



DYCD Concept Paper

COMPASS programs offer a diverse range of enrichment activities after school and during holidays, fostering academic and social growth for students in Kindergarten through 8th grade while providing essential childcare support for families across NYC.





**New York City Department of Youth and Community Development
COMPASS Programs Concept Paper 2025
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I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Our Mission:

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish.

Our Vision:

DYCD strives to improve the quality of life of New Yorkers by collaborating with local organizations and investing in the talents and assets of communities to help them develop, grow and thrive.

In April 2025, New York City made a historic and new \$331 million commitment to support Mayor Adams' vision of "After-School for All" to all public students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The new funding will support the addition of 20,000 new seats over the next three school years and a total investment of \$755 million annually. This funding will be disbursed in phases, with 5,000 slots being added to existing COMPASS programs starting in Fiscal Year 2026. These 5,000 new slots, plus an additional 10,000 slots, will be added through the COMPASS Request for Proposal (RFP) in Fiscal Year 2027. For Fiscal Year 2028, in line with the committed funding, DYCD will add the remaining 5,000 slots to the network.

This concept paper is a commitment to the investment made by the Adams Administration and the precursor to the RFP to be released by the New York City (NYC) Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) in Fall 2025 for contracts to operate Comprehensive After School System of New York City (COMPASS) Elementary and School's Out New York City (SONYC) programs in public schools and other settings. There will

be multiple RFPs to capture the various program and location types.

The primary purpose of the COMPASS programs is to provide a range of engaging enrichment activities, after school and during school holidays and the summer, to help students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 to thrive, and to support families with childcare.

Evidence to support the benefits of afterschool programs

It is well-established that relationships and lasting connections with caring adults and with peers are critical to children's personal growth and development.¹ Strong peer relationships can provide emotional support, bolster self-esteem, and help young people develop social skills, all of which play a vital role in shaping healthy attitudes and behaviors and fostering resilience in the face of bullying, academic pressures, changes associated with adolescence, and other challenges.

Numerous studies also suggest that regular participation in out-of-school activities yield multiple benefits. These include fostering interest in learning, building foundational skills, and supporting overall well-being.²

High quality enrichment programs help young people acquire the skills they need to stay on track as they encounter the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood. They do this by enabling

¹ See, e.g., Search Institute at <https://searchinstitute.org/research>; <https://www.search-institute.org/our-research/development-assets/current-research-developmental-assets/>

² See, e.g., The evidence base for afterschool and summer, Afterschool Alliance Research Brief, April 2021 <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Evidence-Base-For-Afterschool-And-Summer-2021.pdf> ; [Multilevel Models of the Relationship Between Music Achievement and Reading and Math Achievement - Martin J. Bergee, Kevin M. Weingarten, Sage Journals, 0https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0022429420941432](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429420941432)

Many kinds of activities can broaden horizons, encourage reflection and thoughtful decision-making, and support engagement in learning and academic growth. Examples include sports and other types of physical activities (e.g., dance, yoga, and running), STEM (including robotics),³ games such as chess, arts-focused activities (e.g., music, drama, dance, poetry, creative writing, painting, drawing etc.), civic engagement projects, and education about career options.⁴

All youth benefit from such activities, but it is notable that for those living in less advantaged communities where access to resources and opportunities is more limited, participation in high-quality afterschool programs (those with qualified, culturally responsive staff, and well-designed, attractive activity options) may be especially valuable.⁵

Some reports highlight the fact that 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. during the school week are prime hours for juvenile crime.⁷ The December 2022 National Report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and

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Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)⁸ states that violent crimes committed by youth peak at 3 p.m. and youth are more likely to engage in violent crime on school days. The authors conclude that crime reduction efforts conducted during the afterschool and early evening hours from 3pm to 7pm, when the rate of violence committed by youth is more than five times that during “juvenile curfew” hours of 10pm to 6am, are likely to have greater potential to decrease the violent crime rate among juveniles.

DYCD’s Mission, Theory of Change and Holistic Approaches

DYCD supports New Yorkers by funding a wide range of high-quality youth and community development programs, including afterschool, community development, family support, literacy services, runaway and homeless youth services, community safety, and youth workforce development.

DYCD’s *Theory of Change* (ToC) embodies an integrated and aligned roadmap designed to show how DYCD investments across all areas are expected to impact participants and communities served by agency-funded programs. The ToC is informed by the principles of community building, holistic approaches to individual needs, multiple entry points with pathways that offer participants and family members easy access to relevant services, embeddedness in the community, and program models characterized by reciprocity of strengths and assets.⁹ To strengthen its strategic goals, DYCD seeks to connect community members and community-based organizations (CBOs) to a hub of resources and foster partnerships with other public and private entities. If implemented successfully, DYCD expects its investments to result in the following general outcomes:

1. Community organizations will be stronger as a network and as individual CBOs.
2. Community members, including youth, families, and adults, will have multiple points of entry to a broad spectrum of high-quality services.
3. Community members will have access to employment through skills, opportunities, and resources.
4. Community members will be empowered to navigate and participate in civic systems and access an array of resources.
5. Community members will have a greater belief in opportunity, including mindset for success, and self-efficacy.
6. Community members will have stronger connections to social networks in informal and formal relationships.

The goals of DYCD-funded programs align with and support the ToC’s general outcomes through the specific types of services they provide. In the case of the COMPASS programs, the outcomes are achieved primarily through the provision of engaging activities and opportunities that help youth build foundational skills and develop mindsets for success during their school years and beyond. In addition, for both participants and family members, they open doors and pathways to a broad range of resources and help participants develop connections to social networks.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ These principles are associated with what is known as the “settlement house” model of service provision. See e.g., Blog by Tara-Sky Woodward, October 4, 2022 “No need to reinvent the wheel: The settlement house as a time-tested model for community resilience” <https://seas.umich.edu/news/no-need-reinvent-wheel-settlement-house-time-tested-model-community-resilience>

Equity Statement¹⁰

The DYCD Equity Statement supports DYCD's mission and ToC by articulating the agency's commitment to an equitable implementation of operational, administrative, and programmatic functions, and distribution of financial resources, to address historical and contemporary inequities based on race, income and other factors. The vision is a New York City in which everyone flourishes, and outcomes are not determined by race, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, immigration status, income, marital status, national origin, religion/creed, or sexual orientation.

