



**ECHOES (Every Child Has an Opportunity to Excel and Succeed) Program:
Life Readiness Project
Concept Paper**

Purpose

The following Concept Paper is a precursor to the forthcoming ECHOES (Every Child Has an Opportunity to Excel and Succeed) Life Readiness Project Request for Proposal (RFP). In collaboration with the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), the New York City Department of Probation (DOP) will implement ECHOES, an alternative-to-placement program serving 70 youth on probation annually throughout the five boroughs. There are two parts to the ECHOES program: (1) an intensive case management component provided directly by DOP Probation Officers; and (2) an after-school Life Readiness Project (Be Ready) that will be provided under contract by a not-for-profit organization (Contractor) awarded through the RFP. Be Ready is intended to complement the DOP intensive case management component, and as such the Contractor is expected to work in partnership with DOP staff.

ECHOES represents DOP's most intensive level of probation supervision. ECHOES is designed to employ a behavioral change model to engage participants in transformational relationships that enable them to remain in their schools and communities while they improve the educational, employment and social/emotional competencies needed to lead law-abiding lives. It is a program for juveniles between the ages of 14 and 18 who have been adjudicated delinquent, sentenced to probation and would otherwise be placement-bound.

Background

NYC Probation Population

With approximately 25,000 people currently on probation in New York City, DOP is one of the largest local probation departments in the country and the City's largest alternative to incarceration. On a given day, there are approximately 2,000 juveniles (under the age 16) on probation along with about 23,000 adults. Of these 2,000 juveniles, about 76 percent are male; 60 percent are Black and 31 percent are Latino.

DOP Agency-Wide Reform

DOP is helping to build stronger and safer communities by supervising people on probation, fostering positive change in their decision-making and behavior, and expanding opportunities for them to move out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems through meaningful education, employment, health services, family engagement and civic participation.

To accomplish its mission, DOP has embarked upon an ambitious agency-wide reform agenda. The New York City Model of Probation advances public safety and improves communities by adopting a Justice Reinvestment framework. Justice Reinvestment is a two-part approach that focuses resources on individuals on probation who pose the highest risk to public safety and

reinvests in the communities where people on probation live. Research shows that focusing attention on people with the highest risk of re-offending is the most effective way to positively impact public safety. Therefore, DOP is increasingly focusing resources on higher-risk individuals during the first six to 12 months that they are on Probation, which is the time period they are most likely to reoffend. To accomplish this, DOP is implementing a variety of proven measures, including:

- Administering validated risk and need assessments
- Expanding the continuum of care
- Utilizing incentives such as early discharge to reward positive behavior for adult clients
- Diverting appropriate juvenile cases from formal court-processing
- Significantly reducing technical violations of probation

Another aspect of DOP's new probation approach is to decentralize service delivery to the neighborhood level. The vehicle for DOP's neighborhood-based strategy is the Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON).¹ At the heart of the NeON is a network of partners – individuals and organizations, public and private – working together to improve public safety by linking people on probation to quality opportunities, resources and services and by strengthening community capacity to find solutions to complex challenges.²

Under the NeON umbrella, DOP is using a variety of strategies to build on clients' strengths and reduce their involvement with criminal and juvenile justice systems. In neighborhoods where a significant number of people on probation live, beginning in Brownsville, Harlem, Jamaica, East New York, and the South Bronx, NeON model offices will be established with Probation Officers co-located with community-based organizations. In other cases, probation staff based at borough offices will meet with clients in community settings. Key components of the NeON model are: (1) DOP joins and expands local networks of educators, businesses, social service providers, community groups and residents; (2) probation staff and clients work together in a community-setting; and (3) DOP staff and clients engage in efforts to benefit the neighborhood. Key to DOP's strategy is to help build capacity in the neighborhoods where people on probation live. DOP is working closely with community leaders to ensure that NeONs win local support, build on existing assets, and reflect client and neighborhood needs.

