basis. By working with and supporting parents, Beacons can maximize the impact of their efforts to enhance social and emotional learning and build resilience among school-age participants.

#### **IV. Beacon Funding, Sites and Relationships with Host Schools**

As a result of the economic recession, DYCD is confronting difficult choices with respect to allocation of scarce resources. It is anticipated that the total maximum funding for the Beacon initiative will be **\$22,550,000**. Bearing in mind the needs of families as well as the financial challenges facing Beacon providers, DYCD proposes to fund **56 Beacons at a level of \$400,000 per Beacon**. While the City cannot support the same number of Beacons as it has during the last decade, this funding will nevertheless represent a meaningful contribution to community resources in a significant number of high-need neighborhoods. For full details of anticipated funding for the Beacon initiative, see Section X below.

As indicated above, there will be no fixed list of eligible Beacon sites. To maximize the impact of available resources and promote effective delivery of quality programs, DYCD will expect proposers to identify schools that meet minimum space and facility requirements and demonstrate a clear commitment to hosting the Beacon. Minimum space and facility requirements will include dedicated, full-time office space for computer equipment, storage space, desks and telephone, as well as access to five to ten classrooms, the school auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, and, if applicable, the playground. In addition, all Beacon host sites will have to be licensed under and adhere to the requirements of the School Age Child Care (SACC) Regulations<sup>15</sup> and the New York State Day Camp Regulations.<sup>16</sup>

A key factor in program success, highlighted in several studies, including the evaluation of the Middle School Initiative, is the Beacon-school relationship. The importance of this relationship is also supported by the experience of DYCD and its Beacon contractors. DYCD anticipates that the RFP will require proposers to demonstrate the school's commitment by submitting a Beacon-School Collaborative Agreement with their proposals. This agreement will affirm that the school understands the implications of being a host site, is willing to host the Beacon, and supports the proposed program design.

##### *Sites for Beacons with ACS Services*

In collaboration with ACS, DYCD will support ACS Foster Care Preventive Programs at 15 of the 56 Beacon sites. The ACS services are designed to help families make positive changes in their lives that reduce the risk of children being placed in foster care. Proposers seeking to operate a Beacon site with ACS services must provide the ACS component which will vary in size according to the number of families to be served. (See **Section X** for details concerning funding for the ACS-Beacon programs.) At the 15 ACS-Beacon sites, in addition to the minimum requirements for all Beacon sites indicated above, there must be sufficient space to accommodate private consultations.

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<sup>15</sup> See, [http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/414\\_SACC\\_regs.asp](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/414_SACC_regs.asp);  
<http://www.opal.ny.gov/gorr/pas/paslib.nsf/d74e34081d647438852569ae0050fd9c/d5adf98ec1f413b085256755004d27b0?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1,5>; [http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/forms/day\\_care/lrp/applications/school-age%20child%20care%20application%20package%20-%20sample.pdf](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/forms/day_care/lrp/applications/school-age%20child%20care%20application%20package%20-%20sample.pdf) For additional guidelines and updates from OCFS, <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/letters.asp>.

<sup>16</sup> See, <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/camps/nyscamp.htm>

## V. Participants/Participation Levels

As in the past, the forthcoming RFP will require the Beacons to operate as community centers serving both youth and adults.

Each Beacon will serve a minimum 1,200 individuals annually in the following three categories: *basic participation levels* (500), *intensive participation levels* (200), and *community events* (500).

### 1. Basic Participation Levels

The Beacon will serve at least 500 individuals, as follows:

- Minimum of 100 middle school youth
- A combined total of at least 300 elementary school and high school-aged youth
- Minimum of 100 adults 21 years and older, including seniors

Individuals will count towards the required minimum for basic service levels in each age group if they attend the Beacon at least five times during the year for any activity. DYCD anticipates that, if the Beacon has designed its programming in response to community needs and interests, individuals, youth or adults, will participate multiple times during the course of the year, whether or not they are willing to commit to structured activities with attendance requirements.

