

CITY OF MERCED • RFI RESPONSE

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# Stephen Leonard Youth Center

*A Proposal to Operate and Program the Facility*



**Submitted by CallINKS**

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*Submission: PDF emailed to [JensenC@cityofmerced.gov](mailto:JensenC@cityofmerced.gov)*

# About CalLINKS

## OUR MISSION

*To connect individuals and families to resources with equity and compassion — ensuring every person, regardless of background, has the opportunity to live their healthiest, happiest life.*

**2023**

Founded as a local nonprofit

**6**

Counties served across Central California

**\$10M+**

Awarded in 2025 for hubs, mobile units & programming

## Geographic Footprint

**Merced • Madera • Fresno • Monterey • San Benito • San Joaquin**

*Focus areas: whole-person support, youth & family stability, and strong cross-system linkages.*

# WHY MERCED NEEDS THIS NOW

Section 01 — Community Need & Equity Rationale

**~24%**

of Merced families  
live in poverty

**801**

violent crimes per  
100K residents

**30**

median age — a  
very young city

**#1**

need: safe after-  
school  
spaces for older  
youth

Merced youth and families face elevated barriers to behavioral health, education, and economic stability. The Stephen Leonard Youth Center operated by CalLINKS directly addresses these gaps through a bilingual, culturally responsive, peer-led model grounded in community trust.

# Community Need & Equity Rationale

*Sources: Merced County Department of Public Health Community Health Assessment 2023; Mercy Medical Center Merced Community Health Needs Assessment 2025.*

## Community Needs

- Youth behavioral health access gaps
- Family instability and resource navigation barriers
- High need for trusted, culturally responsive entry points
- Limited safe after-school options for older youth/TAY

## Equity-Centered Response

- Bilingual, peer-led, community-based workforce
- Warm handoffs to behavioral health and partners
- Removal of access barriers (transportation, scheduling)
- Programming during evenings/summer when families can attend

# Facility Overview & Proposed Use of Space

*A City-owned facility intended to expand access to community-serving programming for youth and families — flexible space suitable for group activities, learning support, meetings, and partner-delivered services.*

## How CalLINKS Will Activate the Space

### Daytime Community Hub

Navigation and support services for youth, families, and young parents.

### After-School Youth Center

Structured enrichment, mentorship, recreation, and restorative support.

### Seasonal Evening Block

Targeted groups for families and older youth whose schedules limit daytime use.

*Designed to activate the facility consistently, support positive youth development, and provide a welcoming environment for families.*

# Community Hub

8:00 AM — 2:00 PM

## Stability • Navigation • Family Support

*Care coordination, warm handoffs, and a welcoming front door for families seeking community resources.*

### Core Services

01

#### Care Coordination

Single point of contact for ECM enrolled members and walk-in families.

02

#### Resource Navigation

Warm handoffs to housing, food, behavioral health, and benefits.

03

#### Family Support

Parenting groups, case management, and document assistance.

04

#### Drop-in Wellness

Quiet space, light meals, hygiene supplies, and tech access.

### Who We Serve

ECM members

Justice-involved adults

Families in transition

Unhoused neighbors

Walk-in community

*Outcomes: stable connections to care, reduced ED utilization, and measurable progress on housing and benefits enrollment.*

# Warm Handoff Referral Process

1

## Triage

Immediate triage and navigation support during Community Hub hours.

2

## Schedule

Appointment scheduling and transportation problem-solving when needed.

3

## Connect

Warm handoff or onsite delivery through scheduled partner rotations.

4

## Follow-Up

Tracking to confirm service connection and reduce drop-off.

### Partner Coordination & Scheduling

Partner participation is formalized through letters of commitment. Onsite delivery and scheduling are coordinated through a shared program calendar to expand service capacity, strengthen program relevance, and ensure timely supports.

# After-School Youth Center

2:00 PM — 6:00 PM

## Enrichment • Mentorship • Recreation

*Structured after-school programming with restorative supports for youth and transition-age young adults.*

### Daily Programming

01

#### Academic Support

Tutoring, homework help, and college & career readiness coaching.

02

#### Mentorship

One-to-one and group mentoring led by trained, near-peer staff.

03

#### Recreation & Arts

Sports, music, culinary, and creative studios for self-expression.

04

#### Restorative Circles

Skill-building, conflict resolution, and behavioral health supports.