The Mayor's Young Men's Initiative

On August 4, 2011, Mayor Bloomberg announced the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), a bold and comprehensive effort to help black and Latino young men achieve their professional, educational, and personal goals. YMI brings together an array of programs and services designed

¹ For more information on the NeON's, please visit the DOP website at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/prob/html/neon/neon.shtml>

² As described below, Probation officers supervising ECHOES clients will be located in the Central Harlem NeON, which is currently the only NeON serving juvenile clients. In addition, the Contractor's ECHOES Be Ready Program Manager will also be based at the Harlem NeON to facilitate program coordination and communication.

to increase access to mentoring, education, employment, and various opportunities for civic and community engagement. DOP is partnering with a variety of other City agencies, community-based organizations and foundations on a number of innovative program and policy initiatives that focus on neighborhoods with high concentrations of people on probation. ECHOES is one of several YMI programs designed to serve juveniles on probation in New York City.³ While each program takes a different approach, all of the YMI/DOP programs share certain fundamental principles that align with DOP's NYC Model of Probation:

- All are designed to enhance public safety. Research has proven that connecting young people in the criminal and juvenile justice system, especially medium and high-risk young people, to programs that help them continue their education, get a job and engage with their communities are more effective and less expensive than incarceration.
- Education is a key to helping people overcome the issues that led to their involvement in the criminal justice system.
- When young people are engaged meaningfully in the workforce they are far less likely to participate in criminal activity.
- When court-involved youth contribute to community well-being and feel connected to their neighborhood, they are less likely to harm themselves, their families and their neighbors.
- Programs must build on people's strengths, not merely try to minimize their weaknesses.
- New York City is home to a network of nonprofit organizations of unmatched quality and breadth. DOP will partner with these organizations to help youth realize their potential.

ECHOES: An Evidence-Based Model

Many juvenile justice-involved youth face exposure to an array of unhealthy and unsafe conditions that they are unable to escape without assistance. These conditions can make daily survival take precedence over motivation to attend school or use free time productively. Often, justice-involved youth have not had the opportunity to have a supportive adult help them challenge/examine their life choices in a safe space, so when challenged, they may feel threatened and react in anger, fear and/or withdrawal. When given a safe space and a trusting relationship, youth may have higher inclinations to examine their path and become receptive to opportunities that foster personal growth. The literature reveals that young people need motivation and feelings of personal agency to make positive life changes.⁴ Adults, especially those who are consistent and encouraging, can support positive decision-making that ultimately leads to more successful outcomes for at-risk youth. Appropriate conflict resolution skills and positive peer relations are areas with which juvenile justice-involved youth tend to have

³ While the Mayor's Young Men's Initiative is designed to help young Black and Latino men, and while the majority of juveniles on Probation are male, YMI programs, including ECHOES, are not limited to serving young men and will also serve young women on probation who meet the program criteria.

⁴ Sherwood, K. "Transformational Relationships in Youth Work: The Case of Roca." Manuscript obtained from M. Baldwin, Executive Director of ROCA. Intervention Work with High-Risk Young People: Foundational Elements, Guiding Principles, Ideas and Questions for Discussion, A Report by Police Officers, Youth Workers, and DYS Officials. Roca, Inc., 2009.

difficulty. It is essential to provide youth with positive adult relationships in addition to a continuum of services and opportunities to help steer them towards positive life trajectories, while at the same time advancing public safety.

Recent research has shown that on average, evidence-based programs are five times more likely to result in positive outcomes for youth.⁵ To foster changes required for youth to transition successfully into adulthood, the ECHOES program model (described below) is based on several evidence-based practices and principles: Positive Youth Development; Motivational Interviewing, Stages of Change, and Restorative Justice. These approaches have been designed to ensure successful juvenile justice and behavioral outcomes and have been proven effective with high-risk young people.

Positive Youth Development is a comprehensive developmentally-appropriate framework that emphasizes the importance of building on young people's positive attributes to promote success. It assists young adults in obtaining a sense of safety and structure; a sense of belonging and membership; a sense of self-worth and social contribution; a sense of independence and control over one's life; and a sense of closeness in interpersonal relationships. Youth and adults establish positive, pro-social relationships with each other and then cooperate to provide opportunities and support for others. By actively participating in these efforts, young people learn that while they may have made mistakes in the past, they are also capable of learning new skills that they can use to better themselves, their families, and their communities.⁶

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a counseling/coaching style, the core components of which are expressing empathy, developing discrepancy between present status and desired goals, avoiding argument/confrontation, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy. The principle behind MI is that by listening to people and following up on the positive aspects of their speech and thinking, probation and other professionals can help increase client's motivation to make positive changes in their lives that will reduce their likelihood of reoffending. MI suggests questions and statements that make it more likely that young people in the justice-system will think, talk, and act in a positive direction. It teaches staff to support a client's internal motivation to change by highlighting autonomy, competence, and relatedness.⁷