### 2. Intensive Participation Levels

The Beacon will serve at least 200 additional youth intensively, as follows:

- Minimum of 100 middle school youth
- Minimum of 100 elementary, middle or high school age youth or a combination of youth from those age groups

For these 200 youth, participation requirements pertain to structured activities and will vary according to the age of the participants, as follows:

- Elementary school youth: 200 hours annually per participant  
Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of 80 percent
- Middle school youth: 150 hours annually per participant
- High school youth: 100 hours annually per participant

### 3. Community Events

- Minimum of 500 individuals in any age group, annually

Community events will take place on a regular basis throughout the year. At least three community events per year will involve participants who receive a service (for example, health or benefits screenings) or who provide a service (for example, participation in a community service project).

## VI. Beacon Program Design

As neighborhood community centers, the Beacons will operate year-round and provide a mix of programming for youth and adults. The primary goals of the Beacon will be to promote positive youth development and provide activities and services for adults that reflect community needs. While all Beacons will be expected to offer a range of activities of sufficient frequency and duration to



achieve these goals, the precise program menu at each location will vary. Thus, beyond the specified DYCD minimum programming requirements, providers will have flexibility with respect to their program designs. In all cases, however, programs will effectively engage youth and build on community strengths.

### *Three programming modes*

Each Beacon will be expected to offer programming in three distinct modes: (1) structured activities; (2) unstructured activities; (3) community events.

(1) Structured activities are sequenced activities that require regular attendance for a specific period in order to achieve specified learning or skill gains.<sup>17</sup> Examples might include a project to improve math or reading skills using a curriculum/lesson plan that moves participants from one skill level to the next; a team sport that teaches youth the basic skills needed to play successfully, knowledge of the rules and winning strategies; curriculum-based dance or arts programs; a drama class that leads up to a performance; GED preparation, ESOL or computer skills programs and service projects.

(2) Unstructured activities are supervised activities that do not involve sequenced lesson plans or require regular attendance by participants, but offer open access to resources such as the gym, game-room, computer lab, teen lounge or quiet zone.

(3) Community events may target specific age groups or be designed for participants of all ages. Typically, they will take place during the evenings or on weekends and have specific themes such as healthy living, prevention of HIV/AIDS, or career/employment opportunities. Community events may be designed around service projects.

### *Program content*

Six Core Activity Areas: DYCD will expect Beacons to offer *structured* programming under each of the six activity areas specified below with some examples:

- *Academic enhancement*: Tutoring, homework assistance, reading clubs, and computer-assisted and project-based learning including STEM<sup>18</sup> projects, and other activities designed to support basic academic skills and encourage regular school attendance.
- *Life-skills*: Mentoring and counseling, and age-appropriate activities on topics such as financial literacy, substance abuse and HIV prevention, and other activities that build social and emotional skills and resilience, develop effective communication skills, and foster personal responsibility and pro-social behaviors and norms.
- *Career awareness/school-to-work transition*: Career exploration, college options/tours, job training/job search, internships, job shadowing, resume writing, managing transitions to employment.
- *Civic engagement/community building*: Age-appropriate activities designed to build leadership skills and foster civic responsibility such as individual and team volunteering,

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents. Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, Molly Pachan. Published online: 19 March 2010 American Journal of Community Psychology (2010) 45:294–309 295. <http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/A-meta-analysis-of-after-school-programs-that-seek-to-promote-personal-and-social-skills-in-children-and-adolescents.pdf>; Achieving Program Quality in the DYCD Out-of-School Time Initiative: Strategies from 15 Programs. Christina A. Russell, Karen Walking Eagle, Monica B. Mielke. Policy Studies Associates, Inc. May 2010 [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/OST\\_In-Depth\\_Evaluation-Report\\_2010.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/OST_In-Depth_Evaluation-Report_2010.pdf); The Quality of School-age Child Care in After-school Settings. Priscilla M.D. Little (2007) <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12576/pdf>

<sup>18</sup> STEM is the acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.



service learning projects based on a life-skills curriculum, community and youth forums or debates.

- *Recreation/health and fitness*: Games and sports (e.g., chess, basketball, swimming, martial arts), organized sports leagues, team activities such as dance troupes and cheerleading, aerobics and fitness training.
- *Culture/art*: Art, music, dance, spoken word/poetry, and drama, field trips to museums, art galleries, and historical sites/cultural events and projects designed to foster respect for other cultures and appreciation of diversity.

