



WILLIAM J. BARLOW, JR. MAYOR

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**For Immediate Release  
September 18, 2017  
Contact: Mayor's Office 315-342-8136**

## **Mayor Barlow announces RFP for \$400,000 Anti-Poverty Initiative in Oswego**

The City of Oswego was awarded funding to participate in the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI). Mayor William J. Barlow, Jr. organized and appointed the City of Oswego Poverty Reduction Steering Committee to take charge in alleviating poverty through the establishment of a platform for developing innovative initiatives, solutions and programs to begin to shift the pendulum of a bottom heavy socioeconomic demographic to provide a higher quality of life in our community. The Steering Committee with the City's Poverty Reduction Taskforce "LIFT Oswego" worked with the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) to develop a comprehensive city-wide poverty needs assessment, and through this needs assessment has prepared a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide funding up to \$400,000 for projects aimed at reducing poverty in the City of Oswego.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the City of Oswego to work collaboratively with the community partners to identify innovative solutions that will help improve the quality of life for residents in the City of Oswego. I want to thank Governor Cuomo and New York State for selecting the City of Oswego as one of the cities to participate in the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative," said Mayor Billy Barlow. "As a community, we have an obligation to address poverty and do our best as local government to create programs that can lift a person out of poverty. We've centered our discussion on providing our residents a program with the tools to help lift them out of poverty by arming them with the opportunities to gain skills, search for a job and keep a job. We want to maintain that focus moving forward and will work to implement programs that will do just that", Mayor Barlow said.

The City of Oswego with LIFT Oswego is seeking proposals for projects in the areas of Child Care, Education, Housing, Services & Support Systems, Transportation, and Workforce Development that will measurably impact poverty in the City of Oswego. The ESPRI funds provide the City of Oswego with an opportunity to undertake opportunities that focus on such needs and to identify innovative and sustainable solutions that are tailored to the uniqueness of the City of Oswego that can be successful in improving outcomes for the residents and will help individuals and families achieve their full potential. The RFP is enclosed and proposals are due by October 30, 2017.

"I want to thank the members of the Steering Committee and the Taskforce for working collaboratively with the City of Oswego and with the consultant in preparing the Poverty Needs Assessment as it helped paved the way to create this Request for Proposal to solicit proposals for this unique funding opportunity, which is the next step as part of this initiative. I encourage anyone that has an idea to attend the Technical Assistance Workshop scheduled for October 5, 2017 as outlined in the RFP so that we can help you as together we are helping the community," said Justin Rudgick, Community & Economic Development Director and Chair of Oswego Poverty Reduction Steering Committee.

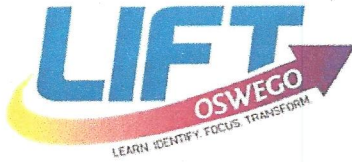
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OSWEGO COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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**City of Oswego Request for Proposals: LIFT Oswego**

**Funding Available: Up to \$400,000**

***Key Dates:***

RFP released	September 19, 2017
Technical assistance session	October 5, 2017, 2:30-3:30 pm Elim Grace Church, 340 W 1st St. Oswego
Deadline for submission of questions	October 11, 2017
Answer to questions posted	October 13, 2017
Proposals due	October 30, 2017, 12:00 pm
Local review of grant completed (note that grants are selected at the local level, with final review and approval by the state)	November 20, 2017
Estimated start date for projects	January 2018
Estimated completion date for projects	March 31, 2019

***For Additional Information:***

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## 1.) Description:

In 2016 Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative (ESPRI) which allocated funds to 16 communities in NYS to reduce the number of households living in poverty. The City of Oswego was selected as one of the designated ESPRI communities and has been working to establish a structure and plan for poverty reduction, including the formation of LIFT Oswego.

LIFT Oswego is comprised of an executive Steering Committee and an advisory Task Force that includes representatives from government, education, non-profit and for-profit sectors and individuals from the community. Over the past 9 months, the Steering Committee and Task Force worked with CGR Consulting to complete a comprehensive needs assessment of poverty in the City of Oswego, established priority areas, needs, outcomes and potential strategies and have initiated efforts to coordinate poverty reduction efforts in the City with the County's Anti-Poverty Task Force. Needs assessments for both the city and county can be found at [www.oc2030.org](http://www.oc2030.org).

The next phase in the ESPRI/LIFT initiative is to provide funding for projects aimed at reducing poverty in the City of Oswego. Up to \$400,000 is available for projects in the identified priority areas that will seek to achieve the broad outcomes outlined in Section 2.

LIFT Oswego is seeking responses from experienced organizations to submit proposals for projects in the areas of Child Care, Education, Housing, Services and Support Systems, Transportation and Workforce Development that will measurably impact poverty in the City of Oswego. Proposals should clearly describe the organization's experience and capacity to successfully facilitate, develop, and implement a comprehensive work plan identifying specific strategies and measureable performance goals related to these priority areas.