Stages of Change is a companion framework to Motivational Interviewing which proposes that most, if not all, individuals go through very specific stages in effecting change in their lives. These stages include pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, maintenance and relapse. Each stage of change has its own coaching strategies to foster movement into subsequent stages. Once a youth's stage of change in a life domain is ascertained (say, improving school performance),

⁵ Beale Spencer, M. and Jones-Walker, C. (2004). "Interventions and Services Offered to Former Juvenile Offenders Reentering their Communities: An Analysis of Program Effectiveness," *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2004 2: 88-97.

⁶ Butts, Jeffrey A., Gordon Bazemore, & Aundra Saa Meroe (2010). "Positive Youth Justice--Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development." Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice. 2010

⁷ Walters, et. al. (2007). "Motivating Ofenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole." U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Corrections.

coaches utilize the appropriate goals to promote a youth's growth and movement into the next stage of change.⁸

Restorative Justice Principles will guide program staff in their group work and in handling conflict. The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and manage conflict by repairing harm and restoring relationships. Basic restorative practices involve check-in and check-out circles as well as problem-solving circles that require participants to acknowledge their role in a conflict situation and come up with ways to repair the harm done. During the problem-solving meetings, questions are posed to the young person and to the aggrieved person/persons when appropriate: What happened? What was going through your mind during the incident? What have you thought about since? Who has been affected by what happened? How have they been affected? What needs to happen to make things right? And what are you going to do to make sure this does not happen again? Restorative Justice promotes a balance of control (including limit-setting and high expectations) and support in ensuring that youth take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Together, these evidence-based practices will facilitate a young person's growth and community reintegration.⁹

ECHOES Case Management: The DOP Component

Each ECHOES participant will have a Probation Officer (PO) who will use these evidence-based practices (Positive Youth Development, Motivational Interviewing, Stages of Change, and Restorative Justice) to develop a transformational relationship with each youth. Without the existence of a transformational relationship, the possibility of change and program engagement diminishes exponentially.¹⁰ As the relationship with the youth becomes stronger, the PO will monitor and assess the youth's stage of change, relative to the key life domains that affect successful community integration: education, employment and social/emotional competencies (a.k.a. healthy life choices). ECHOES PO's will work intensively with the 70 participants citywide over the course of a year. For this reason, they will bear smaller caseloads and it is anticipated that they will provide the following services:

Individual Coaching

Before the PO can begin working with ECHOES youth on personal change, he/she must first engage the youth in a trusting relationship. Research shows that one of the greatest protective

⁸ Naar-King, Sylvie, Suarez, Mariann (2011). "Motivational Interviewing with Adolescents and Young Adults." Guilford Press. Walter, Scott, et. al. (2007) "A Guide for Probation and Parole: Motivating Offenders to Change." U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.

⁹ Costello, Bob, et. al. (2009). "The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators." International Institute for Restorative Practices. Wachtel, Ted (2009). "Real Justice." Piper's Press.

¹⁰ Sherwood, K. "Transformational Relationships in Youth Work: The Case of Roca." Manuscript obtained from M. Baldwin, Executive Director of ROCA. *Intervention Work with High-Risk Young People: Foundational Elements, Guiding Principles, Ideas and Questions for Discussion, A Report by Police Officers, Youth Workers, and DYS Officials.* Roca, Inc., 2009.

factors for all youth is a relationship with a caring adult, other than family.¹¹ This relationship is even more important for youth in the juvenile justice system, as they often exhibit resistance to authority figures and a general distrust of adults. The first goal of the PO will be to establish the transformational relationship that will be necessary for the adolescent to begin to explore the process of personal change and be able to contemplate joining/exploring new social networks. To accomplish these goals, the PO will meet individually with the participant in the community at least three times weekly throughout the initial period of engagement. Following a Stages of Change approach, each meeting will have a coaching goal driven by the interplay between items the client has indicated on his/her “change chart” and the stage of change for those items. POs will use Stages of Change interview guides to ensure the intentionality that is necessary to facilitate the change process. POs will complete targeted interviews in the areas of education, employment/career, and conflict management to anchor their work with participants.¹²

Group Work

In addition to meeting with participants individually to work on personal change, POs will facilitate a weekly Engagement Group, the purposes of which are to build the participants social and emotional competencies, such as their ability to develop positive peer networks, and expand the participants’ self and world-views. POs will use two pre-determined evidence-based curriculum (*Thinking for a Change* and *Real Stories, Real Teens*) as the primary group planning guides and will also organize field trips designed to provide participants with new experiences. For participants who are not group-ready, POs will delay their start in the group. Group work will begin no earlier than the second month of program participation.

