

How Chicago Youth Programs, Inc. Shapes Adulthood Choices and Success.

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Project Summary:

From the perspective of youth development professionals, adult outcomes offer the greatest evidence of a program's successes and failures. Chicago Youth Programs, Inc. (CYP) offers comprehensive services to youth ages 3-25 in three underserved, high need areas of Chicago. Although CYP is experienced in studying the outcomes of its programs, it has never had the capacity to engage an adequate control group to test its outcomes rigorously, nor has it had the resources to follow its graduates into adulthood. The proposed project will provide CYP with an opportunity to develop a research plan to address both of these concerns. The research plan will be submitted to the National Institutes of Health for funding.

The research plan will be developed through a partnership between a community-based Co-PI at CYP and an academic Co-PI based at Children's Memorial Research Center (CMRC). The two Co-PIs will be mentored by Karen Sheehan, MD/MPH, a co-founder of CYP and an experienced CBPR researcher. The partners will engage key CYP leaders in a Work Group that will develop the research questions, the research design, and will problem-solve about how the design can be put into place. Program staff, parents and CYP graduates will participate in a research team to refine the design, be trained in IRB procedures, and be trained in the revised use of an in-house service delivery database (e-File) that will improve their capacity to perform outcomes research in the future. A CYP graduate will be recruited to update the e-File and put the service data into an analyzable format. We believe the process of engaging the CYP staff at all levels will provide the strongest potential research design for submission to NIH.