### *Characteristics of Effective School-Based Programs*<sup>19</sup>

Based on research as well as the experience of DYCD program managers, quality school-based programs serving youth and adults share certain features, which are presented below as general guidelines for proposers:

General. Programs have qualified staff, strong leadership, good supervision of and support for junior staff, and an adequate staffing pattern; solid relationships with host schools; a variety collaborative relationships with other organizations that help leverage additional resources; effective outreach strategies; a range of engaging, structured activities that offer participants tangible benefits; and data-informed decision-making.

Younger youth. Programs focus on social and emotional learning and address participants' developmental needs;<sup>20</sup> place sufficient emphasis on physical activity;<sup>21</sup> enable participants to experience positive personal relationships and develop sound relationship skills; offer homework help, tutoring and alternative learning strategies to intentionally address the academic and cognitive needs of participants; provide activities that involve project-based, hands-on learning opportunities and build skills in areas of interest to the participants; and engage parents.

Older youth. Programs use targeted outreach strategies; empower youth, through a Youth Council and other means, to allow participants to shape program development and the menu of activities offered; provide choices, with a range of structured activities of interest and importance to older youth; focus on critical life-skills, communication skills, and teamwork; encourage career exploration, highlighting the significance of high school and college graduation in expanding future employment options; arrange work or internship experiences; include intergenerational programming such as peer tutoring, peer mentoring and other service activities; offer a safe environment, like a teen lounge, where older youth can congregate; and engage parents.

Adults. Program designs reflect identified community needs, priorities and interests; offer structured skill-building activities to further participants' career and employment opportunities (e.g., GED preparation, ESOL, computer training classes); teach parenting skills and engage parents in their children's education and achievement; promote healthy life styles; offer unstructured activities such as dance classes, exercise classes, or access to computers and game rooms; provide services in response to

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<sup>19</sup> See, e.g. Beacon Profiles, Youth Development Institute, 2002

<http://www.ydinstitute.org/resources/publications/BeaconProfilesPDF.pdf>; Christina A. Russell, Karen Walking Eagle, Monica B. Mielke, Op. Cit.; Priscilla M.D. Little, Op. Cit.

<sup>20</sup> Durlak and Weissberg, Op. Cit.

<sup>21</sup> Studies point to ways in which physical activity not only promotes physical health but also helps children to better relate to their peers and resolve conflicts constructively. See, e.g., New Research Shows a Healthy Recess Can Reduce Bullying, Expand Learning Time in Schools. Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Newsroom at <http://rwjf.org/newsroom/product.jsp?id=74194>.

specific needs, e.g., legal clinics on employment rights, immigration law, eligibility-screening for food stamps and other public benefits, health screenings, and health and dental services.

### *Intergenerational Activities*

The Beacons are ideal settings for inter-generational activities since the center offers a welcoming environment for youth and adults of all ages. Programs can recruit older youth, young adults and older adults as volunteers or staff for mentoring and tutoring roles to help develop participants' life skills and resilience or provide the additional supports they need to improve basic literacy and math skills.

### *Community Events*

Community events can adopt a wide variety of themes or issues such as healthy life-styles, HIV/AIDS prevention, career and college pathways, financial aid for college, and strategies to reduce and prevent neighborhood violence. These events may be open to all local residents or target specific groups, as appropriate. They can also be used to deliver valuable services such as health screenings, immunizations, or legal clinics, or to organize a service project focusing, for example, on neighborhood beautification or a park or street clean-up.

### *Co-Locators*

Beacons typically include some activities and services that are provided by another organization or another unit of their own organization. In either case, DYCD will expect such activities or services to be integrated into the overall program design, with the arrangements evidenced by co-locator linkage agreements that are submitted with the proposal.

### ACS Programs

The goals and objectives for the ACS Foster Care Preventive Services are to:

- Prevent child abuse and neglect and promote the safety of children;
- Serve children and their families in their neighborhoods of origin;
- Ensure that children are safe, healthy, and well cared for;
- Strengthen families;
- Reduce the likelihood of placements into foster care for children receiving preventive services;
- Reduce the likelihood of children receiving preventive services will be the subject of subsequent abuse and neglect reports; and
- Work with family Foster Care and Residential Care contractors to promote permanency for children in foster care and reduce their risk of re-entry into foster care after discharge.

