

**Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI)
Family Peer Mentorship Pilot
2018-2019 Request for Proposal
Attachment A**

Through the enclosed Request for Proposal (RFP), the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) will provide funding to high-quality human service programs that align with priorities outlined herein under the impact area of peer mentorship. All applications must be completed on paper and must be submitted in their entirety by **January 12, 2018 at 5PM**. No late or incomplete proposals will be considered. Applicants (in collaboration) may request a maximum amount of \$325,000 for programs, plus \$125,000 for direct client grants (Flex Fund) for a total of \$450,000.

Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Request for Proposal Released	December 18 th , 2017
Questions & Answers	Please submit questions to Rae Leiner (rleiner@uwdor.org) by January 5 th , 2018: Responses will be issued within 48 business hours
Application Due Date	January 12 th , 2018 at 5PM
Award Notifications	January 31 st , 2018 at 5PM

Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed by members of the ESPRI Steering Committee. Applications will be scored based on the set criteria outlined in the Request for Proposal document. The Steering Committee reserves the right to request additional information during this process.

I. Welcome

Thank you for submitting your proposal to the ESPRI fund. The effort to reduce poverty in impoverished communities throughout New York State was launched in 2016, and a dedicated \$25m was put towards this effort through the Governor's office.

ESPRI is the coordinated effort of residents, community-based agencies, and city, county and state government offices. The effort was spear-headed by United Way of Greater Rochester, who began deep conversations about poverty. This model of community conversations took course over two years and resulted in a model that New York State replicated in other communities such as Newburgh.

Poverty reduction is a complex problem to solve; a multi-pronged strategy is the only way to truly address the many variables that factor into what keeps families in an intergenerational cycle of poverty. As our community's needs evolve, so too must our strategies to effect change. As a community, it is our time to combine efforts and develop a unified vision for systematic change. We have committed to a collaborative model focused on community solutions and systems change and alignment.

II. History

The Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) launched in 2016 by Governor Andrew Cuomo; his administration allocated \$25m in funding to sixteen locations throughout New York State with a mission to make an impact on New Yorkers experiencing intergenerational poverty. Out of the \$25m awarded, Newburgh received \$1m. Phase 1 required Newburgh to spend \$200,000 to engage residents, convene partners and develop a plan for the prioritization and allocation of funding moving into Phase 2. ESPRI received \$800,000 to make investments that will address the intergenerational cycle of poverty faced by over 1/3 of Newburgh residents.

The goal outlined in this RFP represents the start of a coordinated effort to reduce poverty. This initiative has been developed in partnership with the City of Newburgh residents, local municipalities and nonprofit partners. Newburgh ESPRI will use the resulting impact to seek additional funding to support ongoing efforts.

ESPRI inherited its mantle from the Community Opportunity Reinvestment initiative (COrE) launched in the City of Newburgh in 2014. The platform has been bringing agencies and community stakeholders together for the past three years. The COrE Initiative utilized data points as indicators of progress through coordinated work with local partners.

III. Investing in our Community

The ESPRI fund issues this RFP as part of a long-term commitment to achieve the goal of reducing poverty through peer mentorship, a strategy to change the systems that deliver services and engage our residents with the ultimate goal of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty with 50 families. We target our investment on strategies that drive our families toward success, securing employment, education, transportation, healthy food, childcare and skills.

During this RFP process, ESPRI seeks partnerships with nonprofit organizations during the time period of **February 2018 to March 2019**. Our intention is to invest sufficient funding to achieve significant results.

We are seeking to work with organizations that are interested and committed to changing the methodology of service delivery to meet the needs of underserved City of Newburgh residents within their own systems. Engaging in this work will provide an opportunity for organizations to benefit from problem-solving to reducing poverty through collaboration and presenting an opportunity to approach their work through enhanced methods.

IV. Our Community's Challenge

The US Census reports that approximately 10% of individuals in our region are living below the poverty level and are struggling to survive each day. In some cities, this number nearly triples: Newburgh (28%), Poughkeepsie (26%) and Middletown (18%). Similarly, the number of children receiving free or reduced lunch has steadily increased since 2005; today, one in three children across our region qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Again, in some districts, this number nearly triples: City of Poughkeepsie (96%), Middletown (74%) and Newburgh (68%).

Low-to-moderate income individuals and families face multiple economic and societal barriers that prevent them from achieving financial stability and economic independence. To make ends meet, families are struggling to cover many of their daily living expenses or going without basic necessities. Living paycheck to paycheck, these families are more vulnerable to crisis, and in the long-term, they

have a limited ability to save for an emergency situation, advance their education, purchase a home, or even secure reliable transportation.