ESPRI funds provide the City of Oswego an opportunity to undertake activities that focus on needs such as improving the child care system, engaging children and parents in education, providing affordable housing, improving the accessibility of services, increasing transportation, and expanding job training and readiness. The primary objective of LIFT Oswego is to identify innovative and sustainable solutions that are tailored to the uniqueness of the City of Oswego that can be successful in improving outcomes for the residents and will help individuals and families achieve their full potential. These solutions must prove to be effective, inclusive, collaborative, replicable, scalable and sustainable.

## 2.) Priority Areas:

### Child care

The overall outcome identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of child care is: ***Low income parents will be able to access the child care they need to support employment and transition to self-sufficiency.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified the lack of available, flexible, accessible and affordable childcare as a need for low income families in the City of Oswego and a barrier to gaining meaningful and self-supporting employment.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- There has been a 21% decline in registered and regulated child care providers since 2011
- Stakeholders describe an overall shortage of day care slots
- About 1/3 of the funding of childcare subsidies throughout the county goes to children being served in informal care settings (non-quality settings)
- People who work irregular evening/weekend hours find it difficult if not impossible to find childcare
- Based on income and employment status, 4,000 children in Oswego County could benefit from child care subsidies

Proposals focusing on child care may increase the number of child care slots, expand services to evenings and weekends or make child care more affordable. Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- Assist with startup or expansion of new child care facilities/businesses
- Employers provide child care/latchkey services or vouchers to employees
- Subsidize existing providers to expand their hours

### Education

The overall outcomes identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of Education are: ***1) Additional support systems are available to increase performance and graduation rates of low income students, and 2) Programs are available to help students learn while also engaging families in the educational process.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified the lack of sufficient support systems and lack of engagement in school as a need for low income students and families and a barrier to achieving educational success and graduation.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- In 2016, 53% of City of Oswego students were considered economically disadvantaged or low-income, up from 37% in 2006
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the decline in resources and support for low income students
- The City of Oswego has the lowest graduation rate among low income students in Oswego County
- Low income students have poorer school performance and lower graduation rates
- Individuals with less than a high school degree are 52% more likely to be in poverty than those with a high school diploma or GED

Proposals focusing on education may increase support systems for low income students or may increase the engagement of students and families in the educational process. Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- Develop non-traditional education programs for struggling students
- Provide after school program focused on project-based learning
- Expand character education in elementary schools (e.g. Positivity Project)

- Target chronic absenteeism in grades K-6 by pairing with mentors
- Expand programs that target high-risk students (e.g. Bridging the Gap)
- Engage students in policy and decision making with administration to make schools a learning environment for all
- Work together with existing and new services to create a central informational clearinghouse that provides information, referral and encouragement
- Provide services to parents, to engage them as a role model and agent of change

### Housing

The overall outcome identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of Housing is: ***Low income families are able to secure affordable housing options.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified the lack of affordable housing as an issue for families living in poverty.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- There is a scarcity of affordable rental housing which is a key challenge for low-income city residents and limits them from purchasing an affordable home
- With the median monthly rent of a home being \$714, that makes up 43% of the income of someone making \$20,000 a year set aside for rent alone
- With unaffordable prices in areas like car ownership and child care, it prevents individuals from setting aside money to purchase a home
- There is an abundance of college student home renters that drive up competitiveness and increase rental pricing

Proposals focusing on housing may focus on any intervention that will increase the availability of affordable housing for low income City residents. Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- Expand existing home ownership programs with an outreach component
- Develop a rent-to-own program that includes preventive services such as budgeting, prioritizing, and skills to maintain a home
- Provide classes for landlords on how to work with low-income tenants to keep them housed
- Use houses in the land bank for 1st time home buyers

### Services and Support Systems

The overall outcomes identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of Services and Support Systems are: ***1) Low income families are able to access the services and resources that they need to transition to self-sufficiency, and 2) Individuals needing substance and mental health services are engaged and connected to programs that can help them.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified the lack of a centralized service delivery system and a lack of connection with treatment programs for substance abuse and/or mental health services as issues for low-income families in the City of Oswego.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- Stakeholder feedback indicated they thought the location of DSS was designed to keep people on public assistance or to keep people from accessing or maintaining public assistance
- It can take a large part of the day to make a trip to visit DSS, which hinders employment and childcare opportunities
- Mentoring for low income individuals was rated by stakeholders as the #1 strategy for reducing poverty in the City of Oswego
- The number of admissions to treatment in the county for heroin or prescription opioids has grown more than 300% since 2010

Proposals focusing on services and support systems may focus on making support services more accessible or connecting individuals in need to substance abuse and mental health services.

Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- Create neighborhood based centers or hubs, where multiple services and resources are co-located
- Establish clearinghouse for services located in downtown Oswego
- Develop mentoring/coaching programs for low-income families to assist with access to services
- Develop a peer outreach and engagement program for substance abuse and mental health services

### Transportation

The overall outcomes identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of Transportation are: **1) *Alternative transportation systems provide low income individuals with transportation to work, school, childcare, assistance, etc.* 2) *Low income individuals own a vehicle for low cost.* 3) *Low income individuals maintain their vehicles in working condition.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified the lack of alternative transportation solutions, lack of personally owned vehicles and inability to maintain the vehicle as a barrier to gaining meaningful and self-supporting employment.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- 16% of households in the City of Oswego do not have a vehicle; 43% of households have only one vehicle
- 39% of jobs held by city residents are located within the city limits, the remaining 61% must commute to jobs outside the city
- A large share of households without cars are likely comprised of working-age adults

- According to residents, the struggle is using the bus system to access jobs and services elsewhere in the county

Proposals focusing on transportation should focus on creating alternative transportations systems, increasing vehicle ownership for low-income City residents or helping low income City residents maintain their vehicle in order to support employment. Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- "Need-A-Ride" program run by volunteers at low cost
- Employer-sponsored transportation program
- "Cars for Careers" program
- "Vehicles for Change" program
- Vehicle maintenance program

### **Workforce Development**

The overall outcome identified by LIFT Oswego that we would like to see achieved as a result of the proposed activities in the priority area of Workforce Development is: ***1) Individuals overcome barriers that prevent them from participating in training programs and obtaining/ maintaining employment.***

The LIFT Oswego Task Force has identified that there is a lack of resources available to low income individuals to help overcome barriers to participating in training programs and obtaining/maintaining employment.

According to the LIFT Oswego Needs Assessment:

- Low income residents discussed barriers they see gaining meaningful and self-supporting employment such as accessing transportation or affordable child care
- Mentoring for low income individuals was rated by stakeholders as the #1 strategy for reducing poverty in the City of Oswego
- Individuals cannot retain jobs due to a lack of soft skills needed throughout their work day
- Candidates lack critical soft skills such as showing up, coming on time, and dealing with other personalities and conflict

Proposals focusing on workforce development may focus on developing mentoring/training programs, or providing direct subsidies. Examples of potential strategies include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- Develop mentoring/coaching services to support job seekers and address barriers to obtaining/maintaining employment
- Provide subsidies to overcome barriers such as transportation, child care, clothing, etc.
- Integrate soft skills into training programs (showing up and on time, work etiquette, etc.)

### **3.) Activity Funding Limits:**

Up to \$400,000 is available for projects. No funding limits have been identified for individual proposals, however projects requesting higher amounts should demonstrate significant impact, address more than one priority area, include multiple organizations or include leveraged funds.

There is no matching or cost share requirement. However, applicants able to demonstrate how LIFT funds will be leveraged during the grant award period and beyond for growth and sustainability will have that information taken into consideration during review of applications.

The City of Oswego will prioritize proposals that can demonstrate that individuals will become employed as a result of the proposed activities (i.e. Workforce Development).

Applicants may apply for multiple projects.

The City reserves the right to fund a project at a lower level based on the project description and based on the need to expend allotted funds.

Applicants should only apply for the amount of funding that can be fully expended and the type of activities that can be completed within the specified project completion period of up to fifteen (15) months. All proposed accomplishments must be completed and reported within the project completion period.

### **4.) Eligible Expenses:**

Applicants may include indirect/administration costs. Of the amount requested, indirect/administration costs must not exceed more than 15% of the total award.

Funded proposals are required to meet the NYS requirement of 30% Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) spending or seeking a waiver for such spending. Additional information on MWBE requirements will be presented at the Technical Assistance Session.

### **5.) Eligible Types of Applicants:**

Eligible applicants must carry a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and must demonstrate an organizational capacity to carry out the proposed activities. Examples of eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, government agencies, and educational institutions. If an applicant does not carry a FEIN, partnership with an organization who does is encouraged.

Applicants may submit multiple applications and may request funding for each priority area regardless of any applications submitted for other priority areas of assistance. However, as noted above, demonstrated capacity to carry out each grant activity in a timely manner is a factor in the application review process.

## 6.) Technical Assistance Workshop:

The City of Oswego will hold a technical assistance session on October 5, 2017 from 2:30-3:30 pm at Elim Grace Church (340 W 1st St, Oswego, NY) that will review application requirements and evaluation criteria. Applicants are encouraged to attend.

## 7.) Proposal Requirements:

All proposals must use 11 point Times New Roman Font with 1 inch margins. Page limits are provided for each section below.

