REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

INDIANAPOLIS AFRICAN AMERICAN QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Technical Skill Development and Employability

ISSUED:

MARCH 15, 2022

RESPONSES DUE:

APRIL 22, 2022

11:59 PM (Eastern Time)

For Submission Requirements see *www.iaaqli.org*

INDIANAPOLIS AFRICAN AMERICAN
QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

Indianapolis Urban League (IUL), with support and in partnership with National Urban League (NUL), the African American Coalition of Indianapolis (AACI), its member organizations, community groups, faith-based organizations, corporations, foundations, local and state public agencies and individuals, is implementing the Indianapolis African American Quality of Life Initiative (IAAQLI). Funded through a $100 million grant to NUL from Lilly Endowment, IAAQLI is mobilizing African American resources while also building collaborations and partnerships to elevate the quality of life of African Americans in Indianapolis/Marion County.

IAAQLI focuses on five priority issue areas affecting the quality of life of African Americans in Indianapolis: Business & Entrepreneurship, Education, Employment, Health and Wellness, and Housing and Homeownership. This Request for Proposal addresses the issue of Employment. IAAQLI invites eligible applicants to submit projects/programs that address strategies for Technical Skill Development and Employability.

BACKGROUND

NEED FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

According to recent Marion County data, in 2019, the unemployment rate for African Americans was 10.2% compared to 3.8% for their white counterparts. Black talent is two times as likely to be unemployed than white talent at almost every education level. Both job search and job retention can be negatively impacted by a lack of adequate transportation. While service continues to improve, inefficient and inconvenient public transportation via IndyGo is a factor; sometimes requiring hours of travel time with necessary bus transfers to access suburban job sites. Additionally, insufficient credit to purchase an affordable and quality vehicle can make job retention exceedingly difficult. Lack of reliable transportation is the number one reason people lose their jobs.

Nationally, one in three American adults has a criminal record, and by extension, faces lifelong barriers to employment and economic mobility for themselves as well as for their families[1]. At least 3,000 people return to Indianapolis/Marion County from prison annually. Having a criminal record negatively impacts an applicant's

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[1] Brame, R., Turner, M. G., Paternoster, R., & Bushway, S. D. (2012). Cumulative prevalence of arrest from ages 8 to 23 in a national sample. *Pediatrics*, *129*(1), 21-27.

likelihood of receiving a job offer, particularly if the applicant is African American[2]. The economic impact is felt across the U.S. labor market with the population of former prisoners and people with felony convictions, leading to a loss of $78 to $87 billion in GDP in 2014 (Bucknor & Barber, 2016). Despite Fair Chance hiring laws currently in place and support among employers, inclusive hiring practices are not yet widely adopted. In 2016, over 626,000 individuals in the U.S. were released from state or federal prisons. Employers are often unwilling to hire individuals with criminal records and the jobs that are available often pay them lower wages. Approximately 36 percent return to prison within three years of release.

Morever, automation will prove disruptive to the labor force in the years to come, but its impact will not be evenly distributed. For example, one-third of Black workers are in occupational groups such as production work, food service, and office support, which are at heightened risk of losing their jobs to automation.[3]

Frontline jobs largely do not connect Black employees with sufficient opportunities to advance. Black employees are overrepresented in frontline jobs compared with managerial jobs. Frontline jobs could provide a launching pad for careers, but today there is just one frontline salaried position for every 20 frontline hourly jobs, reinforcing the need for pathways within and across industries.[4] Additionally, many low-wage workers—particularly Black, Latino or Hispanic, and Indigenous workers—are trapped in multigenerational lower-caste jobs without access to career exposure, premium education, or professional networks.

INITIATIVE GOALS AND SCOPE

IAAQLI STRATEGY TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS

IAAQLI is offering a grant funding opportunity to non-profit organizations to address the need for skills-based training and critical thinking to connect potential workers with challenging conditions to employment resources, skills, pathways, and exposure to new career options offering a high wage. In these unprecedented times of a global pandemic that has dramatically impacted employment opportunities for all workers, the already fragile relationship between the labor

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[2] Pager, D. (2003). The mark of a criminal record. *American journal of sociology*, *108*(5), 937-975.

[3] https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/race-in-the-workplace-the-black-experience-in-the-us-private-sector#

[4] https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/race-in-the-workplace-the-black-experience-in-the-us-private-sector#

market and the African American community needs to be primed for a full recovery and disrupt the pre-pandemic status quo.

