

The Justice Education Center, Inc .



Request for Proposals for the Inspire Girls Wellness Program



Introduction

The Justice Education Center, Inc. is seeking proposals from community-based organizations and municipal, quasi-public, and private organizations for Girls Wellness Programs for girls ages 5 to 16 (grades K-10).

The funding for this solicitation is provided by the CT General Assembly and the US Department of Justice Byrne Grant Number 15PJDP24GG00767BRND

Proposals in response to this RFP are due October 21, 2025 at 3pm.

1. **Official Contact.** The Center has designated the individual below as the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of The Center.

Name:	Laura Whitacre, Grants and Contracts Manager, The Justice Education Center, Inc.
Address:	62 LaSalle Road, Suite 308, West Hartford, CT 06107
Phone:	860-231-8180
E-Mail:	laura@justiceeducationcenter.org

Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.



2. **Contract Offers.** The offer of the right to negotiate a contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to The Justice Education Center, Inc. The Center anticipates the following:

Total Funding Available: Contracts will range from \$5,000 to \$150,000 depending upon scope proposed and funding availability
Number of Contracts: TBD
Service Areas: Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, Norwich, Norwalk, West Hartford, Willimantic, Danbury, Coventry, Manchester, East Hartford, Middletown, and Meriden
Contract Term: October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

3. **Eligibility.** Eligible respondents are private provider organizations (defined as non-state entities that are 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporations or partnerships with principal place of business in Connecticut), Connecticut municipalities, or private for-profit providers.
5. **Procurement Schedule.** See below. Dates after the due date for proposals (“Proposals Due”) are target dates only (*). The Center may amend the schedule, as needed. Any change will be made by means of an addendum to this RFP and will be posted on the The Justice Education Center, Inc.’s website at www.justiceeducationcenter.org. All times are Eastern Time.
- RFP Released: October 2, 2025
 - Bidder’s Conference: October 10, 2025, 1 pm
 - Deadline for Questions: October 13, 12 p.m.
 - Answers Released: October 14 (on website)
 - Proposals Due: October 21, 3:00 p.m.
 - (*) Start of Contract: November 1, 2025

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89313312115?pwd=Kz9cGlQbdAxUP6AtYxOWDHkCSEoaTm.1>

6. **Inquiry Procedures.** All questions regarding this RFP or procurement process must be directed, in writing, to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions determined to be material to this procurement and received before the deadline will be answered. The Center may combine similar questions and give only one answer.

7. **Proposal Due Date and Time.** The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time:

- Due Date: October 21, 2025
- Time: 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Faxed or mailed proposals will not be evaluated. Proposers should not interpret or otherwise construe receipt of a proposal after the due date and time as acceptance of the proposal since the actual receipt of the proposal is a clerical function. Proposals received after the due date and time may be accepted by The Center as a clerical function, but such late proposals will be evaluated for consideration under this RFP only at the discretion of The Center. At the discretion of The Center, late proposals may be destroyed or returned by the submitters.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- one (1) electronic proposal in PDF format, including any appendices
- one (1) budget compatible with Microsoft Office Excel

Proposers should keep the original signatures on file for potential future reference. The electronic copy of the proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee.

8. **Multiple Proposals.** N/A.
9. **Declaration of Confidential Information.** Respondents are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations, and interpretations resulting from them. If a respondent deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the respondent must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. **Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV - Proposal Outline. Submissions that fail to follow the required outline may be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
2. **Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in Section IV are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.

3. **Style Requirements.** Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:

Paper Size: 8 ½" x 11" "portrait" orientation
Page Limit: 20 pages *excluding* all required Appendices and Forms
Font Size: Minimum 11 point
Margins: The binding edge margin of all pages shall be a minimum of one and one half inches (1½"); all other margins shall be one inch (1")
Line Spacing: Single-spaced

4. **Pagination.** The proposer's name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, from the Cover Sheet through the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.

