

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For operation of Stephen Leonard Youth Center

Submitted By:

Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation/Legacy Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation submits this Request for Proposal to lease and operate programs and services at the Stephen Leonard Youth Center. The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation (DJMJF) is a pillar in the community that stands alongside children, families, and individuals facing obstacles, providing the resources, education, and support they need through innovative programs, community partnerships, and compassionate service.

The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation has years of experience with developing youth centered programs and managing community-based initiatives in Merced and other counties across California. DJMJF is prepared to operate the Stephen Leonard Youth Center responsibly and in partnership with the City of Merced to meet the community needs.

BOARD & LEADERSHIP

President & CEO - Dr. Jennifer M. Jones

Treasurer - Dr. Sonja Houston

Secretary - Joi Sumler

Director of Events & Youth Programs - Mark Henry II

POPULATION(S) TO BE SERVED

DJMJJF proposes a space that is youth driven with a high focus on community outreach and family access. Primary populations served will include youth (9-15) and young adults (16-25) residing in Merced, with an emphasis on underserved and at-risk youth seeking safe, supervised spaces outside of school hours.

Secondary population will include families and caregivers through intergenerational programming, as well as community members through workshops, events, and evidence-based activities. All our programs remain inclusive and adaptable for the always evolving community needs.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

DJMJF sees the Stephen Leonard Youth Center as a youth & family empowerment hub. We anticipate operating the Youth Center primarily during after school hours on weekdays, select weekday evenings, and weekends for family and community programming. Specific days and hours can be finalized in agreement with the City and adjusted over time based on community needs, staffing, and program capacity.

The center will provide programs and workshops that are geared toward youth development & educational support along with family services that focuses on health & wellness, financial literacy, and community building.

Some programs provided will consist of:

- After school tutoring (STEAM, literacy, financial literacy)
- Support for youth development & housing sustainability
- Mentorship programs (leadership & entrepreneurship)
- College and career readiness
- Family workshops

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The DJMJF has always been a place to provide a safe and welcoming environment whenever possible while strengthening connections between youth, families, and community resources. The Youth Center will not only allow The Foundation to continue that, but we will also be able to deepen our youth engagement by creating a designated space that's intentionally made to encourage emotional wellness, and healthy peer relationships.

Our goal is to create an environment that fuels creativity and expands access to mentorship, leadership, and workforce readiness opportunities.

EXPERIENCE OPERATING SIMILAR FACILITIES

Although the Stephen Leonard Center will be DJMJF's first youth center, The Foundation still brings relevant experience from currently operating 8 facilities across the state of California that provide youth-centered programming and initiatives that require operational oversight and accountability. This includes coordinating recurring youth programs and community events, managing staff and volunteers overseeing schedules and logistics, ensuring participant safety, and collaborating with public agencies and community partners.

DESCRIPTION OF FINANCIAL CAPACITY TO COVER FACILITY-RELATED COSTS

DJMJJF maintains diversified funding sources, including grants, sponsorships, individual donations and partnerships. The Foundation has experience managing operational budgets and planning for financial sustainability and is prepared to cover facility related costs associated with leasing and operating the Youth Center. We will divert some of the income related to other programs and services that we provide to the community, as well seek other funding opportunities/partnerships associated with expanding services.

The DJMJF plans to work transparently with the City of Merced to ensure fiscal responsibility and long-term stability.

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS

The DJMJF's years of work is informed by the consistent engagement with the community of Merced, the families, the youth and the community partners. The needs that seem to come up consistently are access to safe after school and evening spaces, enrichment and wellness opportunities, mentorship and family inclusive programming.

Operation of the Stephen Leonard Center would allow The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation to create a hub for the community that provides the necessary resources, while also bringing in other providers that have the capacity to educate on entrepreneurship and business development and/or other relevant community partners, addressing the needs in a consistent, accessible, and community centered location.

ANTICIPATED TENANT IMPROVEMENTS

At this time, the DJMJF anticipated only minor tenant improvements focused on safety, accessibility, and functionality. This may include cosmetic updates and furnishing equipment that is youth centered. However, any proposed updates would be discussed and approved in coordination with the city prior to implementation.

CLOSING

The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation appreciates the opportunity to submit this Request for Proposal and welcomes further discussion regarding the operation of the Stephen Leonard Youth Center. The Dr. Jennifer M. Jones Foundation looks forward to the possibility of partnering with the City of Merced to not only support the youth, but also the families across Merced.