



# **Request for Proposals XY Curriculum Revision**

**Communities In Schools of Central Texas**

**July 20, 2022**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CIS) is an affiliate of Communities In Schools, the nation's largest organization dedicated to empowering at-risk students to stay in school and on a path to a brighter future. In 1985, a group of Austin's leaders established a CIS affiliate to serve students in Austin who were at risk of dropping out of school. They understood that underlying social service and behavioral health needs, not academic deficits, were the most significant obstacles preventing many students from graduating.

For three decades, schools have relied on CIS of Central Texas to provide a broad range of services and programs to help their students succeed inside and outside of the classroom. The foundation of CIS is a school-based model of Integrated Student Supports (ISS) that provides tiers of support based on student and school needs. CIS currently implements this model in Travis, Caldwell, Bastrop and Hays Counties at 99 schools in seven school districts—Austin ISD, Del Valle ISD, Hays CISD, Lockhart ISD, Elgin ISD, Bastrop ISD and Manor ISD. CIS also offers five specialized programs, including the XY-Zone program, to provide targeted services to specific at-risk populations. The impact of these services is maximized through a diverse network of volunteers, AmeriCorps members, university interns, and community partners. As a result, nearly 6,000 students are served intensively each school year and over 35,000 additional students and parents are reached agency-wide.

Communities In Schools of Central Texas (CISCT) invites proposals from qualified individuals and organizations to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP) to revise and enhance the XY-Zone curriculum.

### **A. Deadlines and Submission Information**

#### **1. Proposal Deadline**

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00p.m. Central Time on Friday, July 29, 2022.

#### **2. Submission Process**

Proposals may be submitted via email, postal service, or hand delivery.

- Contact: Jackie Platt, Senior Program Director
- Email: [jplatt@ciscentraltexas.org](mailto:jplatt@ciscentraltexas.org)
- Mail: 3000 S. IH 35, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78704

#### **3. Inquiries**

Inquiries may be submitted via email to Jackie Platt at [jplatt@ciscentraltexas.org](mailto:jplatt@ciscentraltexas.org)

#### **4. Notification**

Successful applicants will be notified via email no later than 5:00p.m. Central Time on Friday, August 5, 2022.

### **B. Project Purpose and Program Background**

Started by CIS of Central Texas in 1999, the XY-Zone is a transformative leadership and peer support program for young men who are at high risk of dropping out of high school. The XY-Zone is currently implemented at 11 Central Texas high schools in four school districts (Austin ISD, Manor ISD, Hays CISD, and Lockhart ISD). The XY-Zone operates year-round and is housed in the CIS office on each school campus. XY-Zone Program Coordinators are placed full-time on campus to serve young men that are struggling with unmet basic needs, disengagement with school, the lure of gang involvement, and lack of positive male role models.

The XY-Zone targets male students who have poor attendance, are involved in gangs or the juvenile justice system, or are on the path to dropping out. Guided by the pillars of the program known as the “Five Rs”— Respect, Responsibility, Relationships, Role Modeling, and Reaching Out—the XY-Zone fosters a “positive brotherhood” to empower students to stay in school, reduce or stop risky behaviors, and make positive, informed choices about their relationships, physical health, and future. The multi-step design of the curriculum allows participants to advance in the program throughout high school, gaining additional leadership roles and opportunities along the way. The XY-Zone students also participate in service learning projects, which helps them to learn about community and global issues, as well as apply the leadership skills they are developing in the program.

Each XY-Zone participant has a support plan tailored to their identified needs that may include individual counseling, crisis intervention, support groups, basic needs assistance, academic support, home visits, parent engagement activities, and assistance identifying and accessing community resources. This provides the holistic approach required to effectively address the educational, physical, social, and emotional needs of the young men.

All services are provided through caring, supportive relationships—a critical component of the CIS model and XY-Zone, and essential in helping students to develop the resiliency and coping skills needed to respond to future challenges. Because CIS staff work full-time on campus, they can respond immediately to students in crisis and are available for students throughout the week to check in as needed. CIS staff also closely monitor students’ behavior, academic performance, and attendance, and intervene quickly with necessary supports before concerns escalate.

CIS partners with more than 40 community agencies and organizations to leverage additional social service resources into schools. This is particularly critical in rural districts which have limited resources. Having relationships with a wide range of community providers is an important aspect of the safety net the CIS model creates.

Low-income adolescent males are at high risk for school dropout, and among those, ethnic minority males are most at-risk. Only 83% of low-income Black male and 84% of low-income Hispanic male students graduated on time in 2016, compared to the Central Texas graduation rate of 91%. Boys of color are also overrepresented among those with disciplinary problems, low grades and test scores, and are more likely to be suspended and expelled (E3 Alliance, 2018).

