

INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON YOUTH PROGRAMS
Children of Incarcerated Parents (COIP)
Call for Research Proposals

Under a contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), the American Institutes for Research (AIR) is issuing this Call for Research, specifically youth participatory action research (YPAR), on a competitive basis. This Call for Research supports work of the federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (Interagency Working Group), of which the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is a member agency.

The primary goal of this Call for Research is to understand the research priorities and to advance knowledge about the issues affecting children and youth who have or have had an incarcerated parent (COIP), and to engage youth with this experience as full partners in doing the research and disseminating those results. The secondary goal is to present the findings to the field in order to apply the knowledge gained by the YPAR to improve practices and support policymakers and practitioners in the field of working with children and youth who have or have had an incarcerated parent. Specifically, findings will be disseminated through a manuscript submitted to a professional journal; written or visual research brief for youth.gov/coip that describes the YPAR process and findings; submission of a professional conference presentation; and a virtual presentation of findings to federal staff at a meeting sponsored by the Interagency Working Group. The final products submitted to youth.gov/coip would capture the process of youth engagement and could include visual material, such as a video of the process or a PhotoVoice project. The topics should focus on issues and questions as identified and defined by children of incarcerated parents based on their lived experience in schools, families, and communities.

We anticipate awarding a contract of up to \$50,000 to two (2) researchers. This amount includes travel expenses to a professional conference where youth and adult researchers will present their

Call for Research Proposals for the Youth Participatory Action Research Convening
Key Information

- Proposal Submission Deadline: Thursday, December 10, 2020
- Up to \$50,000 subcontract each for two (2) accepted proposals (including up to \$5,000 for travel expenses)
- Only one submission per researcher
- Award Notification Date: Friday, January 8, 2020
- Virtual presentation of findings to federal staff at a meeting sponsored by the federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs
- Presentation submitted to a professional conference
- Manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal
- Written and/or visual research brief submitted to youth.gov for publication

work. Researchers may use no more than \$5,000 on travel and other conference-related expenses (e.g., conference registration).

Purpose

The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs with funding support from OJJDP has focused on evidence-based practices for services for COIP, their caregivers, and families. These include practices related to mentoring COIP and communicating, visiting, and preparing for the reentry of the parent into the family and community (see youth.gov/coip). The primary goal of these products is to educate adults who work with youth about the experience of having an incarcerated parent, and to amplify youth voice about strategies that work to address challenges it can create.

The Interagency Working Group encourages the investigation of these issues and evidence-based solutions by commissioning two new research projects. Selected researchers will receive a contract of up to \$50,000 to support new and original work on issues faced by COIP as it relates to and advances Interagency Working Group research priorities. The award amount includes travel expenses to a professional conference. Awardees may spend up to \$5,000 of the total award on travel expenses. Contract awards will be made through a competitive process, with the proposed research evaluated based on partnership with youth, value to the field, creativity, methodology, and other considerations as described in the review criteria below.

Background

Many young people have or have had an incarcerated parent. According to a report by the Pew Charitable Trusts, approximately 2.7 million children have an incarcerated parent.¹ The experiences of these children and youth and how the incarceration of their parent has affected them varies widely. While there is no one typical experience, having a parent in prison is an adverse childhood experience and can have an impact on a child's mental health, social behavior, and school performance.² The emotional trauma that may occur and the practical difficulties of a disrupted family life can be compounded by the social stigma that children may face as a result of having a parent in prison or jail.³ Children who have an incarcerated parent may experience financial hardship that results from the loss of that parent's income.⁴ Further, some incarcerated parents face termination of parental rights because their children have been in the foster care system beyond the time allowed by law⁵ or have questions about child support. These children require support from local, state, and federal systems to serve their needs. Children of incarcerated parents may also face a number of other challenging circumstances. They may have experienced trauma related to their parent's arrest or experiences leading up to it.⁶ Children of incarcerated parents may also be more likely to have faced other adverse childhood experiences,

