REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
Research Partnerships

RFI Release: October 17, 2022

Proposals Due: November 30, 2022, at 5:00 PM EST to AnnaLee Maxwell-Coates at amaxwell-coates@pyninc.org

This document is a Request for Information (RFI) regarding partnerships between PYN and organizations or individuals that specialize in research and evaluation, both who currently work with PYN in some capacity, as well as those who do not. PYN is seeking to gain deeper knowledge to innovate workforce development programs serving a variety of populations, including participants in WorkReady Summer and Opportunity Youth (young people ages 16-24 who are not in school or working) using three guiding research perspectives:

- Examine program efficacy by evaluating short-term and long-term program outcomes
- Examine program quality by evaluating tools and metrics that capture program performance
- Examine program equity by evaluating program accessibility for youth that are marginalized and experience barriers such as juvenile justice involvement, foster care, poverty as well as youth with disabilities.

The award will be made available as soon as a contract between the researcher and PYN has been finalized (approximately 6 weeks after award notice). Awards will range anywhere from $25,000 to $99,000, depending on the research deliverables and scope of work.

The RFI process allows PYN to gather updated information on research organizations or individuals that have experience and interest in conducting research on youth and/or specific target populations, such as low income. All interested researchers are expected to provide all the information requested here, which PYN will use to evaluate and decide on new partnership agreements.
PYN Background
PYN is a non-profit organization working on solutions to ensure youth are connected to positive experiences that connect learning and workplace expectations. PYN’s mission is to create a coordinated system of diverse programs that help youth attain academic skills, broaden economic opportunity, and support personal success. We know that young people have unlimited potential, and we want to help communities thrive by connecting youth to services that nurture and enhance that potential, empower youth to lead change, and equip youth to pursue their future career goals.

Founded in 1999, PYN was among the first organizations in the country to systematically increase connections between formal education and employment preparation. Since then, PYN has become a leader in innovating service delivery, leveraging funding, aligning partners, and enhancing systems to support better outcomes in education and employment for youth in Philadelphia. Using a collective impact approach, PYN unites leaders and resources to create new solutions to complex, large-scale social problems. Since its inception, PYN has secured more than $500M dollars from public and private sources and managed over 200 plus contracts with community-based organizations to create a coordinated youth service system and high-quality opportunities for more than 225,000 young people.

PYN manages Project U-Turn (PUT), which is focused on engaging and re-engaging young people in education through collaborative efforts and WorkReady Philadelphia, a citywide initiative to address the skills gap for vulnerable young people. Since inception of PUT in 2006, Philadelphia’s graduation rate increased by 25% and more than 29,000 re-engagement opportunities have been provided. Since 2003, WorkReady Philadelphia has provided nearly 160,000 work experiences and distributed more than $70M in youth wages. However, early data regarding the effects of COVID-19 on young people’s economic outlook, we know that much progress has been lost in engaging young people. This RFI provides an opportunity to target youth most impacted by the pandemic with innovative partnerships and opportunities.

RFI Objectives
PYN seeks research partners to work with its research and evaluation team to advance two areas of programmatic inquiry: 1) evaluation of current program design for Opportunity Youth (OY) services leading to innovations for service strategy 2) support to prepare an MOU and IRB, facilitate a data request process and analyze large quantitative datasets of WorkReady Summer data from PYN and partner systems. Researchers may choose to pick one or both RFI objectives, although Objective 1 will be prioritized for initial contracts and Objective 2 will be contracted out subsequently.
Objective 1
Opportunity youth program evaluation
Evaluate current program design for Opportunity Youth (OY) services leading to program quality through innovative service strategies. This project will include the following activities:

a. Review local industry and employer landscape to help us understand the specific outcomes that set young people up for the most success in this region; and
b. Create avenues to hear from the OY in Philadelphia to better understand how E3 or other programs can help to connect them to education and/or employment pathways. Ideally, this will be conducted through focus groups, however we may also supplement with surveys when appropriate.
c. Assess the true cost of education and employment programs and pathway preparation for OY

Start: January 2023
Due: May 2023

Objective 2
WorkReady programmatic outcomes
Evaluate the multi-year impact of WorkReady, our summer youth employment program, on program participants to establish the efficacy of program design on young person’s career development. This project will involve the following activities:

a. Translate research questions into testable hypothesis, and develop a research methodology to answer those questions;
b. Obtain IRB review of research methodology;
c. Establish MOUs with system stakeholders in order to obtain data needed to answer questions;
d. Conduct analyses and create a written report of findings.

Start: April 2023
Due: February 2024

PYN Research Partnership Capacity Building Overview
PYN envisions this RFI process as just the starting point of engagement between PYN and new research partners. Organizations responding to this RFI should expect not to simply apply for funding, then report periodically on outcomes, for example. This opportunity is meant to build a network of ongoing research partnerships that will adapt
and respond to new and shifting youth needs and utilization and the system priorities and investments. To that end, this capacity building effort will occur over a few stages:

1. **Initial Meeting** – PYN will review the researchers’ information shared through the RFI and meet with research organizations or individuals to discuss in more depth elements such as research experience and interest and how both the research partner and PYN will advance youth workforce system goals more effectively through evaluation and research projects.

