



**Department of  
Youth & Community  
Development**  
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Commissioner

# **NYC Unity Works Program Concept Paper**

**November 12, 2019**

## **Table of Contents**

- I. Background, Stakeholder Feedback, and Program Model**
- II. Program Goals**
- III. Target Population**
- IV. DYCD Program Approach**
- V. Program Components**
- VI. Staffing**
- VII. Output Measures, Performance Measures, and Outcomes**
- VIII. Subcontracting**
- IX. Funding**
- X. Payment Structure**
- XI. Contract Period**
- XII. Eligibility and Basis for Award**
- XIII. Health and Human Services Accelerator System**
- XIV. Procurement Timeline**
- XV. Comments**

# NYC Unity Works Program

***Our Mission:***

*The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish.*

***Our Vision:***

*DYCD strives to improve the quality of life of New Yorkers by collaborating with local organizations and investing in the talents and assets of communities to help them develop, grow, and thrive.*

This concept paper precedes a Request for Proposals (RFP) through which the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), in collaboration with the NYC Unity Project and the NYC Center for Youth Employment, will seek a qualified not-for-profit organization to provide a new education and workforce development program. The program will serve runaway and homeless youth (RHY) as well as youth at risk of homelessness who are 16-24 years of age; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or other sexual/gender minorities (LGBTQI+); and currently not working, not in school, or in need of additional employment or literacy skills. The program will prepare participants to secure entry-level employment in a career pathway by offering a continuum of education and employment services including literacy instruction, HSE prep, work-readiness training, paid work experiences, industry-recognized credentials and placement in employment, advanced training, or post-secondary education. Participants will also receive comprehensive support services tailored to their individual needs. DYCD will fund one citywide program.

## **I. Background, Stakeholder Feedback, and Program Model**

### Background

Recent research on youth workforce preparation and labor market success has shown a growing emphasis on the importance of combining academic progress with the accumulation of work-readiness skills (i.e., critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and self-advocacy), employment experiences, and industry-recognized credentials.<sup>1</sup> This emphasis adopts a longer-term developmental perspective requiring an ongoing commitment on the part of youth to engage in activities that keep them on track and on the part of workforce preparation systems to provide training and employment opportunities as well as coordinated, comprehensive supports along the way.<sup>2</sup> Meeting these requirements is challenging for youth and workforce preparation systems alike.

DYCD currently oversees the largest system of services for RHY and youth at risk of homelessness in NYC. In addition to drop-in centers and street outreach efforts, DYCD invests in residential programs for youth in crises and youth transitioning to independent living. In addressing the work readiness and employment needs of this population, programs rely on referrals to existing programs and opportunities, most of which are not explicitly set up to serve RHY or youth who are LGBTQI+. The need for such programming is outlined below. The NYC Unity Works program (hereafter referred to as Unity Works)

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<sup>1</sup> This approach is advanced in the following publications: “Youth Workforce Development,” Jobs for the Future, 2016; Richard Kazis, “MDRC Research on Career Pathways,” MDRC Issue Brief, March 2016; and Career Pathways: One City Working Together, Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force Report, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The NYC Center for Youth Employment’s Career Readiness Framework shows the elements of this developmental perspective and commitment. See CareerReady NYC: Preparing Young New Yorkers for Career Success, NYC Center for Youth Employment 2019. Also see Dan Bloom and Cynthia Miller, “Helping Young People Move Up: Findings from Three New Studies of Youth Employment Programs,” MDRC, November 2018.

is designed to meet this need and thereby, would serve as an important resource for existing RHY programs.