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2010). *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts

² La Vigne, Davies, & Brazzell, 2008

³ La Vigne et al., 2008

⁴ General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2011

⁵ U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), 2011

⁶ La Vigne et al., 2008

including witnessing violence in their communities or directly in their household or exposure to substance use.⁷

Youth Participatory Action Research

There are a variety of options for how to engage youth in participatory action research; these can be focused around specific elements of the process or the complete process from beginning to end. Youth involvement at the beginning of a project ensures the research questions center around what youth themselves consider to be the key issue to be addressed, and that the methods will be effective in finding out what they want to know, learn, or share.

Regardless of the specific role(s), youth involvement in the research process can provide a valuable learning opportunity for youth and the adults working in partnership with them. Examples of roles and involvement include advising, designing the study, fact checking, data collecting, reviewing, analyzing, and presenting results.

Topics

To be eligible for award, the proposed research must focus on issues faced by children and youth who have or have had an incarcerated parent, where youth are defined as those between the ages of 10 and 24 years old. Applicants are encouraged to develop a topic, research questions, and research methods in coordination with youth who have lived experience as a child of an incarcerated parent.

Selected projects may be primary or secondary research or a hybrid of the two. For example, a project could involve youth in:

- conducting, analyzing, and interpreting primary quantitative research (e.g, surveys) or qualitative research (e.g., focus groups, PhotoVoice)
- analyzing and interpreting data from an existing dataset
- conducting, analyzing, and interpreting primary research to supplement secondary data analysis of an existing data set

Both the adult and youth researchers should believe addressing the research questions would advance knowledge and understanding of children of incarcerated parents to inform practices, services, or policies that support them.

Criteria

Selected projects are *required* to:

- Demonstrate meaningful youth engagement in the research process;
- Focus on issues faced by children and youth who have or have had an incarcerated parent as defined by those with lived experience of such;
- Demonstrate substantive contribution to the field of COIP;
- Compensate youth fairly for their time;

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2013; Phillips & Gleeson, 2007

- Constitute new, original work, to be submitted to a professional conference, submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, and submitted as a research brief to be published on youth.gov/coip; and
- Be presented by youth and the lead researcher at a virtual meeting of federal staff, sponsored by the Interagency Working Group.

In addition to the review criteria below, other considerations may also factor into the selection of the awards. ASPE **will not provide** applicants with individual critiques of submitted proposals.

Review Criteria	Points
<p>Youth Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the plan for recruiting youth with lived experience is clearly articulated and feasible. • The extent to which the plan for meaningful engagement of youth with lived experience throughout the research process is clearly articulated. • The extent to which youth engagement in the development of the proposal and/or identifying research questions relevant to youth with lived experience is clearly articulated. 	20 points
<p>Contribution to the field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the final report of findings will contribute new knowledge to the field of COIP or address existing gaps in the literature. • The extent to which the final report and process broaden the understanding of the value of YPAR. 	15 points
<p>Research Topic and Question(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the research topic and research questions are clearly identified. • The accessibility and appropriateness of the research question(s) and the ability to produce meaningful results within the proposed timeline. 	15 points
<p>Data Source and Study Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the data source is appropriate for answering the research questions. • Representativeness of the sample to population data (if applicable). 	15 points
<p>Research Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manner and extent to which youth are engaged in research design and youth roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated; • The ability of the research design to answer the proposed research question(s). 	15 points

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appropriateness of the research design to provide meaningful results that could influence policy or contribute to academic knowledge. 	
<p>Experience with Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the researcher has experience partnering with youth. • The extent to which the researcher has experience partnering with populations that have had adverse experiences, such as children who have or have had an incarcerated parent. 	10 points
<p>Record of Investigator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the applicant demonstrates having the necessary experience and expertise to complete the research proposed within the project period. • Ability of the researcher to publish in the peer-reviewed journal, youth.gov website, and professional conference they target for submission in the proposal. • Ability of the researcher to promote the work through avenues that reach COIP and COIP-serving practitioners, such as social media. 	10 points
Other Considerations	

Eligibility and Restrictions

- All applicant award recipients must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- Subcontract award funds must be used for YPAR.