The City of New York shares DYCD's commitment to equity with initiatives such as Women Forward NYC, a vision for gender equity focused on increasing economic mobility, providing holistic services for women to access stable housing, dismantling barriers to health care, and reducing violence against women.¹¹

This Concept Paper reflects the agency's goal to advance equity in intentional and explicit ways. One example is the inclusion of additional supports for providers working with specific subpopulations that may face disproportionate challenges, to improve equitable access to services funded through DYCD.

II. FUNDING AND COMPETITIONS

COMPASS Programs Site

COMPASS programs will be located at school-based and center-based sites throughout the five boroughs. Please see Attachment 01 for a list of school sites where COMPASS programs currently operate and which DYCD expects to continue to support, subject to availability of funding, unforeseen circumstances, constraints or other needs that arise prior to the release of the RFPs. It is anticipated that the list of eligible sites in the RFPs will include additional public and non-public schools to align with the recent announcements regarding increases in funding, as well as neighborhoods eligible for Center-Based funding. A full list of New York City Public Schools, Non-Public Schools, and Center-Based settings will be included in the RFPs.

Anticipated Total Funding, Number of Contracts, and Price Per Participant (PPP)

Below is a breakdown of the total funding and slots for the COMPASS program for the duration of the contract term (August 1, 2026, to August 31, 2032):

	FY27		FY28 - FY32		FY33*	
	Funding	Slots	Funding	Slots	Funding	Slots
Elementary	\$291,463,640	59,965	\$412,052,240	59,965	\$120,588,600	59,965
Middle	\$201,103,862	49,912	\$201,103,862	49,912	\$ -	-
Total Funding	\$492,567,502	109,877	\$613,156,102	109,877	\$120,588,600	59,965

¹⁰ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dycd/about/about-dycd/about-dycd.page>

¹¹ See: <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/069-24/mayor-adams-43-million-plan-lead-gender-equity-lays-ambitious-goal-make-nyc-most#/0>

*FY33 funding includes summer services only.

See below a breakdown of the anticipated number of awards and PPP for each program type:

Elementary Program Sites (Year-Round: July 1st to June 30th)

- Anticipated Number of Awards: 325
- Year-Round PPP: \$6,800

SONYC Program Sites (School Year: September to June)

- Anticipated Number of Awards: 492
- School-Year PPP: \$3,900

Please note that the numbers listed above are based on anticipated available budget and current service levels. It is expected that the final number of slots and PPPs may be adjusted, as needed, to take into account any special needs and/or center-based slots awarded.

III. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This concept paper is informed by analyses of internal data and findings from external research on the science of human learning and development and effective afterschool program models, as well as evaluations of DYCD programs conducted since the expansion of the SONYC initiative in 2014. Additionally, this concept paper is informed by input from multiple stakeholders over a period beginning early in 2021. Touching on a range of topics, stakeholders shared their views on the existing COMPASS programs, challenges, and priorities for program design going forward. An analysis of the feedback from SONYC program participants, family members of students enrolled in COMPASS Elementary programs, and current providers (program directors, educational specialists, multi-site supervisors) revealed some important points that are reflected in this concept paper.

In the case of the Elementary and SONYC programs, either parents/guardians or program participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the current enrichment models. They were clear about the purpose of the programs, and valued the variety of activities offered, including academic support, projects involving teamwork, opportunities for youth leadership and the chance for participants to try out new things. In both Elementary and SONYC programs, they ranked homework help, STEM, Literacy, and physical activities as the most important activities. The feedback also disclosed a surprising level of support for remote programming (introduced following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic) as well as for the in-person programming provided through the COMPASS programs.

In responses to survey questions, provider staff highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): three quarters (75 percent) said SEL should be a required content area; over half (56 percent) said they thought a COMPASS SEL curriculum would be useful; and over two thirds (68 percent) said their program already uses an SEL curriculum. In addition, a significant majority of provider staff (75 percent) saw the value in partnerships between COMPASS programs and other community entities. Finally, it was notable that while two-thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed on the benefits of

partnerships involving subcontractors, half of all COMPASS program directors used less than 10 percent of their budgets on subcontracts.

DYCD will carefully review responses to the ideas presented in the concept paper and will take these into account as the agency works to develop the COMPASS Elementary and SONYC program RFPs.

IV. PROGRAM MODELS

Program Goals

COMPASS Elementary and SONYC programs aim to strengthen the integration of youth development, social and emotional learning, and academic skill-building through achievement of the following overall goals:

- **Goal 1:** Foster social and emotional competencies and physical well-being in a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment.
- **Goal 2:** Provide opportunities for youth to explore their interests and creativity.
- **Goal 3:** Build skills that enhance expectations and confidence and support participants' academic efforts.
- **Goal 4:** Cultivate youth leadership skills and foster community engagement.
- **Goal 5:** Engage parents/other caretakers to support program efforts to achieve program goals.
- **Goal 6:** Secure community partnerships that maximize resources for participants and families and help to ensure access to high quality engaging activities.

