



Request for Proposals (RFP) for Strategic Planning Facilitation and Services

RFP Released Release Date: November 4, 2024

RFP Proposal Due Date: December 16, 2024

1. Overview

The Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) invites qualified firms or individuals to submit proposals for strategic planning facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and project management services to develop YEP's 5-year strategic plan covering the period of July 1, 2025-June 30, 2029.

2. About YEP

Mission:

YEP engages underserved young people through community-based education, enrichment, mentoring, and employment readiness programs, helping them develop skills and strengthen ties to family and community.

Background:

Founded in 2004, YEP is a New Orleans-based nonprofit that provides comprehensive services to vulnerable young people. Initially established as Louisiana's first juvenile reentry program, YEP has expanded to serve youth living in poverty, out of school or work, or who have experienced trauma. YEP operates in five geographic locations: Central City, Mid-City, Algiers, New Orleans East, and St. Charles Parish, and engages close to 1,000 young people annually across Southeast Louisiana. YEP has a dedicated team of 54 full-time and part-time staff, and a 23-member Board of Directors. All of YEP programming is offered free of charge to participants. YEP operates programs that fall under four primary service areas:

- YEP Mentors: Mentoring and youth advocacy
- YEP Educates: Adult education and high school equivalency preparation
- YEP Works: Work-based learning
- YEP Enriches: Out-of-school time enrichment programming

3. Strategic Planning Background and Context

YEP is nearing the end of its current strategic plan (FY 2020-2025). The overarching goals of this plan included:

1. **Programmatic Excellence:** Developing a data-driven, youth advocacy-focused programmatic approach.
2. **Systemic Impact:** Influencing practices, policies, and laws at local, state, and federal levels.
3. **Organizational Sustainability:** Ensuring financial health and organizational stability.

Significant progress has been made in these areas, including some of the following highlights:

- Formalizing internal program data systems and monitoring reports
- Enhancing Youth Advocate onboarding, training, and service delivery
- Successfully adapting services during the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ida
- Expanding programming to a new program site in New Orleans East
- Increasing YEP's community presence and board/committee representation
- Building a healthy cash reserve and establishment of an endowment fund for long-term financial sustainability
- Formalizing HR processes and talent management systems

In our next strategic plan, we aim to leverage the successes and lessons learned from the past to guide our growth and direction for the next five years. YEP is at a pivotal point in its organizational development, celebrating 20 years of operation in 2024. We are reflecting on the milestones of the past while looking ahead to ensure we continue to meet the needs of the young people and families who are part of our programs and services. Our goal is to build on our strong foundation to ensure YEP remains a sound and sustainable organization for years to come.

4. Scope of Work

Successful responses may employ a variety of methods for the strategic planning process. While all approaches will be thoroughly considered, those that effectively facilitate participation and engagement from a broad range of YEP stakeholders—including staff and board members—within the proposed timeline are likely to be the most successful.

The selected firm will be responsible for the following:

- **Review and Discovery:** Conduct a thorough review and have a deep understanding of YEP's organizational history. Engage with YEP stakeholders to gather relevant context and assess YEP's current position to inform the strategic planning process.
- **Facilitation:** Lead discussions/interviews with YEP leadership, board members, staff and other key stakeholders to align on strategic direction, considering YEP's mission, vision, and core values.
- **Staff and Board Engagement:** Create opportunities for staff and board input and feedback throughout the planning process.
- **Strategic Plan Development:** Produce a strategic plan and supporting materials outlining YEP's goals for FY 2025-FY 2030.
- **Presentation:** Create a final strategic plan document and facilitate the presentation of the strategic plan to YEP staff and board members.
- **Tools and Metrics:** Propose tools and metrics to monitor progress and measure the achievement of strategic goals.
- **Project Management:** Provide additional capacity throughout the planning process for managing logistics, project timelines, documentation, meeting facilitation, etc.

5. Proposal Submission Requirements

The most successful RFP responses will provide detailed information about the proposed strategic planning process, including how it will be executed, who will be involved, what the expected outcomes are, and any associated deliverables.

