Community Building and Crime Response

Safe and Beautiful Neighborhood Grant 2019-2020

Safe Passage for Youth

Concept Paper

I. Introduction

The City of Madison, Madison Police, (MPD) and Community Development Division, (CDD), in partnership with Common Wealth Development Inc. applied for and received a grant through the Department of Justice entitled “Our Neighborhood: A Safe and Beautiful Place,” a community-based crime reduction project. Through a process that included the views and ideas of a South West neighborhood advisory group, an implementation plan was developed that aims to reduce youth and young adult crime while improving social relationships and collective efficacy in the neighborhoods and strengthening community systems.

Our Neighborhood: A Safe and Beautiful Place has three “program pillars” that will work together to reduce crime and improve underlying social conditions that contribute to crime: Increased Guardianship, Support for Parents and Community Policing. The Increased Guardianship pillar includes support for youth mentoring programs (addressed through an earlier request for proposal process) and a Safe Passages strategy that will reduce youth conflict and connect youth to prosocial activities.

This concept paper will focus on providing a descriptive framework that will be used to communicate to policy makers, the larger community and potential vendors the essential components of a Safe Passage program that will be funded by the City of Madison under the Department of Justice’’ Community Based Crime Reduction funding, Our Neighborhood: A Safe and Beautiful Place” grant.

Federal Grant Requirements

The source of funds for the Safe Passages project are Federal Funds awarded through the Department of Justice to achieve outcomes needed to reduce crime and improve social conditions that contribute to crime. It is expected that funded projects will work closely with city staff, the project manager and the project researcher to develop systems and processes to fulfill federal data collection and reporting requirements.
II. Project Overview

Many of the disturbances, fights and negative behaviors among youth in our neighborhoods occur in the hours just after school, when many youth lack supervised activities and congregate in various public locations between school and home. Often, these hostilities are the extension of conflicts that may begin in school and turn into disturbances in the neighborhood. A key risk factor for youth crime at the Raymond Road and Whitney Road hotspot is the convergence of large numbers of young people after school in and around the Meadowood Shopping Center. The shopping center is home to several businesses, a public library, and the Meadowood Neighborhood Center. Near the shopping center are two other hotspots that are risk factors for youth disturbances: the 5800 block of Russett and the 5800 block of Balsam. Most of the students come from nearby Toki Middle School and Orchard Ridge Elementary School. The site also attracts older youth and young adults during the day and during after-school hours.

Research suggests that fights and other juvenile offenses can happen when three elements come together: motivated offenders, vulnerable targets, and the absence of guardianship. Adults who are actively present in locations where offenses occur, can disrupt or discourage a potential crime—even in the presence a motivated offender and potential victim.

The Safe Passage Program is a model that communities across the country have used with success to ensure that youth are able to transition from school safely. The Safe Passage Program integrates an innovative, powerful network of community members that is a visible presence and monitors chosen “safety zones” after school hours to ensure youth safely move from school to home or other locations by way of walking or public transportation. The Safe Passage Team supplies supervision, guardianship, and a friendly face on the streets during the after-school hours or other peak time periods.

III. Scope of Services

The focus population for the Safe Passage program is largely geared toward middle and high school age youth experiencing conflict, who may exhibit disorderly behavior, or who may be otherwise unsupervised or at-risk during the hours after school in the hotspot areas.

Project Area
The project area is predominantly the Meadowood area including Meadowood Park, Leland Dr, Balsam Rd, Russet Rd, Raymond Rd and Cameron Dr. The Park Edge/Park Ridge and Theresa Terrace area may be included if circumstances warrant it by increased disturbances and/or MPD data.

Time Frame
The Safe Passage program is primarily an after-school activity, during the MMSD academic school year with the possibility of summer hours depending on proposed program structure,
availability of resources and the needs of the target areas. Preferred programs will begin in some capacity in Summer 2019. Programs must start by Fall 2019. Funding expires September 30, 2020.

Expected Cost
Up to $150,000 is available for the 16-18 month funding period. Potential vendors should have the ability to raise additional funds for Safe Passage that ensures provision of service after the Federal grant ends.

