

Request for Proposals for the External Evaluation of a Sports Based Youth Development Program

Request for Proposals Issued: Aug 18, 2023

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: Sep 15, 2023

Questions and Proposals must be submitted via email to:

1) Scott R. Furtwengler, PhD: sfurtwengler@up2ussports.org, and

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON DISCLOSURE

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Up2Us Sports is an equal opportunity employer and federal contractor or subcontractor. Consequently, the parties agree that, as applicable, they will abide by the requirements of 41 CFR 60-1.4(a), 41 CFR 60-300.5(a) and 41 CFR 60-741.5(a) and that these laws are incorporated herein by reference. These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals based on their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities, and prohibit discrimination against all individuals based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. These regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, protected veteran status or disability. The parties also agree that, as applicable, they will abide by the requirements of Executive Order 13496 (29 CFR Part 471, Appendix A to Subpart A), relating to the notice of employee rights under federal labor laws.

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I. Background

Up2Us Sports is a national service program that uses youth based sports as a platform to re-energize economically vulnerable communities. The program's theory of change posits that trained sports coaches are among the most effective role models in the lives of young people. Trained coaches can teach skills that lead to increases in physical activity and positive decision-making. Our evidence-based model, called sports based youth development (SBYD), combines sports coaching and mentoring with positive youth development methodology to address some of the most persistent epidemics facing youth in urban communities across the United States.

Through recruiting and training a national "coach force" composed entirely of AmeriCorps Coach-Mentors (ACMs), Up2Us Sports is able to expand access to recreational opportunities for youth and provide group and one-on-one mentoring to foster non-cognitive skills that lead to healthy decision making. The service role of ACMs produces significant contributions to existing efforts because the AmeriCorps service model of recruitment, training, programmatic support, service activities, and alumni support are excellent tools to empower ACMs with the social capital necessary to empower their community.

ACMs are placed predominantly in low-income, African-American and Latinx neighborhoods, where residents are more likely to be facing chronic physical and mental health issues related to substance abuse, trauma, poverty, and higher crime rates. Youth targeted in these neighborhoods have a tremendous need for sports and mentorship programs. Compared to their peers in more affluent communities, youth whose family income averages below \$25,000/year are nearly three times as likely to be physically "inactive"-- meaning that they have little to no access to physical activity, recreation and sports programs. Moreover, these youth are half as likely to play a team sport even just for one day.

These communities are in high poverty areas in which 40% of the residents on average are living in "deep poverty" (US Census Bureau -- Community Survey, 2020). Youth growing up in "deep poverty" experience dual health issues: (1) higher than average rates of childhood obesity in part due to lack of structured recreational activities led by a trained coach; and (2) higher than average rates of negative social indicators like youth violence, substance abuse and academic failure. Many families living in poverty are forced to make difficult choices between essentials like food, housing, healthcare and education, because they do not have enough income or assistance to afford basic necessities resulting in an inability to "pay to play" to gain access to high quality sports programming.

Up2Us Coach ACMs will address obesity by serving as coaches who provide youth in these focus communities with regular physical activities that otherwise would not be available to them. 60% of youth see an increase in physical activity levels compared to when they began working with an ACM. The recipients of these services are youth ages 6 to 18, and have varying degrees of exposure to sports. As previously stated, some are novices and some have moderate exposure while others will have high levels of exposure to sports. Through the context of sports, ACMs will address the negative social behaviors in their communities by integrating one-on-one and group mentoring activities into the sports setting. A previous Up2Us Sports-led evaluation found that youth with trained coach-mentors demonstrated statistically significant increases in positive decision making that leads to prosocial outcomes, including future focus and plan B thinking, self-awareness, and well-being

II. Scope of the Study

2.1 Evaluation Objectives

This study is being conducted in the second year of a 3-year grant cycle for the Up2Us Sports Americorps Coach program.

The study's main objectives are:

1. To understand the effect of participation in Up2Us Sports activities on youth outcomes such as leadership and like skills, attitudes toward and frequency of physical activity, and positive relationship between participants and coaches.
2. Gathering data from educators and parents/guardians on their perception of behavioral changes among youth who participate in Up2Us Sports activities.

The study team will undertake consultation with the Up2Us Sports Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation (RM&E) team at the commencement of the project to further refine the study questions.

2.2 Key Research Question(s)

Research Question	Methodology
To what extent does working with an Up2Us Coach at a host site increase the development of leadership and life skills/attributes of youth participants compared to a group of non-participants?	Qualitative: Analysis of data collected from focus groups with parents/guardians Analysis of data collected from interviews with teachers/educators *Up2Us RM&E team to provide data
	Quantitative: Data analysis using inferential statistics with the results of the youth survey *Up2Us RM&E team to provide data

III. Study Methodology

3.1 Study Data Collection Plan

The following study data collection plan is proposed, which includes a combination of existing and primary data collection.

The consultant will analyze and report on all quantitative and qualitative data in collaboration with the Up2Us RM&E team. Data collection with youth, teachers/facilitators, parents and local partners, however, will be conducted by Up2Us staff. Raw translated data will be provided to the consultant for analysis.

All primary data collected during the study must facilitate disaggregation by gender, race/ethnicity, and age. The study data collection plan includes estimates for the number of focus group discussions (FDGs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to be conducted. The study data collection plan will be further revised at the commencement of the project.

All secondary data, such as reports, past studies and quantitative data will be provided by Up2Us Sports.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

Child-participatory. Where appropriate and safe, children should be supported to participate in the evaluation process beyond simply being respondents. Opportunities for collaborative participation could include involving children in determining success criteria against which the project could be evaluated, supporting children to collect some of the data required for the evaluation themselves, or involving children in the validation of findings.