Preventive Services are expected to provide services to families in accordance with federal, State, and city regulations, and with policies, procedures, and standards promulgated by ACS.

In order to maintain a cohesive and comprehensive system responsive to families, in which health or clinical issues such as mental health, chemical dependency/use, domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual abuse, and other serious issues that place children at risk for abuse and neglect, preventive services providers will be expected to provide:

- *Social Work Services and Advocacy.* Contractors will provide intensive, holistic social work services to families with the following components:
  - a comprehensive assessment of safety, alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, health/mental health, housing, education, and employment needs;

- case planning approaches that includes ACS' Family Team Conferencing (FTC) model, involve youth (aged 10 and older) and their caretakers in goal setting and service planning to meet identified needs;
- promoting frequent, positive parent-child interactions (e.g., through family counseling, parent-child homework groups, parenting education and support, including evidence-based, evidence-informed and promising practices, and socialization activities);
- scheduling of regular *home-based casework contacts* to comply with the ACS requirements.

Caseworkers will advocate on behalf of the youth and families to ensure effective coordination of services, access to government and private sector systems providing healthcare, education, employment, housing and social benefits.

Individual caseloads will not exceed 12 families per case planner and families will be assigned to one case planner. Contractors will operate during hours that reflect the needs of the youth and families.

- *Parenting education and support services.* The contractor will provide activities and interventions geared to parents that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of specific parent categories (e.g., teen parents, non-English speaking parents, or terminally ill parents). Where group participation in parenting education and support services is not appropriate, the contractor will provide services on an individualized basis.
- *Participation in Beacon Programming.* Participants would have access to all programming and services provided by the Beacon and families will be encouraged to take advantage them.
- *Partnerships/Linkages.* The contractor would meet the full range of client needs either directly or through linkages with other neighborhood-based service providers, including a formal referral and treatment arrangement with a New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services or Health and Hospitals Corporation treatment program to address substance abuse.

## **VII. Minimum Hours of Operation/Staffing Requirements**

It is anticipated that Beacon programs will operate year-round, including the summer.

*School year:* Beacons will operate for a minimum of 37 hours per week, over 6 days, offering activities during the afternoons and evenings, on weekends, and on selected school holidays and school recess. When schools are in operation, Beacons will operate from 3pm, unless the official school dismissal time is earlier than 3pm, in which case they will open at that time.

*School Closing Days:* Programs will operate on 15 days during the year when the host school is closed. Providers may choose these days according to the needs of the community they serve, but DYCD will recommend that they include the Winter Recess (February) and Spring Recess (March/April) periods. No coverage is anticipated for New Year's Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, or Christmas Day.

*Summer:* Summer is defined as the period between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next. Each Beacon will be expected to provide summer services for a minimum of 50 hours per week, Monday through Friday, for a minimum of 7 weeks. There will be some flexibility with respect to provision of summer services. However, DYCD will expect proposers

to include summer camp for elementary-age children in their program design, unless they demonstrate in their proposal that this service is not a priority in the community to be served.

*Staff training days:* Providers will be required to set aside a **minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 days** during the program year for staff training and professional development. DYCD will recommend that programs use the last week of June and the last week of August for these purposes.

### *Staffing requirements*

Beacon programs: All staff will be appropriately qualified for their respective roles. The Beacon director, who is wholly responsible for administration of the center will be a full-time employee. He/she will be expected to have at least an associate's degree plus three years experience in a youth-serving program of comparable size or six years experience in a youth-serving organization, at least two years of which were spent in a supervisory position. Staffing patterns will be required to meet the ratios specified under the School Age Child Care (SACC) Regulations and the New York State Day Camp Regulations.<sup>22</sup>

ACS Programs: The program director will be required to have an MSW degree or an equivalent human services graduate degree approved by ACS, together with significant experience in an administrative or supervisory position in a community-based agency doing related work with a similar population. In any program with 60 or more slots, the program director will work full-time and have at least two years of satisfactory experience and some supervisory experience. Qualifications and accreditation and licensure requirements for other staff will be specified in the RFP.

