

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

DIVERSION PROGRAM FUNDING

under the

Mississippi Juvenile Justice System Reform & Reinvestment Initiative (aka the Juvenile Justice Initiative)

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Department of Public Safety

Public Safety Planning

Office of Justice Programs

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Application Deadline Date: 09/12/2025

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

The Mississippi Juvenile Justice System Reform and Reinvestment Initiative (MJJSRRI) is a collaboration between the Division of Public Safety Planning Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State University (SSRC) with funding by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The overarching goal of this initiative is to develop and implement research-based policies, practices, and programming to improve outcomes for juvenile justice-involved youth, reduce youth contact with the juvenile justice system, and increase investment in community-based diversion, delinquency intervention, and alternatives to detention programs. Ultimately, the initiative hopes to demonstrate that the implementation of such programs will result in cost saving due to lower reoffending and incarceration (especially pre-trial detention of status and minor offenders) that can be reinvest into effective prevention and intervention programs.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to seek applications for **juvenile diversion programs**. A diversion program is an intervention strategy that redirects youth away from formal processing in the juvenile justice system, while still holding them accountable for their actions. Diversion programs can be more cost-effective than traditional court proceedings, as they reduce the burden on the court system and the need for lengthy legal processes. Diversion programs can reduce recidivism rates of youth who participate in them compared with youth who were formally processed by juvenile courts.

For more information about juvenile diversion programs visit:

<https://crimesolutions.ojp.gov/ratedpractices/juvenile-diversion-programs>

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Priority will be given to community-based organizations, including nonprofit and faith-based organizations, that include with their application a letter of support from the county youth court judge where the program will be located.

Awards will be in the amount of \$25,000 to 30,000, however, a larger amount will be considered if a justification is provided by the applicant.

➤ **This is a cost reimbursement program.**

- Because MJJSRRI awards are reimbursement-based, any applicant requesting \$10,000 or more must include a copy of their most recent independent audit or financial review, completed within the last fiscal year. This documentation must demonstrate the organization's ability to cash flow project expenses until reimbursement is received. **Applications missing this documentation will be considered incomplete.**
- Although there is no federally mandated amount that triggers an audit requirement, pass-through entities are responsible under 2 CFR 200.332 to evaluate subrecipient risk before making an award. A \$10,000 threshold for requiring an audit or financial review is a reasonable internal control measure to ensure applicants have sufficient financial capacity to manage a reimbursement-based grant. It also provides documentation to support your risk

assessment process and helps prevent issues with cash flow that might delay program implementation.

- All applicants must be financially capable of supporting programmatic expenses until reimbursed.
- Funds may not be used to replace eliminated or reduced funds from other sources.
- **Match:** There is no match requirement for the first 12 months of funding. Subsequent funding may be available for another six to eight months for qualifying grantees AND will require a 10% match.
- **Evaluation:** All MJJSRRI grantees will be expected to participate in a program evaluation that will be conducted by Dr. Angela Robertson and Dr. Sheena Gardner, Mississippi State University. Grantees will be expected to collect and report demographic information (sex, race/ethnicity, and age) on all youth enrolled in their program and to collect mandatory OJJDP performance measures (see <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding/grant-performance-measurement/legacy-performance-measures/titleii/pa/ff14/diversion/pdf>.)

SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROCEDURES

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Page setup:

- Paper size: Standard US 8 ½" x 11
- Margin: at least one-half (0.5) inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right)
- Each page should be numbered sequentially

Font:

- Font type: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, Times New Roman, or Georgia
- Font color: black
- Font size: 11 points or larger

APPLICATION REVIEW

An applicant review committee will be convened by SSRC and will consist of members of the Mississippi Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee-State Advisory Group (MSJJAC-SAG) and other juvenile justice stakeholders, including individuals who provide programming and services to justice involved youth (“peers”). Each application will be reviewed by three reviewers. Reviewers must disclose any conflicts of interest that could bias their opinions and must recuse themselves from reviewing specific applications if the potential for bias exists.

Reviewers are expected to write a critique of the application and assign a score between zero and 100. SSRC will provide OJP with a summary of the review process/discussions, application average scores, and recommendations for which applications should be funded. OJP will make award decisions by November 28, 2025.

Organizations that were not selected will receive a letter stating why they were not selected. Organizations selected will receive notification, conditions of the award, and a contract. Organizations selected for grants must respond to OJP their intentions to accept the grant within

15 days of notification.

All funded projects will be expected to start in January 2026. By the second week of January 2026, SSRC will establish an evaluation MOU with each grantee and train on evaluation/performance measures data collection and reporting procedures.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION & DEADLINE

The application must be submitted in Word or PDF (preferred) format. The properly executed application can include either a wet or digital signature from the Authorized Official (e.g., Executive Director). The application must be EMAILED no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 5, 2025 with the following subject line: “MJJSRRI Diversion RFP – [Your Organization Name]”. Email the completed application to Micheal Hall at mhall@dps.ms.gov and copy Dr. Angela Robertson at angela.robertson@ssrc.msstate.edu