These challenges impact not only individual potential but also place constraints on entire families and feed a growing financial dependency on local government and human service organizations.

V. Our Community's Opportunity

As there is no single contributor to poverty, there is no single solution. In partnership with our community, ESPRI has identified four broad categories to address the obstacles of breaking the poverty cycle: systems alignment and change, peer mentorship, the data-tracking tool and resident engagement.

Through a multi-tiered approach, it is our goal to create a strong network of service providers that use data to coordinate interventions, deliver services and provide resources to residents. This will make an impact in combating the cycle of poverty. Residents and organizations will have access to national models that will act as containers to support systems change and alignment and provide professional development. The organizations selected for funding will mentor families towards data-driven, self-determined interventions. Additionally, we aim to foster relationships between organizations and residents through the support of resident-led projects that raise the profile of organizational work and resources.

VI. Innovation Project: Family Peer Mentorship Program or Family Support Network

Family Peer Mentorship

Although a coordinated system of service and program delivery does not guarantee success, more individuals and families who are able to access this system will benefit from it. Individuals and families may not have the skills for self-advocacy, critical problem-solving and navigating opportunities for growth. Creating supportive relationships for residents to break the poverty cycle means connecting with familiar, reliable and relatable individuals. These peer mentors will help the families make difficult decisions and achievable goals. The use of peer mentorship programs is gaining traction across multiple sectors throughout the country. This model is an effective strategy to support personal growth, from reducing substance abuse to gaining life skills. There are a myriad of reasons why individuals and families residing in the City of Newburgh may be disadvantaged from seeking pathways for stability:

1. Lacking the knowledge of the services available to them
2. Not having the self-advocacy skills necessary to get what they need
3. Mistrust of service providers

Lacking in some of these general skills can set residents back in achieving greater outcomes in accessing jobs, training and/or educational opportunities.

For the purpose of this RFP, we are using the term "household" to broaden the pool of applicants who can participate in this pilot program. "Household" will include single-person households and undocumented households. The following criteria will be factored into our selection of applicant organizations:

1. Willingness to collaborate with other organizations to ensure the success of families
 - a. Three partner organizations are **required** to strengthen the application (one organization will service a lead agency with two other collaborating organizations)
 - b. Recruitment of household participants through collaboration of partnerships
 - c. Collect information on barriers that families face with regards to overall system delivery
2. Diverse household representation in pilot (recommended breakdown)
 - a. 50% families who are at the Federal Standards of Poverty (up to 300%)
 - b. 50% Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed ([ALICE](#)) households

Goal 1: Supports families with peer mentors using data tools to craft their own interventions to disrupt a cycle of poverty.

Indicator: Participants will develop plans for advancement in the following areas: workforce development, education, transportation, housing and wellness, utilizing the data platform tool provided through the organization's data grant.

Accomplishments may include but are not limited to the following:

- Attendance of two data training sessions to show commitment to the program
- Use of data platform to gather information that is targeted towards indicating progress and unlocking financial resources/supports (Flex Fund)
 1. Incentives will be awarded for consistent data entry
 2. Families will also have access to additional monetary resources to remove systems barriers (vendors will be paid directly)
- An increase of economic gains
 1. Attaining higher-paying jobs
 2. Movement from job to career track
 3. Accessing new professional development opportunities
- An increase in access to educational supports
 1. Returning to school
 2. Attaining an Associates, Bachelors or other degrees and certifications
 3. Accessing after school or before school programs
 4. Accessing enrichment programs
- An increase to healthcare and wellness activities
 1. Walking club
 2. Joining a gym
 3. Forming exercise group
- An increase in access to transportation solutions
 1. Accessing supportive services that are effective for residents
 2. Coordinating carpooling
- Provide feedback and recommendations of services that residents have accessed to increase positive and beneficial outcomes
- Assessment of our systems and how households access them (successfully/unsuccessfully)
 1. Recording data on barriers to stability in systems
 - Strengths in the systems available to residents
 - Barriers in systems available to residents
 - i.e. referral follow-up
 - Opportunities for system improvement

2. Assessment of lead organization
 - Current methodology for delivery of services
 - Strengths of the collaborative organizations
 - Barriers within delivery of services
 - Opportunities for collaboration, improvement of communication and delivery of services

Goal 2: Supports families to develop a peer-to-peer network amongst participants to strengthen their ability to problem solve using community support.