POs will be trained by DOP’s Division of Staff and Organizational Development (DSOD) in group process and facilitation in order to develop a positive group identity and trust and to provide support. POs will use curricula to engage the participants in the work of reestablishing a meaningful relationship to self, family, school and community, the areas that determine a youth’s resilience and the areas where juvenile justice-involved youth often find barriers to making successful connections.

Outreach

As stated above, ECHOES participants are expected to meet with their PO at least three times weekly, in addition to attending the ECHOES Engagement Group. We understand that many otherwise placement-bound youth are resistant to participation in structured programs and/or meetings with adults at their request. This reticence is due to many factors, including a lack of trust in adults, a lack of social and emotional awareness and skills, discomfort with structured groups, and a lack of experience with positive peers. The PO’s outreach efforts will convey the

¹¹ Altschuler, D.M. and Brash, R. (2004), “Adolescent and Teenage Offenders: Confronting the Challenges and Opportunities of Reentry,” *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2004 2: 72-87.

¹² Being literate, holding a legitimate job, and maintaining stable and positive personal relationships have been identified as critical in making successful transitions to adulthood and law abidance. Altschuler, D.M. and Brash, R. (2004), “Adolescent and Teenage Offenders: Confronting the Challenges and Opportunities of Reentry,” *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2004 2: 72-87.

message that he/she will “show up” for the relationship with the young person even if the young person is not yet ready to do so. The relentless and intentional pursuit of this relationship constitutes the best hope for success for this group of highly disaffected young people. As a result, PO’s delivering this intervention will use flexible scheduling to achieve these relational goals.

ECHOES DOP staffing will consist of at least one Supervising Probation Officer and a team of Probation Officers. The Contractor delivering the Life Readiness Project will be expected to work with in partnership with the POs to ensure the success of participating youth.

ECHOES: Life Readiness Project (“Be Ready”)

Project Goals

Succeeding in school and becoming employable are critical protective factors highlighted in research to develop competencies in youth that ensure success in their futures. The primary function of work-related and service-learning projects is to improve youths’ attitudes toward their communities and to enhance their skills and their potential for paid employment, while also reducing recidivism. Toward this end, increasing a young person’s life readiness in addition to the obtainment of educational credentials is a goal that will be in every ECHOES participant’s achievement plan. DOP will contract with a not-for-profit organization (Contractor) to deliver the ECHOES Life Readiness Project (Be Ready) in partnership with DOP. DOP and Contractor staff will jointly work on this aspect of the program and will co-manage the Saturday sessions and summer-time work teams (see below for description).

ECHOES Be Ready is comprised of three stages of life readiness development: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Each stage, described below, builds upon the competencies and strengths developed in the previous cycle. One of the unique aspects of the program is that participants can remain active in the program until they complete the three programmatic stages. It is anticipated that, of the 70 young people who begin the program each year, one-third to one-half will be able to complete all stages within a 12 month period regardless of any setbacks they may experience. The other one-half to two-thirds will experience significant enough setbacks in their tenure that they will need more than 12 months to complete the program stages. Struggling participants can remain active in the program for a longer period of time in an attempt to complete all program stages.

In addition to this graduated program model, another key component of the program is the No Eject/No Reject policy, which means that there are no exclusion criteria for the Be Ready component of the program; that no matter what behaviors a youth exhibits they will not be removed from life readiness programming; there is always a way for the young person to work his/her way back in.¹³

¹³ DOP will develop provisions in the event that a participant poses a threat to public safety or causes serious physical injury.