## **VIII. Program Monitoring**

### Beacon programs:

- Enrollment and participation data from DYCD Online will be reviewed by program managers to ensure each Beacon is meeting minimum requirements for youth and adults relating to basic levels, intensive levels and community events. With regard to the intensive levels services, DYCD will monitor programs to ensure that contractors are meeting the required minimum hours for the required minimum numbers in each age group in accordance with contractual obligations.
- In the RFP, proposers will be asked to identify the outcomes of all structured activities in their program design. DYCD will expect each Beacon to define the anticipated outcomes in the form of learning or skills gains each activity is designed to achieve.
- Beacon contractors will not be asked to report on individual outcome achievement but they will be asked to describe the means they use to assess participant progress toward achievement of the outcomes they specified in their proposals.
- Program quality as evidenced through DYCD's Program Quality Monitoring Tool will be taken into account in determining whether or not a program is achieving, or has the capacity to achieve, the outcomes identified in the lesson plans or curricula for its activities.
- DYCD will expect Beacons to engage in continuous quality improvement practices with the help of tools developed for this purpose. The RFP may require Beacon contractors to adopt a specific quality monitoring tool or allow providers to select from a list of such tools.

### ACS Programs:

To the maximum extent possible, at both the case practice and administrative levels, ACS collects and monitors performance data to assess, target, and improve program performance to ensure that the stated goals, principles and practice guidelines of the Child Welfare System are met effectively and appropriately. The contractor will cooperate with ACS assessment and evaluation systems, providing all

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<sup>22</sup> For links to websites with details of the regulations, see Footnotes 15 and 16 above.

information necessary to allow the agency to conduct its monitoring responsibilities. The contractor will also cooperate with ACS, as necessary, to improve program performance.

## **IX. Technical Assistance (TA) Services**

DYCD expects to provide targeted TA support for Beacon contractors. It is anticipated that these services will focus on helping contractors to implement data-driven, continuous quality improvement models with the help of self-assessment tools.<sup>23</sup>

## **X. Funding Allocation/Number of Contract Awards/Competitions**

Anticipated maximum annual total DYCD funding for the Beacon initiative in FY2014 will be **\$22,550,000**.<sup>24</sup> Service Option 1 will be funded at **\$16,400,000** for **41** Beacons at **\$400,000** per Beacon; Service Option 2 at **\$6,000,000** for **15** Beacons at **\$400,000** per Beacon, not including the ACS funding for the foster care prevention services; and Service Option 3 at **\$150,000** for TA services. The competitions and funding allocations within each Service Option are set out below. DYCD will reserve the right to modify the allocation of funds between competitions in the best interests of the City.

DYCD funding for the Beacons will be allocated across the boroughs based on a needs index that reflects each borough's percentage share of the City's youth (5 to 21 years) and youth poverty populations. The boroughs' share of total funding (\$22,400,000) is as follows: Brooklyn – 34.44% (\$7,600,000) for 19 Beacons, Bronx – 25.21% (\$5,600,000) for 14 Beacons, Queens – 22.03% (\$4,800,000) for 12 Beacons, Manhattan – 13.46% (\$3,200,000) for 8 Beacons, and Staten Island - 4.86% (\$1,200,000) for 3 Beacons. The borough allocations were adjusted to ensure full funding (\$400,000) for Beacons in each borough.

### Service Option 1: Beacons without ACS Services (\$16,400,000)

There will be five borough-based competitions for a total of 41 contract awards. CBOs may propose to locate a Beacon community center in any public school except a school where a DYCD OST program is located.<sup>25</sup> DYCD will encourage CBOs responding to the Beacon RFP to select schools located in one of the high-need CDs listed in the chart below.

The high-need CDs have been identified using an index based on the number of youth aged 5-21 and the number of youth aged 5-21 who reside in poverty households within each of NYC's Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which are essentially coterminous with CDs.<sup>26</sup> The PUMAs in NYC were ranked from highest to lowest need. The CDs in the top 60 percent of PUMAs (33 of the City's 55 PUMAs) were designated as high-need CDs.

