

Request for Proposals:

We Are New York (WANY) Program Evaluation and Ethnography

I. RFP Deadlines

- a. Release date for this request for information: **October 7, 2016**
- b. Deadline for Questions: **October 14-21, 2016**
Please submit questions to: fund@cityhall.nyc.gov with “WANY Program Evaluation and Ethnography” in the subject line by October 21, 2016, 5pm.
- c. Deadline for Proposals: **November 4, 5pm**
Proposals should be emailed to: fund@cityhall.nyc.gov with “WANY Program Evaluation and Ethnography” in the subject line.

II. We Are New York Program [WANY] Overview

A. Program Overview

The *We Are New York Series* is an Emmy award winning educational TV series created by the NYC Mayor’s Office and the City University of New York. The 10-episode comedic drama captures the spirit and stories of New Yorkers who have come from all over the world to make New York City their home. The episodes are based on fictionalized, yet true-to-life, stories of immigrant New Yorkers working together to solve common challenges and create better lives for themselves. Each episode provides useful information on essential City services and other resources and is intended to help immigrants improve their English skills while learning how to make their way in New York City.

WANY videos are an innovative tool that makes a difference in people’s lives. The language level and speed of the dialogue, along with English subtitles, make the series uniquely accessible to the 1.8 million New Yorkers with limited English skills. Viewers want to watch the show because they can understand the English; the storyline is filled with topics that are relevant to their everyday lives; and the cast reflects the demographics of the City’s immigrant population. The working class immigrant heroes of WANY contend with asthma and diabetes; they find ways to support their children’s education and prevent teenagers from dropping out; and they figure out the banking system.

WANY has been used throughout the City’s adult education system to help tens of thousands of New Yorkers improve their English. Over 500 teachers have been trained to use WANY in their classrooms and over 90 percent report their students have benefited from the series. Almost every teacher trained to use WANY would recommend it to a colleague. And the vast majority of students rated the learning experience as excellent or very good. WANY presents a scalable option for expanding English language practice opportunities at the community level, especially against the backdrop of extensive waiting lists for formal English language programs.

The **We Are New York Community Leadership and Empowerment Project** organizes free English conversation classes based on the WANY series at community

and faith-based organizations, public schools, and across NYC's three public library systems (NYPL, QPL, BPL). The project brings essential language resources to immigrant communities and adult English language learners while increasing the capacity of bilingual volunteers to serve their community.

WANY classes help adult immigrants learn English and learn about City services in two hour classes held once a week for ten weeks. Classes are held in one of three terms: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The Project places two trained volunteer facilitators per group, classroom materials, study guides for students, and certificates for those who successfully complete at least 6 out of 10 classes.

WANY facilitators undergo two three-hour trainings. Trainings instruct WANY facilitators how to assess group skills, build community and embrace diversity in the classroom, and help students learn English that is useful and geared towards services and rights. At least 30% of WANY classes are observed every term, and facilitators receive critical feedback for improving their skills.

Since its launch in June 2015, the project has successfully organized 125 groups across five boroughs, trained over 200 volunteers, and engaged 2500 learners in English language classes in a year. Many of the WANY volunteers are first or second generation immigrants and have contributed almost 7000 hours of service facilitating English classes.

In the near future, the project will provide professional workshops to existing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers and WANY facilitators and provide a greater range of classes to meet the needs of different levels of English Language Learners (ELLs). In the fall of 2016, the project will launch literacy and advanced lesson plans based on the WANY series. These new lessons plans will add 150 hours of English language instruction for students.

B. Program Partners

Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City (Mayor's Fund): The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization designed to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector to support public programs. Established in 1994 the organization serves as an important vehicle for foundations, corporations and individuals to contribute to City programs that enhance the lives of New Yorkers.

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA): The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is a City chartered agency that promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by recommending policies and programs that facilitate successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the City.

