



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB

A REQUEST FOR INTEREST

Selecting Jurisdictions as “Innovation Sites” for Implementing a New Developmental Framework for Emerging Adult Justice

From the Emerging Adult Justice Project at Columbia University’s Justice Lab

#DevelopJustice

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Overview

Through this request for interest, state, county, and municipal government entities and non-profit organizations may apply to become one of three sites (“Innovation Sites”) to implement and assess the functionality of the Developmental Framework (“the Framework”) specifically for emerging adults with adult criminal legal system involvement. Over the course of 2.5 years, each of the selected jurisdictions will implement the Framework at a particular point in the criminal legal system of its own choosing, such as pre-arraignment diversion, defense, probation, jail, prison or re-entry. Representatives from the Innovation Sites will participate in Emerging Adult Justice Developmental Framework Steering Committee (“Steering Committee”) meetings, both in-person and virtual convenings, during which they will report back on implementation and help adapt, edit, and improve the Framework to maximize its usefulness to local and national practice.

The Columbia University Justice Lab’s Emerging Adult Justice Project (“EAJP”) and the Annie E. Casey Foundation (“Casey Foundation”) will partner with sites by providing expertise in the burgeoning field of emerging adult justice, sharing promising practices, and supporting and fostering learning among all the sites. The Casey Foundation will provide funding to the selected sites for \$50,000 for the first year (and further funding to be determined). We thank the Casey Foundation for their funding and support but acknowledge that any findings and conclusions presented are from the Columbia University Justice Lab alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.

Background

Emerging adults (people ages 18-25)¹ are in a distinct life stage that demands developmentally appropriate justice responses. Reforming systems, including the criminal legal system, to better meet emerging adults where they are at can be best accomplished through implementation of a thorough, thoughtful developmental Framework. Because no existing Framework focuses *specifically* on emerging adults involved in the justice system, the Emerging Adult Justice Developmental Framework has been created by a Steering Committee of experts led by the EAJP and the Casey Foundation to provide a foundation for justice reform for emerging adults ages 18-25.

During emerging adulthood, the period from approximately age 18 to 25, people undergo a process of transitioning from dependent adolescence to increasingly independent adulthood. In some ways, emerging adults share many of the characteristics of their younger peers; for example, they are highly susceptible to peer influence, especially in emotionally charged situations, and they take risks more readily than fully grown adults. These developmental attributes can be positive, leading emerging adults to start movements and trek down new life paths. As emerging adults experiment with and exercise independence, they gain experience needed to successfully transition into adulthood. Emerging adulthood is often referred to as “an age of opportunity,” as most people who are given opportunities to experiment and grow will mature and desist from criminal behavior by their mid-twenties.²

But this transition to adulthood has been delayed in recent years due to societal factors beyond people’s control,³ and has been found to be delayed further for emerging adults who have experienced trauma, which is common among emerging adults in the criminal legal system. Most emerging adults in the criminal legal system have been victims of

¹ The term “emerging adult” was first coined in 2000 by psychologist Jeffrey Arnett and defines the transition from a youth who is dependent on parents or guardians for supervision, guidance, and emotional and financial support, into a fully mature, independent adult who engages as a productive and healthy member of society. For more information, see Arnett, J. J. (2004). “Emerging adulthood: the winding road from the late teens through the twenties.” New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Other terms sometimes used to describe this population are “young adults” or “transition-age youth.”

² Loeber, R., Farrington, D., and Petechuk, D. (July 2013). “From Juvenile Delinquency to Young Adult Offending.” Study Group on the Transitions Between Juvenile Delinquency and Adult Crime. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/242931.pdf>

³ Schiraldi, V., Western, B., & Bradner, K. (2015). “Community-Based Responses to Justice-Involved Young Adults.” New Thinking in Community Corrections Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. NCJ 248900. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/248900.pdf>

violence,⁴ and often suffer from underlying mental, behavioral, and substance use disorders.⁵

Meanwhile, the adult criminal legal system fails to recognize the developmental needs of this population and generally treats emerging adults in the same manner as older, fully mature adults. Except for Vermont, all states automatically prosecute and sentence people accused of lawbreaking at age 18 (or even younger) in the adult criminal legal system where they receive little, if any, developmentally appropriate services to support their healthy transition to adulthood. Furthermore, the justice system interferes with and harms the development of youth.⁶