Essential Program Features

- Commitment to positive youth development and violence reduction as an overall goal.
- Intentional program design consistent with identified program standards and outcomes.
- Provision of a consistent, stabilizing adult presence in the neighborhood during peak hours when youth may be in transit or congregate in public spaces.
- Supervision of Community Safety Advocates (CSAs), including regular check-in meetings with team supervisor at the beginning of shift to plan and discuss ongoing issues in the hotspot area.
- Support of young people’s efforts to connect in positive ways to neighborhood resources.
- Commitment to training and continuous improvement for service delivery.
- Emphases on helping youth reduce and manage conflict.
- Emphasis on staff training and communication among staff and with key stakeholders
- Development of mechanism for ongoing CBCR Advisory Team and Cross Functional Partnership Team updates.
- Ability to develop and utilize data collection systems that document impact and outcomes of programming in alignment with federal requirements.

Program Elements

There is richness in a diversity of approaches to working effectively with children and youth. However, Safe Passage programs reach positive outcomes when several conditions exist within and in support of the program. These include the research-based best practices:

- **Program provides a consistent, stabilizing adult presence**—for at least 3 hours after school release, Monday through Friday, with possible staffing hours during the summer. CSAs will be on foot, walking the specified neighborhoods, engaging youth, and visible during each shift.
- **Program hires and trains Community Safety Advocates**—Provider will conduct background checks and ensure staff members have the knowledge, skills and physical ability necessary to fulfill the duties of the position to have a visible and engaging
presence at key times. Trainings include youth brain development, trauma-sensitive practices, de-escalation and intervention strategies, and cultural sensitivity.

- **Program has a team approach to developing and enhancing relationships**—Provider will take a team approach to developing working relationships with schools, existing neighborhood groups and other key stakeholders.
- **Program connects youth with positive youth development opportunities**—Provider has knowledge of local youth development opportunities, determines youth needs and can connect youth with relevant resources.
- **Program provides positive, credible presence in the hotspot areas**—Provider supports CSAs in having a mobile, highly visible, positive and engaged presence which promotes good relationships with community members, businesses, and organizations, and modeling of pro-social behavior.
- **Program supports reduction of conflict and violence**—Provider gives necessary training and support to the CSAs to build rapport with youth, de-escalate potential conflicts and, as needed, report unsafe behavior to the proper resource including schools, library, community center, neighborhood officers and the Madison Police Department.

**Program Standards**

- **Provider empowers**—Provider brings focus to empowering youth, including an emphasis on fostering personal efficacy, advocacy and judgment in youth.
- **Provider educates**—Program provides youth with information that increases youth knowledge and understanding about issues that affect youth or resources beneficial to positive youth development and well-being.
- **Provider fosters positive connection and cohesion**—Provider trains CSAs and implements strategies that promote connections among youth, and between youth and local stakeholders that foster trust and cohesion.
- **Provider recruits, trains and retains staff**—Providers have a formal plan to recruit and retain staff for the duration of the program. CSAs will have needed skills and competencies for positive outcomes including a desire to work with youth, solid communication skills, empathy, listening skills, patience, good judgement, ability to assess complex youth situations, and the physical ability to fulfill duties. CSAs will receive training on adolescent development, communicating with youth, trauma informed care, conflict resolution, mental health first aid, documentation and reporting, and community resources available for youth and families.
- **Provider gives supervision and support**—In addition to training, provider will track and support the activities of CSAs and provide regular feedback, encouragement and performance evaluation.
- **Provider works closely with schools**—Supervising staff will have regular communication with school staff at Toki, Memorial, Falk, and Jefferson to share pertinent information.
- **Provider makes program changes based on CSAs and stakeholder input**—Provider will adjust presence of teams based on observation by the CSAs as well as input from grant
management staff, MPD, youth, schools, local businesses and organizations and other stakeholders in the hotspot area.

- **Provider documents activities and interventions**—Develops a formal plan to document incidents of contacts, successfully apply de-escalation and problem solving with youth, monthly reports, and relationship with the CBCR oversight teams detailing activities of staff

- **Provider communicates and collaborates**—Provider takes part in regular CBCR project meetings to share information, give updates and explore coordination of violence reduction strategies and potential collaboration.

**Program Outcomes should include at least two of the following measurable changes:**

- Decrease in youth citations in the hotspot area
- Decrease in youth conflict (vocal and physical) in the hotspot area
- Improved relationships with other youth and community
- Increased youth efficacy
- Increased positive social connection
- Increase in youth participation in organized and other prosocial youth activities