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<sup>23</sup> See e.g., A Home Run for Quality Improvement. Karen Pittman, Ready Thoughts April 10, 2012, Forum for Youth Investment. <http://www.readyby21.org/newsletter/ready-thoughts/home-run-quality-improvement>

<sup>24</sup> This total does not reflect possible funding reductions due to the Mayor's Program to Eliminate the Gap for FY13 and FY14.

<sup>25</sup> It is anticipated that the RFP will include a list of school sites that are ineligible because they have an OST program.

<sup>26</sup> In four cases, a PUMA comprises two CDs: Bronx 1&2, Bronx 3&6, Manhattan 1&2, and Manhattan 4&5. Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-year 2008-10 Estimates.

**Chart 1: Service Option 1**

<b>Borough Competitions</b>	<b>High-Need CDs</b>	<b>Number of Beacons</b>	<b>Maximum Annual Funding (\$)</b>
Brooklyn	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18	13	5,200,000
Bronx	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12	12	4,800,000
Queens	3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14	10	4,000,000
Manhattan	3,9,10, 11, 12	4	1,600,000
Staten Island	1	2	800,000
<b>Totals</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>\$16,400,000</b>

Service Option 2: Beacons with ACS Services (\$6,000,000 in DYCD funds and \$8,611,200 from ACS)

- There will be 12 Community District (CD) competitions for a total of **15** contract awards. Proposers may propose to locate a Beacon in any public school situated in one of the CDs listed in the chart below provided (1) they submit with their proposal a Beacon-School Collaborative Agreement signed by the school principal and (2) there is no DYCD Out-of-School Time (OST) program located at the proposed school.
- The ACS services component for the ACS-Beacons will be funded at the levels indicated in Chart 2 below.
- Proposers must submit a complete and separate proposal for the ACS services along with their Beacon proposal. To be considered for a combined Beacon-ACS contract, proposers must be eligible for award based on proposal review scores for both the Beacon and the ACS foster care prevention services.
- With the exception of Beacons to be located in Brooklyn CD 6 and Brooklyn CD 13, proposers **must propose to provide the ACS foster care prevention services at the school that hosts the Beacon program.**
- Brooklyn CD 6 and Brooklyn CD 13. For Beacons to be located in these CDs, the proposed ACS services must be readily accessible to residents of the **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Red Hook Houses East and Red Hook Houses West and Coney Island Houses.** Accordingly, if the proposed host school has insufficient space to meet the requirements of the foster care prevention program, the ACS services may provided off-site, at a distance of no more than a quarter of a mile from location of the school.
- Due to the high demand for ACS preventive services in the south Bronx, central Brooklyn, and Harlem, ACS-Beacons located in Bronx CD 2, Bronx CD6, Brooklyn CD 17, and Manhattan CD 9 will accept ACS referrals to serve families living in neighboring CDs as indicated in the Chart 2 below.

**Chart 2: Service Option 2**

Borough	CD Competitions	Additional CDs to be Served	Number of Beacons	DYCD Maximum Annual Funding (\$)	ACS Annual Allocation		DYCD + ACS Maximum Annual Funding (\$)
					Planned slots*	Funding \$	
Brooklyn	BK 5		1	400,000	48	422,400	822,400
	BK 6		1	400,000	84	672,000	1,072,000
	BK 7		1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
	BK 13		1	400,000	84	672,000	1,072,000
	BK 17	BK14	1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
	BK 17	BK9	1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
Bronx	BX 2	BX3, BX4, BX5, BX6	1	400,000	96	768,000	1,168,000
	BX 6	BX5,BX7	1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
Queens	Q 12		1	400,000	48	422,400	822,400
	Q12		1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
Manhattan	M 9	M10	1	400,000	84	672,000	1,072,000
	M10		1	400,000	48	422,400	822,400
	M 10		1	400,000	108	864,000	1,264,000
	M 3		1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
Staten Island	SI 1		1	400,000	60	528,000	928,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>8,611,200</b>	<b>14,611,200</b>

\*Number of planned slots is based on a caseload of 12.

Service Option 3: Technical Assistance (\$150,000)

There will be one citywide competition for one contract award of \$150,000.