Emerging adults are over-represented throughout the criminal legal system,⁷ have the highest recidivism rates,⁸ and experience the most extreme racial and ethnic disparities, particularly at the system's most punitive stages (i.e., incarceration).⁹

Within a growing number of youth-serving systems, developmental frameworks are being used to try to orient more effective practices towards asset-focused engagement with young people. For example, Positive Youth Development (PYD), in which the EAJ Developmental Framework is rooted, "is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support

⁴ Velazquez, T. (May 2013). "Young Adult Justice: A New Frontier Worth Exploring." *The Chronicle of Social Change*. Available at: <http://chronicleofsocialchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Young-Adult-Justice-FI-NAL-revised.pdf>. The study found that emerging adults ages 18-20 experience violent victimization at more than twice the rate of the general population, and those with a history of foster care are 10 times more likely to report being arrested when they were 18 or 19 years old.

⁵ Siringil Perker, S., and Chester, L. (January 2018). "Combating the Crisis: Using Justice Reform to Address the Drug Epidemic among Emerging Adults." Emerging Adult Justice Research Series, Justice Lab, Columbia University. Available at: <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/combating-the-crisis>.

⁶ Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community. (2021). "Key Elements of Specialized Courts for Emerging Adults." New York, New York: Columbia Justice Lab, Emerging Adult Justice. Retrieved from https://www.eajjustice.org/library/https://issuu.com/s121m131/docs/eajlc_specializedcourts-pages.

⁷ Pirijs, R. (2019). "The Legislative Primer Series for Front-End Justice: Young Adults in the Justice System." Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from: https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/cj/front_end_young-adults_v04_web.pdf.

⁸ Perker, S. S., Chester, L. E., & Schiraldi, V. (2019). "Emerging Adult Justice in Illinois: Towards an Age-Appropriate Approach." New York, NY: Columbia Justice Lab, Emerging Adult Justice. Retrieved from <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/EAJ%20in%20Illinois%20Report%20Final.pdf>; Schiraldi, Western, & Bradner, *supra* note 3; Pirijs, R. (2019). "The Legislative Primer Series on Front-End Justice: Young Adults in the Justice System." Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/cj/front_end_young-adults_v04_web.pdf.

⁹ *Id.*

needed to build on their leadership strengths.”¹⁰ While PYD provides a model for engaging with young people within their circles of care, and has increasingly been applied within juvenile justice systems (often referred to as Positive Youth Justice),¹¹ it does not address some of the particular developmental needs and assets of emerging adults and is ill-suited for successful application in the adult criminal legal system.

The EAJP and the Casey Foundation therefore set out to develop a Framework akin to PYD but specifically for emerging adults and applicable within criminal legal system settings. A Steering Committee of researchers, practitioners, advocates, and emerging adults who were formerly justice-involved was formed and met four times over 2021 to discuss what they believed needed to be included and/or enhanced in a Framework designed for emerging adults. As a result, a new, multi-tiered draft of the EAJ Developmental Framework was created, a description of which is available on the EAJP website (<https://www.eajjustice.org/ea-developmental-framework>). The goal of this project is to explore how the elements of the Framework can be successfully implemented with emerging adults, age 18-25, who are currently referred to adult criminal court.

Who Should Apply?

The EAJP welcomes applications from any state, county, or municipal government entity, or any non-profit community organization including those applying in partnership with a government entity. The goal is to create a team of key stakeholders (e.g., emerging adults with system involvement, parents, guardians, mentors, community organizations, workforce development, child welfare, education, judiciary, probation/community corrections, defenders, prosecutors, corrections, etc.). The team’s focus can be at any stage of the criminal legal process (e.g., on the front-end, such as post-arrest diversion, the middle process, such a prosecution/defense, or the back-end, such as re-entry), provided that the target population of the proposed work is emerging adults (ages 18-25) who are currently being referred to, charged, or convicted in the adult criminal legal system.

¹⁰ Moore, Kristin Anderson. (2016). “Why positive youth development works.” Child Trends. <https://www.childtrends.org/blog/why-positive-youth-development-works>.