Unity Works will target youth at the intersection of two vulnerabilities, i.e., being RHY or at risk of homelessness and LGBTQI+, to foster workforce readiness and labor market success. RHY experience disruptions in education, unstable housing, lack of resources, and trauma – all of which can become barriers to employment and undermine sustained engagement in education and employment preparation programs.<sup>3</sup> LGBTQI+ populations experience employer discrimination and bias that result in lower hiring rates, promotion rates, and salaries; as well as higher firing and harassment rates compared to their heterosexual counterparts.<sup>4</sup> The over-representation of LGBTQI+ individuals among the RHY population is well documented.<sup>5</sup> In NYC, approximately 28-44 percent of RHY are LGBTQI+.<sup>6</sup> These youth experience the combined labor market challenges found among both populations. If they are neither in school nor working, then they are not engaged in activities that would advance their progress on a career path and likely lack the social capital to put them back on that path.

### *Stakeholder Feedback*

In developing the Unity Works approach, extensive interviews were conducted with current RHY providers, experts, advocates, and chief executive officers of LGBTQI+-focused organizations as well as program directors of DYCD’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program for out-of-school youth. The resulting recommendations that have been adopted in the Unity Works design are as follows:

- Meet youth “where they are at” and customize support services to individual needs
- Provide food and clothing
- Hire “navigators” to assist youth in accessing a broad range of services, especially housing and medical services
- Emphasize case management services to keep participants from dropping out of the program
- Increase program access to LGBTQI+ youth and develop an understanding about working with LGBTQI+ youth among employers and internship sponsors
- Allow for a program duration longer than one year
- Provide access to trauma-informed mental health services and supports
- Allow flexibility and choice in attainment of advanced training opportunities
- Include follow-up services after exit from the program

### *Program Model*

The Unity Works model is designed to provide youth who face the barriers described above with the services they need to build resiliency and confidence; acquire work experiences; and gain skills, competencies, and credentials. The model combines robust, culturally competent literacy instruction and

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<sup>3</sup> See Homelessness in America: Focus on Youth, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, October 2018; Abramovich, Alex, “Barriers to Employment for Homeless Youth,” Covenant House, 2016; and Long, David, Rio, John, and Rosen, Jeremy, “Employment and Income Supports for Homeless People,” National Symposium on Homeless Research, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> See Results of a Survey of LGBTQ New Yorkers, Office of the New York City Comptroller Schott M. Stringer, June 2017; Frazer, M. S. and Howe, E.E, “LGBT Health and Human Services Needs Assessment,” The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center, 2016; James et al., U.S. Transgender Survey: New York State Report, National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016; and Badgett, M.V.L., Lau, H., Sears, B., and Ho, D., Bias in the Workplace: Consistent Evidence of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination, The Williams Institute, June 2007

<sup>5</sup> See Ingram, E., Fridgeland, J.M., Reed, B., and Atwell, M., Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America’s Public Schools, Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> “New York City Youth Count 2018,” NYC Center on Innovation through Data Intelligence, 2018.

workforce training, wraparound support services, paid work opportunities, and group-building activities with participants to ensure peer support and ongoing connection to program services. These services will be holistic and, at the same time, individualized for each program participant. The goal of the program is to give participants solid footing on a career path and to move them forward in the direction of long-term success in the labor market. To allot sufficient time for participants to succeed in meeting program goals and outcomes, Unity Works will offer up to three years of services, which include up to two years of direct services and one year of follow-up services after exit. The program will serve 90 youth in two cohorts of 45 participants.

Among the most consequential skills in relation to labor market outcomes are literacy and numeracy skills. The ability to read, write, and carry out mathematical calculations is essential to advancing along a career pathway. Employers use the attainment of a high school diploma as an indicator that someone has sufficient skills to handle the tasks associated with entry-level employment. It is assumed that the majority of the youth recruited for Unity Works will require preparation for passage of New York State's High School Equivalency (HSE) exam.<sup>7</sup> Literacy instruction and HSE preparation will be an initial engagement in the program.

