



## ***REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS***

### ***City Leadership to Promote Black Male Achievement***

**An initiative to help local leaders improve education, work, and family outcomes for black men and boys**

**Grant Period:**

**April 1, 2013 to August 29, 2014**

**Deadline for Proposal Submission:**

**Friday, March 22, 2013**

**With Support from the Open Society Foundations'  
Campaign for Black Male Achievement**

## I. Goal

This project is designed to assist city leaders in their efforts to improve the life outcomes of black men and boys. In order to achieve this result, NLC seeks to support city leaders in framing and raising the visibility of issues related to black male achievement and to enhance their capacity to develop strong local partnerships, use data more effectively, implement comprehensive strategies in areas of education, work, and family, and promote greater civic engagement of young black men and boys.

## II. Project Overview: Technical Assistance Opportunity for City Leaders

The National League of Cities (NLC), through its Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), invites city leaders to apply for a new technical assistance project in support of local efforts to reduce the wide disparities in education, work, and family outcomes between African-American males and their peers. Made possible by the generous support of the Open Society Foundations, this project will begin in April 2013 and conclude in August 2014.

Mayors and other city leaders are in a unique position to spearhead efforts to increase black male achievement and reduce racial disparities in their communities. City officials have a visible “bully pulpit” from which to place issues on city and community agendas, the power to serve as conveners and broker partnerships among diverse groups, and the ability to leverage local resources – from parks and community centers to libraries and housing and community development programs – on behalf of citywide initiatives.

Based on the proposals submitted in response to this request, the YEF Institute will select up to six cities to participate in this national initiative. **A strong commitment by a local elected official to frame and raise the visibility of issues related to black male achievement in his or her city is a requirement of participation.** In addition, NLC expects that selected cities will commit to work in each of the following four areas, which the YEF Institute believes are keys to sustained progress at the community level in improving life outcomes of black men and boys:

1. **Development of Strong Partnerships:** Create or utilize an existing partnership structure that engages other local government officials, community and faith-based leaders, families, youth, funders, and other stakeholders within the city who are dedicated to improving outcomes for black men and boys.
2. **Effective Utilization of Data:** Strengthen data capacity that supports the city’s efforts to use data to document needs, target resources, assess the effectiveness of strategies and programs, and measure progress in improving life outcomes of black men and boys.
3. **Implementation of Comprehensive Strategies:** Develop and advance new policies and practices that are of sufficient scale to generate significant improvements in outcomes for black men and boys in areas such as educational attainment, employment opportunities, family strengthening, and the prevention of violence and violent-related deaths.
4. **Civic Engagement of Young Black Men and Boys:** Promote an authentic youth civic engagement structure that allows young black men and boys to be involved in meaningful ways in local planning, policy, and decision-making processes.

Through the project's technical assistance process, YEF Institute staff will encourage city leaders to engage diverse stakeholders across the community, help cities build a strong local team, and identify key leadership opportunities for stimulating and supporting cross-system collaboration. Technical assistance provided by the YEF Institute will also assist city officials in developing and implementing strategies to improve the quality of their efforts, overcome challenges, maintain momentum, use key indicators to evaluate progress, and enhance the accountability and sustainability of such efforts over time.

Participating cities will also receive technical assistance to strengthen their capacity to engage young black men in local government and their communities, increasing their knowledge of the authentic youth civic engagement (AYCE) model and developing new approaches or innovative adaptations of the AYCE framework through their black male achievement initiatives.

### **III. Benefits to City Leaders and their Partners**

City teams selected to participate in this project will gain access to a broad range of potential benefits, including:

- a YEF Institute assessment that identifies strengths, challenges, and opportunities for future progress in promoting black male achievement, including assistance in collecting more baseline data and identifying potential targets for improvement;
- support from the YEF Institute in developing and implementing action plans with locally defined indicators to measure progress toward desired results;
- ongoing technical assistance through site visits, phone interviews, monthly conference calls with individual city teams, bimonthly calls with the full cohort, cross-site convenings, webinars, and frequent phone and email communications;
- brokered access to federal agencies and national experts on topics such as educational equity, employment strategies, family strengthening, vulnerable youth in transition, and violence prevention;
- opportunities to participate in a multi-city network of municipal leaders working on cross-system strategies for black males that offers valuable and sustained peer learning opportunities;
- a nationally-sponsored framework that enables city leaders and their partners to invite diverse segments of their own communities to join a collaborative effort in support of black male achievement; and
- the heightened stature and national visibility associated with participation in a technical assistance initiative sponsored by NLC and supported by a prominent national foundation.