Many XY-Zone participants experience significant personal and family challenges. Without positive role models and guidance, disadvantaged adolescent males can be negatively influenced by their environments. Without intervention, the chances are great that they will fall into the patterns of low academic achievement, school disengagement, disruptive classroom behavior, and involvement in criminal or gang activity. There is tremendous need for programs like the XY-Zone that focus on solely the support, education, and engagement of minority male students in Central Texas.

### **Overview of Prior Research:**

The CIS ISS model has been rigorously evaluated and proven to consistently lead to student stabilization, improved behavior, increased attendance, promotion, and graduation. A five-year randomized controlled trial (RCT) conducted by ICF International revealed that students who received CIS case management services significantly outperformed control group students and CIS services were the causal factor that improved student performance. Students in CIS attended school 4.83% more than control group students (receiving nearly two additional weeks of instruction), and on average, CIS participants’ GPAs were nearly half a grade higher than their peers. CIS participants also passed an average of one more class relative to the control group students. Researchers found that CIS has the strongest effects on the most at-risk students (less than

90% attendance, less than 2.0 GPA) (ICF International, 2010). In 2017-18, 99% of students served intensively by CIS completed the school year; 96% graduated or were promoted to the next grade; and 85% improved in academics, attendance, and/or behavior.

In 2012, the UT School of Social Work conducted a scientific evaluation study of the XY-Zone. Results from the study indicated that students that participated in the XY-Zone had fewer behavior problems, greater interpersonal strengths (e.g., ability to control emotions and behavior in social situations), greater intrapersonal strengths (e.g., positive sense of competence and accomplishment), increasing family involvement, and increasing career strengths. Students in the XY-Zone were also more likely to see themselves as a positive leader, participate in community service, think positively about the future, aspire to know people from different cultural groups, and feel safe at school.

### **C. Project Description**

1. Overview and Goals of Project
  - a. Review groundwork from previous consultant which includes
    - i. Logic model
    - ii. Staff and student surveys and focus group data analyzing current and desired curriculum content and desired facilitator training
    - iii. Literature review focused on male-youth specific programming best practices
    - iv. Summary reports and recommendations from technical assistance projects
  - b. Conduct research/review of best practices specific to identified gaps in curriculum content and facilitator training including
    - i. Positive youth development for male identifying youth
    - ii. Gender socialization and healthy male identity
    - iii. Social emotional learning
    - iv. Relationships
    - v. Diversity, equity, inclusion, racial justice
    - vi. Academic supports and post-secondary planning
    - vii. Service Learning
  - c. Review and update the XY-Zone Curriculum (Step One: Five R's; Step Two: Leadership; Step Three: Ambassador) for inclusivity, cultural competence with DEI lens, age appropriateness, and cultural relevance.
  - d. Work with XY Curriculum Revision Committee to complete the following:
    - i. Based on findings from steps above, develop draft of updated curriculum to be presented for review by the Executive Team
    - ii. Revise drafts as needed to produce final, complete curriculum
    - iii. Develop accompanying curriculum training guide
    - iv. Graphically design complete, updated curriculum and curriculum training guide and produce in a format ready for distribution
2. Timeline
  - a. Sept, 2022 - Kickoff meeting with (contractor and internal staff committee)
  - b. Sept, 2022 – Review groundwork and best practices
  - c. Oct, 2022 - Edit and improve curriculum content, based on findings, present draft curricula to Executive Team

- d. Nov, 2022 - Finalize curriculum and develop curriculum training guide
- e. Dec, 2022 – Graphically design complete curriculum for distribution; Deliver Executive Summary of process

The following data sources will inform this evaluation:

1. Logic model
2. Staff and student surveys and focus group data
3. Literature review focused on male-youth specific programming best practices
4. Summary reports and recommendations from technical assistance projects
5. Additional records as needed

### **3. Eligible Applicants**

The contractor must be independent, unaffiliated with CISCT, and have experience with curricula development. The contractor should be able to explain how they will be inclusive in their curricula evaluation and design.

### **4. Contract Period**

The program outcomes and curricula revision should take place **between September 2022 – December 2022.**

- September 2022: Kick Off Meeting
- September-October 2022: Curriculum research and revision
- End of October 2022: Draft Curriculum presented to Executive Team
- November-December 2022: Final Curriculum and Training Guide; Executive Summary of process

### **5. Available Funds**

Accepting bids based on project description. Proposed budgets should include the contractor's time, mileage, materials, and supplies require to complete the project.

## **D. Proposal Contents**

Proposals should consist of the following sections:

1. Understanding of the project
2. Specific approach to be used for each task
3. Deliverables
4. Proposed Budget
5. Past Performance, including list of previous similar projects undertaken in the past three years
6. List of key personnel and resumes.