5. **Delivery Condition** – All proposals must be received via email, including all required attachments by the above deadline. Proposers are recommended to use a secure email platform or request a read receipt to confirm delivery.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

1. **Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of The Center to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP.

2. **Evaluation Team.** The Center will designate an Evaluation Team to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Evaluation Team. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Attempts by any respondent (or representative of any respondent) to contact or influence any member of the Evaluation Team may result in disqualification of the respondent.

3. **Minimum Submission Requirements.** All proposals must comply with the requirements specified in this RFP. To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (a) be received on or before the due date and time; (b) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (c) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (d) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Center will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.

4. **Evaluation Criteria (and Weights).** Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Evaluation Team will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The criteria are weighted according to their relative importance. The weights are confidential.

- Organizational Requirements
- Service Requirements
- Staffing Requirements
- Data and Technology Requirements
- Community Partners and Subcontractors
- Work Plan
- Financial Requirements
- Budget Requirements
- Appendices

5. **Respondent Selection.** Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Evaluation Team will submit the rankings of all proposals to The Center's Executive Director. The final selection of a successful respondent is at the discretion of the ED. Any respondent selected will be so notified and offered an opportunity to negotiate a contract with The Center. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. All unsuccessful respondents will be notified by e-mail about the outcome of the evaluation and respondent selection process.
6. **Debriefing.** After receiving notification from The Center, any respondent may contact the Official Contact and request a Debriefing of the procurement process and its proposal. If respondents still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with The Center to discuss the procurement process. The Center shall schedule and conduct Debriefing meetings that have been properly requested, within **fifteen (15) days** of The Center's receipt of a request. The Debriefing meeting must not include or allow any comparisons of any proposals with other proposals, nor should the identity of the evaluators be released. The Debriefing process shall not be used to change, alter or modify the outcome of the competitive procurement. More detailed information about requesting a Debriefing may be obtained from the Official Contact.

Please see complete program description and requirements on the next pages.

INSPIRE GIRLS WELLNESS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Program Description and Purpose

The Inspire Girls Wellness Program seeks to provide opportunities for children and youth 5 through 16 (grades K-10) to participate in sports and other wellness activities. An emphasis of the program is to engage girls that would not otherwise choose to participate in sports or wellness activities or those that have not had the opportunity or ability to do so; there are opportunities to serve boys as well.

Sports and wellness activities may include basketball, softball, volleyball, wellness activities like yoga, and other activities on a case by case basis.

The Inspire program integrates participation in the above sports and wellness activities with a youth character development program, called ECHO (which stands for Empathy, Character, Hope and Opportunity). The Center will provide tools and resources for successful respondents to incorporate ECHO into the programming they propose.

In addition to ECHO, the Center will also provide training in identifying and responding to mental health issues that arise with participants. The Center will also provide information on nutrition and wellness to be incorporated into the programming provided by successful respondents.

There are two options for this proposal:

Option 1 is to propose sports and fitness/physical wellness related programming, including the ECHO component described above.

Option 2 is to propose sports and fitness related programming, with the ECHO component, as well as the supplemental programming described below.

For Option 2, in addition to sports and fitness related programming, respondents are also invited to propose supplemental programming that includes prevention/enrichment programming (arts, theatre, music, gaming, mentoring, etc) to be delivered along with the sports/fitness/wellness programming.

The intended outcomes of the Inspire Girls Wellness Program includes:

- an increase in sports/wellness related skills and knowledge,
- increased knowledge of the ECHO core values and associated changes in attitudes and behavior, and increases in self-esteem, self-confidence, and resiliency. *These outcomes are intended to put participants on a path to success in school and life, and to prevent involvement with the justice system.*

The Center will provide pre and post assessment instruments and other evaluation tools to assess the extent to which the above outcomes are achieved for program participants.

MAIN PROPOSAL

Respondents are required to provide the information requested about each community partner and subcontractor proposed to provide direct services to program participants where indicated throughout this section of the RFP. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate disqualification of the proposal.