The attainment of a high school diploma is necessary, but not sufficient for economic success. Youth also need to build their employability skills. At the same time participants are building their literacy skills, they will begin developing work-readiness skills and be placed in paid internships. Participants who have at least a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level or attain that level in the program will receive training toward a DYCD-approved occupational credential. When participants are ready to exit the program, program staff will help them secure a placement in employment, postsecondary education, or advanced training. These credentials, combined with work experience, would provide youth with the foundational skills necessary to secure full-time employment with career advancement opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

Given that the youth population to be served by the program face particular vulnerabilities, compared to their peers, they will need enriched supports to overcome barriers such as skills deficiencies, mental health challenges, housing instability, and histories of trauma and poverty. Therefore, a key component of the program approach will be providing comprehensive support to participants as they engage in program activities and after exit, as they continue their career development through employment, postsecondary education, or advanced occupational training. In addition to intensive, trauma-informed counseling, participants will be assigned a "navigator" who will ensure that they gain access to and receive the services they need, while in the program and during a follow-up period after exit. The program will also make an intentional effort to ensure that internship sponsors and employers are welcoming and sensitive to the needs of LGBTQI+ persons. All staff of Unity Works will undertake training on how to assess potential worksites, advise participants, and highlight areas where an internship sponsor or employer could receive training to improve its LGBTQI+ cultural competency.

The LGBTQI+ RHY population has identified employment as one of its top three needs along with housing and acceptance/affirmation of their LGBTQI+ identity.<sup>9</sup> The Unity Works approach will ensure

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<sup>7</sup> Lacking a high school diploma is to top risk factor for youth homelessness and among opportunity youth nationally, 42% of youth 16-19 years of age and 30 percent of youth 20-24 years of age lack high school diplomas. See Morton, H., Dworsky, A., and Samuels, G. M., *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America, National Estimates*, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2017 and Ross, R. and Svajlenka, N., "Employment and Disconnection Among Teens and Young Adults: The Role of Place, Race, and Education," Brookings, May 2016.

<sup>8</sup>See Louisa Treskon, "What Works for Disconnected Young People," MDRC, February 2016.

<sup>9</sup> See Choi, Soon Ku, et al., *Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness*, True Colors Fund, June 2015.

that participants not only have the skills to secure employment, but the necessary support to build a career plan that will serve them well in the future.

## **II. Program Goals**

The goal for Unity Works is to provide youth from the target population (specified below) with literacy instruction, foundational occupational credentials, workforce development opportunities, referrals, supports to attain a job with career possibilities, enrollment in postsecondary education or advanced training in the short term, economic self-sufficiency, and a successful career in the long term.

## **III. Target Population<sup>10</sup>**

The target population for Unity Works is Runaway and Homeless Youth as well as youth at risk of homelessness who are:

- 16-24 years of age
- LGBTQI+
- not working, not in school, or in need of additional employment or literacy skills to secure entry-level employment in a career pathway

It is anticipated that the majority of participants recruited to the program will lack a high school diploma or HSE credential.

## **IV. DYCD Program Approach**

DYCD has a common set of expectations, set forth below, for its funded human services programs. Since DYCD funds a diverse range of programming, how these expectations are met will vary by program type. Unity Works would adhere to the following requirements:<sup>11</sup>

1. Safe and Welcoming Environment: The contractor would ensure a friendly and supportive environment where youth feel welcome and are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, or background. There would be an intentional focus on creating an affirming environment for LGBTQI+ youth.
2. Strengths-based Approach: The contractor would embrace DYCD's strengths-based framework in which the strengths and assets of individuals and communities are valued. Since many youths in the target population have experienced trauma, programs would adopt trauma-informed practices and address the emotional and mental health needs of participants. A central focus would be to establish caring, empathic relationships that reflect an understanding of the effects of trauma on the youths' development.

The contractor would adopt the interconnected concepts of Positive Youth Development (PYD), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and Youth Leadership set out in DYCD's Promote the Positive approach.<sup>12</sup> Program staff would function as responsible, caring adults and positive role models, promoting participant safety, engagement, confidence, and empowerment. Programs would demonstrate the benefits of prosocial behaviors and responsible decision-making,

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<sup>10</sup> Although the program will target specific youth, it will be open to all RHY youth and youth at risk of homelessness in NYC.