Multiple Proposals

*Beacon Centers:* proposers may submit multiple proposals for more than one Service Option, more than one competition, and/or more than one site within a competition. However, a separate and complete proposal must be submitted for each Beacon site and for TA Services.

*TA Services:* proposers selected for award under the TA Services competition **will not be eligible** for award as a direct service provider.

Subcontracting/Consulting

*Beacon programs:* DYCD will allow a maximum of 30 percent of the Beacon contract award to be used to provide program services through approved subcontract and consultant agreements. No part of the management of the Beacon program may be subcontracted.

*ACS Foster Care Prevention Services:* No part of these contracts may be subcontracted. However, a contractor may retain as a consultant, one or more independent individuals with



professional or technical skills to perform specific, limited program-related tasks that the contractor's paid or unpaid staff cannot accomplish.

## **XI. Anticipated Payment Structure**

Contracts will be a mixture of line-item and performance-based reimbursement. DYCD reserves the right to withhold up to 10 percent of the value of the contract pending achievement of minimum performance targets.

The performance targets listed below reflect achievement of the minimum target numbers indicated above under "Service Levels":

- In the basic services category, the Beacon will serve the specified minimum number of participants in each age category at least 5 times during the calendar year
- In the intensive services category (elementary), ADA of 80 percent.
- In the intensive services category (middle and high school), at least 80 percent of the required minimum number of participants will participate for the minimum contact hours specified in the RFP.

In the case of community events, at least three events each year must be ones at which participants receive or provide a service, and at least 500 individuals in total must attend community events each year.

### Technical Assistance

The anticipated payment structure will be based on a Full Day Equivalent (FDE) rate representing seven hours a day of consulting time. The maximum payment per day under the contract will be \$1,300. Payments to the vendor would be made monthly upon receipt of approved invoices submitted to DYCD. Each monthly payment would be contingent on completion of deliverables due and approval of the activities undertaken within the month for which services are invoiced.

## **XII. Contract Term**

It is anticipated that the term of all the contracts awarded from the forthcoming Beacon RFP will be for a period of three years starting September 1, 2013, with an option for DYCD to renew the contracts for up to an additional three years.

## **XIII. Eligibility, Proposal Evaluation, and Basis for Award**

### Eligibility

For Service Options 1 and 2, eligible organizations will be incorporated as not-for-profit organizations at the time of contract award. For Service Option 3, eligible organizations will be incorporated as private or not-for-profit organizations at the time of contract award.

For Service Options 1 and 2, government entities and their affiliates, including but not limited to, public libraries, public schools, affiliates of the State University of New York and The City University of New York, and other City agencies will NOT be eligible to receive a contract award under the RFP, but will be able to participate through co-locator or general linkage agreements.

### Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience, taking into account where applicable the past performance on DYCD contracts, and the demonstrated level of organizational capability. In the case of Service Options 1 and 2, the evaluation criteria will also include the quality of proposed program approach and design. In the case of Service Option 3, the evaluation criteria will include quality of the proposed TA services design.

DYCD also reserves the right to conduct site visits of all proposed facilities, conduct interviews, and request proposers to make presentations.

Basis for Award

DYCD will award contracts to the responsible proposers whose proposals are determined to be the most advantageous to the City, taking into consideration the price and such other factors or criteria set forth in the RFP, including the geographic distribution of programs, targeted areas of higher need, and population(s) to be served. In the case that a proposer is eligible for award in more than one service option or competition, DYCD reserves the right to determine, based on the proposer's demonstrated organizational capability and the best interests of the City, how many and in which service option(s) and competition(s) contracts will be awarded to the proposer. Contract award will be subject to timely completion of contract negotiations between DYCD and the selected proposer.

**XIV. Procurement Timeframe**

It is anticipated that DYCD will release the RFP in February of 2013. The deadline for submitting proposals in response to the RFP will be approximately 5 weeks after it is issued.

Comments

Written comments may be emailed to [conceptpaper@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto:conceptpaper@dycd.nyc.gov) (entering "Beacon" in the subject line) or submitted by fax or mail to:

Cressida Wasserman  
Department of Youth and Community Development  
156 William Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
Fax No: (212) 676-8160

The deadline for all written comments is November 16, 2012.