1. Organizational Requirements

a. Organizational Description

Describe your organization, including the type of organization (non-profit, municipal agency, quasi-public or private for-profit), the number of years in operation, and the types of services you provide.

b. Organizational Experience

Please describe your organization's experience with planning, coordinating, and providing sports and wellness related programming. If you are applying for option 2, please also describe your organization's experience with providing the prevention programming you are proposing. Please provide recent examples of programming that you have provided.

2. Service Requirements

A responsive proposal must describe how the respondent shall, directly or indirectly through community partners and subcontractors, perform the activities required by this RFP. The respondent should note which city will be the focus of their program.

For Option 1:

- Describe the number of individuals/participants who will engage annually with your program
- Describe the types of sports/fitness/wellness programming that will be provided
- Describe the number of hours of programming to be provided
- Describe the duration of the programming
- Describe when the programming will occur (summer, fall, spring, school vacations, etc.) include specific or estimated dates of programming
- Describe how ECHO will be incorporated in the delivery of programming

For Option 2:

- Describe the number of individuals/participants who will engage annually with your program
- Describe the types of sports/fitness/wellness programming that will be provided, including the number of hours and duration of sports/fitness/wellness programming that will be provided
- Describe the additional prevention/enrichment programming that will be offered, including the number of hours and duration of prevention/enrichment programming that will be provided
- Describe when the programming will occur (summer, fall, spring, school vacations, etc.) include specific or estimated dates of programming
- Describe how ECHO will be incorporated in the delivery of programming++
- Describe how wellness and nutrition will be incorporated in the delivery of programming

3. Staffing Requirements

A responsive proposal must include the following information about the number and qualifications of staff that the respondent and each proposed community partner and subcontractor intend to employ to perform the activities required by this RFP.

++ ECHO (Empathy, Character, Hope and Opportunity) is an emotional and physical development and wellness program developed by The Justice Education Center. ECHO uses 10 core values to instill positive attitudes and behaviors in young people and focuses on building resiliency and self-esteem with caring adults modelling and reinforcing positive attitudes and behaviors. **The ECHO Health Wellness “Fit Kits”** introduce cardio, core, upper and lower body strengthening and yoga to children and youth from elementary through high school and, if there is interest, can be ordered to grantees. Training in ECHO will be offered to all grantees.

- a. Key Personnel: Provide the names and titles of proposed personnel key to the success of the proposed program and the hours and percentages of time dedicated to this project.

Describe how your staffing will successfully meet this RFP's requirements in light of any other obligations this staff have to any other entity. Summarize your procedures to secure and retain professional staff and your method to evaluate personnel performance.

- b. Job Descriptions: Attach job descriptions for proposed funded positions and resumes if position hours are to be filled by % of FTE of existing staff members.

4. Data and Technology Requirements

Please include a statement that the respondent agrees to provide information on program participants and activities through the Center's Inspire Reporting System, as well as administering any required evaluation instruments (e.g., pre and post assessments and surveys).

COST PROPOSAL COMPONENT

1. Budget Requirements

- a. Budget: Use the Budget form found at <https://www.justiceeducationcenter.org/initiatives/solicitations/> to prepare an annual line item budget that depicts the allowable costs associated with the program.
- b. Budget Narrative: Detail how expenses listed in the annual budget were calculated. Either Microsoft Word or Excel format is acceptable.
- c. Supportive Services may include both personnel and program costs. Personnel narratives must include the number and/or percent of case manager positions (use FTE) funded. Administrative salaries cannot be funded under the supportive services line item but may be included in the Administration line item. Program costs that support the operation of the proposed program are allowed and must be itemized and justified in the narrative.
- d. The Center reserves the right to fund portions of a proposed budget and/or require adjustments.

If you are doing option 2, please ensure the budget clearly separates the costs for the enrichment programming being offered.