Indicator: Through their network, residents will be able to approach creative ways to solve barrier issues and find solutions and resources such as:

- Shared childcare
- Carpooling
- An increase of knowledge through the network of programs, jobs and other opportunities

Getting Ahead

Bridges Out of Poverty, a national model for promoting the development of common language among service providers and creating opportunities for residents struggling with issues of poverty, will act as a framework for supporting the peer-to-peer network.

Accomplishments may include but are not limited to the following:

- An increase in navigating systems
 1. Accessing supports that may not have been known prior to engagement
 2. Accessing opportunities that may not have been known prior to ESPRI engagement
- Participation
 1. Returning to school
 2. Attaining an Associates, Bachelors or other degrees and certifications
 3. Accessing after school or before school services
 4. Accessing enrichment programs
- An increase to healthcare and wellness activities
 1. Walking club
 2. Joining a gym
 3. Forming exercise group
- An increase in access to transportation solutions

Access to additional resources:

To support households enrolled in the pilot, we are providing additional resources for families to access through their active participation through data collection and meeting attendance. The Flex Fund disbursement criteria to households are determined off of the following:

1. Monthly entry of data to platform
2. Attendance of monthly peer network meetings

3. By recommendation of Peer Mentor

Flex Funds can be used for families to remove barriers (i.e. rental payments, utility payments, etc.) towards education or any other reason that will support their household towards education, employment, or any other reason that will support their household towards financial stability.

VII. Core Funding Criteria

This RFP is a first step toward establishing a cohesive strategy, in partnership with our community, to address resident needs in the City of Newburgh. This strategy will also work to develop a strong continuum of effective community supports that will advance the opportunities for residents to develop their leadership and disrupt a poverty cycle.

This RFP is designed to establish a foundation, which addresses a strategy of intervention for broad issues that comprise poverty through systems change and coordination, family peer mentorship, and resident leadership. ESPRI is looking for partners who share our commitment to the following:

1. Community and population level outcomes focused in the City of Newburgh with the greatest need as defined by local data;
2. Work collaboratively with the ESPRI Task Force and other initiative partners in developing effective, cohesive strategies;
3. Strategies that demonstrate long-term success using evidence-based or informed models or those identified as promising practices;
4. Cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration.

Our commitment to funding requires that nonprofit partners draw from the following perspectives when proposing interventions to address community needs: **Scientific Research**, including controlled studies; **Outcome Evaluations**, including local program outcome data; **Field Knowledge** with proven results; and **Consumer and Cultural Values** that take into account the culture, values, opinions and experience of community members and program participants.

VIII. Collaboration

ESPRI believes that strong collaboration among nonprofits, businesses and government partners is necessary for our community to realize outcomes that will effect change. Nonprofit partners are strongly encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to community change by incorporating collaborative opportunities into their requested program proposal.

Programs that rely on outside organizations (i.e. school districts) to accomplish stated program goals are required to provide letters of commitment from the outside organization.

One application should be submitted by the lead agency, clearly outlining each respective partner and the structure in which they will operate to achieve collective goals.

IX. Core Criteria for Request For Proposals

For this granting cycle, RFP should be between seven and ten pages and should include the following:

- Qualifying criteria for your organization (all collaborating organizations please submit)
 - Track record of accomplishments

- Additional materials that would make your application stronger
 - 501(c)3 status
 - United Way Anti-Terrorism form
 - List of Board of Directors
- List of collaborative partners
 - Who are your collaborative partners?
 - What are their track records?
 - Why did you choose them?
 - How do these partners fit into your plan to accomplish the goal?
 - What strengths and expertise can the selected partners contribute?
- What is your plan and how do you expect to execute it?
 - Hiring of Peers
 - Recruitment of households
 - Data training
 - Meeting schedule
 - Mentor meetings
 - Supervisor meetings
 - Case management
 - Support of mentor
 - Location of mentors (multiple sites? One site?)
 - Participation of ESPRI Task Force
 - Data sharing at ESPRI Task Force Meetings
 - Updates at ESPRI Task Force meetings
- Budget
 - Program Budget
 - Organizational Budget

X. Questions

Any questions related to the RFP should be submitted in writing with “RFP Questions” in the subject line to rleiner@uwdor.org. Questions will be answered within 24-48 hours upon receipt.

The proposal and supplemental documents should be submitted in writing with “RFP” in the subject line no later than 5PM on January 12, 2018.