Proposals should include:

- Process: A detailed description of your process and approach to facilitating a strategic planning process with organizations., including how you initiate, steps, beginning to end
- Experience: A summary of relevant experience, highlighting work with similar nonprofit organizations.
- Familiarity with YEP’s work: Demonstrates an understanding of YEP’s mission and 20-year history of providing service to young people in the Greater New Orleans region, including the role that YEP plays in the local youth-serving and nonprofit sectors.
- Proposed Project Overview: an overview of the proposed activities and methods led by the applicant to facilitate the strategic planning process
- Timeline: A proposed timeline with key activities, milestones, and deliverables.
- Team: Names and qualifications of individuals involved, along with their roles for this project
- Primary Contact: Contact information (Name, Email, Phone Number) for the project lead.
- Budget: A detailed budget and payment schedule. *(included as an attachment)*
- References: Contact information for at least 2 current or former nonprofit clients who can attest to your capacity to perform the proposed work, as well as any members of the team who may be working directly with YEP. *(included as an attachment)*

Proposal Length:

Proposals should not exceed **5 pages**, excluding relevant attachments. The required **Budget** and **References** may be included as attachments (that do not count toward the total page count), along with any other relevant materials that support the scope of the proposed project (e.g., resumes, templates, or work samples). Applicants are encouraged to avoid including promotional materials that are not directly relevant to this proposal.

6. Scoring Criteria & Review

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria
1. Process/ Approach to Strategic Planning
2. Relevant experience and qualifications of proposed team members with nonprofits similarly positioned to YEP
3. Understanding of YEP’s mission, work, and role in the local youth-serving and nonprofit context
4. Proposed budget and budget justification
5. Completeness, clarity, and overall content of the proposal as compared to the desired outcomes of RFP (i.e. timeline, deliverables, etc.)

RFP responses will be reviewed and scored by a review committee that will include representation from YEP’s Leadership Team and Board of Directors. The committee will use the score as a part of the selection process in order to determine a shortlist of applicants to request follow-up interviews with the final selection. YEP will contact applicants selected for an interview.

7. Timeline

- RFP Release: November 4, 2024
- Proposal Due Date: December 16, 2024 5:00 PM
- Proposal Review and Scoring Period - January
- Applicant Interviews (for finalists) - January/February 2025
- Consultant Selection: Before or on February 1, 2024
- Strategic Planning Process: February/March/April 2025
- Plan Presented to YEP Board and Staff - May 2025
- Implementation of Plan - July 1, 2025

The proposed timeline line is subject to change based on the final agreement with the selected applicant.

Please note that the timely delivery of the final strategic plan is essential. If you are unable to meet the proposed timeline, with a finalized plan by the start of YEP's 2026 fiscal year, we kindly ask that you refrain from submitting a proposal.

8. Submission Instructions

Please submit electronic copies of your proposal via email or cloud storage link (Google Drive, Box, OneDrive, etc.) to:

- **Darrin McCall, Chief of Staff at dmccall@youthempowermentproject.org**
- Please include “**YEP Strategic Plan RFP Response**” and the name of the responding firm or individual in the subject line of your submission

Submission Deadline: Monday, December 16th, 2024, by 5:00 PM (CST)

10. Discretionary Rights

YEP reserves the right to modify or cancel this RFP at any time and for any reason, without prior notice. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate YEP to award a contract, and YEP may reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, at its sole discretion. Additionally, YEP reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from any applicant and to negotiate terms and conditions with any applicant, also at its sole discretion.

All proposals and associated fees must remain valid and binding for a minimum of 120 days from the proposal submission deadline. Participation in this RFP process does not guarantee business or indicate a preferred vendor relationship; YEP will select the proposal that best meets its needs.

All costs associated with preparing and submitting a proposal are the sole responsibility of the applicant. YEP will not reimburse any expenses incurred by applicants.

This RFP is a request for proposals only and does not constitute an offer to contract. No contractual obligations of any kind will arise unless and until a formal agreement is executed between YEP and the selected applicant.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of YEP. YEP reserves the right to use any concepts, ideas, or strategies presented in the proposals, regardless of whether the proposal is selected.