<sup>11</sup> All requirements under the DYCD Program Approach also apply to subcontractors, as appropriate.

<sup>12</sup> DYCD's online link to "Promote the Positive" is currently under development.

reliability, critical thinking, and good communication skills and offer youth opportunities to be good team players, leaders, and role models. These could include opportunities for youth to be peer leaders, provide input into planning activities such as community service, and assist with recruitment and outreach as peer connectors.

- a. Circles of Support: The contractor would embrace the principles and vision underpinning DYCD’s Circles of Support family engagement framework.<sup>13</sup> DYCD recognizes that the healthy development of participants of all ages requires that we consider the contexts of their families and communities. DYCD defines family in broad terms to include those individuals who care for and support participants but are not related to them. Caring adults become key networks or “circles of support,” replacing traditional family systems. Programs must consider the diversity of participants’ circles of support and create welcoming environments that embrace those who have positive influences on participants’ development. The Unity Works contractor is expected to engage and cultivate connections to supportive relationships that may be present among participants’ networks of friends, families, and communities and help them build supportive connections among their peers in the Unity Works program. DYCD will expect the contractor to be mindful of the potential impact of unresolved family issues that can undermine efforts to move youth towards stability, and to take into account that family dynamics can change over time.
3. Community Partnerships: The contractor would have knowledge of local and citywide resources relevant to RHY and youth at risk of homelessness who are LGBTQI+, as well as a related set of established community partnerships with external organizations. Community partnerships may take different forms and would include referral agreements, co-location of services, joint projects, and subcontracted services. If not providing all the program components within its organization, the contractor would provide the other(s) through a subcontract agreement that would identify each organization’s responsibilities and provide for strong mechanisms of collaboration for the shared work. The partnerships would intentionally promote service integration at the local level and build provider networks that maximize options for program participants.

Unity Works will specifically require the contractor to partner with the following organizations and programs:

- DYCD-funded Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Services programs, including Drop-in centers, Crisis Services programs, and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) Support programs for recruitment and, where applicable, coordinated case management services
- Literacy instruction/HSE preparation providers (e.g., New York City Department of Education District 79)
- Advanced occupational training providers and internship sponsors
- Mental health services providers

Community partners may include other DYCD-funded youth workforce development programs and other services funded through DYCD. The *Discover DYCD* digital tool is available at <https://www.dycdconnect.nyc/> to help identify DYCD-funded programs by neighborhood. Also

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<sup>13</sup>Available at / <http://familyengagementdycdconnect.nyc/>

in support of partnership development, DYCD will provide a vetted list of training providers as well as a referral network listing of mental health services providers.

4. Youth Voice: The contractor would provide a mechanism for ongoing feedback from youth (e.g., anonymous online comment card survey, monthly feedback session, etc.) for program improvement.

## **V. Program Components**

The key program components of Unity Works include the following:

1. Outreach and Recruitment: The contractor would work closely with DYCD-funded Drop-in centers, Crisis Services programs, and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) Support programs that will be invited to refer appropriate youth to the program. In addition, youth living on the street or who walk through the contractor's door seeking services may also be enrolled. For youth who are street homeless, the contractor would try to connect them to housing. Therefore, it is expected that the contractor would develop partnerships and coordinate services with providers of residential facilities that house program participants. The contractor will be expected to conduct intentional outreach and recruitment to LGBTQI+ youth.
2. Comprehensive Assessment: Upon enrollment, each youth will participate in a comprehensive assessment, completed with the counselor or case manager, to determine current social, medical, and mental health needs and explore the participant's career interests and goals. Literacy skills would be assessed using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). As part of case management, contractors would provide reassessments at multiple points throughout the program to determine changes in youth interests and needs.
3. Orientation: Youth will take part in an orientation that will include a review of program expectations, opportunities for building positive relationships among fellow participants as well as with staff members, and an introduction to other DYCD-funded programs.
4. Enrollment: The program will serve 90 youth in two cohorts of 45 youth each. The contractor would propose a recruitment plan and timeline for when full enrollment would be reached for each cohort. Ideally, full enrollment for the first cohort would be attained by October of 2020. However, DYCD will consider alternative dates for the first cohort based on justifications presented in the contractor's plan. Full enrollment for the second cohort would be attained by June 30, 2021 to ensure that participants can receive two full years of program services and one year of follow-up services by the end of the contract period. Regarding youth who leave the program, DYCD will emphasize re-engagement efforts over replacement.
5. Case Management: Each youth will work with the program staff to develop an Individual Service Plan (ISP) and be assigned to a "navigator" (described below in Section VI. Staffing) with whom the youth would meet regularly throughout the program at a mutually agreed upon frequency and according to need. The case manager would help the youth connect to needed services, reassess and revise the service plan as needed, assist in placements, and follow up with youth for one year after they exit the program. The maximum caseload per navigator would be 25 youth.

Case management would include case conferencing among program staff and the staff of service providers with whom the youth is engaged, including the staff at the RHY facilities where participants reside. The case manager will play a key role in sustaining participant engagement;

ideally each youth would work with the same case manager throughout all components of the program. The contractor would have up to \$600 per participant, per year to be used for incentives.

6. Literacy Instruction: Youth will have access to literacy instruction and HSE preparation classes as needed. These services will either be provided directly by the contractor or through arrangements with external providers. It is anticipated that most of the youth in the program will need these services. The provider would attempt to create literacy learning communities among participants undertaking instruction at the same level.
7. Work Readiness: All youth will participate in work-readiness activities to build the foundational skills that apply in any work setting, and in college and career exploration. Work-readiness training will be tailored to the participants' internship placements. The training will also address topics such as financial literacy, conflict resolution, and workplace dress codes.
8. Subsidized Paid Work Experiences: All participants will take part in subsidized paid work experiences through internships or job placements. They will receive wages of up to \$1,500 per year. (Participant wages will be paid by DYCD through a payroll vendor.)
9. Post-Secondary Education and Career Exploration: All youth will participate in activities to explore post-secondary education and career options.
10. Group Activities: The program will offer group activities to build relationships and support the formation of a learning community among the participants. The activities would include team-building exercises, networking sessions, and workshops. Workshops would be on topics relevant to program goals and outcomes such as self-advocacy, resilience, college exploration, career planning, LGBTQI+ rights, worker rights, and healthy living. The program would also offer group peer-support opportunities, to strengthen positive relationships and cohesion among program participants.
11. Industry-recognized Occupational Credential: Youth will be offered access to training that results in an industry-recognized occupational credential. Before youth exit the program, they are expected to attain at least one foundational occupational credential such as the National Retail Federation credential, the ServSafe credential, or the Microsoft Office User Specialist credential. DYCD will consider approving other foundational credentials on a case-by-case basis.
12. Transition Assistance and Follow-up Services: The contractor would have strong and effective transition strategies in place to ensure that participants will maintain motivation and be connected to the appropriate next steps as they move from literacy instruction and HSE preparation to occupational training to post-exit placements. The contractor would provide one year of follow-up support services to participants after exit. A key factor would be maintaining established relationships with program staff, particularly the mental health counselor and navigator, as well as other program participants. Other strategies may include, for example, assisting with college and financial aid applications. In support of successful participant transitions, DYCD will establish a separate pool of funding to assist participants with the costs of post-exit placements, e.g., tuition expenses at community colleges or advanced training fees. The contractor would manage these funds, but expenditures would be subject to prior DYCD approval.
13. Program Operating Hours and Activity Scheduling: The contractor would establish program operating hours and weekly schedules of activity that best fit the needs of participants and employers, taking into account curfew hours of residents in RHY facilities.

