
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: TO CO-DESIGN AND DEVELOP DIGITAL INNOVATION CENTERS

Background

Part funder, lender, connector, and consultant, Neighborhood Allies is unlike any other community development organization in Pittsburgh. Our goal is to serve as an investor, thought leader, and catalyst for innovative approaches to solve challenges in Pittsburgh's most under-resourced neighborhoods. We support the people, organizations and partnerships committed to creating and maintaining healthy neighborhoods by working with local and national funders.

Existing Need

In the next decade, 7 out of 10 new jobs will require baseline computer skills. In Allegheny County, at least 5,000 of the high priority jobs slated to open annually require computer skills (Partner4Work). Yet, many in our most under-resourced communities are ill-equipped to achieve these opportunities: 45% of students living below the poverty line are set back in school because they cannot finish their homework without a computer or have to complete it on a cell phone (Pew Research).

Further, while the internet has fast become the primary resource for finding jobs, a notable minority are not positioned to compete due to lack of access to the digital skills and resources necessary to thrive. For example, low-income workers are more likely to have to complete job applications over a smartphone, where they run into a range of problems like content that does not load properly or difficulty attaching supporting documents ("Searching for Work in the Digital Era"). In the face of exacerbating income inequality, we resolve that nobody will be left behind as the workforce adapts to a digital future.

Project Scope

Neighborhood Allies seeks to establish four (4) digital inclusion centers in Pittsburgh over the next year. We are soliciting proposals from qualified organizations with natural ties to social service and an interest in creating innovation center(s) to facilitate opportunities for STEM Education, digital literacy and workforce development programming. We seek to work with all ages—from youth to adult—by bridging digital divides in the most under-served communities with the development of these centers.

Over the course of the next year, we seek to invest between \$250,000-\$400,000 in the creation of each Center (including remodeling/rehabbing existing spaces, operating expenses, technology and software), as well as provide in-kind programmatic support and internationally-recognized digital skills certification programs over the years to follow.

We seek an established, brick-and-mortar organization with approximately 2,000 square feet of available space, that has a demonstrated commitment to poverty reduction, workforce development, STEM education and/or digital literacy in their target neighborhood(s). An ideal partner will utilize the co-created Center to leverage existing community networks and assets to integrate, operate, and elevate their work. It is our hope that each Center will organically mix baseline programming with the individual character and needs of each corresponding community.

This RFP process presents an opportunity for you to submit your organization's credentials for review.

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Proposals Due – Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Interested parties should submit a proposal including the following by **Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

Please follow the following format in your response to this request. The entire response, inclusive of all elements (except supporting documents), should not exceed 2000 words.

Do not omit responses to any of the questions below. *Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.*

SCOPE NARRATIVE

SECTION I: ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

- i. Provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address of the individual we should contact with respect to your proposal.
- ii. Provide a brief and general summary of your organization and the programs you currently provide. Briefly describe your commitment to poverty reduction, workforce development, STEM education and/or digital literacy. Elaborate how this contract would extend the capacity of your existing efforts. Feel free to highlight sample programming relevant to your constituency, and what repairs or other elements would be necessary for successful programming.
- iii. Describe your establishment, including: 1) size of your establishment, 2) proposed space/room you envision to use to develop a Center (include: images, square footage, and any other room highlights), and 3) why this establishment is in great need of a space for innovative technology learning and support. Please note: the room size requirement is approximately 2,000 square feet or larger.
- iv. Describe established key community relationships and partnerships. Identify possible approaches to forging programmatic partnerships with local public agencies, community organizations, businesses, schools, etc. In addition, please provide initial thoughts on ways to monitor and assess the viability of these partnerships.
- v. Describe the types and frequency of information/data collected. How do you digitally report outcomes and measure your work? (A bulleted list of reporting and data collection at this stage is acceptable.)
- vi. To what extent does your organization demonstrate a value for racial and economic equity in communities that have been historically underserved and under-resourced? What value do you bring to close opportunity and wealth gaps in the communities you serve?
- vii. How do you approach sustainability? Organization must be able to provide at least 2 years of audited financial statements.

