

Abstract

Applicant Institution: Delta Connection Consortium, Inc.

Project Title: Gang-involved Intervention Transition-Higher Education Initiative Training (GIT-HEIT)

Target Population: 150 -Gang-involved youth and at-risk individuals from Tunica, Coahoma, Quitman, and Tallahatchie Counties in Mississippi

Proposed Budget: \$990,000

Services and Proposed Activities: The project aims to provide comprehensive support and opportunities for gang-involved youth to pursue higher education and gain vocational skills. Services include academic support, career counseling, work-based learning, internships, and partnerships with community colleges and post-secondary schools offering trade programs. The project will also address social and emotional needs through culturally competent interventions. Some activities will include one-to-one mentoring, classroom instructional activities, field-trip, motivational speakers, work-based learning, academic support and tutoring and motivational and career readiness workshops.

Anticipated Results: The project aims for participants who needs a high school diploma to be enrolled in the high school diploma program and achieve a high school diploma attainment rate of 90%. It also aims for 90% of participants to enroll in a post-secondary degree or credential programs. It seeks to place and retain 90% of participants in work-based learning, field study, or internships. Additionally, the project targets an 85% placement and retention rate in post-secondary education, advanced training, military service, or employment. Project aims to have a graduation rate of 85% placed in post-secondary institutions.

Absolute Priority Addressed: Yes

Absolute Priority 1: Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success will be addressed by helping with enrollment process to a postsecondary institution with the entire process and follow-up services until completion.

Competitive Priority Addressed: Yes Competitive Preference Priority 1: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs. Each participant will receive comprehensive support services via participating in workshops, assigned to a Mentor who has the same goals and aspirations as the participant and a Career Case Manager and Career Success Job Developer to offer assistance in the program to help each participant graduate and pursue higher education, military enrollment, employment or other career aspirations. Ultimately, participants will enroll in post-secondary institutions.

Abstract: The Delta Connection Consortium, Inc. presents " **Gang Involved Intervention Transition- Higher Education Initiative Training (GIT-HEIT).**" This project aims to empower gang-involved youth and at-risk individuals in Tunica, Coahoma, Quitman, and Tallahatchie Counties by providing comprehensive support and opportunities for educational and vocational advancement. Through academic support, career counseling, work-based learning, internships, and partnerships with educational institutions, the project seeks to increase high school diploma attainment, enrollment in post-secondary programs, and successful placement and retention in higher education, military service, or employment. By addressing the absolute priority of increasing post-secondary education access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success, the project aspires to break the cycle of gang involvement and create a pathway to a brighter future for these underserved youth.

Abstract

1. **Applicant institution:** Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CISCT; applicant) in partnership with Austin Community College (ACC)
 2. **Project Title:** Providing Access To Holistic Support (PATHS) to Postsecondary Success
 3. **Target Population:** Underserved youth, including youth involved with or exposed to gangs, ages 17-24 who reside in Central Texas
 4. **Services and Proposed Activities:** Through PATHS to Postsecondary Success, CISCT and ACC propose to provide holistic wraparound support on three ACC campuses. CISCT will place social service professionals on each campus to provide social-emotional support and serve in a navigator role, connecting students and families to college and community resources. CISCT and ACC will implement a Scholar Support Team to monitor effectiveness of individual supports and identify trends and opportunities for improvement to system-level processes and services.
 5. **Anticipated Results:** The PATHS program will increase the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs at ACC. As a result of support services: 260 targeted underserved high school students will apply to a postsecondary credential program at ACC over the next three years; 180 targeted underserved students will enroll at ACC project campuses over the next three years; 100 targeted underserved students will persist and complete a postsecondary credential at ACC project campuses over the next three years; and 60 targeted underserved students will be active in internships, apprenticeships, or other workforce experiences over the next three years.
 6. **Absolute Priority Addressed:** The PATHS program will increase the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs through holistic case management strategies that address barriers to students' academic, personal, and career success. The program will integrate multiple evidence-based services and approaches to support students with enrollment and access, navigation of basic needs services, fostering a sense of community and belonging, structured pathways, workforce preparation, transition planning, and family and community engagement. Services are provided directly on college campuses in individual, group, and whole campus settings by leveraging the resources and expertise of CISCT, ACC, and an extensive network of community partners.
 7. **Competitive Preference Priorities Addressed:** The PATHS program will meet students social, emotional, and academic needs by fostering inclusion and belonging through PATHS Orientations, small group activities, near-peer mentoring, and other connection opportunities; drawing from evidence-based models of integrated student supports and multi-tiered systems of support; providing student-centered, strengths-based professional development opportunities for ACC faculty and staff; and further amplifying this work by leveraging community partnerships. PATHS will also strengthen cross-agency coordination to advance systemic change with regard to justice policy and college readiness through creation of the Male Student Success Coalition.
- Invitational Priorities Addressed:** Since 1999, CISCT has provided XY-Zone, a transformative leadership and peer support program for male identifying students of color who experience economic disadvantage. Founded as a gang diversion program, XY-Zone specifically works with students who are identified as "at risk" of being pushed out of the traditional education system, including those who have poor attendance, face academic barriers, have experienced behavioral challenges, and/or are involved in gangs or the juvenile justice system