Expectations of Awardees

Awardees will be awarded a contract of up to \$50,000 based on the level of effort outlined in the submitted budget. The \$50,000 includes travel to a professional conference to present this work. Awardees may use no more than \$5,000 of the total award toward travel expenses.

In exchange, awardees will be expected to conduct high-quality research that addresses the topic and adheres to the methodology as specified in their proposals. Under the contracts, awardees will be obligated to provide the following deliverables:

- A project work plan that provides a schedule of deliverables within three weeks of award notification;
- Recognizing that youth may not be fully engaged in the application writing process under the timeline for submitting, researchers will submit a final set of research questions and description of the data source and research methods that have been finalized in partnership with the youth researchers;
- Brief check-in calls ongoing throughout the research period to discuss progress and any obstacles or issues encountered and proposed solutions;

- Copies of draft and final reports of findings. Reports should be no longer than 50 pages, including all tables and appendices (subject to ASPE and OJJDP approval);
- A draft and final 2-5 page written or visual research brief summarizing the YPAR process and findings of the research for youth.gov/coip (subject to ASPE and OJJDP approval);
- A presentation of the research at a virtual meeting of federal staff sponsored by the Interagency Working Group, including presentation materials (e.g., slide decks, handouts, etc.) (subject to ASPE and OJJDP approval);
- Submission of the research to a professional conference for presentation; and
- Submission of a manuscript summarizing the research to the proposed academic journal.

Awardees will submit drafts of both the report of findings and a research brief to ASPE and OJJDP for review. The report will provide an abstract as well as a full description of the data, methodology, findings, and discussion, suitable for submission to an academic journal or similar publication. The written or visual research brief will provide a 2-5 page summary of the research report geared toward a general audience and with a focus on practical implications. The research report and brief should be written in plain language. The draft and final paper and brief may go through several feedback and revision loops to ensure they are of the highest quality. The work plan will propose exact dates for each award, but at a minimum, all draft papers must be submitted to AIR by Friday, December 3, 2021 for revisions. Following approval, awardees will submit the research paper to an academic journal, the written or visual research brief to youth.gov for publication, and a presentation proposal of the YPAR project to a professional conference.

Mandatory Contractual Terms

By submitting a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal (RFP), the applicant, if selected for award, shall be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions of this RFP. Any exceptions to these terms and conditions shall be clearly identified in the applicant's response to this RFP. A proposal that takes exception to these terms may be rejected.

Federal Agency Requirements

For data collected and used for this RFP, the Awardee agrees to assume responsibility for protecting the confidentiality of personal identifying or sensitive data. Each employee of the Awardee to whom data may be made available or disclosed shall be notified in writing by the Awardee that such data may be disclosed only for a purpose and to the extent authorized herein.

The Awardee agrees not to release or disclose, verbally (e.g., via presentations, briefings) or in writing (e.g., calls for papers, conference abstracts/material submissions, articles, reports), information pertaining to the conduct or results or findings of the work (including data collected, analyses, draft or final papers, and reports) for the period of the subsequent subcontract without first notifying American Institutes for Research (AIR) in writing at least 30 days prior to the proposed disclosure or release date. During the period of the subcontract, the Awardee must provide notification (minimum 30 days prior to release) in writing, specifying: who or what is generating the request for information, when and how project information/results are proposed to

be released, and what information would be released. The Awardee agrees to coordinate major findings/report release/postings with AIR during the contract period.

