

City of Merced Parks & Community Services

Stephen Leonard Youth Center – Proposal Evaluation Toolkit

Purpose & Process Overview

This tool is designed to help Subcommittee Members and Commissioners evaluate proposals using a structured forced-ranking approach. Instead of scoring proposals individually, each proposal is compared directly against others to determine overall strength, community impact, and long-term success. This ensures clear, defensible decisions aligned with City priorities outlined in the Request For Interest.

Part 1. Proposal Review- Each Proposal will be reviewed as a group with each Committee Member using the Review Guide prompts to inform their position.

Part 2. Forced Ranking- The first proposal will start out as number 1 followed by a direct comparison to the second. Each proposal afterward will be considered in relation to the rank of each prior until a final ranking of proposals is developed.

Part 3. Final Alignment Check- Before confirming complete ranking it is important to take a last check of the alignment of each proposal and their ranking. There may be times when proposers must back out and having confidence in the rest of the ranking will allow a confident replacement by the next highest ranked proposer.

Your role as Committee members is to provide your Commission the ranked candidates for consideration. Commission will deliberate and prepare their ranked top 3 proposals for City Councils consideration and formal final approval.

This Committee will present their ranking to the rest of the Commission on Monday, March 23rd 2026.

PART 1: REVIEW GUIDE (prompts to inform your ranking)

Use these prompts for discussion after each proposal is presented. These align directly with our RFI priorities.

Key Questions to Ask for EVERY Proposal

1. Community Impact & Alignment

- Does this serve youth and families in a meaningful way?
- Does it address real needs (education, wellness, workforce, etc.)?
- Will this create positive, visible outcomes in the community?

2. Program Strength & Clarity

- Is the program clearly defined (who, what, when, how)?
- Are hours, structure, and outcomes realistic?
- Does it feel organized and ready to launch?

3. Experience & Ability to Deliver

- Has this organization successfully done this before?
- Do they appear capable of managing a City facility?

4. Financial & Operational Stability

- Can they realistically sustain operations (utilities, staffing, programming)?
- Any red flags or risks?

5. Facility Activation & Fit

- Will this proposal activate the building consistently?
- Does it complement the park, school, and neighborhood?
- Will the space be well-utilized?

PART 2: LIVE FORCED RANKING PROCESS

Round 1 – Proposal #1

Automatically becomes: → Rank #1 (only option so far)

Round 2 – Proposal #2

Which proposal better serves the Youth Center overall?

- Proposal #1 stays #1
- Proposal #2 becomes #1

Round 3 – Proposal #3

Is Proposal #3 better than our current #1?

If YES → it becomes #1, shift others down

If NO → compare to #2

Is it better than #2?

Repeat for ALL Remaining Proposals

Start at the top and work down: better than #1? then #2, etc.

Final Rank

- 1 Merced Community College
- 2 Youth Leadership Institute
- 3 Dr. Jennifer M Jones Foundation
- 4 Community Commons Collaborative
- 5 God's Love Outreach Ministries (GLOM)
6. CalLinks

PART 3: FINAL ALIGNMENT CHECK (VERY IMPORTANT)

- Does our #1 proposal clearly deliver the strongest community impact and activation of this facility?
- Are we confident this ranking reflects long-term success, not just the best presentation?
- Is there anything we need to reconsider before finalizing?