



## REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INQUIRY (LOIs)

### A Funder Collaborative to Support Excellence in Foster Care in New York City

*Supported by:* The New York Community Trust, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Ira W. De Camp Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation

#### ***LOI Deadline:***

**February 8, 2021**

LOIs must be submitted electronically no later than 11:59pm on February 8, 2021 on The New York Community Trust's Grants Portal. LOI submission instructions are provided on page four.

#### ***Summary***

The purpose of this Request for Letters of Inquiry is to provide young people exiting foster care in New York City with Fair Futures Coaches. Coaches build trusting relationships with ~15 young people, provide ongoing emotional support, and help them with their academic, career development, housing, and independent living goals so they can transition successfully to adulthood.

The Foster Care Excellence Fund will support up to five foster care provider agencies in New York City to extend their Fair Futures program to provide 1:1 coaching to young people who are exiting or have recently exited foster care and are no longer eligible for Fair Futures funding through the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). A two-year grant will be awarded to support one new Coach position at each agency focused on serving this population. Grant recipients also will receive hiring, training, and technical assistance support from the Fair Futures coordinators and other sources.

#### ***Overview***

Young people in the City's child welfare system often lack a consistent, positive support system to help them envision and then stick to a productive path into adulthood. Additionally, public supports for youth in foster care end at age 21, when few of them are ready to be on their own. For example, of the 646 young people who "aged out" of the City's foster care system in 2018, only 21 percent had a high school diploma/equivalency.

Responding to this challenge, in November 2017, The Trust helped to create the Foster Care Excellence Fund to improve services and outcomes for children and youth in the City's foster care system. Fair Futures is one of the major initiatives funded by the Excellence Fund. Fair Futures is a coalition of over 100 non-profit organizations, advocates, and foundations

advocating for all current and former foster youth in New York City to have access to the long-term supports they need to achieve their potential – from 6<sup>th</sup> grade through age 26.

In 2019, the Fair Futures coalition launched a campaign to advocate for \$50 million in public funding (the full cost of the Fair Futures model at scale) to be baselined in the City budget. The Fair Futures campaign was successful in securing \$10 million (2019) and \$12 million (2020), respectively, in City funding. This funding was distributed to all 26 provider agencies through the ACS for young people ages 11-20. The Excellence Fund also formed a public private partnership with ACS and pooled over \$2 million to help develop the infrastructure needed to implement the Fair Futures model systemwide.

### ***Funding Opportunity***

Need: In the Fair Futures model, coaching is provided to foster care youth starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade through age 26. However, the public funding secured for Fair Futures excludes young people that exit foster care. As such, foster care youth ages 21-26 do not have a coach to help them with the transition out of care and into independent living. In light of this, the Foster Care Excellence Fund will help fill this gap in the model by expanding coaching support to this population. With this funding, we also aim to continue to build an evidence base for the Fair Futures model to leverage additional public funding for young people who have exited care.

The Foster Care Excellence Fund will support up to five foster care provider agencies in New York City to expand their Fair Futures program to provide 1:1 coaching to young people who are exiting or have recently exited foster care and are no longer eligible for Fair Futures funding through ACS. A two-year grant will be awarded to support one new Coach position to serve this population. Additionally, grant recipients will receive hiring, training, and technical assistance support from the Fair Futures coordinators and other sources.

Eligibility and Supports Provided: This request for LOIs is open to:

1. Nonprofit foster care provider agencies with ACS contracts to provide foster boarding home services to children in ACS custody who have received public funding for Fair Futures as well.
2. Agencies that can identify at least 15 young people in need of a Coach who are 20-24 years old. Young people should either be exiting foster care in calendar year 2021 or have already exited care. Agencies should prioritize those most in need of a Coach.

Selected agencies will receive the following supports:

- Two-year funding to hire 1 additional Fair Futures Coach that will serve ~15 young people annually.
- Tailored trainings and 1:1 technical assistance support in serving this population.
- The Coaches funded will also be part of a monthly support group/learning community consisting of Fair Futures consultants, sector experts, and Coaches from other agencies/organizations who have coached young people ages 21+ for several years.
- Access to a youth-led peer group(s) for this cohort, (with stipends to be included in budget at rate of \$25 per hour). Guest speakers and credible messengers will attend these groups, as needed/requested by young people.

LOI Selection Process & Criteria: LOIs will be evaluated by a committee of Excellence Fund donors. Priority will be given to foster care provider agencies that meet the following criteria:

- ✓ serve a large number of foster youth;
- ✓ currently do not have Coaches that serve young people ages 21-26; and
- ✓ have solid organizational capacity, including strong supervisory support and the ability to implement best practices, such as when in hiring/screening of Coaches.

### ***LOI Requirements***

Letters of Inquiry may not exceed four pages, single spaced, 12-point font. (A fifth page could be used for the project budget). Please include the following in your LOI:

**1. Proposal Narrative** – Please include the items listed below, in the following order:

- a. A short description of the applying entity, including the EIN number, programs, key leadership, method of delivering mission, examples of engagement with internal and external stakeholders, and any past examples of successful improvements made in the delivery of care.
- b. A data summary and analysis, highlighting the number and demographics of children and youth in foster care, by placement type, placement stability, lengths of stays, exit types and reentry data. Also, please provide information on your ACS scorecard rankings for permanency, safety, and wellbeing, and include information regarding any existing quality improvement plans, including corrective action plans. Feel free to include this information as attachments/Appendices.
- c. A description of the proposed cohort of young people to be coached. If these young people have already been identified, include their current/previous foster care placement type, length of stay, exit type and date, educational attainment levels, and career development status. If the young people have not yet been identified, provide an estimate of the number of young people who will be exiting foster care from your agency in 2021 and an estimate of the number of young people who have already exited (ages 20-24) and who continue to seek support/may be open to coaching. Describe how you will prioritize young people to be coached.
- d. Attach the template your agency prepared with Katie Napolitano and Emil Ramnarine in preparation for the ACS site visit (please reach out to Katie for the final version if need be). These templates describe your existing Fair Futures program, staffing, young people served, best practices, and the progress made in Year 1. Should you like to add any additional information to the template (or this proposal), please feel free to do so.
- e. A work plan detailing the project implementation process including key dates, goals, and activities. Please include how your program would hire/screen Coaches; include any best practices you would incorporate, such including young people in the interview process and using the Fair Futures Hiring/Screening Guide.

**2. Project Budget** – include an itemized budget, showing total cost of the project, the amount requested, all sources of funding, personnel and non-personnel costs for each year of the grant period.

Representatives of the Foster Care Excellence Fund will be available to answer clarifying questions on proposals until February 1, 2021; please email Sarah Chiles ([schiles@rhfdn.org](mailto:schiles@rhfdn.org)) with any questions. Questions about The Trust's grants portal may be emailed to Barbara Taveras ([bat@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:bat@nyct-cfi.org)).

### ***LOI Submission Instructions***

**Step One:** Prepare your letter of inquiry and budget (as listed in #1-2 above) combined into a single PDF that is saved with the filename format "Organization Name.pdf".

**Step Two:** Go to [The Trust's Grant Portal](#). Click on the "Apply Here" button at the bottom of the page, then find the "**(Invitation Only) Foster Care Excellence Fund/Fair Futures LOI**", and click on the "Apply" button.

**Step Three:** Complete the LOI profile and upload your single PDF file.

### ***Notification of Awards***

Finalists will be notified by email if the project described in the LOI is of interest to the Foster Care Excellence Fund, and they will then be asked to submit additional information and documentation. Follow up phone calls also may be arranged.

Grant awards are expected to be announced in mid-March, 2021.