#### IV. Proposal Guidelines

In order to be considered for selection, city teams must submit a proposal that includes the following elements:

- *A proposal narrative, not to exceed five pages in length.* This narrative should address the following questions:
  - ✓ *Problem Statement/Need:* What is known about the disparities that exist in your city between black males and their peers in the areas of education, work, family and violence? Please provide examples of data that illustrate disparate outcomes and/or trends (see the “Scorecard for Black Male Achievement” in NLC’s recent [municipal action guide](#)).
  - ✓ *City Priorities:* How or why has this issue become a priority for the mayor or city councilmembers? Is the city considering, or has it already pursued, any plans or strategies to promote black male achievement? If so, please describe the stakeholders involved in current efforts, sources of leadership and support, and any progress to date.
  - ✓ *Data Capacity:* What efforts is your city taking or would like to take to strengthen its capacity to use data to document needs, target resources, assess the effectiveness of strategies and programs, and measure progress in improving outcomes for black men and boys?
  - ✓ *Youth Engagement:* How does the city currently engage youth in local government? Do any of these efforts reach or focus on young black men? Are there ways in which the city might increase and support the civic engagement of young black men in the future?
  - ✓ *Local Challenges:* What challenges has the city encountered in any past efforts to promote black male achievement and how have those challenges been mitigated? What other challenges or obstacles is the city likely to encounter in future efforts?
  - ✓ *Intended Results/Indicators:* Does the city have specific results it hopes to achieve in its efforts to improve educational attainment, expand job opportunities, strengthen families, and reduce violence for black men and boys? What indicators would enable the city to measure progress toward these results? How would technical assistance from the YEF Institute enhance and/or assist the city’s efforts?
- *A letter of support from the sponsoring mayor or city councilmember.*
- *A letter of support from the leader of at least one major local community-based or faith-based organizations serving or advocating on behalf of black males in the community.*
- *A completed technical assistance application cover sheet* (see below).

## V. Selection Criteria

Selection of city teams for participation in the initiative will be based on the following criteria:

- **Evidence of need to improve outcomes for black men and boys.** A successful application will demonstrate knowledge of the problems and trends affecting black males in the community, and describe relevant policies and strategies already in place.
- **High-level commitment from the city and major partners.** NLC will look for compelling evidence that the city and local partners will dedicate the time, staff, and resources necessary to participate in and benefit from the project. Strong expressions of intent to assume and sustain leadership roles from the mayor or the city council and from other public systems serving black males represent one important means of demonstrating this commitment.
- **Readiness for technical assistance.** A successful application will include a thorough description of how participation in this initiative will provide specific opportunities for local progress, including priorities for improvement or development via technical assistance.
- **Commitment to core project components.** NLC will look for evidence of the city's willingness and readiness to focus on the four key elements described in the project overview: development of strong partnerships; effective utilization of data; implementation of comprehensive strategies, and civic engagement of young black men and boys.

## VI. Submission of Applications

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Proposal Deadline:** Friday, March 22, 2013

**Selection Announcement:** Friday, March 29, 2013

**Project Director:** Leon T. Andrews, Jr.  
Institute for Youth, Education and Families  
National League of Cities

**Mailing Addresses:** Leon T. Andrews, Jr.  
National League of Cities  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20004

Please include the original application, including the application cover sheet, letters of support, and the five-page proposal. Please mail to the address above or send by email to [andrews@nlc.org](mailto:andrews@nlc.org). No appendices beyond the required letters of support should be included. **Only one application per city will be accepted.**

## **VII. Background Information**

A large body of research shows that young black males are significantly more likely than other segments of the population to experience joblessness, low educational attainment, incarceration, family instability, and other challenges that perpetuate a cycle of intergenerational poverty. The existence of these disparities has been well known for a long time. Only recently has the national dialogue on these issues reflected a heightened sense of urgency. The Campaign for Black Male Achievement – led by Open Society Foundations – was created in 2008 to address the intensification of negative outcomes for black males and their continued educational, economic, social, and political exclusion. Some of the most vocal and active policymakers in this burgeoning, nationwide movement are mayors and other city leaders from cities across the country.

Every day, city officials are reminded of the impact of these corrosive disparities in education, work, and family outcomes on their communities, and many have been sounding the alarm for decades. Some city leaders express their concerns in terms of equity and core values while others emphasize public safety or the link between a skilled workforce and local economic vitality. Local responses to the crisis facing black males have been muted by the devastating economic recession and shrinking federal and state assistance to families and cities, which have exacerbated pressures on households and forced deep cuts in city budgets. Nonetheless, cities continue to develop innovative, cross-sector strategies to strengthen families, promote early literacy, raise high school graduation and college completion rates, reengage disconnected youth, and enhance family economic success.

Building on a previous, one-year initiative supported by the Open Society Foundations to identify opportunities for city leadership to promote black male achievement, this project responds to a need for technical assistance and peer learning opportunities among city officials that will help them explore and adopt promising practices for improving outcomes for young black males. By providing intensive, site-level support, the YEF Institute will help city leaders accelerate the pace of local progress to reduce disparities in educational achievement, employment, financial security, health, juvenile arrests and detention, and family stability.

The YEF Institute has more than a decade of experience demonstrating that the personal engagement of mayors, coupled with substantive ongoing support and opportunities for peer sharing, can lead to real and effective local policy changes that benefit vulnerable youth. For more information about the YEF Institute, please visit [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef).



**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION COVER SHEET**  
*City Leadership to Promote Black Male Achievement*

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsoring Mayor or Councilmember:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NLC Member:** Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lead City Staff Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_