Common Features of the Elementary and SONYC Program Models

- Alignment to New York City Public Schools Policies and Initiatives:** Contractors will work to establish close relationships with local schools; and align activities with and embed approaches from the NYC Reads and NYC Solves initiatives into all facets of programming to help ensure that all New York City students become strong readers and develop math skills, both of which are important skills required for educational, career, and lifetime success.¹²
- Introduction to Career/College Options/Career Readiness:** Contractors will include a variety of activities (e.g., exposure to growing fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology, urban sustainability,¹³ college tours, presentations by experts/employers, videos games, Q & A sessions, etc.) to introduce participants to the wide range of careers and educational options they might be able to pursue as adults, such as those featured in DYCD's Exploring Futures initiative.¹⁴ These activities could be

¹² NYC Reads initiative is designed to bring science-of-reading and phonics-based learning methods to all public-school students. See, e.g., <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/literacy/nyc-reads>. The NYC Solves Initiative will introduce a single, uniform curriculum to all public-school students to help develop math skills: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/math/nyc-solves>

¹³ See: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/sustainability/initiatives/urban-sustainability.page>

¹⁴ This is a career exploration pilot program for middle school youth. See: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/youthemployment/initiatives/k-12.page>

incorporated into or linked to programming in another required activity area (e.g., STEM programming, Physical Activity/Healthy Living) and will include information about paid internships and other opportunities available to young people ages 14 years or older.

- iii. **Program designs include mentoring and focus on life skills:** Development of life skills and use of formal and informal mentoring, including peer-to-peer mentoring, will be incorporated into all COMPASS programs.
- iv. **Marketing and Outreach:** Contractors will submit and implement a comprehensive, strategic marketing and outreach plan to recruit and retain program participants and boost attendance throughout the entire program. The marketing and outreach strategy must comprise multiple communication outlets (e.g., street outreach, social media, trusted messenger recruitment, online and/or print advertising, etc.) and a variety of messaging strategies. Choice of communication outlets and messaging strategies will be tailored to the program's target demographics, including age, language, trusted sources, etc. and will incorporate language that encourages collaborations with school and community.
- v. **Remote Programming Option:** Based on lessons learned during the COVID pandemic, DYCD will welcome program designs that incorporate remote programming in creative ways. These components will enhance (not replace) in-person services: for example, by offering additional options and experiences that help to engage participants and broaden their horizons, connect with other participants during school or center closures, and facilitate more regular communication with family members. Examples of program activities that can be successful when delivered online include homework help, tutoring, and various forms of physical exercise, including dance-based exercise.
- vi. **Staffing:** All staff will meet the applicable requirements set out in the New York State School Age Child Care (SACC) Regulations.¹⁵ All COMPASS Elementary and SONYC programs will include the following staff positions:
 - a. **Program Director (Required)**
 - The Program Director, as the onsite supervisor of the COMPASS program, has overall responsibility for program implementation, including the hiring of staff.
 - In programs that serve 90 or more participants, the position will be full-time.
 - In programs serving fewer than 90 participants, the position may be part-time, provided the Program Director is present during all operational hours, five days per week. However, even if the position is part-time, the Program Director will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to double as the Content Specialist.
 - *Qualifications:*
 - Four-year bachelor's degree and at least three years of experience in a supervisory/oversight position or completion of the coursework for site supervisors mandated under the New York State School Age Child Care (SACC) Regulations.

¹⁵ For all the minimum qualifications and other requirements for staff mandated under the SACC Regulations, see <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/regulations/414-SACC.pdf>

b. Content Specialist (Required)

- The role of Content Specialist will replace that of ‘Education Specialist’ included in prior COMPASS RFPs. As signaled by the title, the role will be somewhat broader than that of the Education Specialist, covering the selection and management of program content in the required content areas.
- The Content Specialist will oversee and support the implementation of programming by Activity Specialists, Group Leaders, and Youth Workers in the Required Content Areas (see below under the sections on Distinctive Features of the COMPASS Elementary and SONYC programs). These are areas where DYCD requires programs to implement a sequenced set of activities, with clear goals and objectives; therefore, where necessary, the Content Specialist will select relevant curricula or create lesson plans.
- To ensure program quality, the Content Specialist will support program staff through observation, effective supervision, coaching, training, and professional development.
- The position may be full-time or part-time, but the Content Specialist must provide at least nine (9) hours of services per program per week, up to a maximum of three (3) COMPASS programs.
- *Qualifications:*
 - A four-year bachelor’s degree and at least three years of experience in a supervisory/oversight position that included management and development of program content as well as staff supervision, training, and coaching.

c. Activity Specialist/Instructor (Required)

- The role of the Activity Specialist/Instructor is to lead activities in areas that require specific types of expertise and experience – e.g., STEM, Literacy, art, dance, organized sports etc. Activity Specialists work with Group Leaders (and, if applicable, Youth Workers) to implement the relevant program component.
- These positions will be part-time, but the Activity Specialist will be expected to be present during relevant program offerings.
- *Qualifications:*
 - Preferably, these staff will be professionals who are already specialists in their field, or college or graduate students who are working towards such specialization.
 - In addition to a solid grounding in the relevant content area, they will have the necessary teaching skills to successfully implement the relevant program component.

d. Group Leaders (Required)

- The role of a Group Leader is to lead and supervise their assigned participant groups and create and implement program activities under the guidance of an Activity Specialist or the Content Specialist.
- These positions will be part-time but the Group Leaders will be expected to be present during all program hours.
- *Qualifications:*

- At least two years of direct experience working with children under 13 years of age, and, preferably, an associate degree. At a minimum, Group Leaders must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
 - Group Leaders will have the necessary content knowledge, experience, and skills to effectively implement activities, as required.
- e. **Youth Worker (Optional):** The primary purpose of allowing contractors the option to include the position of Youth Workers in their staffing patterns is to offer greater flexibility in terms of meeting staff-to-participant ratios mandated under the SACC Regulations (or higher ratios that DYCD may require).
- The role of a Youth Worker is to assist and work collaboratively with Group Leaders (who are more experienced and likely to have higher educational credentials), under the supervision of Activity Specialists and the Content Specialist.
 - These positions will be part-time, but, if hired, Youth Workers will be expected to be present during all program hours.
 - *Qualifications*
 - A Youth Worker must be at least 16 years of age and have either a high school diploma or equivalent, or a minimum of one year of experience working with children under 13 years.

f. **Mental Health Staff**

- Contractors must identify at least one staff member who will cover the critical mental health and wellness support functions outlined in the Mental Health Supports section below.