Program Design

ECHOES Be Ready is informed by evidence in the field of work-readiness for disconnected and disaffected youth.¹⁴ In order to develop long-lasting life readiness and employment competencies, the participant group needs intensive coaching and program completion standards that reward effort and/or persistence. In addition, ECHOES participants need to develop better conflict management skills. Accordingly, Contractor and DOP staff will be trained in and use evidence-based practices to build community and foster motivation for success, as well as to overcome resistance to program engagement and teach conflict management skills. The evidence-based methods utilized in Be Ready, like those used in ECHOES overall, are Positive Youth Development, Motivational Interviewing, Stages of Change, and Restorative Justice.

Project Stages

There will be a continuum of services available through the Contractor to provide services from the very basic levels of job and life readiness training to the highest level of paid work experience, with all stages providing the support necessary to ensure the youths' success. Most importantly, youth will remain active in each component of the program until each respective stage is completed. The expectation is that if the young person fails to meet the requirement of any of the stages outlined below, he/she is demoted to the previous stage or, if at the Basic Stage, will return to pre-Work. The continuum of programs offered to ECHOES youth will include the following:

Referral and Intake

All participants will be sentenced to ECHOES by the Family Court. Upon sentencing, DOP and Contractor staff will conduct joint intake meetings with participants and their families, ensuring that all staff, the youth and the family work together to develop goals for the young person that are consistent with the conditions of their probation and future life goals. An orientation session will explain the ECHOES program, its expectations of the participants, and its underlying principles and theory of change. After a young person has completed both the intake and the orientation, they will be given a start date of the following Saturday when they will begin the Basic Stage.

The Basic Stage – Saturdays Only

The first stage in Be Ready will be group-based, as severely disconnected youth often lack the skills necessary to work in teams and with peers. Each participant will be assigned to a Team that meets once a week on Saturdays. Teams consist of ten youth with one Team Leader and one ECHOES Probation Officer co-leading. Teams work on projects that incorporate elements of service learning, such as community mapping to help determine local areas of opportunity and those in need of service. Projects are designed with participants to ensure that young people feel ownership of the project while also learning basic soft skills associated with getting and keeping

¹⁴ Butts, Jeffrey, et. al. (2010). "Positive Youth Justice: Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development." Washington, D.C.: Coalitional for Juvenile Justice

a job, such as working well with others, managing conflict, and completing projects on time. These skills are reviewed with each youth daily on a score card that includes Attendance/Punctuality, Preparedness, Performance, Attitude and Participation. When a participant is able to demonstrate these basic competencies, he/she will be able to move into the more advanced stages of the program.

The Basic Stage of the program takes place on Saturdays, so that participants can experience a full day of hands-on work during the school year. During this time, youth continue to meet individually and in group with their PO. Participants must attend four consecutive Saturdays without a “strike” to complete the phase. Strikes include absences, lateness (beyond 15 minutes), fighting, and any other failure to follow rules and regulations, and will result in a step-down (demotion) to the Pre-Team.

Pre-Team

Participants who fail to meet the expectations of the Basic Stage are “demoted” to a Pre-Team, where participants go through a facilitated group process of self-reflection to understand the reason(s) for the demotion, identify and make all necessary amends of the behavior, and make a plan to avoid further demotions. Youth then work a half day on a Pre-Team and must follow all rules and regulations to start over at the Basic Stage.

Intermediate Stage – Saturdays and One After-School Weekday Workshop

Once youth complete the Basic Stage, they will be promoted to the Intermediate Stage. At this point they will continue working with their Saturday once-per-week Team. They will also choose a skills-based track one additional afternoon a week that includes workshops to learn new skills in a chosen field with hands-on experience.

Participants must work for six weeks in a row, on Saturdays and one other day of the week, for a total of 12 sessions, to complete the stage. The first two weekday sessions are a Life Skills Workshops. After the two Life Skills Workshops, participants choose a skill track such as clerical, building maintenance, or hospitality. In the afternoon skills-based workshop, participants will receive instruction for 30 to 45 minutes then practice what they have learned. Participants are assessed daily on their scorecard in the same manner as the Basic Stage. Participants in this phase are allowed two strikes before being demoted to repeat the Basic Stage.

The Advanced Stage – Weekdays Only, After School

Upon completing the Intermediate Stage, youth may be promoted to the Advanced Stage. The Advanced Stage is the highest level of training. Participants will engage in 20 weeks of subsidized employment in a combination of internships and externships. Youth work three days a week after school (nine hours per week) at an internship for ten weeks, ideally within the Contractor’s organization, and then at an externship site for ten weeks. For youth needing more support, the internship may be extended.