III. Task Overview

A. Instructions

The Mayor's Fund seeks an independent evaluator to conduct an evaluation of the We Are New York program using qualitative and quantitative data. The selected evaluator will have experience evaluating and studying educational programs and clearly demonstrate the research tools they will use to study the program's impact. The following services are expected of the evaluator:

- Develop an evaluation plan, based on the goals described below
- Develop consent forms for study
- Develop interview, focus group, and observation instruments/protocols
- Provide translation and interpretation services while conducting the evaluation, as needed
- Process and analyze relevant qualitative and quantitative data
- Prepare a report for public dissemination
- Create assessment and survey tools that can be used by the program

The primary goal of the evaluation is to assess the program's instructional quality and effectiveness in improving learner's English acquisition over the course of the ten week class.

The evaluation should also:

- Assess how students' perceptions of City services and government change before and after taking a WANY class as well as their ability to access City services
- Assess the program's impact on the capacity of partner sites to provide language services to their community members
- Evaluate the impact of its volunteer model on community engagement and volunteerism among immigrant communities
- Identify elements that assist with immigrant inclusion and civic and service learning
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and best practices in program implementation
- Identify the technical and administrative assistance needed for the program to scale services
- Create tools that will be used by the program in the long run, including but not limited to:
 - Assessment tools to assist learners
 - Assessment tools to assist and guide facilitators
 - Survey tools for partner sites
 - Survey tools for program implementation
- Assess whether WANY can serve as a low-cost high-quality scalable model for English language acquisition

The evaluators should use different mechanisms to make these assessments including, but not limited to:

- An ethnographic study of WANY students (learners) and volunteer facilitators using a purposeful stratified sample
- Observing WANY classes
- Visiting sites
- Conducting focus groups with learners and facilitators

IV. Proposal Instructions

Evaluators are invited to submit a proposal for this evaluation. Proposals should include a narrative of up to seven pages (single spaced, 12-point font) excluding attachments (see below). Please submit proposals electronically to fund@cityhall.nyc.gov with the subject heading “WANY Program Evaluation and Ethnography.” Questions should also be directed to fund@cityhall.nyc.gov

The proposal should detail:

- a) Evaluator’s narrative description of relevant experience (including experience with programs that target immigrant populations, experience studying educational/language programs and language acquisition, experience building tools for program administration, and/or an explanation of the ability to subcontract for such services)
- b) Proposed evaluation approach utilizing appropriate research tools beyond observations and focus groups and meeting goals outlined above, including staff who are culturally sensitive/representative and have experience working with target population and in target area
- c) Project timeline (including sufficient time to allow for proposal feedback and edits from WANY staff during contract negotiation)
- d) Experience building tools for program administration
- e) Budget (Attachment)
- f) Detailed narrative for a “theory grounded evaluation” (Attachment)
- g) Resumes for staff that will be involved, if not previously submitted (Attachment)
- h) The organization’s Form W-9. A blank one can be downloaded [here](#). (Attachment)
- i) A completed Doing Business Data Form, which you can download [here](#). For more information about completing the Doing Business Data form, review this [Q&A](#) (Attachment)
- j) The names of no fewer than three (3) clients for whom vendor has performed tasks of similar size and scope, the time period during which such tasks were performed, whether such tasks were brought to successful completion, and contact information including name and telephone number (Attachment)

Proposals are due by 5 p.m. EST November 4, 2016.

V. Selection Process

The selected contractor must have extensive knowledge and experience successfully providing services similar in nature, quality, and complexity to the services described in this mini-bid competition. In this specific mini-bid competition for qualitative research, the technical score will be based on the following criteria:

1. Quality of Successful Relevant Experience/Expertise	40 points
2. Quality of Proposed Approach	50 points
3. Budget	10 points

VI. Funding and Timeline

The total funding for this project is \$102,500, of which

- \$7,000 is earmarked for report design. The selected evaluation firm may use the report design funding to compensate firm-based or external design vendors.
- \$5,500 for students and facilitators who may participate in the focus groups and for conducting the focus groups.

The timeline for producing a draft report for review by WANY program staff is **nine months** from the date of selection. A final report should be designed and completed for circulation within a year.