In addition to the above staffing requirements, **Center-Based Sites** will include the following staff roles. Please note, these requirements do not apply to school-based programs.

g. **Janitor**

- The role of a Janitor is to complete routine cleaning of the Center (e.g., sweeping and mopping floors, wiping doors/windows, cleaning restroom facilities, minor repairs, etc.)

h. **Security Guard**

- The role of the Security Guard is to ensure the safety of participants and program staff during program operating hours, including evenings and weekends.

i. **Front Desk Reception**

- The contractor must ensure front desk coverage, hiring one or more staff members for this role, as necessary.
- Front desk staff will greet participants and their families, provide information about program services, and sign participants in and out throughout the program operating hours.

- vii. **Professional Development Supports:** To ensure front-line staff are equipped to effectively implement program activities, contractors will be required to provide at least three (3) hours per week of preparation support/professional development to Group Leaders and Youth Workers (and, if appropriate, to Activity Specialists). Content may include how to effectively support participants with special needs, behavioral management, positive youth development and SEL, and safety (including licensing, active shooter preparation, social media boundaries, program transitions and sexual assault prevention). DYCD provides many relevant cost-free trainings through its capacity building portfolio.
- viii. **Mental Health Supports:** DYCD's programs already aim to promote mental well-being of participants through the incorporation of social-emotional learning in all program models, as well as foundational environmental supports for positive mental health such as a safe and welcoming environment and respectful and caring relationships with staff. These approaches are outlined in DYCD's Promote the Positive frameworks.¹⁶ The requirements below do not replace these foundational approaches: they supplement them to support participants who may be experiencing mental health conditions that are impacting their well-being.

The following requirements focus on improving access to mental health services; creating a cohesive and aligned system of supports internally and externally; and ensuring mental health supports are provided to both staff and participants. The goals of DYCD's mental health requirements are to:

- Ensure staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of common mental health conditions that often affect young people, such as depression, anxiety, trauma, and unhealthy substance use.
- Provide participants and family members with information about available mental health supports, including mobile crisis services and emergency services and how to access them.
- Ensure program staff understand how to identify youth mental health crises and provide timely and appropriate responses to a youth who is in crisis or experiencing suicidal ideation.
- Provide ongoing mental health and wellness support to staff and participants.
- Create strong partnerships with internal and external providers and facilitate referrals to appropriate mental health services as needed.

To support the above goals, contractors must comply with the requirements set out in the section below. Please note, however, DYCD may modify required training modules to adapt to changing program and participant needs and available resources.

a. Staff Training

- All staff must complete the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health's (OCMH's) Building Connections to Mental Health Support Training (recorded, 1 hour) covering the following topics:
 - [YouTube Link](#) | [OCMH Website Link](#)
 - Mental health and mental illness

¹⁶ See <https://www.flipsnack.com/nycdycd/dycd-promote-the-positive-flipbook-for-rfp.html>

- Engagement and de-escalation strategies
 - Referral and crisis management protocols
 - Mental health resources.
- Program Director must complete OCMH’s Building Bridges to Support (recorded, 1 hour and 40 minutes) covering the following topics:
 - [YouTube Link](#) | [OCMH Website Link](#)
 - Mental health spectrum and mental health crises
 - Importance of implementing an organizational crisis navigation plan
 - Creating and implementing a customized crisis navigation plan for your organization (with the OCMH Crisis Navigation Worksheet).

b. Referral Plan

- Contractors must create a plan and process for mental health referrals that staff should follow when a need is identified through staff observations of participants and/or concerns expressed by participants. The plan must be updated and disseminated, at least annually, to all staff.
- After contract award, contractors will be required to obtain signed partnership agreements, on an annual basis, with each partner named in their referral plan.

c. Partnership Development

- Contractors will develop and maintain partnerships with all the mental health service providers and practitioners included in their referral plan. In addition, they will liaise with school-day Social Workers and Mental Health staff to ensure that resources provided to participants are coordinated and comprehensive.

d. Mental Health Programming

- Contractors are required to designate at least one staff member whose role is to ensure that the following services are delivered:
 - If a crisis occurs, on-site mental health supports are provided.
 - On an ongoing basis, the program provides wellness and social-emotional group sessions for students as part of its offerings.

ix. Community Partnerships, Subcontractors, School Partnerships

- a. **Community Partnerships:** In addition to the signed partnerships with the mental health service providers identified in their referral plans, contractors will be required to have a series of community partnerships. DYCD defines “community partnership” as an agreement with an external entity (e.g., an organization/agency/department separate from the proposer) or, in some cases, with another unit of the provider’s own organization. In both cases, the community partner agrees to provide specific services or resources that support the program on a short or longer-term basis. Within the spectrum of partnerships defined in DYCD’s Strategic Partnerships Framework,¹⁷ community partnerships will fall within the Coordinating, Cooperating or Collaboration levels. The Networking level will not count as a community partnership for the purpose of the community partnership requirements described below.

¹⁷ See chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://communityactionpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Strategic-Partnerships-Framework.pdf

DYCD will require all contractors to have a minimum of three (3) community partnerships. Community partners may include, but are not limited to, organizations or agencies that agree to receive referrals from or donate specific types of resources to the COMPASS program. Partnerships involving referrals will include those designed to assist with learning disabilities, such as the dyslexia screening services provided by NYCPS schools or other professionals.

DYCD will expect contractors, to the greatest extent possible, to tap into resources available through the host school (if applicable) or schools from which participants will be recruited. They will also be expected to take advantage of other kinds of community assets to fulfill the community partnership requirements, such as libraries and museums, local businesses, and health and mental health services. These may include partnerships that expand activity options by providing in-kind services as well as those that create opportunities to bring in additional financial resources for the program.

Whenever appropriate, contractors will be expected to facilitate referrals to DYCD-funded programs of most relevance to COMPASS participants and their families. DYCD-funded programs that may be particularly relevant include Community Centers (Beacon and Cornerstones); Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs; Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) Younger Youth programs; Healthy Families programs; and the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) programs, including safe passage activities in the Youth Enrichment Services (YES).

