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SPCC

THE NEW YORK
SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY
TO CHILDREN



Athletes are Children First:

A Pilot Project for Keeping Children Safe in the Sport of Gymnastics

A Request for Proposals from New York State Child Advocacy Centers and Child Welfare Agencies

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**ATHLETES ARE CHILDREN FIRST:
A PILOT PROJECT FOR KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN THE SPORT OF GYMNASTICS**

**A Request for Proposals from New York State Child Advocacy Centers
and Child Welfare Agencies**

Application Deadline: 5pm ET on Friday, February 28, 2020

Applicants are encouraged to print a copy of this funding guideline, fully review it and use it to assist them in the completion of their applications. Applicants will be permitted to submit questions about this Request for Proposals (RFP) for two weeks after the RFP announcement on Monday, January 6, 2020. Questions can be sent by email to childrenfirst@nyspcc.org. All questions will be due by Thursday, January 16, 2020. The NYSPCC will create and send out an addendum to this RFP with answers to the most frequently asked questions.

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Basic Funding Announcement Guidelines

Funding Announcement Title: **Athletes are *Children First*: A Pilot Project for Keeping Children Safe in the Sport Of Gymnastics**

Submission Requirements for Applications:

- **Scoring** – All completed applications will be competitively reviewed and scored. Applications will be scored on the basis of the applicant’s adherence to the Funding Announcement Guidelines and timely submission.
- **Due Date** – Please submit all applications through email or mail no later than **5pm ET on Friday, February 28, 2020**.
- **Contact** – Questions and applications can be submitted via email to childrenfirst@nyspcc.org or mailed to:

Attention: Jessica Trudeau
Assistant Director of the Training Institute

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
161 Williams Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Background

The Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal sent shock waves through the sports community and the United States. Following the scandal, the Protecting Young Victims of Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 was passed. This Act designated adults associated with an Olympic governing body or amateur sports organization as mandated reporters who are required to report allegations of child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to local authorities and the U.S. Center for SafeSport. It also requires that sports organizations offer and provide consistent training to adult staff and volunteers who are in contact with minor athletes, as well as the athletes themselves.

The Athlete Assistance Fund (AAF) has sought ways to provide guidance and support for gymnastics clubs on how to implement these policies and procedures to meet best practice child safety standards. AAF, an independent, not-for-profit, is dedicated to making the sport of gymnastics safer through prevention education and providing counseling services for current or former gymnasts who have suffered sexual abuse within the sport. Over the last year, AAF partnered with The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) to gather crucial information to better understand the complexities and risk of sexual abuse in gymnastics. The NYSPCC is the first child protection agency in the world and a leading organization in the prevention of child sexual abuse. The NYSPCC has met with many stakeholders in the sport of gymnastics who expressed that they did not feel prepared to implement the new policies and procedures due to their lack of experience with the complexities of the subject. They believe a local expert who could provide training and advice would be beneficial if an incident occurred.

Based on these findings, AAF and The NYSPCC developed a pilot project for New York State that would inform a nation-wide child sexual abuse prevention model, the *Children First* Initiative. This initiative will enlist Child Advocacy Centers and child welfare agencies who are uniquely positioned as experts on child abuse and protection to support gymnastics clubs in their efforts to protect gymnasts from abuse. This initiative will utilize child sexual abuse prevention trainings for gymnastics club staff developed by The NYSPCC specific to the sport. The trainings were developed with input from club owners, coaches and staff and further refined through feedback from trainings conducted at two gymnastics regional congresses and one national congress in 2019.

RFP Overview

This Request for Proposals (RFP) to Child Advocacy Centers and child welfare agencies across New York State will select five agencies to connect with, educate and provide ongoing support to gymnastics clubs in their communities. Each participating agency will receive free training and technical assistance from The NYSPCC. Two to three staff from each agency will become trained as NYSPCC-certified Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Trainers using The NYSPCC's training curriculum, *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education for Club Owners, Coaches and Staff*, and *Facilitator's Guide*, as well as The NYSPCC/AAF *Safe Gym Handbook* outlining best practice policies for gymnastics clubs. These agencies will be funded for one year to provide training to gymnastics club staff and support clubs in implementing best practices in child protection. The NYSPCC will oversee the RFP process and the pilot project implementation.