2. **Analysis** – PYN will initiate a discussion with the partner about how the partner’s description of services can advance research in one of the areas outlined here.

3. **Planning** – PYN and the research partner will jointly develop a Partnership Integration Plan to clearly articulate how the partnership is connected to PYN’s goals for this capacity building effort *(see RFI Introduction)*. During this planning stage, PYN and the partner will also determine the parameters of data sharing and draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define the relationship.

**Instructions to Partners**
This is a Request for Information (RFI), not an order. No cost can be charged to PYN for any reason in relation to responding to this RFI.

This document shall not be construed as a request or authorization to perform work at PYN’s expense. Any work performed by a vendor in response to this RFI will be at the vendor’s own discretion and expense. This RFI does not represent a commitment to purchase or lease. Submission of a response constitutes an acknowledgement that the vendor has read and agrees to be bound by these terms.
**Timeline**

**RFI Issue Date:** October 17, 2022

**RFI Submission Closing Date:** November 30, 2022, at 5:00 PM EST

**Award Notifications:** January 9, 2022

**Start Date:** Approximately January 23, 2023

PYN intends to utilize responses gathered from this RFI process to develop a pool of approved partners to work with for current and future funding opportunities. There is no guarantee that PYN will initiate partnerships within the time frame described in this RFI, or of how many partnerships PYN will initiate. The information in this RFI is accurate to the best of the PYN’s knowledge at the time of the release of this RFI.

**Point of Contact**

All communication with PYN must be directed to the single Point of Contact email address utilized for this RFI:

amaxwell-coates@pyninc.org

**Submission of Responses**

Responses must be received via email to amaxwell-coates@pyninc.org by November 30, 2022, 5:00 PM EST.

Responses must be submitted complete and in writing at the email address stated above. All requests for information in all sections of this document must be answered as concisely as possible while providing all information necessary to understand the outsourcing process proposed. Any deviations from requirements, or requirements that cannot be satisfied by the vendor, must be clearly identified.

Responses must include a statement that indicates that the vendor understands the requirements of the RFI and accepts the terms and conditions under which the RFI was issued to the vendor. The original response and any supplementary literature must be forwarded to the point of contact identified in the Point of Contact section of this RFI.

**Confidentiality**

Any information of a confidential or proprietary nature contained in a vendor response should be clearly marked ‘PROPRIETARY’ or ‘CONFIDENTIAL’ by the item or at the top of each page. Reasonable precautions will be taken to safeguard any part of the response identified by a vendor as being confidential or proprietary. All responses, once delivered, become the property of PYN.

**Response Submission Costs**

There is no fee associated with this RFI submission. However, any costs incurred relating to the submission process are the sole responsibility of the vendor supplying the response.
Response Format
To facilitate a timely and comprehensive evaluation of all submitted responses, responses must be submitted using the format specified in this RFI. Any deviation from this format may lead to the rejection of the response. Vendors should limit the answers to the following questions to ten pages in total. A limited number of supplemental materials may be provided, but for the purposes of this RFI, less is more.

The information contained in the RFI is confidential and proprietary to PYN. In accepting this RFI, vendors agree to the following conditions, under US law:

1. Each party recognizes and agrees that the Confidential Information has been compiled, created, and maintained by special effort and expense of the other party
2. Each party recognizes and agrees that disclosing or disseminating Confidential Information to a third party will have a materially adverse effect on the other party and agrees not to disclose or disseminate the Confidential Information to any third party. Except as necessary to perform its obligations hereunder, each party shall not use, reproduce, or draw upon the Confidential Information or circulate it within its own organization.
3. Each party shall provide notice to the other party of any demand made upon it under lawful process to disclose or provide the other party's Confidential Information. Such party agrees to co-operate with the other party if it elects to seek reasonable protective arrangements or oppose such disclosure, at the expense of the party that is seeking the protective arrangements or opposing the disclosure.
4. Any Confidential Information disclosed pursuant to such lawful process shall continue to be Confidential Information, the access to such Confidential Information shall be limited to those persons (i) only with a need to review such information for the purposes for which the disclosure was required, and (ii) who agree in writing to keep the Confidential Information confidential.

Award of Contract
Each respondent submitting a proposal will be notified of Philadelphia Youth Network’s decision.

Criteria and Selection Process
After the proposals are reviewed, final selection will be determined. The successful contractor will be required to enter into an agreement with Philadelphia Youth Network.
Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Quality, completeness, and thoughtfulness of the proposal.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>2. Researcher/organization’s experience in conducting research protocols, literature reviews as well as qualitative and quantitative data analysis and data collection. Also experience in conducting research on poor or disenfranchised populations.</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<td>3. Researcher’s or organization’s experience in partnering with community-based organizations.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>5. Ability of the partner to provide the services requested and contribute to PYN’s research agenda and mission</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>6. Please describe your resources available to lend to this work, ie project staff, their experience and current capacity and organizational tools (eg data software).</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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**Review Process**

Philadelphia Youth Network may, at its discretion, request interviews/presentations by or a meeting with any or all contractors, to clarify or negotiate modifications to the contractor’s proposal. However, Philadelphia Youth Network reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, that the contractor can propose. Philadelphia Youth Network contemplates award of the contract to the responsive, responsible contractor whose proposal is the most advantageous to Philadelphia Youth Network, based on the highest total points and its decision is final.