14. Professional Development: Program staff would participate in training and staff development activities relevant to their job titles to build their capacities to effectively serve program participants. They would also receive training on “employer screening,” i.e., how to assess the extent to which a potential employer is knowledgeable and welcoming to LGBTQI+ employees. Professional development would be provided by the contractor, a DYCD capacity-building contractor, or other training resources. In addition, programs would provide the conditions and opportunities for program staff to share challenges and successes, learn from one another, and find support.
15. Employment and Education Partnerships: The contractor would devise strategies to recruit and work with employers in order to identify employer needs and set up high-quality work experiences for participants that could lead to career-track employment. This would include participation in local employer networks to better understand local labor markets and identification of a range of employment options that are a good fit for LGBTQI+ young adults. Programs would develop partnerships with advanced-training providers and postsecondary institutions to support programming in Unity Works and aid transitions.
16. Reporting Requirements: The contractor would be required to submit regular reports to DYCD, including reporting on enrollment, selected output measures, and outcome achievement. The contractor may also be asked to participate a program evaluation which could include additional reporting requirements.

## **VI. Staffing**

### **1. Program Director (one full-time)**

*Job description*: manages the overall program, oversees staff and relationships with any subcontractors

*Job qualifications*: B.A. or B.S. degree and relevant experience, or, as an alternative, at least five years of relevant experience, including case management experience and an Associate Degree

### **2. Job Developer (one full-time)**

*Job description*: develops relationships with employers and external training programs and supports youth in applying for jobs and occupational training

*Job qualifications*: at least some college and applicable experience toward developing jobs and/or occupational training placements

### **3. Mental Health Counselor (one full-time)**

*Job description*: provides onsite counseling services for program participants, assists in conducting initial assessments of potential participants

*Job qualifications*: must have at least one of the following credentials:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)
- Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC)
- Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)

**4. Workforce Facilitator (one full-time)**

*Job description:* provides work readiness and related skills training (e.g., resume and cover letter writing, soft skills training) and may also provide training toward attainment of foundational occupational credentials

*Job qualifications:* B.A. degree in education or relevant field, experience providing basic skills education and work-readiness training

**5. Educational Specialist (one full-time)**

*Job description:* provides literacy and numeracy, and HSE test prep instruction; can deliver “contextualized instruction,” i.e., instruction tailored to targeted industry sector needs

*Job qualifications:* B.A. or B.S. degree in education or relevant field with applicable experience supporting youth in High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation, college preparation, and college application assistance

**6. Administrative Support Staff (one part-time or at least .5 full-time equivalent)**

*Job description:* manage routine administrative tasks and ensure completion of contract’s administrative and fiscal obligations

*Job qualifications:* High school or high school equivalency diploma plus relevant experience in office management and in managing administrative and fiscal aspects of government contracts

**7. Navigators (four full-time)**

*Job description:* The navigators will be the case managers for the program. They will ensure that participants attain the specific services they need to meet the goals and attain the outcomes of the program, with an emphasis on work readiness and making successful transitions. Navigators will also be responsible for creating group peer-support opportunities among participants. Each navigator will manage a maximum caseload of 25 participants.

Participant services would prioritize individual participant needs and include the following:

- Obtaining identity documents
- Obtaining public benefits
- Food and clothing assistance
- Housing referral assistance
- Referrals to physical and mental health care providers
- Securing housing through partnerships
- Conducting work-readiness training on issues of specific concern to LGBTQI+ RHY
- Conducting workshops on financial literacy, health and well-being, and other key life skills
- Advocating for participants (including teaching of self-advocacy skills) to address any potential barriers faced by them
- Helping participants create educational and/or career plans, in collaboration with other program staff
- Facilitating peer group discussions to address issues and topics as they arise

*Job qualifications:* B.A. or B.S. degree in social work, counseling, education or related relevant field; extensive experience in providing case management and workforce preparation services to RHY and LGBTQI+ youth, including at least three years of trauma-informed counseling; experience managing caseloads of 20 or more clients; and successful experience creating and maintaining strong working relationships with other organizations for referral, case conferencing, and sharing resources.