Abstract: Kent State University

Project Title: *Fostering Pathways for Bright Futures (FPBF)*

Goal: To provide evidence-based pathways to postsecondary access and credential completion for gang-involved youth and young adults.

Target Population: 120 unduplicated gang-involved youth and young adults (40 per year) ages 14-24 in northeast Ohio for Tier 1 intensive programming. Tier 1 preference is given to multisystem gang-involved youth and young adults with juvenile justice and/or foster care experience. Tier 2 services will be provided to 300 unduplicated participants (100 per year) ages 14-24.

Primary Activities/Services (multi-tiered structure):

Tier 1: Bi-monthly resource specialist advising, monthly in-person Saturday workshops, quarterly virtual Lunch-and-Learns, four-week Kent State summer academy, LifeSkills Reimagined sessions, and development of college/career plans.

Tier 2: Bi-annual Kent State campus visits, quarterly virtual Lunch-and-Learns, optional resource specialist advising, transition to Tier 1 when ready.

Pre-Release Tier: For eligible participants 90 days before reentry, services include advising meetings with the FPBF project director, developing a pre-release transition plan, and two virtual LifeSkills Reimagined sessions.

Expected Outcomes:

- Short-Term
 - o 50% of Tier 1 participants (60) will engage in internships, apprenticeships, or other work experiences.
 - o 90% of Tier 1 participants (108) increased confidence in pursuing their education and career goals.
 - o 80% of Tier 1 participants (96) become LifeSkills Reimagined certified.
 - o Six college credits earned per participant enrolled in dual enrollment programs.
- Mid-Term
 - o 85% of Tier 1 participants (102) will complete a high school diploma/equivalent.
 - o 75% of Tier 1 participants (90) will enroll in post-secondary education programs.
 - o 75% of Tier 1 participants (90) will persist from semester to semester.
- Long-Term
 - o 50% of Tier 1 participants (60) will earn a certificate, degree, or other credential by the end of the grant period.

Contributions Related to Research, Policy, and Practice: Provide data-driven outcomes to key academic program rationale to create trust and build seamless pathways to college access and success; establish an institutional culture that strengthens equity and a sense of belonging; institutionalize experiential learning to careers requiring a post-secondary degree; educate on youth brain development; increase understanding of issues gang-involved individuals face through their self-reporting and why they disengage from relationships, school, and structured social activities; and empower successful alumni to become role models and mentors.

Priorities: This proposal addresses **two Absolute Priorities** to work directly with gang-involved youth to help them pursue higher education opportunities and to increase post-secondary access, affordability, completion, and post-enrollment success; **two Competitive Preference Priorities** to meet social, emotional, and academic needs and strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement to advance systemic change; and **two Invitational Priorities** to target justice-involved youth, and institutional support from a Prison Education Program.