Proposers must document the contributions that each community partner agrees to make to the program by submitting a signed **Community Partnership Agreement** with their proposal. This Agreement will demonstrate how the partnerships will enhance the program for the benefit of the participants. Even where partnerships are with another unit (or units) within the proposer's own organization, a Community Partnership Agreement must be completed in collaboration with the team/personnel who will be responsible for providing the specified services or resources listed and then submitted with the proposal. Preferably, community partners will have 3 years of experience within the last 5 years providing the services or resources specified in the partnership agreement.

- b. **Subcontractors:** DYCD will require a minimum of 10% of the total program budget (up to a maximum of 30% of the total budget) to be used for the purpose of hiring specialist subcontractors or consultants to ensure delivery of quality services in the Required Content Areas described in this concept paper (Mental Health Supports; STEM or Literacy; SEL). Subcontractors or consultants could include, but are not limited to, small, specialized, or neighborhood-based CBOs and vendors, faith-based organizations, and fraternities and sororities. The additional 20% of the program budget (up to the maximum of 30% of the total budget) may be used to hire subcontractors to provide activities that do not fall within the required content areas. DYCD strongly encourages the use of City and State certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) as subcontractors and consultants.
- c. **School Partnerships:** For a variety of reasons, DYCD will require contractors to have a partnership with the school where the COMPASS program is located and/or from

which participants may be recruited. The primary purpose of the partnership is to maximize the resources needed for quality programming by aligning afterschool enrichment opportunities with school day learning and helping programs meet their enrollment targets. School partnerships can also help with recruitment of harder-to-reach students for whom participation in the program may be especially beneficial; ensure safe passage of students to center-based programs; increase the likelihood of robust academic support for program participants; and help ensure delivery of quality programming. Each school partnership agreement will include a requirement to refer program participants to their NYCPS school for the purpose of screening for learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

DYCD will determine the process to be followed for developing and maintaining partnerships with schools (e.g., information to be included in the proposal, whether proposers will be required to participate in interviews with school principals, etc.). Details will be included in the RFPs.

Distinctive Features of the COMPASS Elementary Program Model

- i. **Program Participants:** Students in grades K-5 who reflect the diversity of the community served. Note: the program must offer activities and services for students in all K-5 elementary school grades (i.e., a program cannot target only one or two of the grades).
- ii. **Year-round Programming:** It is anticipated that all COMPASS Elementary programs will operate year-round, providing summer activities in addition to school year programming. All locations, irrespective of facility type (NYCPS, Non-Public, and Center-Based programming) must be made accessible for programming year-round. Center-Based sites will be required to maintain the cleanliness and safety of the facility in which programming is operating.

Summer activities will offer participants new experiences and provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills and make new friends. They will include outings (e.g., to the City's parks, museums, other cultural assets) in and beyond the neighborhoods where participants live. The summer schedule, particularly in the case of school-based programs, will be planned and conducted in collaboration with NYCPS staff to ensure a mix of academic support, enrichment programming, outdoor recreation, and social and emotional learning, based on current models (for example the Summer Rising model). The City may provide additional summer seats, beyond school year allocations, that will include summer programming at alternate sites.

iii. Program Hours and Minimum Requirements

a. Total Year-round Annual Program Hours: 1,020 hours.

• School Year Programming: 670 hours

- *Weekdays (Monday to Friday)*, during the 36-week school year: the contractor will operate the program for three (3) hours per day, starting as soon as possible after the school's dismissal time. When dismissal time is later than 3 p.m. and program staff play a substantial role in the last hour of the school day's activities, these hours may count towards the minimum hourly requirements, provided the contribution of the program is documented in the School Partnership Agreement.

- On 13 school holidays during the school year, the program will operate for 10 hours a day (8AM to 6PM) for a total of 130 hours. The contractor may choose the school closing days on which it would operate according to the needs of the participants and their communities.
- *Weekend programming during the school year.* The contractor may schedule activities on weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and on school closing days (including spring and winter breaks) to meet the minimum school-year hours. Note, for NYCPS schools, the number of activities on the weekends will depend on permit allowances, determined by DYCD and NYCPS.
- **Summer Programming: 350 hours over seven weeks**
 - *Weekdays (Monday to Friday)* programs will operate from 8AM to 6PM. It is anticipated that most COMPASS Elementary programs serving students in grades K-5 will provide summer programming. Summer activities will include outings to museums and other cultural assets in and beyond the neighborhoods where participants live.

iv. **Required Content Areas/Activities**

- a. **STEM OR Literacy:** In addition to infusing STEM and Literacy throughout a range of program activities, each program will offer at least two hours per week for a minimum of eight hours per month of STEM OR Literacy-focused activities throughout the program year. Whichever content area is selected by the contractor to fulfill these requirements; all programs must offer at least some Literacy or STEM activities during the program year to ensure participants receive activities in both core areas. COMPASS program contractors will be expected to align their Literacy and STEM activities with the NYC Reads and NYC Solves initiatives.¹⁸ The activities will have clear goals and objectives and follow a set of lesson plans or a curriculum. The aim is to ensure that program participants at different grade levels are exposed to STEM or Literacy in ways that stimulate their interest and engagement in these critical fields. The activities will, preferably, embed Literacy or STEM learning, be project-based, and align with the contractor's mission. In all cases, activities in the required content areas will support the development of teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking and basic academic skills. They will also provide opportunities for participants to learn about and discuss global issues.
- b. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** SEL is a critical way in which COMPASS programs help youth develop essential life skills:
 - DYCD will require programs to adhere to the agency's SEL Framework and embed SEL throughout program operations. This can be achieved in various ways, including use of program activities designed to develop specific SEL competencies.¹⁹ Included in the SEL Framework are methods to build participants' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The ability to understand the perspectives

¹⁸ NYC Reads initiative is designed to bring science-of-reading and phonics-based learning methods to all public-school students. See, e.g., <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/literacy/nyc-reads>. The NYC Solves Initiative will introduce a single, uniform curriculum to all public-school students to help develop math skills: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/math/nyc-solves>

¹⁹ See, for example, a post by Jacie Maslyk illustrating the relationship between STEM activities and development of SEL competencies: <https://blog.definedlearning.com/how-stem-can-support-social-emotional-learning>

of others, including those with diverse backgrounds, international cultures, and contexts is a key component to be underscored when implementing SEL programming.