### Executive Summary (1 page limit)

- Provide a summary of the main sections of the RFP: Organizational Capacity, Identification of Need, Description of the Project and Budget. All information in the Executive Summary should be substantiated in the application

### Organizational Capacity (2 page limit)

- Describe the organization
- Describe the organization's experience with engaging and serving low-income individuals
- Describe the organization's experience with building relationships and collaborating with other community partners
- List key staff and describe their roles and qualifications
- Describe the organization's experience with administrative, fiscal, and programmatic oversight of grant-funded projects, including timely and accurate submission of fiscal and project reports
- Describe the organization's organizational and systems capacity to ensure performance measures are identified and tracked in order to determine outcomes are being met, and process improvements are implemented as needed
- Describe the organization's readiness for start-up of the proposed activities

### Identification of Need(s) (2 page limit)

- Clearly identify the need(s) that will be addressed by the proposed project (note that the needs should be substantiated by reliable qualitative or quantitative data such as that provided in the City and County Poverty Needs Assessments ([www.oc2030.org](http://www.oc2030.org)) and/or other data collected by the applying organization)

### Description of Project (4 page limit)

- Provide a detailed narrative description of the project including a timeframe for proposed activities
- Describe the extent to which the project will be effective, inclusive, collaborative, replicable, scalable and sustainable
- Clearly identify the outcomes that will be achieved by the project as listed under Section 2 and how the project will significantly impact the community's needs
- Identify the specific results that are expected and how success will be measured (list performance measures, measurement tools, and data sources)
- Describe if/how the use of volunteers will be incorporated into the project activities (see Section 9)
- Complete the attached logic model using the format provided (Attachment B)

### Budget

- Submit budget using the budget format provided (Attachment C)
- Provide commitment letter(s) from all other funding sources, including proposed terms or letters of application

### Letter of Support

- Submit letters of support for all listed partnering agencies, project partners and/or community partners that may be impacted by the proposed anti-poverty activities

### **8.) General Requirements:**

All LIFT Oswego funded recipients will be required to comply with all federal, state, and local regulations and statutes. Applicants should only apply for the amount of funding that can be fully expended and the type of activities that can be completed within the specified project completion period. All proposed accomplishments must be completed and reported within the project completion period.

### **9.) Volunteers:**

The incorporation of volunteers into the proposed activities is encouraged. NYS ESPRI has provided LIFT Oswego with assistance in the form of staff to help develop volunteer management programs and will provide AmeriCorps members to assist with LIFT Oswego projects.

### **10.) Reporting:**

The applicant will submit quarterly budget and project progress reports to the City of Oswego within 30 days of the end of the quarter. Report templates will be provided. A final program report will be submitted within 30 days after the end of the project.

### **11.) Proposed Evaluation Criteria:**

Priority will be provided to projects that demonstrate a clearly defined need, address specific priority areas, meet the objectives of LIFT Oswego, demonstrate that they can proceed immediately upon award, and present a project budget that is justified by the proposed activities. Specific evaluation criteria for all applications include the following:

#### **Total – 100 Points**

##### **Organizational Capacity – 20 Points**

- Proposals will be evaluated on the organization's capacity to implement the proposed program within the allotted timeframe, including the ability to monitor activities and evaluate the success of the program. Evaluation criteria will also include readiness to start up project activities in a timely manner.

##### **Identification of Need – 15 Points**

- Proposals will be evaluated on the extent to which they use data from the City and County Needs Assessment and other sources to justify the proposed activities

##### **Project Description – 35 Points**

- Proposals will be evaluated on the nature of the project, including the project's projected impact and the extent to which it will achieve the outcomes listed under Section 2. Projects will be evaluated on whether they are effective, inclusive, collaborative, replicable, scalable and

sustainable. Projects that address more than one priority area and that include partnerships and collaborations between organizations are encouraged.

**Strategy for Performance Measurement – 15 Points**

- Proposals will be evaluated on their plan to measure success of the program including a performance measures, measurement tools, and data sources.

**Budget – 15 points**

- Proposals will be evaluated on the projected use of funds and the extent to which the budget reflects the project description. Evaluation criteria will also include the inclusion of leveraged funds.

**14.) Project Term Completion Dates:**

Recipients of LIFT Oswego funding will enter into a grant agreement of up to fifteen (15) months in which all funds must be expended and all accomplishments met. A proposed project timeline is required to ensure funds will be fully expended on time. Any funds remaining at the end of the period are subject to de-obligation.

**15.) Submission of Proposals**

To be considered for selection in response to this RFP, 3 paper copies of the proposal must be submitted to the attention of Justin Rudgick no later than **October 30, 2017 at 12:00 pm** and in addition an electronic copy must be sent to [jrudgick@oswegony.org](mailto:jrudgick@oswegony.org).

Justin Rudgick, Director  
City of Oswego Department of Community Development  
44 E Bridge Street, Oswego, NY 13126

**16.) Required Documents:**

- Attachment A: Logic Model Template
- Attachment B: Budget Template