Under IAAQLI, NUL has committed $3,000,000 in funding for this strategy in grants of up to $250,000 for up to 3 years.

Award amounts are subject to change.

One of IAAQLI's overall goals is to strategically employ grant funds to make changes in the critical issue area of employment, where African Americans have measurable disparities with other citizens. In its first round of funding, NUL and its IAAQLI partners have selected the following initial strategy to respond to the needs described above:

STRATEGY: Technical Skill Development and Employability

The goal of *Technical Skill Development and Employability* is to connect individuals who have been outside the workforce, incarcerated or with other barriers to pathways to high-wage employment and/or entrepreneurship opportunities. Funding will be made to not-for-profit organizations with programs, initiatives, and partnerships that pursue goals to address the need for both skills-based training and critical thinking. Their efforts should connect people to employment resources, skills, pathways, and exposure to new career options, including (but not limited to) technology-based, technology-intensive, health, manufacturing and other industries with minimum wages starting at $18-$20/hour. Funded applications will highlight a focus on one or more of the following subpopulations:

a) Adults age 21+.
b) Justice-involved adults.
c) Individuals previously out of/returning to the workforce.

Preference will be given to projects and programs that provide access to primary wraparound trauma and toxic stress-informed services, including transportation, physical and mental health services, social capital building, and mentoring programs (especially for those candidates with children). Collaborations and partnerships are strongly encouraged.

Specific conditions this strategy will seek to address include:

1. Increased hope on the part of African Americans that high wage employment and success as entrepreneurs are possible for them.
2. Improved access to Career and Technical Education (CTE).
3. Improved access to high-wage employment in technology, health, and other fields.

4. Improved access to on-line training and tools to aid in seeking and obtaining employment.
5. Knowledge of and use of best practices in seeking and obtaining employment.
6. Increase in the capacity of local non-profit organizations engaged in workforce development.
7. Greater cooperation among local non-profit agencies, corporations, and businesses to expand employment opportunities for non-traditional employees.
8. Increased access to wraparound services to help those employed retain their jobs.
9. Increased numbers of African Americans who are successful in gaining high wage employment and retention.
10. Increased numbers of African Americans who are successfully self-employed as entrepreneurs.
11. Increased numbers of African Americans who come out of prison and stay out of prison.

Eligible organizations are encouraged to submit a response to this RFP in accordance with the guidelines outlined below. Include all required sections with your response. Incomplete documents will not receive consideration.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Funding is restricted to organizations that are public charities described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Code). To be eligible for a grant award through this RFP, preference will be given to organizations that are African American-led and that is embedded in communities serving African American residents in Marion County, Indiana. In reviewing applications, preference will be given to organizations that include a plan for measurable milestones, outcome reporting, and collaborative project/program teams.

These organizations may apply independently or decide to collaborate with other organizations to deliver project/program activities. If applying with a collaborating organization or with a consortium of organizations, the applicant must include a letter(s) of support from those collaborators (signed by their authorized official) in the application. A letter of support should outline the collaborator's roles and contributions in delivering the required project/program, experience, expertise, and knowledge. It is preferred that collaborating organizations are based in Indiana and

preferably, reside in Indianapolis. Collaborating organizations may or may not be African American-led or not-for-profit.

To be eligible for consideration, organizations submitting proposals should have or demonstrate:

a) Experienced staff or subcontractors to provide the services described in the proposal or demonstrated ability to acquire such staff.
b) Experience in effectively performing similar types of services in the public or private sector.
c) Ability to contract with NUL promptly for the delivery of services and the ability to fulfill contract requirements, including indemnification and insurance requirements.
d) Satisfactory performance under a current or past contract with another organization for similar services, when executing existing and/or previous contracts.
e) Relevant collaborations through MOUs, contracts, service agreements, etc.

ELEMENTS OF PROPOSAL

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The application form is available online at https://app.smarterselect.com/programs/77221-Iaaqli.
2. All applications will be reviewed and screened by IUL and its IAAQLI partners. Criteria will include certification of Code section 501(c)3 public charity status (including a Letter of IRS Determination), the 990 of the organization, and clear identification of the IAAQLI strategy your organization plans to address, and adherence to other program requirements.