- In line with research findings,²⁰ DYCD will expect programs to be *intentional and explicit* with respect to the social and emotional competencies they are seeking to develop among their participants. To this end, DYCD will require all contractors to adopt an SEL curriculum, selecting one of the following options:
 - Use an evidence based SEL curriculum specified in the RFP.
 - *School-based programs*: Adopt (or continue to use) a curriculum *endorsed by the host school*, documenting this choice as part of the School Partnership Agreement.
 - Continue using an evidence-based curriculum that the proposer has used in the past and found effective, *subject to approval from DYCD*.

All programs will, at a minimum, be expected to complete the hours required under the selected SEL curriculum.

- c. **Physical Activity and Healthy Living:** Programs will provide a minimum of 90 minutes of physical activity per participant per week throughout the program year as well as some activities (e.g., cooking) designed to teach participants the fundamentals of healthy eating and living. Activities may include gym/physical education, organized sports and sports practice, dance, martial arts, fun fitness games, or other organized and supervised recreational physical exercise. These requirements align with the City's HealthyNYC vision that seeks to improve life expectancy and create a healthier city for all New Yorkers. HealthyNYC seeks to ensure all New Yorkers are able to realize their full health potential, regardless of who they are, where they are from and where they live.
- d. **Academic Support:** This will typically include homework help and may include individual or small group tutoring, book clubs, and guided independent reading, writing and math skills. In school-based programs, proposers will discuss and plan activities with the host school and document agreed activities in the School Partnership Agreement. Internal and external partnerships to enhance academic support are encouraged.
- e. **Additional Optional Activities:** Provided programs meet the minimum weekly hourly requirement in the required content areas, they may offer additional types of activities, for example, in the creative arts. These will be planned and supervised (to ensure necessary materials and adequate staffing etc.) but need not follow a set of lesson plans/curriculum. Optional activities can also help expand horizons by allowing participants to learn about other countries and cultures around the world.

²⁰ See, e.g., A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents," American Journal of Community Psychology 45, no. 3-4 (June 2010) NIH National Library of Medicine, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20300825/>; <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6>; Dale Blyth, Brandi Olson, and Kate Walker, Intentional Practices to Support Social & Emotional Learning (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Extension, 2017) chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://conservancy.umn.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/0b0e1d0f-4dd5-41cd-95c0-489b7da46fb7/content

Distinctive Features of SONYC Program Model

- i. Program Participants:** Students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Note: the program must offer activities and services for students in all three middle school grades (i.e., they cannot target only one or two of the three grades).
- ii. School Year Programming:** It is anticipated that SONYC programs will operate during the school year. All locations, irrespective of facility type (NYCPS, Non-Public, and Center-Based programming) must therefore be accessible for programming during the school year. Center-Based sites will be required to maintain the cleanliness and safety of the facility in which programming is operating.
 - a. Note:** It is anticipated that some SONYC programs (subject to availability of funding) will operate year-round, providing summer activities in addition to the school year programming. Although funding and selection of programs to operate summer programming will not be part of this RFP process, the City may provide some summer seats beyond the school year allocations. Summer activities offer participants new experiences and provide opportunities for youth to learn new skills and make new friends. The SONYC summer programming will include outings (e.g., to the City's parks, museums, other cultural assets) in and beyond the neighborhoods where participants live, including college tours and site visits related to career exploration. The summer schedule, especially in the case of school-based programs, will be planned and conducted in collaboration with NYCPS staff to ensure a mix of academic support, enrichment programming, outdoor recreation, and social and emotional learning, based on current models (for example the Summer Rising model).
- iii. Program Hours and Minimum Requirements:**
 - a. School-Year Program Hours: 540 hours**
 - **36-week School Year** (September 1 to June 30): 540 hours, as follows:
 - **Minimum of 324 hours of activities in the *required content areas*** (see below):
 - Programs must offer *at least* nine (9) hours of activities in the required content areas per week. (9 x 36 weeks = 324 hours)
 - Minimum daily requirements: *1.5 hours per day on five (5) days per week when school is in session.*
 - Activities may be scheduled on five (5) weekdays plus *one weekend day* (Saturday OR Sunday) and on school closing days.
 - **Balance of 216 School Year Hours.** These hours may be used to offer additional activities in the *required content areas* or for other activities that do not follow a set of lesson plans or curriculum (See "*Optional Activities*" below).
 - **Minimum Weekly Hours.** Programs will be required to operate for at least 15 hours per week during the school year.
- iv. Required Content Areas/Activities**
 - a. STEM OR Literacy:** The program will offer **at least two (2) hours per week (for a minimum of eight (8) hours per month) of STEM OR Literacy-focused activities throughout the program year.**

All activities in the required content areas will have clear goals and objectives and follow a set of lesson plans or a curriculum. The aim of these requirements is to ensure that the program exposes program participants at different grade levels to STEM or

Literacy in order to foster their interest and engagement in these critical fields. Preferably, these activities will embed Literacy or STEM learning and skill-building, be project-based, and align with the mission of the contractor. They will also be designed to support the development of teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking skills, as well as basic academic learning. STEM and literacy activities would also offer opportunities for participants to learn about and discuss global issues.