TIMELINE OF KEY DATES AND DELIVERABLES

Task	Due Date
Deadline for questions	Tuesday, December 1, 2020
Deadline for proposal receipt	Thursday, December 10, 2020
Expected funding decisions	Friday, January 8, 2021
Initial project work plan	Friday January 29, 2021
Final Research Questions and Research Methods	Friday February 26, 2021
Webinars and conference calls with AIR and key federal staff	To be scheduled
Deadline for submission of draft manuscript/written product to AIR/ASPE	Friday, December 3, 2021
Deadline for submission of final manuscript/written product to AIR/ASPE	Friday, January 28, 2022
Presentation at Interagency Working Group convening	February 2022
Deadline for submission to professional publication, youth.gov, and conference	TBD before March 2022

Proposal Process

All proposals should include the following information:

- Corresponding author: Include the name, email address, affiliation, and contact information of the corresponding author.
- Authors: Include a list of all proposed authors and their affiliations, including youth.
- Proposed title of paper: Include a working title for the paper.
- Resumes or Curricula Vitae of authors that include academic degrees, current and past institutional affiliation(s), list of publications, and current and past grant/contracts awarded.
- Resumes or profiles of any youth with lived experience who will serve as researchers for the project, if identified at time of application.
- Applicant type (academic, graduate student/early career academic, financial education practitioner, policy maker, applied researcher).
- Structured Abstract: A 500 word (maximum) abstract that provides an overview of plans for recruiting and engaging youth as research partners, the proposed research, the research questions the study is intended to answer (or the process by which the research questions will be established), the methods that will be used to answer the research questions (or the process by which the methods will be established), and the value findings may have for research, policy, and/or practice related to COIP.
- Narrative Description: The narrative description must include: (1) process for recruiting and engaging youth as research partners; (2) anticipated roles and

responsibilities of youth and adults in the research project; (3) research question(s), including plans for finalizing research questions with youth; (4) contribution to the field of COIP and YPAR; (5) data sources and study population, including how youth will be engaged in identifying the data sources, whether or not the data are publicly available, whether the author currently has access to the data; the representativeness of the population, expected sample size, and any limitations of the data; (6) research design, including how youth will be engaged in finalizing the research design, limitations of the design, and analytic methods to be used, including the appropriateness of these methods; and (7) the anticipated ability of the final product (with all limitations taken into consideration) to inform COIP practices, services, or policy.

- A budget (in both narrative and spreadsheet format) and timeline for meeting project deadlines.
- Target publication venue and professional conference: Include the name of the first publication venue (journal) and conference to which the paper will be submitted.
- Publication Record: Include each adult author's past five (5) years' publications in peer-reviewed journals as either lead author or co-author, showing no more than the ten (10) most recent publications. If there are more than ten (10) publications in the past five (5) years, the applicant can include only the most relevant publications from those years. These should be formatted as (author(s), title, journal, publication date).
- Conference Record: Include each adult author's past five (5) years' conference presentations, showing no more than ten (10) most recent presentations. If there are more than ten (10) conference presentations in the past five (5) years, the applicant can include only the most relevant conference presentations from those years.
- Experience engaging and working with youth.
- Experience conducting youth participatory action research.
- Experience disseminating research to target audiences.
- Limitations: List any challenges the researcher may anticipate encountering in meeting the deadlines of this contract and potential solutions.
- A statement of agreement with the requirements for the project, including testifying that the proposed research will be original and new work, submitting a 3-5 page research brief to be published on youth.gov/coip and a full research paper to be submitted to a journal, responding to feedback from the review team on the 3-5 page research brief and the full research paper, submitting the research as a presentation to a professional conference and presenting at a virtual Interagency Working Group convening.

Proposal submissions are limited to 10 pages single-spaced (or 20 pages double-spaced) and using a 12-point font with 1-inch margins, excluding the abstract, budget, curriculum vitae, and publication and conference presentation records.

All proposals in response to this Call for Research Proposals must be submitted via electronic mail to Juliette-Marie deSousa at AIR at jdesousa@air.org no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on Thursday, December 10, 2020.

Award recipients will be notified by email Friday January 8, 2021.

Additional Information

Questions may be submitted via email to Juliette-Marie deSousa at AIR at jdesousa@air.org no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on Tuesday December 1, 2020.