ABSTRACT | Transitioning Gang-Involved Youth to Higher Education (TGIY)

Applicant Institution: Richard J. Daley College (“Daley College”)

Project Title: Weekend Warriors Kennedy-King College (“**Weekend Warriors-KKC**”)

Target Population: Gang- and justice-involved youth aged 14 to 24 from underrepresented and underserved community areas in the City of Chicago

Primary Activities: Daley College, in the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) district, will lead Kennedy-King College (KKC) and the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a community-based organization (CBO), in an effort to replicate its successful **Weekend Warriors** program for transitioning gang-involved youth (GIY) to career & technical education (CTE) training. **Weekend Warriors-KKC** will revise and develop curriculum in Automotive Technician and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC-R) for an intensive weekend program specifically for GIY participants. As community college students in the CCC district, GIY participants will have access to KKC’s full complement of academic and student support services, including advising, financial aid, disability services, mental health counseling, and job placement. IMAN, a partner in the Daley College program and subrecipient of the grant, will provide case management and wraparound support services to **Weekend Warriors-KKC** participants designed to address the basic, social, emotional, health, and academic needs of GIY from Chicago’s underrepresented communities and reentry population. Over the grant period of performance, **Weekend Warriors-KKC** will recruit three cohorts of 15 students for training in the KKC certification programs, supported by integrated advising and wraparound support services provided by the KKC campus and by IMAN’s personal enrichment and reentry programs. Daley College, KKC, and IMAN will leverage existing partnerships with Chicago employers and CBOs to create system change and improvements for GIY who seek career pathways to the workforce.

Subrecipient Activities: IMAN Green ReEntry program for justice-involved individuals delivers case management and wraparound support services embedded in a network of positive artistic, social, and institutional connections that have long-term impacts on the academic success and lifetime trajectories of participants. IMAN is also a powerful advocate for leadership development and criminal justice reform for underserved communities, and will be integral to fostering a diversity of perspectives and local partnerships for **Weekend Warriors-KKC**.

Goals & Expected Outcomes: Daley College anticipates the **Weekend Warriors-KKC** program will recruit 45 students total, the vast majority of which will complete the program (80%) and pass certification tests (80%). The project will establish a framework for adoption of similar programs through the CCC district and create a pipeline of recruitment that leads to systemic change and improvements in the educational attainment of gang- and justice-involved youth.

Priorities: **Weekend Warriors-KKC** will address Absolute Priority 1, Absolute Priority 2, Competitive Priority 1 (8 points), Competitive Priority 2 (5 points), and Invitational Priority 1.

Contributions to Research, Policy, & Practice: Daley College is committed to funding project evaluation and research that demonstrates the rationale (Tier 4) and promising evidence (Tier 3) of the **Weekend Warriors-KKC** program. The project evaluation will entail a between-group study design in order to measure the statistical significance and positive effect of the intervention for the treatment group (participants) in the grant program.

Abstract

Project Title: Healing Generational Trauma of Gang Involved Youth and Young Adults Through Access to Education and Employment

Population Served: The program targets justice-involved, gang-affiliated youth aged 14-24 from marginalized communities in Cleveland, Ohio.

Research Issues and Hypotheses: This project addresses critical issues of gang involvement, educational disengagement, and the lack of access to vocational training for justice-involved youth. The hypothesis is that a combination of mentorship, trauma-informed care, and educational pathways will reduce gang involvement and improve academic and vocational outcomes for participants.

Study Design: The program will implement a quasi-experimental design, utilizing a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess participant progress. A cohort of 40 participants will be engaged annually, with pre/post surveys, focus groups, and individual assessments conducted throughout the program. Independent variables include trauma-informed care, vocational training, and educational re-engagement, while dependent variables track outcomes like job placement, mental health improvement, and educational attainment.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background: Building on research in resilience theory, traumainformed care, and social determinants of health, this program addresses both the individual and systemic barriers faced by gang-involved youth. It integrates Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model and Weisblat's Asset-Based Paradigm to support holistic development.

Primary Activities: The Renounce Denounce program will provide gang intervention services, educational support (GED completion, dual enrollment at Tri-C), vocational training (Community Health Worker certification), and wraparound services (mental health support, mentorship, job placement). Participants will receive individualized Student Success Plans, case management, and regular assessments.

Subrecipient Activities: Eligible applicant Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) will serve as fiscal agent and will be ultimately responsible for meeting grant terms and conditions. It will provide Renounce Denounce a sub-award to conduct primary activities. Tri-C will be a key partner in providing education, vocational training and academic support. Additional partnerships with local community organizations will facilitate access to housing, job placements, and ongoing mentorship.

Goals and Expected Outcomes: The program aims to reduce gang involvement by 70% and improve educational and vocational outcomes for 80% of participants. Over the course of three years, it is expected that participants will exhibit increased school retention, job placement, and mental health stability, contributing to broader policy insights on addressing gang violence and educational disengagement.