- b. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** SEL is a critical way in which COMPASS programs help youth develop essential life skills:
 - a. DYCD will require programs to adhere to the agency's SEL Framework and embed SEL throughout program operations. This can be done in various ways, including program activities designed to help develop specific SEL competencies.²¹ Included in the SEL Framework are methods to build participants' awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The ability to understand the perspectives of others, including those with diverse backgrounds, international cultures, and contexts is a key component to be underscored when implementing SEL programming.
 - b. In line with research findings,²² DYCD will expect programs to be *intentional and explicit* with respect to the social and emotional competencies they seek to develop among their participants. To this end, DYCD will require contractors to adopt an SEL curriculum, selecting one of the following options:
 1. Use an evidence-based SEL curriculum specified in the RFP.
 2. *School-based programs:* Adopt (or continue to use) a curriculum *endorsed by the host school*, documenting this choice as part of the School Partnership Agreement
 3. Continue using an evidence-based curriculum that the proposer has used in the past and found effective, *subject to approval from DYCD*.

All programs will, at a minimum, be expected to complete the hours required under their chosen SEL curriculum.

- c. **Leadership Development:** Programs will offer **at least 2 hours per week of Leadership Development activities** designed to foster engagement in school and community and build skills for a range of critical competencies that encourage informed choices and socially responsible behaviors. Leadership programming may include service learning, civic engagement projects, and activities that support the transition to high school, such as exploring the high school selection process and postsecondary education options and career pathways.
- d. **Physical Activity and Healthy Living:** Activities may include sports, martial arts, dance, and other forms of physical exercise as well as programming that involves active learning about the importance of healthy lifestyles, including physical activity, healthy

²¹ See, for example, a post by Jacie Maslyk illustrating the relationship between STEM activities and development of SEL competencies: <https://blog.definedlearning.com/how-stem-can-support-social-emotional-learning>

²² See A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs (June 2010) and Intentional Practices to Support Social & Emotional Learning Op. Cit.

eating, and good nutrition. Programming may also include activities such as yoga and meditation whose primary focus is mental well-being.

- e. **Optional Activities:** Provided programs complete the required minimum hours for activities in the required content areas, they may offer additional activities like creative arts and programming that promotes self-expression and mental well-being. These activities must be planned and supervised (to ensure necessary materials and adequate staffing) but need not follow a set of lesson plans/curriculum. Contractors may use optional activities to meet the balance of the required school-year hours. Optional activities can help expand horizons by allowing participants to learn about other countries and cultures around the world.

V. OUTCOMES TRACKING AND EVALUATION

Attendance, Dosage, Outcomes

DYCD will include a variety of performance targets for Elementary and SONYC school-year programming based on the agency's Theory of Change. For example:

- *Elementary and SONYC Programs* will be expected to reach full enrollment for school year programming by mid-October of each contract year and maintain 100 percent enrollment throughout the school year. Summer programs will have additional enrollment targets.
- *Elementary and SONYC Programs* will be expected to track and report enrollment and attendance of all enrolled participants throughout the contract period. DYCD will require programs to meet a minimum threshold for program participation.
- *Elementary and SONYC Programs* will be expected to measure and report SEL outcomes of participants. With assistance from experts, DYCD will identify reliable approaches and/or validated tools that contractors will use to measure the impact of SEL-focused activities and development of critical social and emotional competencies. The rationale for measuring SEL outcomes is to enable DYCD to understand the extent to which the SEL requirements in the RFPs yield the desired results. The primary aim will be to enable DYCD to assess the overall impact on participants of different ages and differing needs, to determine whether or to what extent adjustments to the requirements would be appropriate and to support continuous quality improvement of programs through coaching and additional supports.

VI. DYCD APPROACHES

- i. **Inclusion:** DYCD expects all contractors to enroll a diverse range of individuals within the population the program is designed to serve. Contractors should take steps to ensure that anyone eligible can enroll and fully participate in the program, irrespective of their individual characteristics, needs or circumstances. Contractors should aim to (a) adhere to other DYCD approaches outlined below (e.g., safe and welcoming environment, strengths-based approaches); (b) develop outreach strategies designed to recruit individuals who are harder to engage; (c) provide additional supports or services to enable full participation by those with special needs. In the latter case, this might be done directly (e.g., hiring paraprofessionals for students with disabilities; hiring staff with relevant language skills to ensure quality services for English Language Learners) or indirectly (e.g., making referrals

to professionals who screen students for learning disabilities or diagnose mental health issues).

- ii. **Safe and Welcoming Environment:** All DYCD programs are expected to create and maintain a friendly, supportive environment and sense of belonging where everyone feels welcome and is treated with dignity and respect regardless race, ethnicity, culture, religion, background, disability, or any other factors that can cause individuals to be perceived as different and treated differently.
- iii. **Strengths-based Approaches:** In line with its mission, vision, and Theory of Change, DYCD emphasizes the critical role of strengths-based approaches in helping individuals, families, and communities to thrive. These approaches value individual and community assets that are seen as vital to achievement of program goals and outcomes. DYCD expects all contractors, for example, to intentionally incorporate participant “voice and choice” as programs are implemented, developed, and evaluated, as well as civic engagement projects that are selected, shaped and conducted by participants.²³ These and other strengths-based strategies yield multiple benefits, including acquisition of new knowledge, broadening of horizons, and development of significant life skills.

DYCD’s “Promote the Positive” guide describes ways in which DYCD contractors are expected to infuse youth programs with the strengths-based principles and practices that characterize Positive Youth Development (PYD), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and Youth Leadership Development (YL).²⁴ PYD is an assets-based approach that fosters healthy human development and resilience. SEL involves the intentional development of key social and emotional competencies that everyone needs to thrive. YL builds on the SEL competencies, focusing on *action* and *reflection* to reinforce new skills and lessons learned, build confidence, and equip participants to respond to emerging challenges, take on leadership roles, and effect change in their communities.

- iv. **Family Engagement:** All COMPASS and SONYC programs are expected to embrace the principles and vision that underpin DYCD’s “Circles of Support: A Family Engagement Framework” and related Toolkit.²⁵ DYCD adopts a broad definition of ‘family’ that includes non-blood relatives. The Circles of Support Toolkit focuses on three critical strategies: *Communication*, *Participation*, and *Partnerships*. The overall aim is to create mutually beneficial circles of support, built on trust and the notion that programs and families together share responsibility for participant success. Thus, DYCD expects programs to create opportunities for those who can exercise a positive influence on participants to encourage their consistent engagement in the program; for example, by involving family members in marketing and recruitment strategies, providing ongoing information about program activities, and routinely inviting family members to attend program events and celebrations.