Once in the Advanced Stage, participants also attend weekly “Career Club” meetings facilitated by a Career Coach employed by the Contractor. Career Club meetings cover work-related topics such as career planning, goal setting, resume building, interviewing, and conflict resolution. In addition to running the weekly Career Club, the Career Coach will also manage the internship and externship programs, interacting with employers, ensuring that participants are paid, etc. Participants who receive three strikes will return to and repeat the Intermediate Stage.

During the Advanced Stage, participants continue to meet weekly with their ECHOES Probation Officer to focus on goals and challenges in accomplishing each of their life domain goals.

The Summer Program

The Summer Program will serve all ECHOES youth. All participants will meet in one location four days a week during the summer months. Each morning will begin with a restorative circle, including all youth and all staff, where expectations for the day will be addressed. After this circle concludes, each Team Leader and ECHOES Probation Officer will take their Team to an assigned project site. These sites will be located throughout the City. Service-oriented projects may include activities such as rehabilitating churches, removing debris and invasive plants and planting in parks, beautifying and rebuilding a community garden, or preparing care packages for service men and women overseas. As the Teams arrive at the project site, the Team Leader and the ECHOES Probation Officer will lead another restorative circle aimed at preparing for the day’s activities. The Teams will then begin their work.

Throughout the day, the Team Leader will work with youth, address any problem behaviors, and meet individually with each youth to discuss the youth’s performance with the support of an ECHOES Probation Officer. The youth’s score card, as described above, will be the basis for these daily performance conversations. This score card will help youth assess their own performance and address any areas in need of improvement.

For those youth who have difficulty abiding by the rules, there will be a Pre-Team during the summer as well. All participants will be allotted three strikes, meaning that a young person may be late or have a behavioral issue twice with repercussions remaining within their Team. By the third strike, the participant loses his/her slot on the Team and is put on a Pre-Team group. This Pre-Team group will continue to meet every day. They will engage in another restorative circle in the morning to discuss the issues and behaviors that caused them to lose their slot on the Team and identify and make all necessary amends of the behavior. They will work out a plan for how these issues will not happen again. After the completion of this circle, the Pre-Team will do short-term minor neighborhood cleanup as their service project (as opposed to the more engaging projects designed by and for participants in the regular summer program). Good behavior and attendance to the Pre-Team will earn the youth a place on another Team, thus giving every young person the opportunity to make mistakes, learn from them and continue working as many times as they need in order to learn the soft skills of life readiness and employability. The Pre-Team will be facilitated by the Contractor’s Program Manager and an ECHOES Probation Officer.

Target Population

Program participants will be adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 who live in any of the five Boroughs. Program participants must be:

- Sentenced to probation through Family Court with an explicit court order to participate in ECHOES as an alternative-to-placement; or
- Facing a violation of probation's most intensive service level (Enhanced Supervision Program/ESP) or a violation of probation in another alternative-to-placement program; or
- Facing a violation of general probation due to a re-arrest.

Contract Term/Funding/Anticipated Payment Structure

It is anticipated that the contract term will start May 1, 2013 and end on April 30, 2016 with an option to renew for up to three additional one year periods.

The anticipated annual funding for the ECHOES Be Ready Program is approximately \$300,000. This amount must cover all operational costs associated with delivering the program, including but not limited to staff, space (Basic and Intermediate Stage Saturday sessions, Intermediate Stage afternoon training locations, and Advanced Stage and Summer work sites), and the payment of youth stipends in all stages of the program, including the summer months. It is anticipated that the payment structure for the contract awarded will be based on line-item budget reimbursement.

Service Levels

ECHOES will serve up to 70 participants per year. It is anticipated that one contract will be awarded from the ECHOES Life Readiness Project RFP.

Site Information

The Contractor must have a site within at least one of the following community districts: Manhattan CD 9, 10 or 11 and/or Bronx CD 1, 2, 3 or 4.¹⁵ The Contractor will be responsible for securing space for all life readiness programming, including the identification and development of worksites, internships and externships to be used in ECHOES Be Ready. The sites for programming must be appropriate in size and design to accommodate the delivery of services as described above, accessible to public transportation, and safe, neutral, and youth-friendly. Ideally, sites will also provide additional opportunities for youth to connect with as many positive adults and resources in the community as possible, such as education and recreation programs.