¹¹ Butts, Jeffrey A., Gordon Bazemore, & Aundra Saa Meroe (2010). “Positive Youth Justice--Framing Justice Interventions Using the Concepts of Positive Youth Development.” Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.

Benefits of Participation

The EAJP and the Developmental Framework Steering Committee will provide guidance and share expertise with jurisdictions implementing the Framework and will support emerging adults who have been involved in the criminal legal system to collaborate, share their expertise, and develop and shape the ongoing work at the sites. The Casey Foundation will provide financial and other support to the sites. Implementing the Framework will put the selected jurisdictions at the forefront of promising practices and a burgeoning field.

A. Implement the Developmental Framework

Jurisdictions that accept invitations to become Innovation Sites can expect the following benefits related to implementing the Developmental Framework:

- Support and guidance from the Emerging Adult Justice Project, including:
 - Preparing for the project (meeting with leadership and on-the-ground staff, presenting for stakeholders, and sharing information that provides a foundation of knowledge to embark on the project, etc.);
 - Attending and participating in meetings needed to obtain buy-in from key stakeholders;
 - Providing honoraria to participating emerging adults with justice experience for their support of the implementation of the Developmental Framework at the sites and their role as members of the Steering Committee;
 - Guiding data collection, as needed, to monitor and assess implementation and outcomes;
 - Hosting and presenting trainings on key issues, as needed, and assisting in the development and design of ongoing or focused trainings with other experts to educate key staff and others;
 - Inviting national experts to share information relevant to planning and implementation at the sites;
 - Reimbursing travel costs (airfare and lodging) for two representatives from each site to attend annual in-person convenings of the Steering Committee; and
 - Acting as an expert thought-partner with the site and assisting in problem solving as needed.
- Support and guidance from the Casey Foundation, including:
 - Providing funding to each of the selected sites to help support the implementation of the Developmental Framework. Funding for the first year will be \$50,000 for each site, with further funding to be determined;

- Connecting selected sites to individuals and organizations with expertise that can inform and support implementation efforts; and
- Guiding sites in using promising and best practices to support emerging adults with justice-system experience who participate in this work at the sites and/or serve as members of the Steering Committee.

B. Participate in the Steering Committee to Share and Elevate New Knowledge

- a. Receiving new information from the field on an ongoing basis and from the other sites testing the Developmental Framework;
- b. Receiving evaluation and research assistance from the EAJP, as funding allows, to ensure that the process and outcomes of implementation are rigorously monitored and assessed;
- c. Receiving information, guidance, and feedback from Steering Committee meetings to support ongoing work; and
- d. Receiving the expertise of individual Steering Committee members on an ad hoc basis for specific issues as they arise.

Expectations

Jurisdictions that accept invitations to be Innovation Sites will be expected to do the following:

A. Implement the Developmental Framework

- a. Innovation Sites will implement the Developmental Framework in at least one aspect of their criminal legal system (i.e., pre-arraignment diversion, defense, probation, jail, prison, or re-entry), as faithfully and fully as possible.

B. Supply Feedback

- e. The participating jurisdictions will be asked to report back on the implementation experience.
- f. Each site will designate two (2) members to join and participate in the Emerging Adult Justice Developmental Framework Steering Committee in meetings throughout the year. Most of these Steering Committee meetings will be held virtually, but if/when the pandemic allows, one meeting a year will be in person with travel expenses for participating staff members—airfare and hotel—reimbursed by the Emerging Adult Justice Project.
- g. This feedback process will help guide the drafting of the final Developmental Framework. Information from the sites will be incorporated into the Developmental Framework, helping to inform and drive changes and refinements.

Application Instructions

Optional Opportunity for Early Feedback

Prospective applicants are invited and encouraged to submit a one-page (double-sided, single-spaced PDF) expression of interest **by September 14, 2022** for feedback by members of the EAJP. Prospective applicants who submit this document will be contacted by the EAJP between September 19 and October 25 to discuss their proposals and provide guidance for the full proposal.

The two-pager should include the below requested information in the following order:

1. Date
2. Jurisdiction
3. Lead Applicant Entity
4. Point of Contact
5. Point of Contact Email
6. Brief description of the applicant(s)
7. List of expected partner(s)/collaborator(s)
8. Description of the area(s) or point(s) of contact of the justice system at which you intend to implement the Framework

Early expressions of interest should be submitted to eajp@columbia.edu.