²³ See DYCD’s Framework for Civic Engagement – see https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/digital_toolkit/flip_book_civicingagement.html

²⁴ See https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/Positive_Youth_Development_Framework.pdf

²⁵ See DYCD’s Circles of Support Family Engagement Framework- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://familyengagementdycdconnect.nyc/docs/Circles-of-Support-FE-Framework-Revised-July-2017.pdf and <https://familyengagementdycdconnect.nyc/>

- v. **Holistic Approach:** DYCD expects all contractors to respond to participant needs in a holistic manner. Thus, irrespective of their specific area of focus, programs are expected to find ways to expand resources for participants and their families by providing information about, and connecting them to, additional services through the formal and informal collaborations. Through these relationships and partnerships programs build the provider networks and community service hubs that provide easy access to relevant services beyond the scope, capacity, and focus of individual programs. Examples might include partnerships designed to connect participants to mental health supports, help them access benefits, paid internships, jobs or career readiness programs. To successfully operationalize the holistic approach, in addition to establishing meaningful relationships with other service providers, programs must ensure all their staff are equipped to provide reliable information about available resources and make relevant referrals. In short, the adoption of a holistic approach enables individual programs to better address participant needs and maximize their impact via an efficient and transparent system of pathways to a broad range of local and citywide services.
- vi. **Outreach and Marketing Strategies:** DYCD expects all contractors to adopt outreach and marketing strategies that effectively communicate information about programs in line with agency guidelines. Strategies will encourage collaborations with school and community.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

All contractors must prepare to implement safety and emergency plans, for example, in response to emergency evacuations, severe weather impact, or other site challenges, to include plans for remote services or any required health precautions, such as social distancing or masking.

All contractors must enter the data required by DYCD Connect for COMPASS and SONYC programs. Every user accessing a DYCD application must have their own individual account that is not shared with any other individual. When registering a user account:

- The real name and contact information of the individual must be used.
- A private email domain must be used (i.e. username@provider.org) to register the account. Public email domains (i.e. username@gmail.com) are NOT permitted.
- To access DYCD systems, users must use *Multi-Factor Authentication* that requires a phone line or authenticator app.
- DYCD must be notified within 24 hours when an employee separates from employment or within one (1) hour if the employee has been terminated.

Contracts resulting from the RFP that DYCD anticipates releasing will incorporate the City's standard human services contract, including Appendix A, and any applicable riders. If the contract is funded with federal monies, additional terms will apply and those terms will depend on the particular federal funding stream.

Further, successful proposers awarded a contract will be required to have and submit proof of, at a minimum, comprehensive general liability, disability and worker's compensation insurance and

follow the applicable DYCD fiscal manual. They will also be required to follow DYCD's policies on social media and incident reporting.

The Contractor shall be responsible for the recruitment and screening of employees and volunteers performing work under the Agreement, including the verification of credentials, references, and suitability for working with clients and participants. Where consistent with State and federal law, if directed by the Department, the Contractor will undertake the fingerprinting of employees and volunteers, including applicants, in accordance with instructions from the Department.

The Contractor will agree to cooperate fully and faithfully with any investigation, audit or inquiry conducted by DYCD and any State or City agency or authority that is empowered directly or by designation to compel the attendance of witnesses and to examine witnesses under oath, or conducted by the Inspector General of a governmental agency that is a party in interest to the transaction, submitted bid, submitted proposal, contract, lease, permit, or license that is the subject of the investigation, audit or inquiry.

The Contractor will be expected to perform all services in accordance with all applicable Laws in effect at the time such services are performed. The Contractor will also be expected to perform all services under this Agreement in accordance with the highest standards of risk management and compliance.

VIII. MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (M/WBE) PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS

- i. Contractor shall make good faith efforts to purchase 30 percent of goods, supplies, services, and equipment that fall within the eligible M/WBE expense categories (Consultants, Subcontractors, Vendors, Supplies, Equipment, Equipment Other, Other Costs, Fiscal Agent Services) from certified M/WBEs.²⁶
- ii. Contractor may select from the certified M/WBE businesses and individual proprietors that appear on the City and State's online directory and will be required to document and report to DYCD on their compliance with the thirty percent M/WBE goal.

IX. ANTICIPATED CONTRACT TERM AND PAYMENT STRUCTURE

It is anticipated that contracts awarded as a result of the RFPs associated with this concept paper will have a fixed term beginning August 1, 2026, and ending August 31, 2032, with no option for renewal. The contract term will commence on August 1, 2026, allowing for a one-month startup period to support necessary planning, staffing, and other expenses. Programmatic services are expected to begin on September 1, 2026.

²⁶ MWBEs are listed on the NYC Online Directory of Certified MWBE Businesses at <https://sbsconnect.nyc.gov/certification-directory-search/>, and the NYS Directory of Certified Firms at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com/>

X. PLANNED METHOD OF EVALUATING PROPOSALS

Eligible organizations will be incorporated as nonprofit organizations at the time of proposal submission. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria set out in the RFPs, including the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience, and proposed approach and design of program services. Organizations selected for award will have demonstrated successful experience providing similar services to similar populations.

XI. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

It is anticipated that DYCD will issue the COMPASS RFPs Fall of 2025. The deadline for proposal submission will be approximately five weeks from the date on which the RFPs are released. DYCD anticipates entering into six-year contracts for programs to begin August 1, 2026 with no option to renew.

XII. COMMENTS ON THE CONCEPT PAPER

All feedback on the concept paper must be submitted at the following link: [COMPASS Programs Concept Paper Feedback Survey](#).

Please note, all responses to the concept paper must be received no later than July 11, 2025.