¹⁵ These seven community districts were chosen due to: (1) their proximity to the DOP's only Juvenile NeON, which is in Central Harlem and is where the DOP ECHOES staff are based, and (2) for their high concentration of juveniles on probation.

DOP ECHOES staff (Supervising Probation Officer, Probation Officers and Probation Officer Trainees) are based in DOP's Central Harlem NeON - Juvenile Division. The Contractor's ECHOES Be Ready Program Manager will also work out of the DOP Central Harlem NeON office, whereas the ECHOES Be Ready program (for participants) will be held at a space proposed by the Contractor in Manhattan CD 9, 10 or 11 and/or Bronx CD 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Program Hours/Schedule

Contractor will be required to run the project outside of normal 9:00am to 5:00pm business hours. In particular, Contractor will be required to run projects for ECHOES participants on Saturdays, on select weekdays after school, and four days a week during the summer months.

Staffing

The Contractor will be responsible for hiring one full-time Program Manager who will be responsible for the overall management of ECHOES Be Ready Program, including supervision of Team Leaders and the Career Coach, and delivery of the Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Pre-Teams stages of the project. The Program Manager will also be responsible for locating and securing the project sites for the Saturday and summer Teams as well as the payment of stipends to youth.

In addition to a full-time Program Manager, the Contractor will be responsible for hiring the five Team Leaders, each of whom will be responsible for running one team on Saturday and one Intermediate workshop. As well as a Career Coach who will oversee the internships and externships of participants in the Advanced stage. The Career Coach will also conduct the weekly Career Club, a debriefing of the work week experience.

All staff will need to be culturally competent. They should be familiar with the particular neighborhoods where the highest-risk youth reside. Staff must demonstrate an appreciation for and sensitivity to diverse languages, cultures, traditions and family structures. They must also have the ability to integrate this knowledge into service delivery. Staff should understand the unique challenges faced by high-risk youth as well as both the negative and positive influences in a participant's community.

Linkages with the Community

Contractor would leverage additional resources, for example, by developing partnerships, collaborations and/or linkages with appropriate community organizations and other services providers to help participants achieve program outcomes.

Performance Measures

Outcomes

The overarching goal that DOP seeks to accomplish with ECHOES is to help juveniles on probation end further involvement with the justice system. DOP outcomes for the case management component of ECHOES are expected to be as follows:

- 65 percent of participants will not be re-arrested within one year of program intake.
- 80 percent of participants will not be re-arrested for a felony within one year of program intake.
- 88 percent of participants will not be re-arrested for a violent felony within one year of program intake.
- 80 percent of participants will learn and apply a restorative justice approach to conflict management.

Outcomes for ECHOES Be Ready are expected to be as follows:

- 80 percent of participants will have begun the Intermediate Stage of Be Ready by the time they complete their probation term.
- 90 percent of the above-referenced participants will develop a tangible marketable skill during the Intermediate Stage of the project.
- 57 percent of participants will have begun the Advanced Stage by the time they complete their probation term.
- These 57 percent of participants must be connected to an educational setting when they begin the Advanced Stage; therefore, educational engagement will be an outcome for these 57 percent of participants.
- The 28 percent of participants who do not progress to the Advanced Stage will continue to acquire tangible vocational skills and continue to work on the barriers to successful advancement in the project phases.

Reporting

Contractor will be required to work closely with DOP and CEO to measure and report regularly on program outcomes. DOP will require monthly and quarterly reports from the Contractor, including but not limited to specific information about participant enrollment and attendance, progress in all structured programming, and movement among the project phases. The Contractor will also be required to track and report on participant outcomes. It will be the responsibility of the Contractor's ECHOES Be Ready Program Manager to collect and report program data on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated pursuant to criteria that are specified in the RFP. This will include the quality and quantity of successful, relevant experience; demonstrated level of organizational capacity; and the quality of the proposed program approach and design.

Procurement Timeline

DOP anticipates releasing the ECHOES Life Readiness Project RFP in Fall 2012.

Contact Info/Deadline for Questions/Comments

Comments are invited by no later than October 19, 2012 Please email acco@probation.nyc.gov and indicate ECHOES Concept Paper in the subject line of the email. Alternatively, written comments may be sent to the following address:

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