Keeping children safe is a community responsibility. Through this connection, gymnastics clubs can provide the needed education and training to their staff and access local, ongoing child protection support and resources. Participating child welfare agencies will establish a new funding stream and the ability to promote their work in the community. Participating agencies will also serve as a key player in eradicating child sexual abuse in the sport of gymnastics. This project will inform the feasibility and process of scaling this child sexual abuse prevention model in gymnastics clubs nationally and position the sport to serve as a role model on best practices for education and prevention of child sexual abuse in all fields of sport.

Funding Availability

The NYSPCC will select five Child Advocacy Centers or child welfare agencies situated geographically throughout New York State. Participating agencies may earn up to \$10,000 for completing trainings (\$300 per training) at gymnastics clubs over a 12-month period. AAF will fully fund this pilot project and trainings will be offered to gymnastics clubs free of charge. The contract period is July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Successful applicants will collaborate and work in partnership with The NYSPCC to implement the pilot project. Awards will include funding for travel to a mandatory one-day, in-person launch training at The NYSPCC offices in New York City on Friday, May 15, 2020. Participating agencies will be reimbursed for travel costs to this training based on government per diem rates.

Project Dates

The RFP announcement will be made on Monday, January 6, 2020. Interested applicants can submit questions about the RFP via email until Thursday, January 16, 2020. Completed applications from Child Advocacy Centers and child welfare agencies will be due by 5pm ET on Friday, February 28, 2020. Successful applicants will be notified of their awards by March 15, 2020. Participating agencies will be required to attend a mandatory one-day, in-person launch training at The NYSPCC offices in New York City on Friday, May 15, 2020. The start of the 12-month period where agencies will facilitate trainings at gymnastics clubs will begin July 1, 2020.

Please see the Pilot Project Descriptions and Activities and Implementation sections for more details on the proposed pilot timelines.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be an NCA-accredited Child Advocacy Center or child welfare agency approved as a provider of New York State's child abuse mandated reporter training or with similar experience. Participation in the pilot project of the *Children First* Initiative will be limited to agencies that are able to provide trainings and support to gymnastics clubs in the following geographic regions in New York State:

1. Western NY and West Finger Lakes
2. East Finger Lakes, Central NY and Southern Tier

3. Capitol District
4. Mid-Hudson
5. Long Island

The NYSPCC will provide trainings and support for gymnastics clubs in the New York City metro area.

Project Goals, Objectives and Anticipated Impact

The overall goal of the pilot project is to prevent child sexual abuse in the sport of gymnastics and keep gymnasts safe. This will be accomplished by connecting state and local child protection experts with gymnastics clubs to educate club staff on child sexual abuse prevention and reporting and provide ongoing support and resources. The NYSPCC will provide training and technical assistance to participating agencies, monitor the quality and fidelity of project activities and evaluate the project's impact. This pilot project has the potential for reaching hundreds of gymnastics club staff with in-person trainings in New York State.

Pilot Project Description and Activities

Through this collaborative agreement, The NYSPCC will work with each participating agency to accomplish the steps outlined below over the course of the project.

1) Launch Training

Participating agencies will select two to three staff to become NYSPCC-certified Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Trainers. The selected staff will be required to attend a one-day, in-person launch training at The NYSPCC offices in New York City on Friday, May 15, 2020. At this launch training, participating agency staff will be trained on and receive The NYSPCC's training curriculum, *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum for Club Owners, Coaches and Staff*, the *Facilitator's Guide* and The NYSPCC/AAF *Safe Gym Handbook*.

