Request for Proposals
For Youth Leadership & Youth-Led Activism
Postmark Deadline: March 20, 2020

Context & Focus
In the late 1980s, veterans of the civil rights and social justice movements of the 1960s and 1970s began developing the nation’s next generation of young leaders. Their efforts to prepare young people to exercise authority over decisions that affect them and their peers became the field of youth leadership development. When well executed, youth leadership programs help young people develop their abilities to set and achieve goals, persuade others on a course of action, work as part of a team, and assess their own strengths and weaknesses.

As the past two years have demonstrated, youth-led organizing and advocacy (often supported by strong youth leadership development) can have a significant impact on public policy. From the nationwide “March for Our Lives” that students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School organized in the wake of a tragic shooting there and the many young “dreamers” who have been agitating for immigrants’ rights, to the global Youth Climate Strike this past September—young people are making it clear that they are ready and able to advocate for their interests.

Against this backdrop, The New York Community Trust is inviting proposals for projects that provide transformational youth leadership programming to young people ages 13 to 24 in two categories:

1. Youth Leadership Development
   Competitive submissions to this category will help young people learn to challenge systemic issues and position themselves as leaders for life. Funded projects will use curricula, workshops, and experiences to prepare young people to:
   - Advocate for change in their communities and/or organize to reform public systems;
   - Investigate social problems, as well as the historical and political context of those problems, and develop solutions; and/or
   - Include their voices in new Citywide initiatives, and meet directly with and provide input to State and City policymakers.

2. Advocacy for Girls & Young Women
   For this category, we are seeking proposals for programs that build on the recent surge in youth activism and rising public awareness about gender inequity and gender-based discrimination and its impact on girls and young women. Projects addressing these issues must meet at least one of the following criteria:
   - The project is designed to engage groups of female-identified youth in organizing or advocacy, including but not limited to activism pertaining directly to gender equity.
• The project engages young people across the gender spectrum in organizing or advocacy aimed at advancing gender equity and addressing the unique needs and concerns of girls and young women.

We expect to award approximately $1.7 million in grants ranging from $60,000 to $140,000 over two years, including $1 million in Youth Leadership Development grants and $700,000 in grants supporting Advocacy for Girls & Young Women.

Interested nonprofits may apply for either or both types of grants. Those that do wish to request funding for both Youth Leadership Development and Advocacy for Girls & Young Women must submit a separate proposal for each. Agencies will not receive more than one grant.

This is a competitive initiative; not all meritorious proposals will be funded. Grants will be announced by October 2020.

**Eligibility & Priorities**

Eligible organizations must be located in and serve New York City. Applicants also must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or have a 501(c)(3) as a funds administrator. For both grant categories, priority will be given to organizations with:

1. Projects that serve young people from and/or address the needs of low-income communities in the outer boroughs and/or historically underserved populations;
2. A clear track-record of working with young people over time; and
3. Demonstrated expertise in a relevant issue area (e.g., gender equity, racial justice, immigrant rights, juvenile justice, educational reform, etc.).

Standalone youth councils are not a priority for this RFP, except in cases where they are embedded within and helping to advance a specific campaign or advocacy agenda.

**Application Process**

Please include the following in your proposal:

1. Copy of the proposal cover sheet that you have submitted online. You can complete and submit the proposal coversheet here: [https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/](https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/).
2. Proposal narrative (please limit to six single-spaced pages and use a 12 pt. font), that includes information about:

   • The need for and goals of the project, the activities youth will undertake, and how those activities will advance the project’s goals;
   • Your plan to involve youth in shared decision-making processes, and support them in initiating and leading key project activities;
   • The population that will benefit from the program, including geographic focus, racial and ethnic demographics, and the expected number of young people to be served during the two-year grant period;
   • A list of six project deliverables (three per year for each year of the two-year grant); and
   • If applicable, your plan to sustain the project beyond the two-year grant period.
3. **Project budget**, including expenses (you may include staff time and other organizational costs) and other sources of revenue.

4. **Current agency operating budget.**

The proposal should be sent to: Ms. Sheila Dinkins, The New York Community Trust, 909 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10022.

Proposals must be postmarked by **March 20, 2020.** Applications that are incomplete or submitted after the due dates will not be considered for funding.

**Contact**

For questions about Youth Leadership grants, please contact Roderick Jenkins, Senior Program officer for Youth and Workforce Development, at [rvj@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:rvj@nyct-cfi.org)

For questions about Advocacy for Girls & Young Women grants, please contact Leigh Ross, Program Officer for Girls & Young Women and Arts Education, at [lcr@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:lcr@nyct-cfi.org).