**Note:** All program staff should have experience, through lived experience, past employment or volunteering, working with the RHY and/or LGBTQI+ communities. Any applicants for positions within this new program should also have experience utilizing the trauma-informed approach outlined by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.<sup>14</sup>

## **VII. Output Measures, Performance Measures, and Outcomes**

Programs will be required to track and report on the following:

### **Selected Output and Performance Measures**

- Number of:
  - Partnerships developed
  - Counseling sessions
  - Consultations with navigator per participant
  - Literacy/HSE prep classes
  - Training sessions leading to industry certification
  - Group Activities held
- Enrollment
- Attendance and duration of participation by program activity (e.g., literacy/HSE prep classes, internships/work experiences) for each participant

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Attainment of a basic skills credential, including HSE
- Development of work-readiness skills
- 57% of participants find placement in a job, postsecondary education, or advanced occupational training in 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after program exit
- 50% of participants are retained in above placements in 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit
- 75% of participants attain a High School Diploma, a HSE credential, a DYCD-approved foundational occupational credential (e.g., National Retail Federation, ServSafe, Microsoft Office User Specialist, Commercial Driver’s License), or an advanced occupation training credential approved by DYCD by end of 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit
- 65% of participants show skills gain as evidenced by pre- and post-TABE tests
- 50% of participants who have a high school credential (attained prior to or during Unity Works) enroll in advanced training that leads to sustainable employment

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<sup>14</sup> See Health and Human Services Publication no. (SMA) 14-4884, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014 available at <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4884.pdf>

## **VIII. Subcontracting**

Subcontracting will be allowed; but no more than 45 percent of the total budget may be subcontracted.

## **IX. Funding**

The anticipated total funding for Unity Works is \$2,700,000. The funding amounts do not include participant wages, which are paid separately through a DYCD vendor. It is anticipated that one program will be funded.

## **X. Payment Structure**

It is anticipated that the payment structure of the contract awarded will be based on 100 percent line-item budget reimbursement.

## **XI. Contract Period**

It is anticipated that the contract term will be for a period of four years starting July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2024.

## **XII. Eligibility and Basis for Award**

Eligible organizations must be not-for-profits registered in New York State. Award selection will be based on the best technically rated proposals for which the price falls within the anticipated maximum funding amount. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience and proposed approach and design of the program. The organization selected for award will be one which demonstrates successful experience providing similar services to similar populations as those targeted by the RFP.

## **XIII. Health and Human Services Accelerator System**

To respond to the forthcoming RFP and all other client and community services (CCS) Request for Proposals (RFPs), organizations seeking contract awards must first complete and submit an electronic prequalification application using the City's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System at [www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator](http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator). The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services agencies to manage procurement. Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Service Applications for one or more of the following will be eligible to propose.

- Academic Supports
- Community Engagement
- Life Skills
- Literacy
- Job Placement Services
- Job/Vocational Training
- Work Readiness
- Mental Health Services
- Case Management
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation
- Preventive Services

#### **XIV. Procurement Timeline**

It is anticipated that DYCD will release the RFP approximately nine weeks after the release of this concept paper. A pre-proposal conference will be held approximately two weeks after the release of the RFP. The deadline for submitting proposals in response to the RFP will be five weeks after the RFP is released in the HHS Accelerator system.

#### **XV. Comments**

Please email written comments to [Conceptpaper@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto:Conceptpaper@dycd.nyc.gov) no later than **December 2, 2019**. Place “NYC Unity Works Program” in the subject line.