- *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education for Club Owners, Coaches and Staff*
This 90-minute, in-person, interactive training will dispel myths and deliver general preventive education about child sexual abuse. Club owners, coaches and staff will receive the tools and knowledge they need to keep the gymnasts entrusted in their care safe and their clubs and employees safeguarded. Topics specific to child sexual abuse in sport will be discussed, including: appropriate gymnast-coach boundaries; recognizing signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse; and why gymnasts may be at increased risk for experiencing abuse. Creating a gym culture to promote child wellbeing and the use of developmentally appropriate coaching techniques will be covered.
- *Facilitator's Guide*
This guide will support staff from participating agencies to facilitate The NYSPCC's *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education for Club Owners, Coaches and Staff* within

gymnastics clubs. The guide will include: an overview of child sexual abuse; logistics of training delivery; facilitator tips; presentation slides and speaker notes.

- *Safe Gym Handbook*

This comprehensive, user-friendly handbook supports club owners and coaches to implement effective prevention policies and reporting practices in their clubs. It covers requirements of the federal law, the U.S. Center for SafeSport and USA Gymnastics, along with child welfare and safety best practices. The handbook provides recommendations on issues such as: hiring and supervising staff; creating safe physical environments; developing safety policies; educating and training staff, gymnasts and parents; and implementing reporting practices.

Additional topics covered at the May 15, 2020 launch training will include:

- Background of the pilot project
- How to conduct outreach and promote the trainings to gymnastics clubs
- Expectations of participating agencies regarding project compliance
- How to track and report data, and invoice AAF for trainings and travel reimbursements

Upon completion of the launch training, participating agencies will submit invoices and documentation to The NYSPCC who will confirm attendance and forward invoices to AAF for reimbursement. AAF will send reimbursement checks directly to each agency.

2) **Outreach and Promotion**

Participating agencies will be provided with a list of gymnastics clubs and contact information in their region, as well as customized promotional materials (e.g. introductory letter and flyer) to support publicizing the pilot project to gymnastics clubs. Participating agencies will be responsible for conducting outreach to every gymnastics club in their region to develop relationships with and promote the trainings. Gymnastics clubs will also receive promotional material from The NYSPCC and AAF through direct outreach and at the New York State Championships in spring 2020, and the USA Gymnastics National Championships and Olympic Trials in June 2020.

3) **Facilitate Trainings and Training Follow-Up**

Participating agencies will travel to and facilitate trainings in gymnastics clubs from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Although the number of gymnastics clubs vary by geographic region, there are an average of 20 clubs per region. Evening and weekend hours may be required to accommodate gymnastic club's schedules. Agencies will receive \$300 for each completed training, up to \$10,000, after submission of required documentation and invoicing.

Agencies will participate in follow-up phone calls with The NYSPCC staff after completing the first three trainings to answer questions, trouble-shoot any issues and reinforce key training

concepts. The NYSPCC will provide monthly highlight emails, occasional webinars or conference calls, and additional technical assistance as needed.

4) Data Collection and Invoicing

Participating agencies will be responsible for collecting and submitting data and paperwork to The NYSPCC on a monthly basis (due on the 10th of each month).

Agencies must submit the following data for each training completed:

- Date of training
- Gymnastics club name and location
- Club owner name and contact information
- Number of attendees (% of total club staff)
- Completed fidelity form
- Completed attendee satisfaction surveys
- Invoice (\$300 per training)

The NYSPCC will provide each agency with the needed data collection tools and invoice template. The NYSPCC will ensure required documentation is submitted by the participating agencies and then forward the invoices to AAF. AAF will then distribute the funds directly to the agencies each month.

5) Final Evaluation

Participating agencies will complete a final project assessment and phone call with The NYSPCC staff in July 2021 to discuss barriers and successes to implementation and the impact of the project. The NYSPCC will also conduct assessments and phone calls with participating gymnastics club owners.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, The NYSPCC will analyze the data provided by each participating agency and gymnastics club and complete a comprehensive report on the feasibility, process and effectiveness of rolling out this pilot project in New York State. This report will make recommendations for how to scale this model nationally.

Implementation

The implementation schedule of the pilot project components is depicted in the table below.