**Notice to Contractor(s)**

All materials provided to Philadelphia Youth Network become the property of Philadelphia Youth Network and may be returned only at its sole discretion. Philadelphia Youth Network is a public entity. All proposals and any materials submitted with a proposal may be deemed public records subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act. No portion of any proposal or materials submitted therewith will be withheld from disclosure as proprietary, trade secret or confidential unless that portion is clearly marked by the contractor as such, and the contractor agrees to indemnify Philadelphia Youth Network against any claim or action to compel disclosure of such portion of the proposal. Philadelphia Youth Network is not obligated to accept any proposal or to negotiate with any entity. All transactions are subject to the final
approval of Philadelphia Youth Network, which reserves the right to reject any and all proposals without liability. All costs directly or indirectly related to a response to this RFP will be borne by the contractor.

The contract, if any, shall be awarded to the responsible contractor whose proposal is most advantageous to Philadelphia Youth Network, based on the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP. Philadelphia Youth Network may at its sole discretion select the response that best fits its needs, may choose to cancel the RFP, or to not select any Contractor. A selection committee will evaluate the responses based on established criteria, including compliance with the direction herein, experience and qualifications, cost, financial position of the company, and other factors as stated in this RFP. If selected, the successful contractor will enter into a written agreement with Philadelphia Youth Network that will include service agreements and compensation agreements.

All information in this RFI should, for purposes of this RFI, be considered proprietary and confidential. Information contained in this RFP should not be shared or distributed without the expressed written consent of Philadelphia Youth Network.

Rejection of Proposal(s)
Philadelphia Youth Network reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, without incurring any cost or liability whatsoever. All proposals will be reviewed for completeness of the submission requirements. The proposal may be rejected if it fails to meet a material requirement of the RFI or if it is incomplete or contains irregularities. A deviation is material to the extent that a proposal is not in substantial accord with RFI requirements. Immaterial deviations may cause a proposal to be rejected. Philadelphia Youth Network may or may not waive an immaterial deviation or defect in a proposal. Philadelphia Youth Network’s waiver of an immaterial deviation or defect will in no way modify the RFI or excuse a contractor from full compliance with the RFI requirements.

Any proposal may be rejected where it is determined to be not competitive, or where the cost is not reasonable.

Proposals that contain false or misleading statements may be rejected if in Philadelphia Youth Network’s opinion, the information was intended to mislead Philadelphia Youth Network regarding a requirement of the RFI.

Philadelphia Youth Network may reject a proposal from a contractor it finds non-responsive. Any person or entity that has substantially assisted Philadelphia Youth Network in preparing any part of this RFI is prohibited from submitting a proposal. Submission of a proposal to Philadelphia Youth Network shall constitute the contractor’s certification that the proposal is not collusive.

Compliance With the Law
Any Contractor must contractually agree and certify that it will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Any Contractor must contractually agree to include the non-discrimination and compliance provisions of this clause in all subcontracts to perform work under the agreement.
Partner Information

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Partner Background

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<th>ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND</th>
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<td>• Credentials</td>
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<td>• Publications</td>
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<td>• Area of expertise</td>
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<td>• Work experience</td>
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ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST THAT MAY ARISE WHILE WORKING WITH PYN?

Capabilities and Experience

Interest in partnering to advance one or more of the RFI objectives:

Objective 1
• Opportunity youth program evaluation.

Objective 2
• WorkReady programmatic outcomes research.
For each objective of interest, address the following questions:

- What problem are you working to solve?
- Is this new or existing work?
- How will PYN’s support help advance the objective(s)?
- What is the learning agenda—how will you collect and share data and deliverables with PYN; describe your approach to data analysis.

Experience working with other community-based organizations

- Describe any ongoing partnerships you currently have and that will continue for at least the next year, that are related to the work you propose to partner on with PYN

Why you’re a good fit for PYN
**Partnership Team Overview**
Divulge information only with employee’s expressed consent. For each team member, please include:
- Title, main responsibilities and # of staff (if any) who report to the employee
- All other projects employee assigned to, and percentage of time assigned to each
- Length of time employee has been with the organization

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<td>Do you subcontract work out to third parties?</td>
<td>If “YES”, Explain:</td>
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<td>YES / NO</td>
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Budget
For any awards sourced from public sector funding, payment cycles for partner invoices may take anywhere from 60 to 90 days from receipt of the invoices. Any selected partner must be able to support an invoice/payment cycle that may last up to 90 days. Please provide the following budget information. A more detailed budget will be developed between the applicant and PYN at the time of contracting.

- Total annual cost of research services and total funding request
- Total research costs
  - Staff
  - Other costs billed (e.g., software utilized; planning time w/ PYN)

Additional Information/Attachments
Detail or attach any further information that you believe will be beneficial to PYN in support of this Request for Information review process (i.e., most recent Annual Report).