Full Proposal

The full proposal is available on the EAJP's website at <https://www.eajjustice.org/rfi-application> and is due on November 16, 2022.

Important Dates

ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
Virtual webinar hosted by the EAJ Project that will describe the opportunity and provide information to potential applicants	Tuesday, 7/26/22, 2-3 pm EST
Due date for submission of one-page (double-sided) overview by prospective applicants (encouraged but not required)	9/14/22
Initial feedback/conversations with applicants	9/19/22 – 10/25/22
Due date for submission of RFI applications	11/16/22 (midnight EST)
Notifications of decision sent to applicants	1/14/23
Preparation (introductions, information sharing, etc.)	1/14/23 – 2/28/23
Work at sites officially begins	3/1/23

Rubric for Evaluating Full Proposals

	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Quality of Project</u>					
Project has a compelling vision for better serving emerging adults in the criminal legal system in a developmentally appropriate fashion.					
Project has a compelling proposed model that is consistent with basic elements of the current Framework (overview of the Framework available on EAJP’s website at https://www.eajjustice.org/overview-dev-framework).					
Project leverages existing initiatives or partnerships in a compelling way.					
Project is feasible to launch and evaluate (preliminarily) within 2 years of start.					
Project has clear, measurable goals and outcomes.					
Site has access to and has considered how to acquire data to measure progress and success.					
Project has the potential to reduce racial and ethnic inequities.					
Project has potential to reduce other inequities or to better serve LGBTQIA, immigrant, or other populations who have been historically poorly served.					
TOTAL – Project Quality					
<u>Readiness</u>					
Stakeholders understand the need for and are committed to embracing more developmentally appropriate responses to emerging adults.					

Stakeholders have a general understanding of how using the Framework could change current practice or policies.					
Stakeholders are committed to changing current practices or policies to support the initiative.					
Stakeholders have experience implementing reforms and therefore have a general understanding of the commitment of time and resources involved in changing practices and policies.					
Stakeholders have already engaged and secured commitments from other stakeholders who are necessary for project success, including community groups.					
Stakeholders understand and have coherent plans to address potential political or other barriers to implementing Framework in their jurisdiction.					
Stakeholders understand and are committed to the need to be alert to and address equity issues in the design and implementation of the project.					
Stakeholders have clear plans for how to sustain the work after the first 2.5 years.					
Stakeholders are committed to working with the Justice Lab throughout the project, including participating in Steering Committee activities and convenings.					
TOTAL – Readiness					
Commitment to <u>engaging and collaborating with emerging adults</u>					
Stakeholders have clear plans for how they would involve emerging adults with current justice system experience (or those formerly involved as emerging adults) in the design and implementation of the project.					

Stakeholders have experience with engaging emerging adults in other projects.					
Site plans to provide financial compensation and/or other support for young people participating in the project.					
Site has mechanism(s) to ensure emerging adults affiliated with the site work are connected to a group or mentor who will support their involvement, provide emotional assistance, and give direct guidance and feedback, as needed.					
TOTAL – Commitment to Engaging Emerging Adults					
<u>Site has engaged diverse state/municipal and/or community stakeholders</u>					
Site has engaged child welfare, workforce development, mental health or other state and local agencies in development of the proposal.					
Site already has strong working relationships with child welfare, workforce development, mental health, and/or other state and local agencies that could support implementation of the Developmental Framework.					
Site has engaged community-based organizations or community allies in developing its proposal.					
Site already has strong working relationships with community-based organizations or community allies.					
TOTAL – Diversity of Stakeholders					
<u>Other criteria</u>					
Selection of this site would support the goal of having diversity amongst sites (e.g., geographic coverage, focus on different aspects of the criminal legal system, etc.)					

<p>Site aims to work with a population of emerging adults that is under-represented in other justice reform initiatives (e.g., youth in rural areas) or over-represented in their involvement in the criminal legal system.</p>					
<p>Site demonstrates interest and commitment to work on a plan to sustain the programming and policy changes undertaken during the implementation of the Developmental Framework.</p>					
<p>TOTAL – Other</p>					