IAAQLI GRANT APPLICATION

The following section provides a general overview of questions grant seekers will need to answer in the application process. Applications, like the Letter of Intent, will be submitted through the IAAQLI Smarter Select system. Applications should address or include the following:

a) The target audience for the proposed project/program, including the geographic location served, and points of service (including where the service will be offered and how the Black community will be able to access the services).

b) A detailed project budget to accompany the applicant's grant request material. The budget must be completed on the IAAQLI Budget Template.

c) How the project/program activities will meet the eligibility criteria of the proposed funding strategy.

d) A description of the project/program team and the management structure for the project/program; a description of the organization's leadership and staffing.

e) How the project will address the gaps in the employment ecosystem for African American residents and how it will contribute towards the achievement of the proposal's objectives and expected results. *(The information should describe what you are offering, how you will deliver, your proven track record, past experiences and your level of expertise related to entrepreneurship. If your project/program includes collaborations with other organizations, please also describe their role, track record, experience, and expertise).*

f) Key activities you will undertake in this project/program and the proposed length of the project/program.

g) Plans for future sustainability after the grant funds are exhausted.

h) A statement of Revenue and Expense for the organization's most recently completed fiscal year.

i) A commitment that IUL will receive a certificate of insurance ("COI") naming NUL as an additional insured from each individual or organization receiving funding from NUL under IAAQLI.

PROCEDURE FOR PROSPECTIVE GRANT APPLICANTS

1. Applicants must submit responses to this RFP online by the indicated due date.

2. You should expect to receive notification of awards/declines by the end of May 2022. Please note, awards and grant agreement letters will come from the National Urban League.

3. Grant Agreements are sent to funded organizations and must be signed by an officer of the organization and returned by the due date indicated.

4. Funds are delivered after award approval and receipt of a signed Grant Agreement unless requested later.

5. Grant recipients are required to submit Grant Summary Reports at six-month intervals. Reports should update us on the progress of your funded project/program. A final report will be required at the conclusion of the award period. Reporting requirements and dates are included in the Grant Agreement. Please be sure to put the due dates on your calendar. If you do not submit your reports on a timely basis, we will not

be able to provide scheduled future funding until those reports are made current.

Selection & Evaluation Process

Each submitted proposal will be reviewed by a team of evaluators. An IAAQLI staff representative will oversee the proposal evaluation process. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria, among others:

- Eligibility: The extent to which the organization meets the criteria regarding who can apply.
- Alignment: The extent to which the organization demonstrates how it will address gaps and challenges in the housing ecosystem (focusing on racial equity within that ecosystem), in alignment with this strategy's stated objectives and expected results.
- Experience and capacity: The ability of the organization to deliver on the proposed project activities and the applicant's and/or collaborator's technical and financial management capacity. Organizations are highly encouraged to leverage resources by fostering partnerships and by demonstrating economies of scale.
- Feasibility: The extent to which the project is sound and financially feasible.

ANTICIPATED RFP TIMELINE

RFP Date of Issue	March 15, 2022
Written Questions from Q&A session Due to Email: info@iaaqli.org	March 28, 2022
IUL Posts Answers to Questions	April 2, 2022
RFP Proposals Due to Smarter Select	April 22, 2022, 11:59 pm
Anticipated Proposal Awards	June 2022

QUESTIONS AND INQUIRY PROCESS

All questions/inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing by the deadline of March 28, 2022. Questions/Inquiries should be submitted electronically via email to info@iaaqli.org and must be received by the date indicated above.

Following the question/inquiry due date, IAAQLI will compile a list of the questions/inquiries submitted by applicants. Only answers posted on Smarter Select will be considered official and valid. No applicant shall rely upon, take any action, or make any decision based upon any verbal communication.

NUL and its IAAQLI partners reserve the right to publish clarifications on information submitted in response to this RFP and to conduct discussions, either oral or written, with applicants separately or in groups. These discussions could include requests for additional information, requests for cost information or technical requirements, response attachment revisions, etc. Additionally, in conducting discussions, NUL and its IAAQLI partners may use information derived from the responses submitted by competing applicants, making reasonable efforts to preserve the identity of applicants when communicating with others.

Neither NUL, its IAAQLI partners, nor any of their representatives shall be liable for any expenses incurred in connection with the preparation of a response to this RFP. Applicants understand that this RFP does not constitute an offer to enter into an agreement or a contract between any applicant and NUL, or any of their IAAQLI partners.

This document is for information purposes only. All applicants are required to complete a full application to be considered for funding. Eligible applicants are invited to apply through the Smarter Select grants management system available on at www.iaaqli.org.