DATE	PILOT PROJECT COMPONENTS
January 6, 2020	The NYSPCC releases the RFP; question period begins
January 16, 2020	Question period ends; addendum distributed
February 28, 2020	Application deadline
March 15, 2020	Selected applicants notified
May 15, 2020	Launch training at The NYSPCC in New York City

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	Participating agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach and promotion of trainings to gymnastics clubs • Facilitate trainings at gymnastics clubs • Submit paperwork and invoices monthly • Paid monthly by AAF
July, 2021	Final assessment and phone call

Research and Evaluation

The overall success of the pilot project will be evaluated through data and feedback received from participating agencies and gymnastics clubs to assess the interest, satisfaction, feasibility and impact of this model. The NYSPCC will provide the participating agencies with the following data collection forms:

- **Training Attendance Form:** record training date, gymnastics club name and location, club owner name and contact information, attendee names and titles, and percentage of total club staff who attended each training
- **Fidelity Form:** record fidelity to training model
- **Participant Satisfaction Survey:** record training participant satisfaction with training

The NYSPCC will also conduct follow-up assessments and phone calls with participating agencies and gymnastics clubs at the end of the project.

Application and Scoring

The NYSPCC will use the following criteria in its determination of which five agencies should receive the awards. Only completed applications will be reviewed.

1. Applicant Overview (Maximum 12 Points)

Applicants must provide the following information:

- Provide an overview of the agency, including the number of staff. Share if the agency is an NCA-accredited Child Advocacy Center, or a child welfare agency that is approved as a provider of New York State’s child abuse mandated reporter training or with similar experience.
- Describe the community served, including the geographic area and reach.
- Provide an overview of what services or programming is currently provided for children and youth at the agency, including child sexual abuse prevention programming, if any.
- Describe trainings the agency has conducted in the community, including topics and audiences.

- Describe the agency’s willingness to partner with The NYSPCC and gymnastics clubs in their community on this pilot project and describe similar partnerships the agency has collaborated on.
- Describe the agency’s commitment to helping eradicate child sexual abuse in the sport of gymnastics.

2. Applicant Readiness (Maximum 33 Points)

Applicants must provide the following information:

- Describe the capacity of the agency in terms of staffing and ability to assign two to three staff to work part-time on this project. (Please note that staff hours will vary depending on the geographic region, the number of staff assigned and the number of trainings conducted. Agencies can expect to spend an average of 60-80 total hours of staff time over the course of the 12 month period.)
- Attach the resumes and provide brief bios of the project staff and their experience related to the role (e.g. training facilitation experience, knowledge of child sexual abuse prevention, child abuse and neglect, trauma, child development, etc.).
- Describe the agency’s capacity and willingness to complete the project activities. Provide a plan that includes:
 - Attending the in-person, launch training
 - Conducting outreach and promotion to gymnastics clubs
 - Traveling to and facilitating the trainings at gymnastics clubs in their region
 - Collecting data and submitting monthly paperwork
 - Participating in technical assistance, fidelity monitoring and final evaluation
- Provide a contingency plan to complete the project activities if project staffs’ responsibilities shift or there is staff turnover.
- Describe the agency’s financial ability to cover costs upfront and send monthly invoices for reimbursement.
- Describe how the agency anticipates continuing to engage with local gymnastics clubs in their community after the pilot project ends.

Budget and Funding Narrative

No budget needed as the funds will be provided by AAF after completion of the project activities.

Performance Measures

Successful applicants are **required** to submit paperwork for completed trainings, including attendance, participant satisfaction surveys, fidelity forms and invoices monthly to The NYSPCC. Successful applicants will be **required** to conduct trainings at 80% of the gymnastics clubs in their region over the 12-month period with the expectation that outreach will be conducted to 100% of the gymnastics clubs

in their region (average of 20 gymnastics clubs per region). It is anticipated that gymnastics clubs will welcome this free training and resource.

Other Administrative Requirements

Disbursement of Funds

Participating agencies will submit monthly invoices to The NYSPCC for completed trainings along with paperwork documenting their occurrence. The NYSPCC will verify that the trainings occurred and that all paperwork has been submitted and then forward the invoices to AAF who will distribute the funds directly to each agency.

Mailing Information

The completed application must be sent to childrenfirst@nyspcc.org no later than **5pm on Friday, February 28, 2020**. Applications can also be mailed to:

Attention: Jessica Trudeau
Assistant Director of the Training Institute

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New York, NY 10038