Inclusive. Ensure that children from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.

Ethical: The study must be guided by the following ethical considerations:

Safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behavior towards children and adults.

- Sensitive – to child rights, gender, inclusion and cultural contexts.
- Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties.
- Confidentiality and data protection - measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk.
- Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this.
- Broad participation - the relevant parties should be involved where possible.
- Reliability and independence - the study should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

It is expected that:

- Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
- Study activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
- A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children, young people's, or adult's participation.
- A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
- Informed consent will be used where possible.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO CONSIDER: For implementation of the study, the consultants would not need to travel.

IV. Expected Timelines and Deliverables

4.1 Study Timeline

Key Deliverables in bold.

What	Who is responsible	By when	Who else is involved
Selection of consultant	Up2Us Sports	Oct 25, 2023	
Document review, desk research	Study team	October 2023	
Develop research protocol and tools	Study team	November 2023	
Review of research protocol and tools	Up2Us RM&E	November 2023	
Training staff on data collection and facilitating focus groups and interviews	Up2Us RM&E	November 2023	Additional Up2Us staff
Quantitative data collection	Up2Us RM&E	November-December 2023	Additional Up2Us staff
Qualitative data collection*	Up2Us RM&E, additional Up2Us staff	November-December 2023	Additional Up2Us staff
Data management and analysis (coding, transcriptions,	Study team	January 2024	

data cleaning, integration, & analysis			
First draft of final report	Study team	February 2024	
Review of first draft	Up2Us RM&E, Up2Us Leadership	February 2024	
Final report	Study team, Up2Us	March 2024	Luella Provenza , Jack Callahan , Kim Crawford
Presentation of final report	Study team	April 2024	

* Exact timing of data collection may be adjusted based on school year, school schedule, and availability of participants

4.2 Deliverables

The study team will produce the following deliverables:

Deliverables	Timeline
Research protocol and data collection tools, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the Program and context relevant to the Study using the literature review and desk research. • Study objectives, scope and key study questions • Description of the methodology, including design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data sources • Data analysis and reporting plan • Caveats and limitations of study • Risks and mitigation plan • Ethical considerations, including details on consent and data privacy • Data collection tools (e.g., surveys, FDG/KII guides, etc.) 	August-September 2023
Training for local facilitators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide remote training to local enumerators who will do data collection 	November-December 2023

<p>Final Study Report including the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary • Background description of the Program and context relevant to the Study using literature review and third party data. • Scope and focus of the study • Overview of the study methodology and data collection methods • Findings aligned to each of the key study questions • Specific caveats or methodological limitations of the evaluation • Conclusions outlining implications of the findings or learnings • Recommendations • Appendices (additional tables, descriptive statistics, notes, etc.) • Data and analyses including all encrypted raw data, databases and analysis outputs <p>Report brief of 2 to 5 pages including the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief summary of the project • Objectives of the research • Methodology of the study including sample, tools description and field work • Key findings • Recommendations <p>A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Up2Us within one week of the submission of the draft report. The final report will incorporate feedback from Up2Us.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<p>Final presentation on study report to Up2Us RM&E and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An oral powerpoint presentation on the key findings from the study 	<p>April 2024</p>

V. Selection Criteria

To be considered, the study team members together must have demonstrated skills, expertise and experience in:

- Designing and conducting evaluations using mixed methods design.

- Conducting studies in the field of youth livelihoods, education, particularly in relation to life skills, social-emotional learning, digital skills, and gender equality and social inclusion. Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving children and child participatory techniques.
- Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving marginalized, historically underrepresented groups in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways.
- Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders.
- Strong written and verbal skills in communicating technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation skills).
- A track record of open, collaborative working with clients.

There is a high expectation that:

- A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex study projects, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
- The team has the ability to commit to the terms of the project and have adequate and available skilled resources to dedicate to this study over the period.
- The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

VI. Financial Proposal, Compensation, & Schedule of Payment

Financial Proposal:

Up2Us Sports seeks value for money in its work. This does not necessarily mean "lowest cost," but quality of the service and reasonableness of the proposed costs. Proposals shall include personnel allocation (roles / number of days / daily rates), as well as any other applicable costs.

Compensation:

The compensation will be based on the deliverables from the Evaluation Consultant. The total amount for the study will not exceed \$55,000.

Schedule of Payment:

The following terms of payments will be applied for this consultancy:
Upon approval of final study report and presentation [100%]

VII. How to Apply

Up2Us Sports seeks letters of interest from evaluator(s). Interested evaluator(s) should clearly indicate their background experience and knowledge of the subject area, how they meet the required skills and experience, and their availability. Selection of the evaluator(s) will be done by Up2Us Sports and will be based on the strength of the qualifications provided by potential candidates through their:

- Letter of interest/cover letter
- Technical Proposal Summary (5 pages Max.) requiring: 1) Sample size for Qualitative Data collection, 2) Analysis Strategy, and 3) Timeframe.
- CV for each evaluator
- Example of a previous evaluation report with similar scope of work
- Cost estimate (including daily rate and related expenses)

Potential evaluator(s) can work remotely and do not need to live in Washington DC or the USA. Submission should include a letter of interest/cover letter, CV, sample evaluation report and cost estimate. The response from the suppliers should be returned as a signed form or on official letterhead.. The deadline to submit expression of interest is close of business on Friday, September 15, 2023. All submissions should be sent to Scott R. Furtwengler (sfurtwengler@up2ussports.org).