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- viii. Describe any potential conflicts of interests that could be arise by your organization creating and/or providing services to the Centers. If you are currently working with any private organizations, please disclose.
- ix. Within the last 5 years, has your organization been involved in any business litigation, legal proceeding or regulatory investigation?

SECTION II: CONSTRAINTS AND COMMITMENTS

- i. Centers selected will be required to make a **five-year commitment** to operate the center with yearly milestones and targets measured. Please confirm.
- ii. Site Selection and Location: Due to constraints from funding, all Centers must be located within the boundaries of the City of Pittsburgh. Priority goes to under resourced communities with a large proportion of members at or below the poverty level with a demonstrated need for digital access centers (e.g. low broadband access, few household computers), which are identified as: Homewood, Hill District, Larimer, Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar, South Oakland, Hazelwood, Hilltop communities, and North Side (i.e., Perry-South, California Kirk-Bride, Chateau). Please note that final decisions on center locations will be directed by regulations from the funding source.
- iii. Organizations who can prove convenient transit access to one or multiple of these communities will be considered as well (e.g. East Liberty, Downtown, Oakland). Please provide a list of the current bus lines servicing your organization’s client base.

SECTION III: PHYSICAL SPACE AND HUMAN CAPITAL

- i. Space: Organization must demonstrate existing open space or room of approximately 2,000 square feet that can be remodeled and reserved to house the Center. If you possess CAD files or other blueprints for your existing building layout, please submit these along with RFP.

Note: *Please proceed if you are able to acquire requisite space (e.g. rental, obtaining neighboring building, etc.) within 6 months.*
- ii. Staffing: Center will require a full-time on-site manager who will manage site programming, outreach, data entry, and technology. Neighborhood Allies will work closely with each center on integration of staffing and staffing demands. Do you have a staff member who you envision could fill this role, or would you hire a new member? In the case of the former, please briefly describe their experience and qualifications. In the case of the latter, describe your hiring process for a role of this nature. Finally, please describe how your organization provides continuity of service in the case of professional turnover.

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- iii. Describe how the proposed services would relate to existing programs operationally, and how resources will be shared by or reassigned to the Center. If desired, you may attach a chart showing how the proposed services will relate to existing services and programs.

SECTION IV: RELEVANT OUTREACH AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

- i. Marketing and Outreach: Detail existing organizational communications opportunities to promote the Center and any other outreach opportunities.
- ii. Describe experience conducting effective client outreach, including any specific experience using multiple marketing and outreach tools to build a high-volume client base.
- iii. In the prior year (2019), approximately how many (non-recounted) individuals participated in your events or programming?

RFP PROCESS

1. RFP released January 27, 2020. Please direct all questions in writing to vanessa@neighborhoodallies.org.
2. Interested parties should also provide intent to apply by sending an email with main point of contact to vanessa@neighborhoodallies.org.
3. To execute a fair and open process, all answers received by respondents will be distributed to all interested parties. All questions will be received and responses distributed to interested parties until one week prior to the deadline (Thursday, February 13, 2020). At that point, we will enter a quiet period until the RFP deadline.
4. **RFP will close on February 20, 2020 at 5 p.m.**
5. All proposals should be submitted via email to vanessa@neighborhoodallies.org with “RFP Response – Digital Inclusion” in the subject line.
6. Proposals that meet fundamental criteria (location, organizational presence/longevity, space) will be reviewed by a recommendation committee comprised of: 2 community members from each target area, 3 Neighborhood Allies staff (including Program Managers and Leadership), 2 Board Members, and 1-2 funder representatives. The committee will submit their recommendations to the external funder, who will make the ultimate decision. Following your submission, organizations with qualifying proposals may be interviewed and have their proposed Center location(s) visited by selection committee.
7. All decisions will be released by March 31, 2020.

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Annual Report or Program Information (optional, but highly encouraged)
- CAD Files, Blueprints for proposed space
- Current Board of Directors List
- Audited Financial Statements for 2018, 2017
- 2019 Financial Statements
- 2020 budget
- Most recent 990
- IRS Determination Letter

Neighborhood Allies reserves the right:

- To reject any and all proposals submitted.
- To request additional information from all proposers.

All proposals become the property of Neighborhood Allies, and part of the requester's files without obligation.