**80+**

Youth served weekly

**4 hrs**

Daily structured time

**1:8**

Mentor-to-youth ratio

**100%**

Snacks & transit support

# Evening Programing

6:00 PM — 9:00 PM · DAYLIGHT SAVINGS & SUMMER

## A Flexible, Seasonal Programming Window

*Activated when daylight allows — extending wellness, workforce, and peer-based supports into the evening.*

### Evening Programing

**01** **Young Parent Groups**

Peer support, child development, and parenting skills in a safe space.

**02** **Workforce Readiness**

Resume building, interview prep, and connections to local employers.

**03** **Wellness Education**

Nutrition, mental health, and harm-reduction workshops led by clinicians.

**04** **Restorative Supports**

Peer-led circles for justice-involved youth and TAY participants.

### When We Activate

<b>March → November</b> Daylight savings active — extended programming hours.	<b>Summer Intensive</b> Five evenings per week with workforce & enrichment focus.	<b>Holiday Pop-Ups</b> Seasonal events for families, alumni, and community partners.
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# EVERY ROOM. EVERY PURPOSE. EVERY DAY.



## FOYER *Welcome & Sign-In*

- Welcoming entrance
- Check-in & sign-in
- Safe & accessible



## COMMUNITY HUB *8 AM – 2 PM*

- Navigation & enrollment
- Family support
- Warm handoffs
- Partner services



## SERVICE COUNTER *Intake & Snacks*

- Intake & assessment
- Snack distribution
- Visitor management
- Resource information



## AFTER-SCHOOL CENTER *2 PM – 6 PM*

- Tutoring & mentorship
- Restorative circles
- Recreation & games
- Academic support



## LARGE PROGRAM ROOM *Recreation & Arts*

- Arts & crafts
- Reading & learning
- Group activities
- Safe space



## PRIVATE ROOM *1-on-1 Navigation*

- Confidential navigation
- Peer support
- Resource linkage
- Case management

# Sample Quarterly Report Template

Report Item	Summary (Fill In)
Quarter & Dates	<i>[e.g., Q1: July – September 2026]</i>
Days/Hours Open (by block)	<i>[Hub / After-School / Seasonal Evening]</i>
Unduplicated Participants	<i>[Youth: X; Families/Young Parents: X]</i>
Service Contacts	<i>[Hub: X; Youth Center: X; Partner: X]</i>
Program Activities Delivered	<i>[Tutoring; restorative circles; workshops; groups; lending library]</i>
Referrals / Warm Handoffs	<i>[Initiated: X; Completed connections: X]</i>
Partner Activation Summary	<i>[BH sessions; CCAH workshops; First 5 activities]</i>
Safety / Incidents (if any)	<i>[# incidents; actions taken; prevention improvements]</i>

# Core Partner Commitments

1

## County of Merced Behavioral Health

Youth services and prevention supports delivered onsite and through streamlined referral pathways.

2

## Central California Alliance for Health

Wellness education and prevention-oriented programming for youth and families.

3

## First 5 Merced County

Lending library and early learning supports for young parents and families.  
(Children Ages 0-5)

### Additional Partners

- Education partners (school districts and tutoring providers) to support academic success
- Workforce development partners to connect older youth/TAY to job readiness, training, and employment
- Faith-based and community organizations for outreach, family engagement, and volunteer support

# Safety, Security & Site Management

## Cameras

Security cameras for safety monitoring and incident review.

## Emergency Procedures

Documented protocols for medical, fire, and evacuation events; staff trained and drilled.

## Incident Reporting

Standardized reporting and follow-up process; restorative logs to track patterns over time.

## Visitor Management

Sign-in for visitors; partners scheduled through a shared program calendar.

## Site Readiness

Routine cleaning, supply checks, and basic maintenance coordination with the City.

## Insurance Coverage

Maintained consistent with City requirements throughout the term of operation.

# Sustainability Beyond Year 1

**Stable Baseline**

Predictable staffing and structured programming hours.

**Scalable Delivery**

Programming intensity adjusts based on participation levels.

**Diversified Revenue**

Braided streams reduce reliance on any single funding source.

**Partner-Activated**

Onsite partner services expand reach without expanding overhead.

**Outcomes-Driven**

Ongoing reporting strengthens future funding competitiveness.

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# THANK YOU

*We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further.*

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