



Connecting YOUth

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness Federal Project

Component 2-Connect to Achievement

Bidder's Conference

January 14, 2016



Request for Proposals (RFP)

YARH Connect to Achievement

Background and Overview

- **Connect to Achievement**-Provide educational advocacy services for youth in foster care and secure “near peer” or professional mentors for youth. The program intends to promote permanency, social connections, education/employment success, well-being, and self-sufficiency.

Background

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports inadequate income, employment and education are well documented as causes of and contributing factors to people cycling in and out of homelessness.
- The Role of Risk (2013): the study's findings point to reduction in depressive symptoms and gains in social acceptance, academic attitudes and grades who have experienced mentoring relationships.

Background

- Educational supports and mentoring opportunities were identified as priority interventions after the YARH Phase I Planning Activities.
 - YARH Phase I Planning Activities included: review of national research, DCF reports, and qualitative data (collected from stakeholders events, focus groups with youth, and surveys with staff).
 - DCF record review reports indicated a need to strengthen practice to engage and link youth with sustainable and comprehensive education/vocational/employment training services and supports.
 - YARH Phase I quantitative and qualitative data indicated the need for social connections and relationships to achieve outcomes.

Program Overview

- Three programs will be awarded, one in Burlington, Mercer and Union counties.
- Each awardee will receive \$150,000 in service funding per pilot county (\$450,000)

Program Overview

Awarded programs will:

- Be deeply familiar with services in county.
- Participate in the County Based Implementation Committee.
- Endorse the Youth Thrive framework.
- Participate in trainings as required by DCF.
- Participate in evaluation activities, adjust program as needed.

Selected Counties

- **Burlington County**

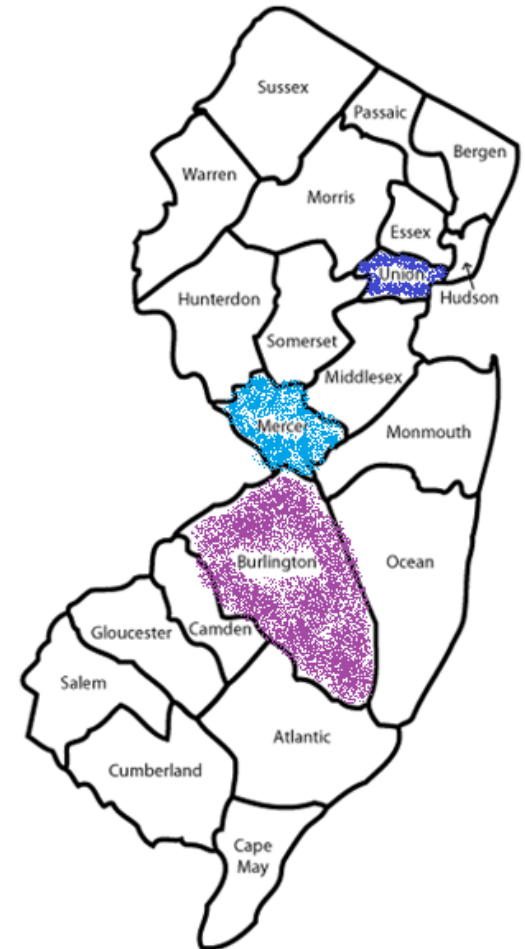
- Burlington West Local Office
- Burlington East Local Office

- **Mercer County**

- Mercer North Local Office
- Mercer South Local Office

- **Union County**

- Union Central Local Office
- Union East Local Office
- Union West Local Office



Staffing

- Educational Champion (2A)
 - 1 FTE
 - Master's level: School Counseling, Social Work, Higher Education, Law, Secondary Education, Administration, or some other education related field
- Mentor Coordinator (2B)
 - 1 FTE
 - Must have experience or formal education in youth development programming, child psychology, education, social work, or other relevant fields, as well as experience supervising others
- Youth Worker (2B)
 - Should reflect the diversity and lived experience of the population served and reflect the values of the program

Program Overview 2A

- **Education Champion will:**
 - Assist CP&P staff to meet the educational needs of youth.
 - Catalog community resources
 - Build connections to community resources (i.e. supplemental education programs, tutoring, college-bound programming)
 - Support workers in connecting to educational resources
 - Network with local school districts to
 - Create access to staff and resources
 - Acquire data on students
 - Involvement in viewing/ensuring youth's education information is current/accurate in NJ Spirit (CP&P information system)

Program Overview 2A

- **Education Champion will:**
 - Create Education Passport
 - Case Conference on specific youth
 - Be an available resource to youth/worker as needed
 - Provide intensified case management for youth at risk of failing/dropping out
 - Assist Mentor program staff as needed

Program Overview 2B

- **Mentor staff will:**
 - Recruit, screen, train and supervise “Near Peer” and “Professional” mentors
 - Work in collaboration with the CP&P Local Offices within the specific counties to serve as a direct resource to CP&P staff
 - Establish and support post-secondary education and community connections to recruit mentors
 - Assist the Education Champion as needed

Program Overview 2B

- **Mentor staff will:**
 - Work with youth to identify the purpose and priority within the mentor relationship:
 - Character, Social and Leadership Development (“I want someone to talk to and hang out with.”)
 - Academic Success (“I want to go to college or another educational/career technical program after high school.”)
 - Career Interest Inventory (“I’m not sure what I want to do yet.”)

Referral and Screen

- Youth in foster care between the ages of 14-21 in the three pilot counties (Burlington, Mercer, and Union) will be eligible for programming.
- Connect to Achievement, Educational Champions will target youth 14-17 who have not graduated from high school. Exceptions will be made for youth 18-21. “Near Peer” and Professional Mentors will be available to youth ages 14-21.
- Youth will be identified by DCF staff and the Connecting YOUth project team using the “early warning system” on page 5-6 of the YARH Component 1RFP.
- Identified youth will be further screened by CP&P and awarded agency for appropriateness for services.

RFP Submission

Deadline for receipt of proposals:

February 17, 2016
by 12:00 PM

Questions



Additional Information

More information on Connecting YOUth,
please visit
<http://nj.gov/dcf/adolescent/yarh.html>.